

# Summer Statement – Employment Trade Body responds

Submitted by: BlueSky Public Relations Ltd

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The Government's 'kickstart scheme' aimed at getting 16-24-year olds into training – and the training incentives announced today are welcome but more needs to be done to ensure that the delivery mechanism of both apprenticeships and training is flexible enough to allow businesses such as recruitment firms to be part of the solution. That's the opinion of The Association of Professional Staffing Companies (APSCo), the trade body for the professional recruitment sector.

Responding to Sunak's speech, Tania Bowers, APSCo's Head of Public Policy said:

Recruitment sector can be part of solution

"We are optimistic about the Government's plans – a highly trained and skilled workforce will obviously support the economic recovery but we are concerned that the delivery mechanism may be too rigid to allow recruitment firms to get involved in the delivery and implementation of the scheme. Young people working through recruitment firms would have the ability to work in a variety of different environments and gain multiple skills – our members are tapped into a multitude of employers across a wide variety of sectors and would be in a position to support and facilitate the scheme. We also hope that recruitment firms will be able to access the funding available for training for young people – and that it applies to PAYE employers so that agency workers can be included"

Apprenticeship Levy – more flexibility needed

"We are disappointed the Chancellor has not introduced more flexibility around the Apprenticeship Levy – we believe that the way in which levy funds can be used should be broadened to help re-skilling opportunities and facilitate the 'skills pivot' we will need to get people back to work. Currently the scheme can only be used to upskill employees on formal apprenticeship programmes so agency workers are excluded and the levy can't be used for shorter term training, which would have been so useful during furlough."

Job Retention bonus welcomed

"While we wholeheartedly welcome the Job Retention bonus which will help retain jobs, we were disappointed that the Chancellor chose not to reduce employer costs through an amendment to national insurance contributions – reducing employer costs while also putting more money in people's pockets would have been a welcome intervention at this stage."

Infrastructure spending will drive job growth

"We know from our experience of previous downturns that infrastructure spending drives job growth and so we welcome the investment designed to ensure a 'green recovery'. However, the spending announced is still lower than that announced by Alistair Darling during the financial crisis and the Government must support the recovery by continuing the spending initiatives outlined in the 2020 budget."

Ends