

Care workers should be exempt from ISA charge, say de Poel

Contributed by The Editorial Team
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CARE workers should be exempt from ISA registration charges, according to the UK's number-one procurer of temporary agency labour for care, de Poel.

The cost-saving consultancy, who manages the supply of temporary workers for organisations like Mears and Shaw Healthcare, believe that people should be incentivised to work in the care sector rather than discouraged.

According to de Poel, the care sector is already battling to recruit workers due to a nationwide skills shortage, a tighter points-based immigration system and widespread reluctance among workers to accept permanent placements.

Their comments came after Ed Balls scaled back plans to implement a national registration system to protect children and vulnerable adults at the 11th hour, with reportedly little mention of how this would affect care workers.

Chief Executive of de Poel, Matthew Sanders, said: "It is crucial that the care sector is excluded from paying for registration if we are to cater for the millions of people needing care in the future.

"Otherwise, the care sector, which is already heavily reliant on temporary agency workers to supplement their workforce, is set to become wholly reliant on temporary agency recruitment once the VBS takes effect and starts deterring prospective care workers from applying for jobs.

"And whilst temporary agency labour is great for allowing business flexibility and adaptation to seasonal and market shifts, it can also be dangerous and expensive if not properly managed and regulated, with obvious implications for the quality of care."

He added: "Our clients are lucky in that they only work with audited agencies, and under formal terms and conditions which protect them from legal action and ensure that only quality staff are supplied. They also operate under standardised pay and charge rates to stop agencies from overcharging them."

On top of their suggestions for charging, de Poel argued that the rules for when workers need to be registered should be relaxed for care workers, taking into account the varied and unpredictable nature of care work.

They also noted how whilst there is a lot of focus on how the new laws will affect parents and visitors in schools, there seems to be limited acknowledgment of how the changes will prohibit the provision of adult social care.

"I was disappointed by the lack of reports on how Ed Balls's changes would affect care workers," said Mr Sanders.

"The provision of adult social care in England is an extremely topical issue at the moment in view of the increasing

demand for care homes and an ageing population, and much more needs to be done to cater for this sector.

“This became more and more evident throughout 2009 when we saw a massive increase in the number of care organisations adopting our management solutions.”