



Cross-industry
Construction
Apprenticeship
Task Force™



Apprenticeship Vision 2021-22

“Construction was one of the best performing sectors before the coronavirus outbreak hit, and is key to our economic recovery. Large-scale construction projects like HS2, our extension of the West Midlands Metro, and the new Midland Metropolitan University Hospital, alongside our multi-million-pound investment to remediate derelict brownfield land across the region to build new homes and businesses, will help us to reignite the sector quickly.

“These projects are creating thousands of jobs, but local people need to have the right skills to benefit. This is why it’s so important that residents are able to retrain through apprenticeships, gaining the knowledge and confidence to secure jobs in the sector.

“We are committed to increasing the number of apprenticeships in the West Midlands, and are doing this through our Apprenticeship Levy Transfer Fund. This scheme enables large employers to pledge their unspent levy to fund the training of apprentices at small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) in the West Midlands – boosting our region’s economic recovery.



Andy Street,
Mayor of the West Midlands

“Over £21m has been pledged and to date, 2,023 apprentices at 684 SMEs have benefited from the fund over the past two years.”

Contents

Foreward from Minister for Apprenticeships and Skills	02
RT. Hon. Gillian Keegan MP	
Leveraging Apprenticeships to address skills gaps in the construction sector	04
Martyn Price MBE, Chairman CCATF	
Rhetoric versus reality – A personal journey into the world of apprenticeships	06
Alison Watson MBE, Chief Executive, Class of Your Own	
Innovative training solutions to address industry skills shortages	08
Martyn Price MBE, Workforce Development Director, OHOB	
Flannery Plant Hire – Operator Skills Hub	12
Paul Skitt, Skills Development Director, Flannery Plant Hire	
Apprenticeship challenges post Brexit and COVID	14
Graham Hasting-Evans, Chief Executive, NOCN Group	
‘Levelling up’ for all	18
Ciara Pryce, Chief Operating Officer, VGC Group	
The business case for addressing the gender imbalance in construction	22
Kath Moore MBE, Managing Director, Women Into Construction	

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FOREWORD FROM MINISTER FOR APPRENTICESHIPS AND SKILLS

“The construction sector is at the centre of the biggest challenges we face today. Employers in this sector, as in many others, are now beginning to think about the skills they need for their recovery from the impact of the pandemic, and I want as many of them as possible to recruit apprentices. Where there are big challenges, apprenticeships are vital – in transforming infrastructure that is crucial for growth, in making a reality of emerging technologies and in building back greener as well as better. Apprentices are currently working on all these challenges.”

Throughout the pandemic, employers have continued to recognise the value that apprentices bring to their businesses. Construction sector employers have continued to support apprentices while keeping the country running, maintaining utilities and the built environment and, of course, building hospitals. The sector deserves huge credit for its role during these times which have meant severe disruption for everyone's lives.

Nevertheless, construction apprenticeships starts have been falling off. We are working with industry leaders to regrow them and have held extensive dialogues with employers, training providers and stakeholders in the construction sector. One way that we are doing this is through the

Construction Skills Delivery Group which I set up last year with the Minister for Business and Industry. This brings together government departments and industry leaders to improve progression routes into the sector, and develop opportunities for workers of all ages and all career stages the opportunity to upskill and reskill.

Crucially, we want to understand better the challenges to apprenticeships recovery from their point of view. This is resulting in more informed flexibilities that meet employer needs, plans for tailored communications and engagement, and the co-ownership of developing plans for apprenticeships recovery and growth to address skills gaps and shortages.

We aim to support small firms further by making it easier for levy paying firms to transfer funds to them to recruit apprentices. Businesses, and the CCATF, are telling us that they want us to make this process easier and quicker, and we are responding to their asks. From August 2021 we will be launching a new online service where employers can pledge and match levy transfer payments, to help employers get full value from levy funds. The online service will make it quicker and simpler for employers to transfer funds to other employers that share their business priorities - reducing skills gaps within their sector or location.

