



APSCo
United Kingdom



OutSource
An APSCo Global company



**Attracting overseas
expertise**



Overview

The UK has long been a destination for talent enabling it to be a global leader in both established and evolving industries and technologies. In a post-Brexit, post-pandemic UK the Government needs to ensure that the country is continuing to attract the workers needed to deliver a highly skilled flexible workforce fit for the future.

As the only recruitment body with an international footprint, with members based in Southeast Asia, Australia and Germany, APSCo has a unique position and insight into international labour markets and how the UK compares.

APSCo is best placed to work with policymakers on ensuring the UK has the right regulation, visa routes and recruitment environment to attract highly skilled talent from across the world and to grow.

The UK negotiating and signing new trade deals presents an excellent opportunity which should be capitalised on to implement short term visa arrangements and expand existing visa programmes with our trading partners, ensuring the UK is accessing the highly skilled global talent needed to mitigate skills shortages.



Supporting the UK's global recruitment industry to drive innovation and growth

International comparisons

Germany

Germany increasingly has the most flexible visa options of the countries in which APSCo operates. Attracting high skilled professionals to work particularly in digital, green jobs and engineering and attracting global skilled talent remains a key priority and there is current legislation to expand access to independent specialists.



Norway

Norway has long been considered by recruiters as a country where employment is the only permissible route to “contract” work. However, Norway now has a skilled worker route for self-employed persons with a company abroad.



Denmark



Denmark introduced legislation in April relaxing criteria to attract the highly skilled. Denmark already recognises the value of migrants based on individual criteria namely; qualifications OR salary OR in demand/shortage skills hence the various visa application models: Fast Track Scheme, Pay Limit Scheme and The Positive List. The Fast Track Scheme even enables applicants to work in Denmark based on a “provisional permission to work” whilst their work permit is approved.

Netherlands



The primary criterion in the Netherlands is that of salary and the current discussion is around reduction of these salary bands to enable greater targeted migration of “knowledge migrants”. These Highly Skilled Migrants are employed by a registered sponsor, but can be “leased” to a hirer, employed by a recruiter or payroll company. The application can be approved in as little as 3-4 weeks for nationals of close trading partners and is valid for up to 5 years.

Australia



Australia does not have a professional self-employed visa but does have a temporary work visa called Subclass 400 Temporary Worker for a maximum of 6 months. Contractors can enter the country with a letter from the client. Australia is well known internationally for the robustness of its immigration system and if a person breaches visa conditions it is unlikely that they would be issued with another visa.

Flexible visas for high skilled international workers

As the country takes steps to upskill and reskill our domestic workers, many of our members are struggling to access the best and brightest candidate talent from abroad to help plug their clients’ skills shortages. This is particularly problematic for short term contractors in competitive growth industries who are desperately needed to work on projects in sectors such as engineering and technology. The UK system is not fit for this purpose and uncompetitive internationally.

“The Netherlands as per the UK’s other main EU competitors is suffering with an ageing population and a lack of a highly skilled domestic workforce meaning the political and economic pressures are growing to facilitate the access to the Dutch market for third-country nationals”

Jon Clarke,
Managing Director 6CATSPRO

The work-related options that are available in the UK typically rely on employer sponsorship, are administratively burdensome, expensive and carry with them extensive compliance obligations. As such, businesses conclude that employer sponsorship is disproportionate, particularly for short term work assignments/arrangements.



Extension of the permitted activities under the standard visitor route and allowing visitors to receive payment from UK sources for activities undertaken in the UK under the visa conditions could boost UK growth, without increasing the risk of illegal migration.

"The current immigration system provides only limited options for self-employed individuals and contractors; post-Brexit this is proving a major problem for UK businesses."

Laura Darnley,
Immigration Partner, Brabners LLP

Securing a high skilled workforce

The Government should ensure that discussions and agreements on trade deals focus on skills, the workforce and the mutual recognition of services and professional qualifications as well as tariffs and goods.

Global highly skilled, mobile, niche workers should be encouraged to work in the UK, building a long-term portfolio career and life here, seeding innovation and diversity throughout the labour market



APSCo recommends:

The Government should continue to invest in a 'highly skilled' workforce by ensuring that accessible, simple to obtain visas for independent non-employed contractors are readily available to support UK businesses in need.

A rescoping of permitted business within scope of the Standard Visitor visa. This could be a flexible, non-sponsored, short term visa route for highly skilled foreign employed and self-employed workers and potentially targeted at shortage occupations.

Last year, the Home Office announced a fast track for skilled worker visa applications for broadband installation workers, this should be expanded to simplify the process for workers across the entire skills shortage list and consideration should be given to allowing registered sponsors to "lease" visa holders to hirers.

About APSCo Global

APSCo Global is an international trade body offering global services with local delivery to the international recruitment sector through our offices in Australia, Germany, throughout Southeast Asia and the UK.

APSCo helps differentiate the professional recruitment market by raising standards and delivering expert support and market intelligence to members of APSCo around the world.

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.

APSCo and OutSource members range from SMEs to the largest global, listed recruiters and outsourcers. Members recruit professionals into permanent and contract roles across STEM, accountancy, legal, finance, marketing and media in addition to highly regulated sectors such as qualified social work, teaching and clinical healthcare.

Contact Details

Contact details For further information or access to APSCo's research please contact Tania Bowers, APSCo's Global Public Policy Director at tania.bowers@apsco.org