

Employer Commitment to High Level Skills

Higher-level skills are central to the UK's ambition for a productive, high-skill economy. As Skills England's recent forecasts show, demand for higher technical and professional skills will continue to grow sharply over the next decade particularly in sectors critical to the UK's Industrial Strategy. To meet this demand and achieve the government's ambition for two-thirds of the workforce to be participating in higher level learning, employers must have continued access to high-quality, advanced apprenticeships. These programmes not only strengthen productivity and competitiveness but also support regional growth and social mobility.

We, as employers and leaders, recognise that high-level skills are a vital part of the UK's wider skills ecosystem helping people to enter, progress, and thrive in work throughout their careers. We are committed to supporting and protecting opportunities for advanced, work-based learning at Level 6 and above, **based on the following principles.**

- 1. A Ladder of Opportunity:** They provide young people with routes into high-quality careers and enable adults to upskill, retrain, and progress mid-career. We oppose any possible defunding or restriction of Level 6 apprenticeships, which would reduce opportunities for learners and limit employers' ability to meet business and skills needs.
- 2. A System that Works for All Ages and All Stages:** Evidence shows higher-level skills deliver for learners at all stages of their careers, creating real opportunities for advancement, reskilling, and social mobility. Flexibilities alone cannot replace these essential pathways.
- 3. Driving Productivity and Growth:** These programmes deliver measurable benefits for employers, sectors, and the wider economy. We urge government to accelerate approval of key standards, including those in key sectors like engineering, manufacturing, health, and for core cross-cutting skills like leadership, management and business administration, to ensure the system keeps pace with business needs and supports productivity growth.
- 4. Promoting Inclusion and Equity:** High-level apprenticeships are open to all, ensuring talent—not background—determines success, and supporting social mobility as well as business performance.
- 5. Building a Coherent Skills System:** High-level skills must be a core part of an all-age, all-stage skills system, supporting growth, innovation, and opportunity across the UK and not treated as an optional extra.

Signed by:

Bentley
BMet College
Boots UK
Bristow Helicopters/UKSAR
City St Georges, University of London
Confederation of British Industry (CBI)
Chartered Association of Business Schools (CABS)
Chartered Management Institute (CMI)
Coventry University Group
Henley Business School
Metro Bank
Manchester Metropolitan University
National Gas
Newcastle University
Oxford Brookes University
Pertemps
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The Safran Group
Turning Point
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University Vocational Awards Council (UVAC)
UWE Bristol