

APSCo responds to the Prime Minister's "Build Back Better" plan

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The Association of Professional Staffing Companies (APSCo) has welcomed the Prime Minister's announcement today that the Government will invest in future-proofing the UK's skills through more flexible Apprenticeship options, a new Lifetime Skills Guarantee and a 'radical change' to the nation's education and training, but warns the immediate impact may be limited.

Tania Bowers, Legal Counsel and Head of Public Policy at APSCo commented:

"The move to a more flexible training and skills development approach in the UK is something we welcome. We've long called for a relaxation around the Apprenticeship Levy rules to make the scheme more suitable for today's modern world and during lockdown the flaws of the current apprenticeship funding became apparent. Despite millions of people finding themselves out of work looking for new employment opportunities or on furlough, businesses were unable to use their levy pot to fund training. While we wait to review the full details of the new flexible options for Apprenticeship funding, it is our view that these changes need to be made swiftly to support those coming off furlough into potential unemployment."

"For skills short sectors that rely heavily on STEM experts, the Prime Minister's plans to encourage more of the UK's adults to retrain in specialist technical fields certainly looks set to bolster skills in the future. However, as these training courses can take years to complete and the offer won't be available until Spring 2021, the plans don't address the immediate challenge that the country's employers are going to face after the Brexit transition period.

"Come 1st January 2021, employers in sectors that have historically been reliant on hiring flexible resources from across Europe to fill skills gaps – including IT, construction and engineering – will face a real struggle to source these experts. The details published so far on the points-based immigration system provide a disappointing lack of detail around the movement of and access to highly skilled independent professionals across Europe."

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