**Ornamental Horticulture Roundtable Group**

**Review of Education and Employment Working Group Activity – January 2023**

1. Seasonal Workers

We welcome the Government announcement of 45,000 permits (plus an optional 10,00 available) being allocated to the commercial horticulture industry in 2023.

It is our objective to:

* Have the SWS scheme operate on a rolling five year basis to give greater certainty of labour availability with the sector.
* Ensure pay on the SWS is aligned with the NLW.
* Extend the permit to 9 months.
* Improve access to Young People seeking short term employment in all ornamental sectors by expanding the Youth Mobility Scheme.

1. Recruitment

Many horticultural enterprises operate in areas of low unemployment and a shortage of people available for work.

It is our objective to:

* Use all available platforms to advertise job vacancies.
* Work with DWP to optimise the relationship between our employers and Job Centre Plus.
* Have horticultural professions included on the Shortage Occupation List through engaging with the Migration Advisory Committee.
* Work with Government on schemes to remove logistical factors preventing the unemployed from entering the sector.
* Ensure as many occupations in the sector as possible are identified as ‘green jobs’ and are coded appropriately by the ONS.

1. Apprenticeships

The landscape and garden enterprises are leaders within land-based sectors with respect to the adoption of Apprenticeships. There has also been significant growth in the number of ornamental plant nurseries using apprenticeship schemes.

It is our objective to:

* Promote apprenticeships as a route to a career in the industry.
* Promote the apprenticeship brand for career progression and to address business skills needs.
* Ensure access to apprenticeship training and assessment and excellence within the apprenticeship training supply base.
* Ensure relevant Trailblazer Groups are appropriately resourced with expertise in the Ornamental Horticulture sector. There is a current concern with respect to the Trailblazer Group covering the Crop Technician standard that was previously under the auspices of the AHDB.
* Encourage the development and delivery of relevant higher level and Degree Apprenticeships.
* Work together to influence apprenticeship policy and funding to ensure that it meets the needs of the ornamental horticulture sector.

1. T – Levels

Members of the OHRG have actively engaged in the development of a land-based industries T-Level.

It is our objective to:

* Ensure that the Land-based T-Level program contains an appropriate level of content relating to Ornamental Horticulture.
* Ensure appropriate consideration is given by colleges and employers to the practicalities of offering work placements in the sector.

1. Professional Skills Development

Ornamental Horticulture currently remains outside the scope of TIAH (The Institute of Agriculture and Horticulture) – except for a limited number of nursery operations. This is just one aspect of a funding environment that adversely impacts upon the development of professional skills and standards within the sector.

It is our objective to:

* Support an audit of the training provision across the sector to assess gaps against skills needs, and implement subsequent recommended action to ensure there is appropriate, funded skills provision, drive improvements, and look for opportunities to further develop training.
* Have a collaborative relationship TIAH, based on a stakeholding that receives a similar level of Government support.
* Ensure that the sector is not consistently overlooked in skills funding programs – noting that the current trend towards Local Skills Improvement Plans (LSIPs) tends to favour the most important sectors within regions – whereas sectors like Ornamental Horticulture are more easily identified as nationally important.

1. Careers Promotion

We need to develop our presence in the more generic campaigns that will signpost candidates towards our industry. Once interested, we have some good initiatives to give a more specialist insight (such as BALI’s GoLandscape), but more resources are needed.

It is our objective to:

* Work more closely with the National Careers Service and provide more resources and training opportunities to careers advisers to ensure they market the sector more effectively.
* Develop funding opportunities to improve the careers promotion resources that support the sector.
* Work on new programmes to improve diversity and inclusion within the horticultural sector, from engagement activities to experiences and information.

1. School Curriculum

The RHS’s Campaign for School Gardening has achieved some notable success, but there are some unfulfilled opportunities for horticulture to play a bigger part in the school curriculum and thereby inspire the next generation to explore its exciting career opportunities.

It is our objective to:

* Develop communications with DfE (including Ministers) on expanding the horticultural content of the National Curriculum.
* Establish Horticulture as a first choice mechanism of developing the STEM curriculum.

**Current Education and Employment Working Group Membership**

Martin Emmett (NFU Board for Horticulture and Potatoes/Tristram Plants) – Chair

Suzanne Moss (RHS) – Vice Chair

Ros Burnley (Adrow)

Anne Clark (HTA)

Wayne Grills (BALI)

Tess Howe (TIAH)

Christine McDowell (NFU)

Chris Moncrieff (RHS)

John Parker (Aboricultural Association)

Alex Payne (Landex)

Tom Price (NFU)

Helen Sessions (CIOH)

Defra and DWP Colleagues – by invitation