Industry survey highlights persistent skills gap

2 years ago

The latest quarterly Building Engineering Business Survey, carried out by ECA in partnership with BESA, SELECT and SNIPEF, has revealed that electrotechnical and engineering services businesses struggle to find suitably qualified candidates to fill vacancies in their organisations.

Of the 125 businesses surveyed, almost half (46%) are currently looking to fill vacancies in their organisations. Of those respondents, half (47%) said that candidate pay expectations are too high, and 46% said applicants consistently lack sufficient knowledge or skills for the job.

One respondent commented, "Potential electrical apprentices are encouraged to stay on at school. Youngsters coming into the industry struggle to cope with the academics of the electrical courses, and consequently leave."

Another said, "One of the biggest problems is that applicants are not as skilled as they think they are. In some cases, they are nowhere near where they should be."

Considering these findings, ECA has welcomed recent comments from Education Secretary Bridget Phillipson MP encouraging more young people to consider apprenticeships as a viable alternative to university.

ECA Chief Operating Officer Andrew Eldred said:

"ECA welcomes the Education Secretary's ambition to see more young people qualify as electricians.

"For her statements to have any sort of impact, her government must work closely with industry leaders,

educators and business owners – to listen to electricians themselves about what to do to make this happen."

Earlier this month, ECA launched the [Electrical Skills Index](#), which illustrates the national shortage of electricians in England.

Andrew Eldred added, "Of the parts of England where electrical apprentice starts are too low, the vast majority are now represented by Labour MPs. Key Labour Government missions such as new housing and net zero will not succeed without taking steps to address these shortfalls at both national and local levels."