

# Vacancy fall hasn't alleviated the skills shortages

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More investment in skills is needed, particularly across the public sector

Responding to the latest labour market data from the Office for National Statistics (ONS), Ann Swain, Global CEO of the Association of Professional Staffing Companies (APSCo), says:

"It's important to note that the fall in vacancies recorded between November 2022 and January 2023 will also be influenced by a seasonal slowdown in December. However, with the ONS also citing 'economic pressures' as the reason why businesses are holding back on recruitment, the widespread reports from the end of 2022 that the UK will be in a recession in 2023 clearly had an impact. With a confirmation from the National Institute of Economic & Social Research (Niesr) that we have avoided this downfall, we do expect to see these figures continue to increase once again.

"It should be noted, though, that much of the fall in vacancies that we've seen in the last few months are, in fact, more of a return to normal following the record highs of H1 2022. The numbers themselves still remain above pre-pandemic levels at over one million for the three months to January 2023. With the employment rate up during the same period, a labour market shortage is clearly still an issue across the country.

"The labour disputes are evidently having an impact on public sector working hours, with over 800,000 working days lost in December alone due to the strikes. The discontent across sectors including healthcare and education is a significant concern for England's public sector, with no resolution seemingly in sight. While we hope that the upcoming Spring Budget will reveal additional finances for these under-resourced sectors, a lot can still happen in four weeks and we expect strikes to remain a hot topic for the foreseeable future."

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## About APSCo

The Association of Professional Staffing Companies (APSCo) is the trade association for the professional recruitment market. APSCo Global comprises APSCo Asia, APSCo Australia, APSCo Deutschland and APSCo United Kingdom as well as APSCo OutSource, the trade body for the RPO and MSP sectors.