8) Have you used or are you currently using a pay between assignments (PBA) contract?

Yes, currently members of our branch and within our workplace are paid using PBA contracts

9) In your experience, what are the benefits and any problems associated with working on a PBA contract basis?

As a branch, we have not found any benefits associated with working on a PBA contract basis. In our experience the primary purpose of PBA contracts is to replace and undercut permanent employment, providing a loophole through which workers are exploited.

Although PBA contracts offer a guaranteed income for 4 weeks in between assignments, this is paid at the national minimum wage and, because workers are engaged on a long-term basis this does not happen. Indeed it is our experience that workers can be employed on a PBA contract for many years meanwhile, they are prevented from enjoying the same treatment on pay as their permanent colleagues, even after 12 weeks.

As a result, our agency members on PBA contracts who are employed by are paid substantially less than their permanent counterparts doing the same work. This can be as much as £5.26 less per hour, which amounts to £122 a week and £529 a month.

In our experience, temporary work agencies are almost exclusively employing new recruits on PBA contracts in order to avoid equal pay regulations. Tellingly, workers are not given an opt-out choice upon recruitment.

These contracts are offered on a take-it-or-leave-it basis leaving workers with no choice but to accept them.

10) In your experience, how effective do you think pay between assignments contracts are in supporting workers and work seekers when they are not working?

We have found that PBA contracts are entirely ineffective in supporting workers and work seekers when they are not working

When engaged on PBA contracts, workers have struggled due to low incomes and little reassurance that they will be expediently moved into a suitable position.

Moreover, PBA contracts have helped to tie some workers into a cycle of low-paid and insecure employment, and the long-term undercutting of pay and conditions.

11) Do you have evidence that there are wider issues (beyond equal pay) with PBA contracts, for example agency workers not being able to access to facilities, rest break, annual leave or job vacancies?

Workers engaged on PBA contracts have suffered from a range of inferior terms and conditions. These include: an inability to arrange time off at their convenience; unsocial shifts and being mandated to work during bank holidays; unable to access and apply for permanent positions; poorer pension terms and conditions; and only entitled to statutory maternity/paternity and sick pay.

11 (a): Do you believe that that the above issues would justify wider state enforcement?

The problems outlined above are inherent to agency work and enforcement is not the answer. Instead a regulatory overhaul is needed to ensure that day one rights exist across the workforce and to prevent the kind of exploitation that has become normalised in too many workplaces.

12) To what extent do you agree that enforcement of the Agency Worker Regulations 2010 should come within the remit of the Employment Agency Standards inspectorate?

Fundamentally we do not agree with the premise of this question. The challenge is not one of enforcement, or lack thereof, but of poor regulations and loopholes that enable exploitation.

Rather than focusing on enforcement we believe that a wider review and overhaul of the Agency Worker Regulations Act 2010 is required. In particular, we believe that it is time for the Swedish Derogation to be scrapped. It creates disparity in payment received for tasks performed, denying agency workers the going rate for the job.

Consultation on Agency Workers Recommendations
Consultation Questions (Page 22-24)

Are you (select the appropriate option):

	Respondent type
☐	Business representative organisation/trade body
☐	Central government
☐	Charity or social enterprise
☐	Employer
☐	Individual
☐	Legal representative
☐	Local government
x	Trade union or staff association
☐	Other (please describe)

If you are responding as an individual, which best describes your employment status (select the appropriate option):

Employed	
Self-employed	
Unemployed – Looking for work	
Unemployed – Not looking for work	
Retired	
Not looking for work - other	

If you are an employer, how would you classify your organisation?
If you are an employee or worker, what type of organisation do you work for?

Private sector organisation	
Public sector	
Charity/voluntary sector	

Other (please specify below)	

If you are an employer, how many employees work for your organisation?
If you are employed, how many people work for your organisation?

Micro business (0-9 employees)	
Small business (10-49 employees)	
Medium-sized business (50-249 employees)	
Large-sized business (250+ employees)	

If you represent employers or employees/workers, who do you represent?

A trade union	x
An industry or employer association	
An agency worker interest group	
Other	