As construction businesses shift their sights to the skill needs of the future, we want to make sure that employers of all sizes feel empowered to tailor apprenticeship training to meet their needs and respond to fast-changing nature of the labour market. Together with industry we have developed a manual to explain and promote flexible training models.

There are many more signs now that different sectors in our economy have experienced the pandemic, and lockdown, very differently. We are encouraging employers to think critically about how they can tailor training to meet their needs, including greater use of 'front-loaded' training models. These embed core knowledge and skills and help apprentices to hit the ground running from day one in the workplace. We know that this model is already used in the construction sector and that it works well. There is now scope to grow the model and scale up its use across the sector.

Employers in the sector have told us that one of the key barriers to employing apprentices is the varied and flexible employment patterns, for instance where project-based employment is the norm. We are developing a portable apprenticeship offer to enable apprentices to work across different employers as they complete the training requirement for their apprenticeship. We will continue our work with the sector and make more announcements over the next 12 months.

As Martyn's commentary shows, individuals come to an apprenticeship from many different routes. We are working to reflect that and are improving the recognition of prior learning to ensure that moving on from other key skills offers is a seamless process. Accelerated apprenticeships will allow apprentices to build on their relevant skills and experience to complete their training more quickly. We want to make sure that people do not have to repeat learning when they progress from Skills Bootcamps, occupational construction traineeships, and - in 2022 - from T Levels. This will help people of all ages and backgrounds to start their careers in the sector with a pathway that supports them in a modern industry.

One pathway I want to mention and that I hope CCATF members will welcome is provided by traineeships. The bespoke construction traineeships, such as the one in bricklaying that we are developing, will provide stronger technical content and offer a clear route to employment and accelerated apprenticeships. They will be opened up to young people up to and including those with a level 3 qualification and there will be increased duration to help those who need additional support. Our aim is to treble the number of traineeship starts in construction during 2021/22.

Construction is one of the key areas for growth which means it is also a key area for green recovery. As Co-Chair of the Green Jobs Taskforce, I am passionate that apprenticeships

should make a big impact in ensuring that we have the skilled workforce necessary to deliver a net zero economy. With this, ensuring a diverse pipeline of talent will be vital.

There are currently over 800 apprenticeship standards - designed by employers and for employers - which cover traditional as well as new roles in renewable and green sectors, and many of these can be used in sustainable construction. More are being developed all the time and with help from the recently formed Green Apprenticeship Advisory Panel (GAAP), we will ensure green apprenticeships are aligned to the needs of employers in green industries such as construction.

This vision document could not have come at a better time as we look to renew apprenticeships, level up and build back greener and better. Martyn's commentary about attracting people from a wider pool of talent is a direction I very much share, and I look forward to hearing from him on how the sector is achieving these transformational ambitions.



Rt. Hon Gillian Keegan MP,
Minister for Apprenticeships
and Skills

LEVERAGING APPRENTICESHIPS TO ADDRESS SKILLS GAPS IN THE CONSTRUCTION SECTOR

“The evidence is all too clear, there is and has been for the longest time, a lack of skilled workers entering the construction sector. This reality has of course been made exponentially worse with the twin challenges of Brexit, followed closely by the global Covid-19 pandemic.”

During these difficult times the core, collective effort, should focus on the provision of work ready programmes, apprenticeships, learning initiatives, training and other structured routes into the industry that provide as many entry and developmental opportunities as possible for our young people and career changers.

It is also vital we attract talent from a wider pool of people than our traditional recruitment and we make it easier for them to enter the construction industry, particularly those from other sectors who want to take advantage of the existing skills opportunities and may have otherwise been displaced.

What can we offer our aspirational learners today and how might we address the chronic shortages that certain industry sectors, not least construction face?

As with all such sector endeavours there needs to be an amalgam of programmes, schemes and undertakings that come together to make a portfolio of opportunities available to match the largest and widest possible group of learner needs.

