

# Conservative Manifesto: Recruitment Trade Body Responds

Submitted by: BlueSky Public Relations Ltd

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Following yesterday's publication of the Conservative and Unionist Party's 2019 Manifesto, The Association of Professional Staffing Companies (APSCo (<https://www.apsco.org/>)) has voiced support for its commitment to attracting international talent, but concerns that it will not extend the Brexit implementation period.

Tania Bowers, General Counsel, APSCo, commented:

"While this seems to have been designed as a 'steady as she goes' manifesto, overall, I believe our members will be encouraged by the policies outlined in the document."

"By design, the tax and spend numbers within the Conservative manifesto are smaller than those of the Liberal Democrats and, especially, Labour. While the party is renowned for fiscal prudence, it can be argued that a bit more spending would have the potential to boost the economy further."

"Extra support for SMEs - including a fundamental review of the business rates system, increase in Employment Allowance for small businesses and a 'clamp down' on late payment – will be well received by our members."

"The last Conservative manifesto reiterated the leadership's intention to reduce net migration to 'tens of thousands' and, at the time, we raised concerns around how this would impact access to talent. With this in mind, we welcome the party's current commitment to 'attract the best and brightest from all over the world'."

"We support the introduction of an NHS Visa, which promises fast track entry, reduced fees and dedicated support for those coming to work within our health service. Outside of NHS recruitment, although an 'Australian style' points system would, in theory, remove barriers for highly skilled professionals, we need a system which is sufficiently flexible to enable those without a permanent job offer to live and work in the UK. In our own manifesto, we have called for a dedicated visa route as part of the future skills-based immigration system, through which highly skilled contractors from overseas can come and support British businesses."

"A new rail line from Manchester to Leeds is good for regional regeneration – and the introduction of a £3 billion national skills fund, if directed wisely, would also help to upskill workforces in those areas and across the regions."

"APSCo welcomes the Conservative's commitment to improve the Apprenticeship Levy but thinks they could do more to ensure that the system works effectively. With recent figures revealing that employers have lost £133m from apprenticeship levy accounts due to funds expiring, there is clearly need for reform. We have called for the system to be updated so that monies can be shared to assist the professional development of agency workers and Independent Professionals – particularly in talent-short STEM sectors such as digital, engineering and construction."

“We also welcome the promise that the Conservative party will review and explore how it can better support self-employed individuals, including making the tax system easier to navigate. However, with no explicit mention of off-payroll working legislation, we can assume that changes to existing plans are off the table.”

“We are somewhat concerned that the Conservatives have drawn a line in the sand and confirmed that they will not extend the Brexit implementation period beyond December 2020, as we believe this increases the risk of no free trade agreement, effectively a ‘no deal’ scenario – which will not be favoured by the majority of our members.”

- Ends

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#### About APSCo

APSCo was formed to give all firms involved in the recruitment of professional talent who have a commitment to excellence, the specialist support and distinctive voice they need to be successful. Celebrating its 20th anniversary this year, APSCo is the only UK recruitment trade body with an international footprint with in-country operations in Germany, Singapore and Australia. It gives candidates and employers a trusted badge of quality while providing member firms with an innovative range of services designed by recruitment experts to boost performance and reduce exposure to business and financial risk.

These services, combined with its growing international profile, commitment to Corporate Social Responsibility and opportunities for professional networking give APSCo members a unique opportunity to develop their businesses and gain competitive advantage.

[www.apsco.org](http://www.apsco.org)