

### PRESS RELEASE

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#### **Mining skills shortage threatens local economy**

The head of one of Britain's biggest mining operations is backing a call to step up the training of suitably skilled graduates to meet the needs of the industry.

Andrew Fulton, General Manager of the ICL Boulby polyhalite mine in East Cleveland, has welcomed a report from the UK Mining Education Forum (UKMEF), which stresses that mining remains essential for the UK economy, producing materials for everything from food, power and heat to transport and electronics.

Mr Fulton, who is President of the Mining Association of the UK, says that there is an urgent need, highlighted in the UKMEF report (see attached), to develop new education schemes to recruit mining and minerals processing graduates with informative programmes directed at school students and staff.

He explains "Whilst Boulby is one of the UK's biggest mining operations, it is not widely understood that there are many hundreds of mines in all parts of the country, from Cornwall to Scotland, providing a huge range of materials crucial to the economy.

"In the case of Boulby, for example, we are the world's first and only producer of the mineral polyhalite (marketed as 'Polysulphate') which provides fertiliser products for farmers and growers across five continents.

"Developing such a ground-breaking operation involves a huge range of technologies and skills, which is why we strongly support the UKMEF's work and its plans to expand education programmes to attract the highly skilled workforce needed for our company and the sector as a whole.

"The challenge is substantial – the Forum report suggests that the UK needs to recruit over 60 new mining and minerals processing graduates every year, yet none have enrolled in undergraduate programmes since 2019.

"UKMEF can play a vital role in working with education stakeholders to develop and promote the range of courses which can ensure mining remains at the forefront of making an essential contribution to the economy, and provide rewarding opportunities and careers for young people."

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