How do we support an ambition to enhance skills levels, entice new entrants into the sector and begin the process of closing the long existing shortage of skill within it?

The government has introduced several initiatives and schemes that are targeted to support businesses. The furlough scheme has underpinned many organisations, allowing them to maintain workforce capabilities. There have also been other incentives offered around skills, in particular the redundancy support for apprentices and the financial incentives for hiring an apprentice, initiatives which we at the CCATF wholly support.

Pre-employment and work-ready programmes are of the utmost importance to engage with predominantly young people who to date have been unable to enter the job market. The Kickstart Scheme provides funding to create new jobs for 16-24-year-olds on Universal Credit who are at risk of long-term unemployment.

However, we believe there is still more we can do to engage those young people who are on either study programmes or who have already undertaken some construction skills training programme and demonstrated a commitment to the sector and migrate them into the sector and on to a construction apprenticeship.

Our CCATF Pathway to Construction (PTC) model of up to £1000 for 5 weeks work experience leading to an apprenticeship start still resonates with employers, and fits well within the wider government support. The PTC initiative is aligned to a local further education college or private training provider. The format has included an event where employers visit the training provider's premises and learn more about the benefits of hiring an apprentice. The intention is to use the 5 weeks work experience to showcase the capabilities of the students to the employers, with the ambition to convert the 'learners' on to an apprenticeship programme. We have often targeted substantially new employers or those that do not train apprentices on a regular basis and we are seeking to increase our fund raising activities to further develop this programme.

More recently other programmes that have been announced by the government include Flexible Apprenticeships, Sector Based Work Academies and the Skills Accelerator programme. If successful these

programmes over time may indeed have an impact on the skills landscape within the construction sector and these interventions are therefore to be commended.

With the sector based work academy provision focusing on short 6 weeks courses, it is clear to see that access to these 'gateway' style methods matches the current skills imperative of 'quick start-easy access' learning.

It would also appear that, when looking at the flexible apprenticeship scheme, the government has identified and is attempting to address the challenges of learning within the very peripatetic construction sector, an environment that frequently sees apprentices not able to complete the mandated 12-month (minimum) apprenticeship process with one employer or on one project. The new approach under the title "flexible apprenticeships" would enable an apprentice to work across a range of projects and with different employers to gain the full skills and experience they require to successfully complete their programme.

The under-pinning structure of these programmes appear, on the surface at least, to be making an honest attempt at achieving something proactive and easy to access for both learners and employers. Clearly only time will tell, the flexible apprenticeship programme is in the pilot stage with formal starts being set for January 2022, giving us a few months to wait and see what the outcome is.

It is however abundantly clear that the participation of employers has been kept at the very heart of all of these interventions, this is something that obviously we welcome and seek to both support and where possible facilitate. As without the engagement and buy in of employers these schemes will not provide the desired results the industry and in particular our young people need and deserve.

The CCATF welcomes the introduction of these programmes and schemes and hopes their roll out and impact on the sector will be positive. We support any positive engagement and collaboration with our membership base and stakeholder bodies to help leverage these initiatives on to apprenticeships programmes as a means of addressing the skills gaps in the construction sector.



Martyn Price MBE,
Chairman, CCATF



RHETORIC VERSUS REALITY – A PERSONAL JOURNEY INTO THE WORLD OF APPRENTICESHIPS

“I come from an ordinary, working-class family and attended Myers Grove School, a very large comprehensive school in the outskirts of Sheffield. My father, who sadly passed away when I was 13 years old, was a stone mason. My stepfather was a ‘time-served’ joiner who, by the time my mother had remarried, had worked his way up to the Technical Director for the Sheffield Works Department.”

In the 1950s, when my two dads were making choices about their futures, apprenticeships were the main route into most manufacturing, engineering and construction occupations.

Positions were highly sought after, and those who secured one were destined to be well-trained, highly skilled craftsmen.

