

Trade body launches 'Manifesto to beat the skills crisis'

Submitted by: BlueSky Public Relations Ltd

Wednesday, 24 April 2024

The Association of Professional Staffing Companies (APSCo) has launched its manifesto, calling on political parties to boost the UK's economic growth by strengthening the labour market. The launch of the document took place at an invitation only event at the House of Commons this morning (Wednesday 24th April), with Government Ministers and a cross party group of MPs and peers in attendance.

The trade body for professional recruitment has urged policy makers across the major parties to ensure they adopt its recommendations which are designed to tackle the country's professional skills crisis, raise collective productivity, and drive economic growth.

According to APSCo, the four key opportunities that need to be capitalised on include:

- Creating the right workforce regulatory environment: through regulatory reforms which protect individual workers, drive economic growth and maximise productivity. This includes excluding highly paid contractors from the Agency Worker Regulations 2010 and reviews of Off Payroll IR35 and the employment status of the professional self-employed.
- Supporting workforce skills growth, training and talent development: through access to more flexible modular training under the Apprenticeship Levy and a greater focus on financial support for regional hubs. Access to international skills also needs to be extended through flexible short-term "project" visas for highly skilled workers and a greater focus on skilled immigration in trade deals.
- Introducing policies that drive fairness and inclusion in the new world of work: to ensure legislation matches the pace of change in hiring and working practices. That includes legislating to boost 'skills-first hiring' practices and encourage people to rejoin the workforce through tax incentives on occupational health, mental health and health screening budgets.
- Harnessing technology for the skills revolution: to drive economic growth, which includes building on the existing 'AI in recruitment' guidance to deliver recognised and auditable standards. Any such regulation should be in alignment with global directives and needs to hold AI developers and technology providers accountable for transparency and fairness in their products.

Tania Bowers, Global Public Policy Director at APSCo commented:

“Research from our members, Trusted Partners and Global Strategic partners such as LinkedIn are all pointing to the same issue in the UK; a severe shortage of professional skills that is only growing. Businesses are facing a critical lack of workers, with IT, digital, engineering and healthcare some of the hardest hit remits. For the country to remain competitive, our labour market needs to be world-leading, fair and flexible. Our manifesto outlines exactly how that can be achieved. In what is already proving to be a highly contentious general election year, it is crucial that the major parties have a plan in place to beat the skills crisis that’s prevailed for far too long in the UK.

“We’ve already started engaging with key policy makers across the core political parties – many of whom were in attendance at the launch event itself – and it’s encouraging to note that these recommendations are aligned to the thinking of many MPs and policy influencers. Politicians of all parties recognised that the recruitment and outsourcing sectors play a crucial role in the strength of the labour market and the UK economy. We are pleased to hear that APSCo’s manifesto aligns with the core ideas of the Conservative, Labour, Liberal Democratic and all parties that are looking to retain seats in Westminster as the general election nears.”

Press contact

Vickie Collinge

vickie@bluesky-pr.com

01582 790 705

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 www.apscouk.org