

PRESS CUTTING

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Do you really need to provide referees BEFORE you've got a job?

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Some recruiters in the financial services industry have started asking candidates to provide referees as a precondition for registering on their systems. Predictably, this is causing some consternation. Do you really want to disclose the name of your line manager to a recruiter before you've even been offered a job?

The good news is that there are no laws or regulations obliging candidates in financial services to divulge the names of referees upfront.

"All that an employment agency needs to do is to satisfy itself with the identity or a job seeker and that he or she has the right experience, training, qualification and authorisations," says employment lawyer **Ronnie Fox**. "That is not the same as asking for a reference.

"Upfront references are only required if you're working with children or the vulnerable," he adds.

The other good news is that plenty of large recruiters, including Morgan McKinley, don't ask for references upfront.

"We only ask for references from our contract employees," says a director at one big financial services recruitment firm. "On the permanent side, we leave it up to our clients."

The bad news, however, is that some large recruiters *do* require references for registration. They include Selby Jennings.

"We feel we have an increasingly key part to play in candidate due diligence," says Steve Yendell, executive director at Selby Jennings. "To get ahead of the curve we have implemented an internal requirement to establish sources of reference for all candidates."

Yendell says candidates who register with Selby Jennings and provide the two obligatory referees (one of whom may be their current line manager) can rest assured that the referees won't be contacted until they've received and accepted a firm job offer. Nor will the names of referees be added to Selby Jennings' database and contacted by recruiters looking for business.

"For clarity, these are gathered, held and used purely for referencing purposes," reassures Yendell. "They would not form part of our commercial data source."