

UK contractor immigration policies lagging behind global comparisons

Submitted by: BlueSky Public Relations Ltd

Tuesday, 25 July 2023

The Association of Professional Staffing Companies (APSCo) has urged UK policy makers to follow the example of other countries and improve immigration options for the self-employed and independent contractors.

In its latest campaign, APSCo has highlighted the flexible visa options across the likes of Germany, Norway, Denmark, the Netherlands and Australia as leading examples of how the UK can adapt to better address skills shortages.

Tania Bowers, Global Public Policy Director at APSCo comments:

“The skills shortages across the UK are well documented, but plans to reskill the current population will not fill the gaps. International talent – particularly those from the flexible labour market – will be crucial to strengthening our economy. Current visa restrictions in the country do not allow for, or encourage, independent contractors or the self-employed to take up work here. If we look at the examples of other countries, we are lagging behind when it comes to innovative recruitment strategies.

“We strongly believe that accessible, simple to obtain visas for independent, non-employed contractors need to be readily available, almost mirroring the flexible visa options of Germany which is arguably one of the world leaders on this issue.

“APSCo has also advised policy makers that ‘permitted business’ needs to fall within the scope of the Standard Visitor visa. This could be a flexible, non-sponsored, short term visa route for highly skilled foreign employed and self-employed workers. The fast-track visa application that the Home Office utilised last year should also be expanded and allow for the leasing of visa holders from registered sponsors to hirers. Without action soon, the UK will lose out on key talent to other countries that are ahead of the curve.”

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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.apscouk.org