

Trade body response to latest ONS labour data: Pressures aren't easing fast enough

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Responding to the latest labour market data from the Office for National Statistics, Samantha Hurley, Operations Director at the Association of Professional Staffing Companies (APSCo) comments:

“While permanent salaries are growing, the fact that total and regular pay fell in real terms demonstrates the financial pressures that the UK population is facing. Despite the quarterly fall in vacancies, the labour market is still tough. Historically skills short fields – particularly those requiring Science, Technology, Engineering and Maths skills – continue to face hiring difficulties and with more than a million vacancies still being reported, these recruitment struggles aren't going to dissipate any time soon.

“We are certainly seeing a slowdown in hiring activity and the slight increase in the number of unemployed people per vacancy does further support this trend, however, with this still at historical lows, it would be remiss to be lulled into a false sense of security. Employers across the UK are still facing a tight labour market and with the Chancellor seemingly boosting confidence with his Budget announcement in March, skills demand will continue to grow.

“In fact, our research showed an uptick in hiring following Jeremy Hunt's proposals. The data revealed that permanent jobs grew 10% month-on-month in March while demand for highly skilled contractors rose 4%. Placements also increased, up 21% for permanent jobs and 11% for contract positions between February and March.

“The Government's current focus on skills development is certainly promising, however the highly trained resources the UK needs cannot be created overnight. While these skills are being developed, the country's employers need easier and more attractive routes to flexible workers internationally. The current Tier 5 and fast track visa schemes are too narrow in focus and funding needs to be increased for the Home Office to both support existing systems and drive new visa routes which are more viable for highly skilled, self-employed project workers.”

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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.

Find out more: www.apSCO.org