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Department for
**Employment
and Learning**
www.delni.gov.uk

Information for: Would-be Models and Entertainers - Top Tips (October 2008)



Information for Would-be Models and Entertainers

– Top Tips

- If you want to be famous – **Beware** of anyone who promises they can make you a star overnight or makes extravagant claims – if it looks too good to be true – then it probably is.
- **Unscrupulous people** will tell you what you want to hear: ‘You are just what we are looking for!’ – so you sign up and pay unnecessary/excessive fees.
- Beware of advertisements **Claiming** to provide artists for popular TV programmes – directors for these programmes usually use agencies (and individuals) that they have used before.
- If the agency claims to supply a popular TV or film company with actors/models – try telephoning the TV company to ask if they use the agency. If in doubt you could also ask the agency for references from recent clients.
- **Never** pay any money on the day. If you are asked for money when first meeting or speaking to an agent they are **Breaking the Law** and you should walk away. Report their actions to the Department for Employment and Learning (“the Department”) who will investigate all complaints regarding breaches of the legislation.

Should you wish to make a complaint please complete our online [complaint form](#).

You can also send written details of your complaint to:

Department for Employment and Learning
Employment Relations Policy and Legislation Branch
Adelaide House
39-49 Adelaide Street
BELFAST
BT2 8FD

Or contact our Employment Agency Inspectors via e-mail:

EA.Inspectors@delni.gov.uk

- **Never** sign anything on the day especially if you are being pressured to - reputable agencies let you take paperwork away to read carefully at your leisure.

- **Make sure** you understand all the terms and conditions of a contract before signing – or ask someone else for advice if you need to. If you are asked for money before or after you have signed a contract ask what you are getting for your money. Remember that agencies are only allowed to charge fees (other than commission from your earnings) in limited circumstances – generally in connection with a publication containing your details.
- **Bear in mind** anyone can promise you success – question any claims that you will be found work – it is your right to inform yourself and you should be suspicious of anyone who cannot or will not provide clear answers.
- **Reputable** agencies will tell you that the entertainment business is very tough to get into and only a very small number of people have what it takes to succeed. There are lots of very good-looking people, models – lots of talented entertainers and actors who struggle to get enough work.
- **Finally** – still fame struck? **A Reminder** – Do not part with your money or sign on the dotted line until you have done your homework and found out as much as you can about the agency.

BACKGROUND

A number of agencies advertise casting sessions in local newspapers. There have been instances of hard selling techniques being used at this type of casting session.

Where these hard selling techniques are used – the process is often typically as follows:

- Firstly you see an advertisement for a casting session advertised in your local paper. Often these will be held at hotels – sometimes over a weekend. The advertisement may well say that no experience is needed and that they are looking for models and extras of all ages (sometimes including children). The advertisement may offer a free test shot or free photographs. All you have to do is turn up.
- If you do turn up (or bring your children along) certain agency representatives may tell you that you (or your children) are, ‘Just what we are looking for!’, take photographs and then try to persuade you to sign contracts and pay fees on the day. They may say that you have great prospects and offer you a full refund if you do not get any paid work as a model or an extra. While you probably have some idea of your own potential – unscrupulous agencies sometimes trade on the pride that parents have in their children and will tell all parents how suitable their child is for modelling.
- If you do sign a contract and pay fees to an unscrupulous agency you may get a phone call from another agency a few days later telling you that they have seen your photographs and they also want to sign you up but they want to take their own photographs and you will have to pay more money for these. In some cases the two agencies may be connected and this is an attempt to get a second fee.
- Some people who sign up at casting sessions do get paid work but this is a very competitive industry and even highly talented individuals working for legitimate agencies may not despite an agency’s best efforts and intentions get much or even any work.

The Department is aware that this is essentially a very sensitive area where some sharp practitioners operate. Following its consultation on protecting vulnerable agency workers – **important changes** – have been made to the legislation governing the private recruitment industry which includes agencies supplying workers to the entertainment and modelling industries. The law states that an entertainment/modelling agency can only charge fees to a worker from earnings from work carried out through that agency – known generally as commission. However where an entertainment or modelling agency places details of a worker in a publication (such as a model book or a website) an

agency can make a charge to a worker for the provision of this service – **under restricted circumstances**. From 6 April 2008 entertainment/modelling agencies can no longer take a fee from a work-seeker for entry into a publication **on the first day of contact (including, for example, at an audition or casting session) or for seven days afterwards**. The seven day cooling off period applies in all cases where an agency offers to place a worker's details in a publication for a fee.

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INVESTOR IN PEOPLE

THE DEPARTMENT:

Our aim is to promote learning and skills, to prepare people for work and to support the economy.

This document is available in other formats upon request.

Further information:

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e-mail: employment.rights@delni.gov.uk

website: www.delni.gov.uk