When I was making choices, at the back end of the eighties, it never even occurred to me to pursue a career in construction. My secondary education began in form S1, the top class, and I remained in S1 throughout my secondary school life. S1 was known as ‘SWOT ONE’ and that probably summed up me and my peers. We were hard-working, studious and destined for university.

It was unheard of for such children to be pushed towards an apprenticeship - almost lowly in fact. Back in the eighties, apprenticeships meant ‘YTS’ - the government’s Youth Training Scheme, seen as a last resort for those who didn’t make the grade. It was

university or bust for most ‘academic’ kids, and there was much pressure to perform, especially for those from the working classes.

I reluctantly left school at 16 years old having passed all my O-levels with good grades, including an ‘A’ in my favourite subject, maths. I particularly wanted to study A-level “Pure and Applied Mathematics”. For me, it was important that maths did something, was not just theoretical, and despite the protestations of my school teachers, I left school and went to FE College as it was the only place where the course was offered. I suppose alarm bells should have rung then and looking back, when I discussed my move with my teachers, I was told “Alison, anyone who needs to access an applied subject does so because they cannot use their brain alone.”

This made no sense. Surely the main objective of learning was to be able to use knowledge in the real world. Sadly, the careers advice I received at that time did not help either. The psychometric tests used at my school

and indeed at the FE College identified me as a Maths teacher or a nurse (as I was a “caring” person). Neither of these careers appealed and after an horrendous experience at the college, I decided not to pursue university and instead find a job. My parents were aghast. The first in my family to have the chance to go to university and I wasn’t taking it. I felt like a failure, a let-down.

I left college hoping that I would find my true vocation and landed the first job I applied for, working in a bank where I thought my love of maths would finally come into its own. How wrong I was. Banking turned out to be the most boring job in the world, very sales oriented with little time to put my ‘caring’ skills to use, but with money in my pocket and a mortgage of my own, I decided to stay put.

Life was to change, however. At 24 years old and on a night out with colleagues, I met a civil engineer. I found his story so interesting and persuaded him to take me on site. He introduced me to surveying and site engineering and the rest, as they say, is history.

I set out on a brand-new career path that saw me learning on the job, working on building sites across the North, marking out houses, roads and sewers. I attended Sheffield Hallam University during the day and in my spare time, instead of having my head in the books, went out to work. The theory came through the books and the lectures and the practice came on site. I learned so much from the highly skilled and very knowledgeable groundworkers and bricklayers, those who may well have been the YTS apprentices of my generation who were so looked down on at school. Best of all, the maths of construction completely made sense and I loved every minute of it.

I was, effectively, an apprentice and I loved my job, calling it “the best job in the world”.

But I had regrets. So often I’d think “If only I knew then what I know now”, but I had chance to do something about it in my early 30s, by which time I’d set up my own surveying practice. I was working for a firm contracted to produce topographical surveys, building elevation and floor plans for the Government’s ‘Building Schools for the Future’ programme. My team and I surveyed schools across the country

from the south-east up to the north-east. Each and every time we arrived at a school, we were surrounded by young people, all wanting to know who we were and what we did. Their teachers were equally fascinated, but it was clear that most of them had little idea either.

It was during this time that I identified some major flaws in the education system. I soon realised that the children were no different to me at that age, that careers advice had clearly not improved and that children still struggled to understand the application of maths.

In 2008, I took time off work to create an opportunity to inspire a new way of learning by creating a way for children and young people to be the architects, engineers and surveyors of a school building programme. I wrote a short workshop and called it “A Class of Your Own”. It challenged students to digitally design an eco-friendly classroom that would teach the local community about being sustainable. They would form a team, taking on professional roles and developing their ideas to produce an exciting concept supported by people like me, who genuinely wanted to enhance their learning and inspire a career in the built environment. Essentially, I didn’t want them to miss out on one of the greatest industries in the world due to lack of information at school.

