

Manifesto response: Lack of focus on water infrastructure and skills 'highly concerning'

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The lack of focus on the issues facing the water industry in the three leading parties' election manifestoes has been criticised by a specialist recruiter operating in the sector.

In response to the manifesto launches, Water by Murray – part of Murray McIntosh - has criticised the leading parties for a lack of focus on boosting the industry and its skills. The water sector has faced a series of challenges linked to poor maintenance of ageing infrastructure and ongoing sewage and pollution issues in recent months.

According to Water by Murray's Water Industry Labour Report – which surveyed nearly 4,000 engineers across the sector - the number one issue facing the industry is skills and recruitment, which was listed by 26% of respondents. This was followed by ageing infrastructure (20%) and hygiene and pollution (16%).

Adam Cave, Founder and Managing Director of Murray McIntosh, outlined the firm's disappointment at the lack of strategic focus on the water industry in the manifesto launches.

"It's no exaggeration that water is one of the truly pivotal industries in the UK, which is why it's incredibly disappointing and highly concerning that none of the leading political parties have focused on the sector in any real detail in their manifestoes. The Conservatives have outlined a vague 'Plan for Water', but that doesn't offer enough support for the sector in light of the current challenges it is facing. Indeed, none of the parties have gone into real detail about how they would help the water industry to prosper. Yes, there are more glamorous and headline-grabbing areas to prioritise, but without a functioning water industry, the country would grind to a halt. A series of issues are plaguing the sector, and the majority of those can be tackled by investing in skills and training, and by retaining the engineers that are keeping the industry running."

"According to our data, seven in ten engineers are considering leaving the sector for nuclear, or oil and gas, and that's in a market already badly impacted by skills shortages. Whatever party wins the election, we really hope that they focus significantly on tackling the issues facing the industry and invest in people, infrastructure and the environment, all of which need a boost".

Press contact

Bruce Callander

07725331476

bruce@bluesky-pr.com