

APSCo responds to Queen's Speech

Submitted by: BlueSky Public Relations Ltd

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In response to today's Queen's Speech, where the Monarch outlined a comprehensive list of the new Government's proposed legislation, Tania Bowers, General Counsel at The Association of Professional Staffing Companies (APSCo (<http://www.apsco.org/>)), commented:

"In the run up to the election, speaking on BBC Radio 4, the Chancellor of the Exchequer, Sajid Javid, suggested that his party would conduct a review into the introduction of new off-payroll rules in the public sector. No firm commitment has materialised as yet. On behalf of our members, we are calling for a rethink to incoming changes, which we believe should, at the very least, be delayed pending a further impact review and completion of an assessment on employment status. The Government maintains that it wants Britain to be 'the best country in the world to do business' – but restricting contractors isn't the way to achieve this."

"While it was confirmed that measures will be brought forward to encourage gig workers to request a "more predictable contract", our members are keen to understand whether this right will be extended to non-permanent agency workers, who by their nature are flexible."

"Our members will be encouraged by the new Government's commitment to clamp down on late payments and a pledge to strengthen the powers of the Small Business Commissioner. Many will also welcome the announcements that ministers will bring forward measures to ensure that 'every part of the United Kingdom can prosper', and that the Government will prioritise investment in infrastructure and world-leading science research and skills, in order to 'unleash' UK productivity."

"APSCo and our members have a solid understanding of many of the challenges that businesses face across the regions – most notably, local skills shortages and a lack of investment in local economies and infrastructure which is required to attract and retain talent in a specific area."

"We welcome the introduction of a National Skills Fund. However, while a commitment to 'growing our own' talent will help to mitigate against talent gaps in the future, in the interim access to skilled professionals from Europe and beyond must be maintained."

"While today's speech underlined a commitment to a 'modern, fair, points-based immigration system', Tier 2 Visas will continue to require a job offer. APSCo maintains that there must be a dedicated visa route as part of the future skills-based immigration system, through which highly skilled contractors from overseas can come to the UK and support British businesses. The abolition of the previous cap on numbers under the Tier 1 Exceptional Talent Visas coupled with a new fast-track immigration scheme for top scientists and researchers, however, should help alleviate skills shortages in some of the most talent-short sectors."

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