

APSCo outlines Budget and Spending Review recommendations to support a dynamic labour market

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The Association of Professional Staffing Companies (APSCo) has outlined its main asks of the upcoming Autumn Budget and Spending Review to help the labour market build back better.

In its submission to HM Treasury, APSCo detailed the support that is needed to create a dynamic, modern and flexible labour market with enough skilled workers to help the country bounce back from the pandemic and boost the labour market in a cyclical fashion.

APSCo's recommendations include:

- Continued funding for virtual Right to Work checks to promote opportunity across the country: A permanent move to digital checks will help tackle inequality by eliminating the barrier of in-person checks for those unable to travel to physical locations, but it requires the necessary funding to make this long-term change.
- Investment in a 'highly skilled' workforce through visas for independent contractors: To bring about a more highly-skilled and flexible workforce, APSCo strongly calls for funding to be made available to provide a specific visa route for 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 the UK.
- Levelling up through investment in supporting start-ups, broadening the use of Apprenticeship Levy funds and a regional focus on skills: As digital and tech skills remain in high demand following the shift in how people work now, investment needs to be channelled into not only appropriate skills development, but also the growth of regional high-tech hubs in areas including Newcastle and Sheffield.
- Adequate funding for the introduction of a Single Enforcement Body (SEB): APSCo maintains that the Body should be tasked with driving better and more consistent collaboration with HMRC to push forward more active, visible enforcement of umbrella companies, being mindful and paying particular attention to the introduction of Off-Payroll. Adequate funding now to form the SEB should also prioritise the needs of today's labour market and ensure that the regulation put in place and the protections the body will offer to workers are understanding of the nuances of the recruitment industry, helping to drive a dynamic labour market.

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

"We've faced more challenges in the last two years than we have in the last fifty years, with Covid-19, the UK's exit of the EU and the roll out of Off-Payroll just a few examples of the events that have placed pressure on the staffing sector. As a country we must understand the fiscal and societal changes we need to make to be able to build back better and protect those financially affected by the impacts the Covid-19 virus has had on the country. To support policymakers and funding decisions, we believe the above recommendations will assist the country in building back better, by promoting opportunity across the country within the labour market to help tackle inequality and skills shortages, in turn helping to level up the country. We hope that the Treasury considers these in the upcoming Budget and Spending Review."

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