

# NHS workforce crisis needs immediate reforms alongside longer-term plans

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With healthcare strikes in the news once again, the Association of Professional Staffing Companies (APSCo) has warned that the NHS Workforce Plan is still missing the mark and will have little immediate impact on the skills crisis.

Tania Bowers, Global Public Policy Director at APSCo commented:

“The workforce crisis in the NHS isn’t easily resolved and while the NHS Workforce Plan has been designed to create a more sustainable access to resources, the impact of most tactics could take 15+ years to be truly felt. APSCo has previously highlighted that access to globally trained healthcare professionals needs to be more widely available, but conversations with our members have highlighted a number of additional changes needed in this strategy.

“This includes a plan to ensure that there are not only sufficient, but also appropriate, flexible training pathways that enable new routes into careers in healthcare. We also believe that there needs to be an assessment of how the funding and contractual terms for the supply of clinical staff are affecting the ability to change the supply pipeline and skill-mix.

“While attracting resources is a problem, retention issues also prevail and haven’t been covered in much detail in the plan. Workforce unrest and burnout are real problems in the healthcare sector and if these aren’t adequately addressed, the success of any recruitment strategies will be limited.

“Conversations with our members have also highlighted that there needs to be a more detailed assessment as to how the plan can be successfully delivered across all regions and what the implications of over or under supply will be.

“With strikes once again plaguing the sector, more immediate solutions are required beyond the Workforce Plan. In particular, the red tape many employers face when hiring agency workers needs to be cut. An example is the lack of conformity around pre-hiring compliance and safety checks of permanent and agency staff which is contributing to the increased costs and delays of getting nurses and doctors in front of patients. A specialist, compliant to work for a Trust hospital under one CCG, may not necessarily be so at another hospital or primary care centre that operates under the same group, meaning there is minimal agility or responsiveness in workforce management.”

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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.  
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