

APSCo responds to latest labour market statistics

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Responding to the latest labour market data from the Office for National Statistics (ONS), Tania Bowers, Global Public Policy Director at the Association of Professional Staffing Companies (APSCo) comments:

“There may be lingering questions around the Labour Force Survey statistics that mean the latest figures around self-employment may need to be revised, but the data does paint a similar picture of falling vacancies in the UK. However, it’s important to stress that this doesn’t mean that the labour market is in a concerning state. If we look at the broader picture, jobs remain above pre-pandemic levels. When we also look at sector declines, vacancies have fallen most in human health and social work, and professional, scientific and technical activities – all areas that are experiencing long-standing skills shortages. With employers already struggling to source the required resources, they are unlikely to add more jobs, which will be impacting these statistics.

“This is further reflected in the fact that the number of jobs in the UK continued to grow in the revised data for September. This suggests that work is readily available across the country, but vacancies are being impacted by a lack of available resources. This will only increase the demand for self-employed and specialist contractors who are often able to take on more than one role at once.

“It’s critical that this recognition is reflected in policy decisions in the New Year – particularly with the economic inactivity rate for those aged between 16 and 64 remaining unchanged in the latest statistics (20.9%). The UK needs to provide greater support and allowance to both the self-employed and those that recruit them to encourage wider availability and use of these flexible resources. That includes revising the Apprenticeship Levy scope so that it is accessible to the self-employed to bolster the country’s skills. We also stand firmly by our recent calls to the Government to review business visas to help mitigate against the impact of skills shortages.”

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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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