In 2009, I established ‘Class Of Your Own’ as a social business and have never returned to surveying. That first workshop turned into a full through-

school learning programme entitled ‘Design Engineer Construct!’, the result of a deep desire to transform STEM learning and teaching and inspire a nation of exciting young digital talent for the construction industry.

Design Engineer Construct! has been transformational for our students. The apprenticeship route is now acknowledged as the best way to ‘earn and learn’ with many students branded ‘highly academic’ at school choosing this pathway instead. Whether it’s a Level 3 route at 16 or a Level 4 or 6 route at 18, our children are thriving in this new world where parity of esteem is not simply the rhetoric of the politicians.



**Alison Watson MBE,
Chief Executive,
Class of Your Own**

INNOVATIVE TRAINING SOLUTION TO ADDRESS INDUSTRY SKILLS SHORTAGES

“O’Halloran & O’Brien Ltd are one of the UK’s leading groundworks and civil engineering contractors and we are preparing to open a brand new, state of the art Construction Training Academy, designed to address the need for up-skilling and skills shortages in the construction sector.”

The creation of the OHOB Training Academy reflects not only a focused and tangible approach by the senior management team towards developing a more skilled workforce, it provides new entrants, young learners and potential apprentices a practical insight into construction and allows displaced workers from other sectors a real opportunity to experience the sector and access different trade pathways best aligned to their interests.

Currently we have a significant number of apprentices on multiple pathways including; nine employees on an ILM Team Leader/Supervisor Level 3 Apprenticeship, two on a Construction Site Engineering Technician Level 4 Apprenticeship, a further two employees on a Civil Engineering Design Engineer

Level 3 Apprenticeship, one on a Construction Site Supervisor Level 4 Apprenticeship, one on a Financial Services Level 6 Apprenticeship, one on a Assistant Accountant Level 3 and finally one studying a Business Administration Level 3 Apprenticeship some of which have started since the pandemic but all have continued in learning in spite COVID-19.

Over the next 12 months we are also seeking to recruit, train and up-skill over 1,000 new entrants from across London and the South-East of England and with such an important role in the local Kent community this Academy is set to become a beacon

for construction sector training and future apprenticeship programmes. These outcomes will include up to 5,000 construction training interventions and the delivery of up to 1,000 construction trade specific NVQ’s in addition to our increased apprenticeship ambitions.

Our future apprenticeships ambitions are also likely to include other new employees on a Construction Site Supervisor Level 4 Apprenticeship. Up to three further new employees on the Construction Quantity Surveying Technician Level 4 Apprenticeship and several new opportunities for a Construction Surveying Technician Level 4 Apprenticeship. This is in addition to several trade disciplines including two planned cohort groups on a new Construction Plant Operative Level 3 Apprenticeship programme in August/September and November/December, and other new entrants on a Groundworker/ Formwork Apprenticeships subject to the adequate provision and availability of training.



5,000 construction training interventions

Our sector faces many challenges, particularly in London and the South-East. In recent years we have had an overreliance on Eastern European and migrant labour this, coupled with the potential impact of Brexit and the current worldwide pandemic, clearly demonstrates the unsustainability of an overreliance on this labour pool. This situation is compounded by our industry’s longstanding inability to advocate and showcase our sector to young people in particular but also to career changers, combined with resistance for more construction employers to offer quality apprenticeship and training programmes.

The future success of our business is largely dependent on our ability to develop a talent pipeline and to recruit and upskill new entrants including a more targeted engagement with females and the BAME community. We will only achieve this through a multifaceted approach influencing schools and those in education to consider a career in construction, working with industry partners such as Women into Construction, supporting the new T Levels and technical education routes, through work experience programmes, and by utilising both apprenticeships pathways at trade, technical, and professional entry levels through to pre-employment programmes and reskilling/upskilling workers displaced from other sectors.



