

Apprentices need to see industry's 'best side'

2 years ago



[The Building Engineering Services Association \(BESA\)](#) is marking [National Apprenticeship Week 2023](#) (NAW2023) by encouraging employers to pledge to take on at least one new apprentice this year and promote the exciting career opportunities available in the industry.

The theme of NAW2023 is 'skills for life' and events during the week will celebrate the benefits that apprenticeships present and give everyone involved in apprenticeships a chance to raise awareness, understanding and excitement around the opportunities on offer.

BESA believes apprenticeships are the best way to equip the building engineering workforce with the modern skills needed to be "fit for the future" and meet growing demand in areas such as indoor air quality, decarbonisation of heating, and renewables.

The industry must urgently address problems created by its rapidly ageing workforce with a high proportion of employees already over 60 and nearing retirement plus a sharp drop in the number of workers under 30.

[BESA's 'Future Skills' pledge](#) is a way for building services employers to show their commitment to bringing new talent into the sector, grow the skills of existing workers through apprenticeships and make sure they have a workforce that can meet future challenges.

"We urgently need to replace lost skills and start to rebuild the thinning ranks of the youngest and brightest in our industry - and the best and most business-friendly way to do that is by taking on apprentices," said BESA's director of training and skills Helen Yeulet.

Valuable

“Starting the process early by investing in emerging talent is the best way to ensure you have the right balance of skills to meet future challenges,” she added. “This works well for the apprentice, who is gaining valuable experience and earning while they learn, and for the employer who is training up someone who can quickly contribute to the financial growth of the business.”

BESA is also hosting a series of employer focused [webinars](#) during NAW2023 exploring the importance of apprenticeships and designed to help employers develop a workforce that is fit for the future.

The webinars will explain and simplify the apprenticeship process for employers, demystify funding, outline costs to consider and the return on investment they can expect. It will also be an opportunity to hear from other building services employers, who will share their experience and offer advice.

“Our industry has a wide range of really exciting opportunities due to its central role in addressing climate change, helping people reduce their energy costs and making buildings safer and healthier, but we often struggle to get that message over to a wide enough audience,” said Yeulet.

“NAW2023 is an opportunity for us to present our best and most exciting side to the wider world – and by taking our Future Skills Pledge, employers can demonstrate their commitment to bringing new skills into our industry and offering great career opportunities.

“With the breadth of qualifications on offer, this is also a really good way to upskill existing employees. It is important to point out that apprenticeships should not be thought of as solely reserved for new entrants or those of school leaving age,” she added.

Recent government research found that 86% of employers who took on at least one apprentice believe it helped them develop the skills most relevant to their organisation. 78% said their apprentices helped them improve productivity, and 74% stated they had improved the quality of their product or service.

Apprenticeships last between one and six years depending on the type, level, and previous experience of the candidate. BESA will help employers access the funding available from the government for apprenticeships at all levels from school leavers and university graduates to more experienced workers who want to further their careers or change career direction completely.

The [BESA ‘Future Skills’ pledge](#) does not require the pledger to commit to taking on an apprentice immediately but will help the Association and its college partners identify and prepare the training resources needed to meet demand.

Once the pledge has been made, BESA will contact the employer to get a better understanding of their requirements and provide advice about possible training providers, funding, and access to suitable candidates. The pledger can also access the Association’s Skills Advisory Service for a wide range of support and advice.

For more information visit: www.theBESA.com/future-skills

To sign up for one of the employers’ apprenticeship webinars go to: www.thebesa.com/besa-webinars/