

Trade association warns consultation needed before agency worker regulation changes

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The Association of Professional Staffing Companies (APSCo) and APSCo OutSource have written to Kwasi Kwarteng MP, Secretary of State for the Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy (BEIS), as well as Minister Paul Scully MP, Grant Shapps MP and DLME Margaret Beels, calling for a consultation with recruitment sector leaders before the agency workers' legislation is amended.

Tania Bowers, Global Public Policy Director at APSCo, commented:

"We are concerned with the Government's intentions to change the agency workers' legislation to allow recruitment companies to supply agency workers to replace striking workers without appropriate consultation with sector leaders.

"In our response to BEIS and relevant ministers, we've clarified that APSCo UK and OutSource representatives are keen to meet to discuss the proposed legislative solution that the Government has outlined. It is our view that the voice of the recruitment sector needs to be heard in this matter and discussions are needed around how such a proposal would stand in the context of international labour standards.

"This government was elected on a manifesto of improving worker rights via implementation of the recommendations of 2017's Taylor Review. APSCo UK recently met with Matt Warman MP as the lead of the Government's Future of Work review, and we had a useful and productive discussion on the future of work in the UK and the need to protect workers from rogue umbrella companies and from abuses of loopholes by some when hiring agency and contract workers. However, our members have been surprised by the unexpected move to amend the agency legislation. Our members are also keen to have sight of more detail regarding the reference to agency workers and "transferable skills" to replace striking workers.

"Given the significance of the proposed legislation, we have brought the concerns of our members to the Government and will continue to work with other recruitment leaders who are calling for a review of these changes before they are implemented. As we've previously stated, we are sceptical about the impact of removing the prohibition on agency workers replacing strikers, or those workers moved to replace strikers."

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