

Mr Steve Crocker
President
The Association of Directors of Children's Services
17 Marble Street
Manchester
M2 3AW

11th July 2022

Dear Mr Crocker,

I am writing in response to your speech on 7th July at the ADCS annual conference.

In your speech, you made a sweeping statement about the recruitment agency sector in social work. As the professional body for the recruitment and staffing sector, we were surprised to learn from journalists of your concerns. Our commitment to high standards means we are always ready to engage with bodies who feel there is an issue to address – but shouting about profiteering and unethical operation rather than working with us on practical steps to address any poor practice smacks of playing the footballer, rather than the ball.

That said, I want to invite you to share concerns with us. Both through our formal complaints process and in our work with Government, we aim to ensure the highest standards in the agency sector. This also helps us to advise clients across sectors about the best way to support their substantive and flexible workforces. We never oppose appropriate regulation for the sector – but I should be clear that the banning of agencies is something we will oppose. This can only be seen as an attempt to create a closed shop that holds down social worker wages and reduces their flexible employment options. We have every sympathy with the difficult funding situation Local Authorities find themselves in – but a ban will not solve these problems.

As well as being happy to work with you on key areas of concern, I would emphasise again that every REC member is bound by our Code of Conduct. It is vital that Local Authorities use providers who have passed such a test – ours is not unique – and where there is a clear route of challenge, such as to the REC Professional Standards Committee. I would be happy to share more details of this if you would like.

I would be happy to pick up on the issues you raise in a more constructive way. If you would like to take up this invite, Ellie Goddard (ellie.goddard@rec.uk.com) in my office will be happy to arrange a time.

Yours Sincerely,



REC

Recruitment
& Employment
Confederation

Neil Carberry
Chief Executive