

Five Key Asks of the New Government from APS

General Election - Thursday 4 July 2024



APS was founded in 1995 and is the UK's leading membership body for professionals working in design and construction health and safety risk management. For some years now, we have had a regular and ongoing programme of events and interaction with Westminster (MPs and Peers), the Scottish Parliament (MSPs), the Welsh Parliament (MSs) and, in development this Autumn, the Northern Ireland Assembly (MLAs).

Although our 'key asks' are neither especially new or innovative, the fact they remain our primary messages for the 650 new Westminster parliamentarians to be elected on 4 July signals just how important each is. Quite literally, they are essential life savers, and we look forward to working with MPs – and peers – after 4 July to ensure our key messages continue to get delivered.

In summary, they are:

1. Training and Skills Development

- **Issue:** There is a significant shortage of skilled workers to meet the housing targets set in all the main party manifestoes, but especially in the Tory or Labour ones, both now launched. More info [here](#).
- **Solution:** Invest in comprehensive training programmes and real, meaningful apprenticeships to build a skilled workforce capable of *safely* constructing the planned 1.5+ million homes likely to be needed over the next five years.
- **Our Ask:** Immediate allocation of funds and resources to training centres and educational institutions - with enforceable output targets.

2. Planned and Selective Immigration (Short Term)

- **Issue:** Our members tell us that the current domestic workforce is insufficient to meet critical housing targets in the short term.
- **Solution:** Implement a planned and selective immigration policy to attract skilled workers from abroad, similar to the Australian model. This would be a short-term tactic for five years.
- **Our Ask:** Fast-track visa processes for skilled immigrants with proven experience and identifiable, 'provable' skills in the construction sector.

3. Long-Term Construction Workforce Development

- **Issue:** Many UK college/university training programmes are simply insufficient to meet the demand for skilled workers.
- **Solution:** Enhance and expand apprenticeship programmes to ensure a steady pipeline of skilled workers for future projects.
- **Our Ask:** Partner with industry leaders and educational institutions to design and implement effective programmes relevant to modern methods of construction and developing technologies.

4. Environmental Protection in Planning

- **Issue:** Proposed fast-track planning on brownfield sites and abandonment of nutrient neutrality pose environmental risks.
- **Solution:** Ensure all planning and construction projects adhere to strict environmental protection standards to prevent uncontrolled pollutants in sensitive environments.
- **Our Ask:** Implement rigorous environmental impact assessments for all new construction projects. Some pioneering local authorities are showing this can be done; think how much more with government backing.

5. Retrofitting Existing Buildings

- **Issue:** The focus on new builds overlooks the potential of retrofitting existing structures to meet modern housing needs and environmental goals.
- **Solution:** Develop a robust and realistic retrofit programme to improve existing buildings' energy efficiency and safety
- **Our Ask:** Allocate funding and incentivise homeowners and businesses to retrofit their properties.

Summary: APS urges the next UK Government to prioritise the development of a skilled workforce through improved domestic training programmes and selective immigration (visa) incentives. It is crucial to balance the push for new housing with environmental protections and retrofitting initiatives to ensure sustainable growth.

For further details, please contact APS's Government Affairs adviser, DEVIN SCOBIE, on 07900 397 872. We guarantee a return call from an informed, potentially local to your area, APS member within 24 hours.

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