



The Association for Contract Manufacturing, Packing, Fulfilment & Logistics

# PRESS RELEASE

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## **GOVERNMENT'S IMMIGRANT WORKERS PLAN SPARKS CONCERNS FOR BCMPA MEMBERS**

The British Contract Manufacturers and Packers Association (BCMPA) is to conduct a survey of its members following concerns over the UK Government's post-Brexit immigration plans.

The recent Home Office proposal, to deny working visas to low-skilled immigrant workers, is intended to encourage employers to stop relying on cheap labour and instead invest in a homegrown workforce and develop automation technology.

But several BCMPA members have raised concerns that the proposed points-based entry system for foreign workers will have a huge knock-on effect in terms of UK productivity. The impact could be particularly acute for seasonal campaigns, such as Christmas gift packing which relies heavily on extra labour from June to November.

Many members have relied heavily upon Eastern European workers for years, but claim the benefits are less about cheap labour and more about the work ethic and high productivity levels of the foreign staff they employ.

The BCMPA, which represents companies operating in contract manufacturing, packing, fulfilment and logistics sectors, is now planning to seek the combined views of its 160-plus members with a view to lobbying Parliament in response to the newly announced policy.

Rodney Steel, chief executive of the BCMPA, said: "The Government's recent announcement has caused major concerns among the BCMPA membership. If the

proposed legislation is implemented, many feel it will have a hugely detrimental impact on their businesses.

“As a result, we now intend to conduct a survey of members in order to obtain real evidence and hard data that can be submitted to the Government.”

Mr Steel said that the issue had nevertheless raised the important issue of robotics and automation within the BCMPA’s representative industry sectors, and so could provide a useful catalyst for members to review their operational systems.

“We intend to voice our members’ concerns at the highest level, and we will be monitoring the progress of this legislation very closely,” he said. “But, meanwhile, we also want to encourage members to continually seek opportunities for improving their processes – including through a greater use of automation where appropriate.”

The BCMPA will be exhibiting at the Contract Pack & Fulfilment show – part of the Packaging Innovations exhibition – at the Birmingham NEC on February 26 and 27.

Its presence there, along with 17 exhibiting BCMPA members, will provide a good opportunity for wider discussion around the Government announcement and the collection of industry views.

Among the points of interest at the show is a Cobot (collaborative robot) feature, on stands L2, L3, L4 & L5, in the Empack section of the show.

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