

Skills shortages are being felt beyond HGV drivers: APSCo calls for urgent changes to visa routes

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With on-going reports of worker shortages impacting the UK, the Association of Professional Staffing Companies (APSCo) has warned that the dearth of resources is also being felt across the highly-skilled workforce and has called again for the development of a specific visa route for independent professionals that fall into this category.

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

“When the government came to power in 2019, its intention was to create a “high-wage, high-skill, low-tax economy”. The government also wanted to reform the immigration system by deciding “who comes to this country on the basis of the skills they have and the contribution they can make – not where they come from”. APSCo agrees with both of these points to drive a dynamic labour market and to achieve a truly prosperous recruitment industry.

“As we move into a place where the Covid-19 virus becomes endemic, it is clear from the perfect storm created by both the timing of the UK’s exit from the EU and the scarring impact of the pandemic that there is a distinct skills shortage across high skilled areas of work, such as engineering, life sciences, digital and fintech. However, many within these fields work on projects rather than being bound to one specific role. To bring about a more highly-skilled and flexible workforce, a specific visa route is needed for such highly-skilled, self-employed project workers from abroad who will be vital to plug the short to medium skills gap as the UK looks to up-skill and re-skill. We are aware this is within the scope of the Home Office policy, but this has been delayed until mid-2022 at the earliest. And with the changes to tier 5 visas unfortunately limited to the creative industries, there’s currently a concerning gap that simply won’t be resolved without action. The Global Talent Scheme run by the Home Office and UKVI should also be increased to take such roles into account to allow the UK to attract a high-skilled workforce that will positively contribute to the UK building back better from the impact of Covid-19.”

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