



REC report highlights UKWA's labour market concerns

The United Kingdom Warehousing Association (UKWA) has warned that continuing uncertainty over Britain's post-Brexit immigration policy, is leading to a shortage of labour that will have serious ramifications across the logistics industry.

"At a time when the UK is experiencing the lowest youth employment rate since the 1970s and the Government remains committed to a post-Brexit cap on net migration, labour has become a scarce resource, particularly at peak times," says UKWA CEO, Peter Ward.

He continues: "There is growing concern that any deepening of the workforce shortage crisis could mean that, for example, retailers will no longer be able to offer their customers same-day or next-day delivery – particularly in the run-up to peak periods such as Black Friday, Cyber Monday and Christmas.

"Supply chains rely on orders being picked, packed and despatched and without the people to do these tasks, it seems inevitable that some adjustment in stated delivery times will be inevitable for many companies – not just in the online retail space but across all industry sectors."

To relieve some of the pressure felt by supply chains during peak periods, UKWA is urging the Government to allow employers to continue to access temporary and seasonal workers from the EU.

Peter Ward comments: "UKWA has worked closely with the Recruitment & Employment Confederation (REC) on its recently published report, *Short-term labour for long-term growth: EU agency workers post-Brexit*, which has highlighted the problem.

"The REC's study found that 60 per cent of recruiters operating in the warehousing sector recruit at least half the temporary staff they supply from the EU with almost

three in ten (28 per cent) saying Europeans make up three quarters or more of their agency workers.

“UKWA is lobbying the Government to ensure that the UK gets an immigration policy capable of delivering a stable and sustainable workforce to fill the logistics industry roles that are so essential and does not affect seasonal workers so that logistics companies are able to cope with the demands that peak periods place upon them.”

The REC’s *EU agency workers post-Brexit* report highlights that Britain’s dwindling labour pool is having an impact across all industry sectors.

“Companies in the logistics industry are competing with employers in healthcare, construction, hospitality and a host of other sectors for workers,” says Peter Ward. “Therefore UKWA has a vital role to play in helping to promote logistics as a buoyant and fast-moving industry that offers excellent employment prospects.”

“In the current climate it is also increasingly important that logistics companies retain and get the most out of their existing employees at all levels. UKWA offers its members a range of training and education programmes that not only deliver a more skilled and efficient workforce, but, also – our research has shown – build loyalty among the members of staff that participate in them.”

The Recruitment & Employment Confederation’s report, *Short-term labour for long-term growth: EU agency workers post-Brexit*, is available free of charge from UKWA. Visit www.ukwa.org.uk for details.

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