



Nuclear Skills Strategy Group
c/o Cogent Skills
5 Mandarin Court, Centre Park
Warrington

Rt Hon Anne Milton MP
Minister of State for Skills and Apprenticeships
Department for Education
Sanctuary Buildings, Great Smith Street
LONDON
SW1P 3BT

2nd July 2019

Dear Minister,

Apprenticeships at higher levels – Augar Report

Employers in the nuclear sector have read with concern the proposal in the Augar Report (*The Independent Panel report on the Review of Post-18 Education and Funding, May 2019*), to restrict the availability of Apprenticeship Levy funding at Level 6 and above for individuals who already hold a degree. We feel that, if adopted, this proposal would affect our sector's ability to address critical skills needs.

Our sector has a considerable requirement for skilled people at high levels within the workforce. Given historical recruitment patterns and an ageing workforce, we are facing skills shortages in some critical occupations at these levels. Our sector has a strong history of recruiting apprentices in a wide range of roles, and former apprentices can be found throughout the sector, up to the highest technical and management levels.

We are taking strategic, long-term action to address these needs through the Nuclear Skills Strategy Group, and are pleased that the government recognised last year the sector's strategic importance by launching the Nuclear Sector Deal. As it states:

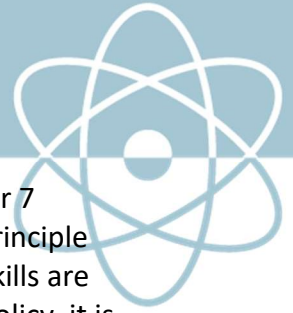
"[The nuclear sector's] economic footprint provides tens of thousands of highly skilled jobs, ... driving growth in diverse regions across the UK and there is potential for further growth in other regions, ... helping develop a workforce which combines experience, skills and technology."

The people in these highly skilled jobs contribute low-carbon energy to the nation, help to maintain our nuclear deterrent, manage our nuclear legacy and undertake world-class cutting-edge research and development.

We have already developed an Apprenticeship Standard for our sector at Level 6, and developments are underway at Levels 7 and 8, including the Nuclear Technical Specialist at Level 8 that was outlined in the Nuclear Sector Deal. We also use Standards at these levels that have been developed in conjunction with other sectors. We welcome the fact that the Government's apprenticeship reforms over the past few years allow the flexibility to

Supported by

Cogent skills
for science industries



apply the apprenticeship approach at all levels. While the content of a Level 6 or 7 apprenticeship is clearly different from that at Level 3 or 4, we know that the principle remains the same, and the work-based learning route is vital to ensuring that skills are relevant to the workplace. We believe that, when considering apprenticeship policy, it is vital to concentrate on the skills needs of the workplace, rather than the qualification history of the individual.

For these reasons, we urge the Government to ensure that any policy decisions do not restrict our ability to use our Apprenticeship Levy contributions to meet our sector's skills needs at these higher levels, while addressing the objectives of our Sector Deal and the Industrial Strategy for the UK.

Yours faithfully,

Dr Fiona Rayment OBE, CChem, FRSC, FNucl
Chair, Nuclear Skills Strategy Group

*cc Andrew Stephenson MP
Minister for Business and Industry, BEIS*

