

Latest labour market statistics raise further concerns around skills availability

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Responding to the latest labour market data from the Office for National Statistics (ONS), Tania Bowers, Global Public Policy Director at the Association of Professional Staffing Companies (APSCo) commented:

“It is encouraging to see that the number of estimated pay-rolled employees was up 160,000 in the month after the furlough scheme ended. This suggests that the job protection scheme worked in many cases. However, while the continued drop in unemployment figures and increase in vacancy numbers may be positive news for some, for those businesses already struggling to source the skills they need this growing gap in supply and demand is a concern.

“APSCo continues to call on the government to help create a highly skilled, dynamic and flexible workforce to support the extensive job and economic growth that we’re experiencing. Current plans to direct funding into apprenticeships and lifelong learning for adults will help some of the skills challenges. However, there are some apprenticeship levies that remain unused while independent professionals go without valuable training that will support individuals and the skills economy alike. How these training funds are being used needs a rethink to ensure it is benefitting the entire UK workforce.

“We are also urging authorities to ensure there is a viable and attractive visa route into the UK for highly-skilled independent professionals and the self-employed. Developing home-grown talent will take time and during this period it will be international temporary experts who will play a significant role in helping the country continue on its path to recovery.”

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