

# APSCo urges levy paying employers and SMEs to take action during National Apprenticeship Week

Submitted by: BlueSky Public Relations Ltd

Monday, 7 February 2022

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As the UK celebrates National Apprenticeship Week (NAW) 2022, the Association of Professional Staffing Companies (APSCo) has urged levy paying recruitment firms and SME businesses to make sure they're benefitting from the potential apprentices bring to firms.

Tania Bowers, Global Public Policy Director at APSCo and a DfE Apprenticeship Ambassador, commented:

"The theme for this year's NAW - Build the Future - is very apt given that the Government has just issued its Levelling Up White Paper, which includes a focus on developing the skills needed to support growth across the UK. At APSCo we recognise the need to create a dynamic labour force that is fit for the future, and as part of that we need a skills strategy that supports appropriate development of niche attributes in the workforce.

"Having supported APSCo members since the introduction of the Apprenticeship Levy, we've found that it has been a largely underutilised resource. Many bigger recruitment firms have substantial levy pots yet are unable to spend this on upskilling their large payroll of agency workers and independent contracting candidates due to the constraints of the levy.

"For levy payers and SME businesses, it is possible to collaborate to ensure that funds are being distributed to those that need it and we are working with our own membership to help guide larger employers navigate the red tape to be able to work with SMEs to fund their apprenticeship training costs. Larger employers can also support these SMEs with mentoring and training initiatives building long term, sustainable relationships.

"However, we have also called on the Government to broaden the scope of the levy to cover administrative costs and 'bench' salaries to facilitate a commercial, realistic and flexible scheme in which recruitment firms can fund 'flexi-job' apprenticeships. This would enable the professional development of agency workers across placements."

Tania has recorded two webinars for recruitment firms to signpost how levy paying employers and SMEs can benefit from the scheme which are available to watch here

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