Recruit, train and up-skill over 1,000 new entrants

Our current vision for training and workforce development is one of the most ambitious of any contractor working across our sector. We aim to exceed industry minimum standards and to up-skill our operative base beyond that of our client’s expectations. Our commitment to training is the bedrock of our business and is founded upon our strong foundations to deliver a safe, competent, and qualified workforce for the future.

We have led the industry and supported the development of new Apprenticeship Standards, and other nationally accredited training standards and skills provision, over recent years. Our training capabilities and our future vision have been recognised through the highly acclaimed, O’Halloran & O’Brien branded training facility at Southwark Construction Skills Centre, in Elephant Park, Southwark, London.



Deliver up to 1,000 construction trade specific NVQ’s

We have allocated a training budget in excess of £1,000,000 to support our internal operative and staff training requirements and we have also introduced a bespoke Training Support Service to support other London and Kent based contractors.

We are currently delivering NVQ’s in multiple construction disciplines, we also have an ambition to deliver NPORS and CPCS Plant provision. Our Academy is now accredited to deliver NOCN Assured Site Right short course training interventions and we are further developing other industry leading provision which we plan to progressively roll out over the coming months.



This new purpose-built centre has training facilities capable of accommodating up to 50 learners, this will also include a fully interactive Construction Plant Simulator to support both our up-skilling programmes and our wider education, career, school engagement and outreach activities.

Once the centre is open and we have established our core market and internal offering we will evaluate the potential to apply to the Register of Approved Training Providers (RoATP) and become an employer provider of trade apprenticeships standards.

We plan to start to build capacity and to raise awareness of our vacancies through showcasing future employment opportunities working with Job Centre Plus (JCP) as well as local brokerage organisations, detailing any skilled trade specific vacancies, potential apprenticeship opportunities and planned start dates of our pre-employment sessions. Working with other partner organisations we will look to create 'job ready candidates' through planning and offering CSCS Health & Safety testing and other such accredited programmes.

The Training Centre will host construction work experience, contextualised 'taster' sessions and pre-employment workshops, together with 'boot camps' targeting the creation of sustainable employment opportunities with O'Halloran & O'Brien Ltd.

Where any new jobs are created and the operatives lack a full suite of qualifications and competencies, they would be afforded further up-skilling opportunities which would deliver additional construction qualifications, these include; NVQ's NPORS, CPCS, Site Safety Plus, SMSTS and SSSTS.

Our involvement with the Southwark Construction Skills Centre at Elephant Park and other London and South-East brokerage partners and industry groups is also expanding and we plan to support these relationships through our contextualised 'taster' sessions and plant simulator training, to enable a greater number of potential candidates to benefit from our training facilities and to support future industry skills gaps.

We are also considering the development of a construction careers promotional webinar, showcasing the multiple roles and varied 'live' employment opportunities we have to offer through O'Halloran & O'Brien Ltd. In addition, we plan to showcase and case study career progression and host live interviews with individuals who have successfully navigated barriers, or experienced difficulties, in gaining entry and employment in the construction sector. This integrated approach will also ensure that we target greater engagement with under-presented and disadvantaged groups and promote improved social mobility and career progression for all.

We plan to utilise, where possible, government and sector specific, post coronavirus initiatives such as the Coronavirus/Construction Skills Fund (CSF), Plan for Jobs, Job Creation Scheme, Kickstart Scheme and the Construction Talent Retention Scheme, together with any Adult Education Budget (AEB) and GLA/ DWP/JCP funded initiatives and supported programmes. We also plan to share and cascade and champion these initiatives with our construction supply chain partners and local SME businesses.

"We are committed to 'get Britain building' and help to invigorate the construction sector for the benefit of not just ourselves but also for the greater benefit of as many young people and career changes as possible."



Martin Price MBE,
Workforce Development Director,
OHOB





FLANNERY PLANT HIRE – OPERATOR SKILLS HUB

“Supporting activities that lead to the enhancement of skills within the plant operator sector is the key focus for the new, Birmingham based, “Operator Skills Hub” (OSH) a joint venture between Flannery Plant Hire and Balfour Beatty.”

