

APSCo calls for greater clarity for temporary workers after ‘Freedom Day’

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Following confirmation from Boris Johnson today that most Covid restrictions will be lifted from 19th July, the Association of Professional Staffing Companies (APSCo) has warned that a lack of clarity to protect contractors and temporary workers needs to be addressed.

Tania Bowers, Legal Counsel and Head of Public Policy at APSCo, commented:

“While the Prime Minister is hoping that employers will make a decision that is best for their people, it will create an environment whereby multiple workforces will be privy to varying health and safety criteria from their employers. If this is the case, staffing companies will face a struggle to respond to the differing requirements of individual clients in terms of the health & safety obligations for agency and atypical workers, whether working in office locations or environments where health and safety has traditionally been more of an issue. The current scope of the conduct regulations is limited when it comes to the safety of workers and putting the onus on employers to make this decision in a post-Covid landscape could lead to staffing companies being unnecessarily burdened with a variety of safety requirements without clear guidance or overarching rationale.

“There needs to be clarity as to where the responsibility for ensuring the safety of this segment of the workforce lies – whether that’s the need to track movements across locations, have a negative PCR test submitted on arrival for the job or even clear guidance surrounding who is responsible for the individual and their pay should they be required to self-isolate.

“This is just one of the challenges that recruitment business and employers are attempting to navigate ahead of Freedom Day, with the lack of clarity surrounding the Employment Bill still hanging in the air for many. While we understand there is a need and desire to get the UK back on its feet following the events of last year, there needs to be the acceptance that the world of work has changed and it needs new, more robust regulation and guidance that protects the right workers in the right way, which includes clear safety guidance for the engagement of agency and atypical workers.”

Ends

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