

APSCo welcomes move to relax doctor and nurse visa restrictions

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The Association of Professional Staffing Companies (APSCo) has welcomed today's announcement that NHS doctors and nurses will be excluded from restrictions to the number of visas granted to skilled non-EU migrant workers.

The number of Tier 2 visas offered to skilled workers outside the EEA and Switzerland is currently limited to 20,700 people a year. According to data obtained by the Financial Times, 2,630 of 3,599 Tier 2 visa applications submitted by non-EU doctors were refused in the five-months to April 2018, despite crippling staff shortages across the NHS.

APSCo's 2018 Market Survey found that 26% of healthcare recruiters are currently experiencing skills shortages, with 87% of those recruiting highly skilled workers expecting access to talent to worsen in the next two years.

Commenting on the announcement, Samantha Hurley, Director of Operations at APSCo, said:

"It's no secret that Britain has been built on skilled talent from overseas and the decision to remove doctors and nurses from the UK's restrictive visa regime is an entirely sensible one.

"Our members have long reported that finding healthcare professionals to work within the NHS is becoming increasingly difficult, and with Brexit on the horizon many foresee the situation worsening.

"This move should also help to marginally ease talent shortages elsewhere, with visas currently issued to doctors, nurses and other health professionals each year becoming available to other sectors. However, it is our view that immigration policy may have to be reviewed more widely if we are to retain access to the volume of skilled professionals the UK economy needs after we leave the EU."

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