This purpose-built facility, launched in February 2021, has been created to give young people an opportunity to access innovative learning approaches to support their development and skills in the multi-faceted plant operations industry. As well as upskill the current workforce so that they are engaged and ready for the UK's most ambitious projects to date.

At a time of significant developments in key sectors of the construction industry, particularly infrastructure projects including HS2, the requirement for competent, safe plant operators has never been more acute.

Flannery, being one of the largest providers of operated plant is working hard to ensure its workforce has the right skills and abilities to offer clients the best value-added solution for their projects.

Reflecting on the commitment to the skills agenda within plant operations, Flannery Managing Director, Patrick Flannery commented:

“As one of the largest providers of the operated plant in the UK, it is imperative that we are able to provide a consistent, quality training experience for operators. It is clear that as the industry continues to adapt and drive innovation, we have to engage

operators, helping to retain our industries best talent and ensure they have the tools to deliver value on-site.

“This purpose-built facility reflects our vibrant and evolving industry and seeing the first intake of the new Trailblazer Plant Operator Apprentices starting their careers here is hugely exciting.”

Patrick was instrumental in the development of the new apprentice standard having chaired the Construction Plant Operative Standard Trailblazer group. The resulting standard being approved by the Institute of Apprenticeships and Technical Education in September 2020 at Level 2.

“This purpose-built facility reflects our vibrant and evolving industry and seeing the first intake of the new Trailblazer Plant Operator Apprentices starting their careers here is hugely exciting.”



30 young learners

The Flannery ambition is to provide around 30 young learners in the first 12 months of operation. In addition to this target and recognising the need for inclusive behaviours and the ability to improve training and retention of existing skilled operators. There will ultimately be an additional 200 supplementary course designed to improve skills and enhance existing operator knowledge with an ambition to train more than 500 operators in preparation for HS2.

The Operator Skills Hub will achieve its results by providing multi-stream blended learning, offering students access to a range of plant equipment, semi-autonomous vehicles and state-of-the-art simulators. These facilities will provide learners with a clear insight into the latest technologies and innovations, as well as health and safety best practise to prepare plant operators and apprentices for the modern-day, digitally enabled construction site.

It is also recognised that outreach is a crucial aspect of the success of this project. As such Flannery, in close collaboration with the Construction Plant Association have made significant efforts in engaging with Schools and Colleges and articulating the career opportunities within the plant sector and the wider construction arena. This engagement takes the form of career events, which have most recently been held on line in response to the pandemic. Moving forward we clearly very much hope to be hosting such events ‘live’ at the Skills Hub.



Additional 200 supplementary course

These efforts reflect the need to ramp up attempts to attract more young talent into plant operations. Highways England data reveals that by 2025-2027 there is projected to be a significant dearth of talent, created by the retirement of the most mature individuals currently working in the industry today. As such there is a real possibility for an outcome that could be thought of as the ‘Perfect Storm’, where an exponential need for ever increasing number of plant operatives and associated roles is met with a dramatic increase in the number of individuals retiring from work leading to a significant shortage.

In order to develop the strong levels of interest in the sector the efforts of the team at the Skills Hub are working hard to be as inclusive and diverse as possible. There are presently approximately two-hundred plant operatives employed by Flannery - sixteen of these are female. The 2021 cohort of trainees that commenced in January was made up of six young learners, one who is female. Working closely with organisation like Women into Construction and Tier One contractors, the team have an ambition to grow the number of women joining the industry.

In a traditionally more male dominated industry, the reality of a steady increase of women operatives is being targeted. There has already been a notable success with Flannery employee, Danielle Taylor being named as the CPA Plant Operator Apprentice of the year in 2020.



