



1 August 2013

Stuart Todd
Assistant Clerk to the Public Petitions Committee
T3,40
Scottish Parliament
Edinburgh
EH991SP

Dear Mr Todd,

CONSIDERATION OF PETITION PE1481

Thank you for your letter of 20 June providing the opportunity for UKCG to comment on this petition.

Before turning to your specific questions I should provide some information about UKCG and its activities.

The UKCG represents some 30 of the leading construction companies across the UK. Our principal objectives are to:

- influence policies and legislative changes, specific to the construction sector, proposed by the UK government and EU institutions, to ensure they are proportionate and practicable for the construction industry; and
- encourage contractors to work together (especially in health and safety and environmental issues) to promote change and spread best practice.

Earlier this year UKCG launched the Scottish Contractors Group representing the 12 largest construction businesses in Scotland.

UKCG wishes to make plain from the outset that its members do not condone any form of blacklisting. The fact that a minority of our members were some time ago involved in the activities of the Consulting Association has damaged the reputation of the construction industry. The Consulting Association has been closed down since 2009 and all of our members are clear that such activities have no place in today's construction industry.

UKCG has received no hard evidence that blacklisting is taking place today. If this were to be forthcoming UKCG would want to work to help stamp it out once and for all.

UKCG members would not discriminate against any employee for raising genuine safety concerns. Indeed, our approach is the exact opposite and to encourage proactive worker engagement.

The industry has also invested heavily over the past decade to improve its health and safety performance. HSE statistics show that the number of all reported accidents in construction has fallen by over 40% in the past decade with much of that improvement driven by UKCG members.

UKCG members have enjoyed good relations with trade unions to ensure that the industry remains a key sector in both Scotland and the wider UK. We have worked closely with the unions, amongst other things, to:

- Implement a working rule agreement covering national pay and working conditions;
- Enhance the skills and recognise the competency of our workforce; and
- Improve occupational health and safety in the industry.

Moreover, UKCG members are working collectively to promote a more diverse workforce in construction and to ensure there is equality of opportunity across the industry. This includes our recently launched "Respect" campaign designed to promote an inclusive atmosphere on construction sites making everybody welcome regardless of their background.

As you will be aware there is currently an ongoing inquiry into "Blacklisting in Employment" by the House of Commons Scottish Affairs Committee. UKCG has given evidence to that Committee and will want to consider any recommendations it makes very seriously. The Department for Business Innovation and Skills has also referred a request from the Scottish Affairs Committee to look into alleged blacklisting on the Crossrail project to the Information Commissioner's Office. Given that these inquiries are underway, UKCG does not believe that a separate inquiry by the Scottish Government would be appropriate at this stage.

I hope this is helpful. Please let me know if I can supply any further information.

Stephen Ratcliffe
Director