

Ashley Fox MP
Anna Sabine MP
Sarah Dyke MP
Gideon Amos MP
Rachel Gilmour MP
Tessa Munt MP
Adam Dance MP
House of Commons
London
SW1A 0AA



Dear Somerset Members of Parliament,

Re: Urgent Concerns Regarding Proposed Cuts to Skills Bootcamp Funding and the Impact on Somerset's Nuclear Workforce Pipeline

I am writing on behalf of the Nuclear South West (NSW) workforce ecosystem and the wider Somerset nuclear supply chain to express deep concern regarding the Department for Work and Pensions' proposed reduction in Skills Bootcamp funding. I respectfully request your support in urging Government to reconsider this decision, which poses a significant risk to Somerset's ability to meet current and future nuclear skills demands.

Skills Bootcamps have become a critical component of Somerset's workforce strategy, particularly through the High Skill Opportunities (HSO) programme. This programme has enabled adults across the region to retrain into highly skilled, well-paid roles on HPC, while also supporting the structured demobilisation of Somerset's home-based civils workforce, including formwork carpenters, steel fixers and groundworkers, into new Mechanical, Electrical and HVAC (MEH) roles. This approach has kept the local workforce local, reduced reliance on imported labour, and ensured that Somerset residents benefit directly from the opportunities created by the UK's largest low-carbon infrastructure project.

The proposed 68% reduction in Skills Bootcamp funding will severely constrain this progress. The HSO programme alone has demonstrated exceptional outcomes, with high progression rates into sustained employment and strong employer endorsement. Yet under the new budget-led allocation model, Somerset's ability to continue delivering these results will be significantly diminished.

This reduction comes at a time when Somerset's nuclear and advanced manufacturing landscape is expanding rapidly. Alongside HPC, the region is preparing for the workforce requirements of the Agratas gigafactory, major Defence programmes, and other high-value engineering projects. The Skills Bootcamp model has been one of the few agile, employer-responsive mechanisms capable of preparing local residents for these opportunities at pace.

The consequences of the proposed cuts are clear:

- A reduced pipeline of skilled workers for HPC and other nationally significant projects
- Fewer opportunities for Somerset residents to retrain into high-value technical roles
- Increased pressure on employers already facing acute skills shortages
- A weakening of Somerset's ability to retain and transition its civils workforce into MEH and other specialist roles
- A missed opportunity to build long-term regional capability in nuclear, engineering and advanced manufacturing

Somerset has consistently demonstrated that when investment is made available, we deliver. The HSO programme, and the wider Skills Bootcamp offer, have shown that targeted, employer-driven training can transform lives, strengthen local supply chains and support the UK's strategic energy and industrial ambitions.

For these reasons, I respectfully ask that Somerset's MPs work collectively to:

- Raise this issue urgently with Ministers in the Department for Work and Pensions, the Department for Energy Security and Net Zero, and the Department for Education
- Press for a review of the funding methodology to ensure allocations reflect **current and future labour market need**, not historic spend
- Advocate for a funding settlement that recognises Somerset's role in delivering the UK's nuclear capability and wider industrial strategy

I would welcome the opportunity to brief you further on the specific impacts of these proposed cuts on the nuclear workforce pipeline, and to facilitate discussions with employers and training providers who rely on this funding to meet Somerset's skills needs.

Thank you for your continued commitment to supporting Somerset's economic future. I look forward to working with you to ensure that the region's residents and employers can continue to benefit from high-quality, responsive skills provision.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Jay Bart', with a stylized flourish extending from the end.

Jay Bart
Chair
Nuclear South West