

5th October 2021

Rt Hon Nadhim Zahawi MP  
Secretary of State  
Department for Education  
Sanctuary Buildings  
20 Great Smith Street  
London  
SW1P 3BT

Dear Secretary of State,

Ahead of the Spending Review this autumn, the REC would like to raise the current imbalance in National Skills Fund-supported opportunities with you. As representatives of the UK's recruitment firms, we believe more support should be made available for training at Level 2 and below as part of this review process. This will enable more people to build their careers and boost their incomes at a time when our recovery means focus should turn to the longer-term unemployed and those who lack the skills needed to get into higher-paying jobs.

Existing quality training platforms, such as apprenticeships, cannot cover off all of the sorts of training needed to support those looking to progress in work. As it stands, supported training opportunities in England are overwhelmingly aimed at Level 3 qualifications or higher. Whilst these schemes have significant benefits, they do little to allay the current skills shortages in the UK labour market.

REC members operating across multiple sectors have made it clear that the vast majority of skills shortages currently affecting the economy are for jobs requiring Level 1 and 2 skills. The relative lack of training opportunities at these levels mean unskilled workers are unable to progress their careers in the same way that individuals with some training already completed can.

Our members appreciate the steps already taken to address urgent skills crises. For example, the introduction of the HGV skills bootcamps to address the driver shortage. This is something that we look forward to working with the Department on, to ensure the workers trained by this scheme are able to find work as efficiently as possible. Many other sectors would benefit from a similar approach. The skills bootcamps model is one that could be successfully replicated to provide training for skills at Level 1 and 2. The short-term nature of the bootcamps model would also allow workers on flexible or temporary contracts to benefit from training that would otherwise not be accessible to them.

The REC and the recruitment industry has a role to play in addressing labour shortages. We are always available to discuss training proposals with your team and to provide industry insight and expertise into the skills programme.

Yours Sincerely,



Neil Carberry  
Chief Executive