

# Trade body responds to latest ONS data

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With the latest data from the Office for National Statistics (ONS) revealing that vacancies have surpassed one million for the first time, the Association of Professional Staffing Companies (APSCo) has warned that the skills gap is only going to stretch further unless quick action is taken to encourage more independent professionals from outside the UK to relocate here for work.

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

“This on-going spike in recruitment activity is in keeping with APSCo’s latest Recruitment Trends Snapshot report – produced in conjunction with growth analytics experts cube19 – which showed that permanent and contract roles saw marked increases year on year in August, up 47% and 79.5% respectively. The fact that pay has returned to pre-pandemic levels at last is a positive sign for the economy, however, we are seeing employers simply needing to increase remuneration as staff shortages continue to impact hiring activity.

“The increasing dearth of talent that businesses across the country are reporting is a real concern to the recruitment sector. While the Government has pledged to support skills development in the UK on a longer-term basis, there is a need for more immediate action. At APSCo we are continuing our calls to the Government to provide a visa entry route into the UK that both allows and encourages high value independent professionals to work in the country on a project-basis. And while the delayed return to in person Right to Work checks is a welcome move, a permanent, longer-term solution is needed to create a regulatory environment that is fit for purpose in today’s modern world.

“We expect to see recruitment activity continue on its upward trajectory in the immediate future, however, with the furlough scheme ending this month, it will be interesting to see how this impacts the ONS labour statistics for the remaining quarter of 2021.”

ENDS

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