

An answer to peaks and troughs for one company is to introduce a casual worker scheme

# Seafield woos casual workers

by Sarah Dennis

Seafield Logistics rolled out a "casual worker scheme" to all its sites last week.

The number of casual employees on the distribution and contract packing company's books is now "in the dozens", managing director Mark Strong tells *Motor Transport*. He adds that casual workers have the same pay rates and are treated "exactly the same as full-time employees".

The scheme has been launched on a site-by-site basis

after successful trials at the company's Guyhirn site in Peterborough. Guyhirn was a good starting point because of "quite a number of peaks and troughs in the business environment" and the worker demographic, says Strong.

Checks on casual workers' compliance with drivers' hours regulations are verbal but "where there is a legal requirement, we monitor their other work," Strong says. Most of the staff on the scheme are ex-employees. "We tend to use

[workers] for the week, so we know they can't be exceeding their hours," he adds.

The scheme gives Seafield Logistics a pool of staff to contact for shift cover in times of staff absence and increased demand, with workers given the choice to accept shifts. Individual sites manage the work flow with their own contacts.

"It's primarily [introduced] because we get peaks and troughs. It's an extra club in the bag," says Strong. Agency labour is still used, but the

casual worker scheme is the "first preferred option".

Roles covered by the scheme include drivers, warehouse staff, yard workers, fitters and office support. Strong does not rule out broadening the scheme to those roles not already covered.

Interest is high among those workers recently retired and those nearing retirement at the company but newspaper advertisements for the scheme have also drafted in new employees who want flexibility.