

# How can Manufacturers make the best of the new apprentice environment?

Despite the disappointing start, it is essential that companies do not see the Apprenticeship Levy as just another tax, but instead make the most of the new Levy funding and put in place a well-planned apprenticeship programme. Those companies that take this opportunity to identify and address skills gaps and those that plan for future skills needs will be in the best possible position to respond to changing market conditions.

Take the opportunity to review your current and future skills requirements, identify gaps, and plan the best way to prepare your workforce for tomorrow's challenges.

Undertake an audit to identify training requirements within your organisation, the Levy can be used to enhance the skillsets of your existing workforce. There may also be opportunities for you to convert existing training programmes into apprenticeships. Your Apprenticeship Fund should be available for this or you can have 90% of the training costs paid from the fund if you are not a Levy payer.

Develop an attraction strategy that will attract skilled workers as well as potential apprentices. It is important that organisations understand what motivates and appeals to their ideal candidates, and tailor their attraction strategy accordingly.

## What is FIESTA doing to support this?

FIESTA in partnership with the Apprentice Management Group has set up **Furniture and Interiors Skills Plus** an approved Apprentice Training

Agency (ATA) for the furniture and interiors sector (<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/apprenticeship-training-agencies>). ATA's can recruit, employ, access funding and arrange training for apprentices on behalf of employers and are designed and regulated to support both large and small members who wish to take advantage of the many benefits of the new training environment.

See [www.fiestalearning.com/furniture-interiors-skills-plus](http://www.fiestalearning.com/furniture-interiors-skills-plus) to see how **Skills Plus** could work with you both in developing apprenticeships and upskilling your workforce.

## Our Furniture Apprenticeships

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