Train over 500 operators in preparation for HS2

Danielle and other female plant operators are engaged in visiting schools and sharing their experiences of working in the sector and inspiring young minds to understand what it's all about. It is important to note that plant sector work is not limited exclusively to operating plant.

The team are also working closely with several military charities having identified strong synergies that make a career change into construction a sustainable and viable route for those leaving the armed forces.

As pandemic restrictions become more favourable to the day-to-day running of the Skills Hub it will be possible to provide an ever-wider range of training and upskilling services to the plant industry. This can only be of benefit to the construction industry at large with Flannery and Balfour Beatty both looking forward to making this facility a premier location for plant operator training and skills development.



Paul Skitt,
Skills Development Director,
Flannery Plant Hire

APPRENTICESHIP CHALLENGES POST BREXIT AND COVID

“We all know that apprenticeship starts at level 2 have fallen substantially in construction since the Apprenticeship Levy was introduced. Since 2018/19 they have fallen by 26.33% from 2018/19 to 2020/21. Although the Covid pandemic has had an impact the decline in level 2 was already well in train before March 2020. Hence a concern about the impact on the workforce.”

Construction Workforce Overview

We appreciate that different organisations quote different figures for employment in construction. These variations arise from differing views on what is defined as ‘construction’, not a simple issue, as well as whether, or not, you include professional, associate professional and technical occupations. Government industrial employment statistics show people working in the construction sector by both occupational type and education qualification level:

Occupational Type

Employment by Occupation Type (000's)	2019	%	2024	%
1. Managers, directors and senior officials	211	9.2%	235	9.8%
2. Professional occupations	220	9.7%	244	10.2%
3. Associate professional and technical	165	7.2%	181	7.6%
4. Administrative and secretarial	158	7.0%	158	6.6%
5. Skilled trades occupation	1,204	52.9%	1,242	51.9%
6. Caring, leisure and other services	5	0.2%	6	0.2%
7. Sales and customer service	36	1.6%	39	1.6%
8. Process, plant and machine operatives	171	7.5%	182	7.6%
9. Elementary occupations	106	4.7%	107	4.5%
Total	2,276	-	2,393	-



Trade skills represent 60.4% (1.37 million) of the workforce



75% of these trade skills are Level 2 or below



By 2024 trade skills will represent 1.42 million people

Educational Level

Employment by Education Level (000's)	2019	%	2024	%
L8 Doctorate	5	0.2%	7	0.3%
L7 Other higher degree	89	3.9%	111	4.6%
L6 First degree	247	10.9%	321	13.4%
L5 Foundation degree / HND	90	4.0%	115	4.8%
L4 HE below degree level / HNC	192	8.4%	239	10.0%
L3 A level and equivalent	642	28.2%	619	25.9%
L2 GCSE (A-C) and equivalent	596	26.2%	631	26.4%
L1 GCSE (below grade C) and equivalent	323	14.2%	298	12.5%
No qualification	93	4.1%	54	2.3%
Total	2,276	-	2,392	-

Skilled Trades and Plant Operations

From the Tables, we can see that skilled trades, such as bricklayers, carpenters, plasters, plant operatives, civil engineering groundworkers and plant operatives are crucial for the industry’s success. At present they represent 60.4% of the workforce (i.e. 1.37 million people) and some 75% of these are at level 2 or below. Even by 2024 skill trades and plant operatives will still be 59.9 % of the workforce (1.42 million people). This is an increase of 49,000 level 2 and below jobs; plus of course the replacements needed for retirement.

The concern is that the Government’s policy direction of moving away from funding level 2 and below qualifications in favour of level 3 and above will have a significantly negative impact on the construction industry. Industry needs to press upon Government the importance of continuing to invest in the level 2 and below workforce.

In terms of increasing apprenticeship numbers at level 2 the sector needs to embrace the Government’s policy changes in respect of:

- **Occupational traineeships** which are being introduced. The first pilot is for Bricklaying starting in June 2021 followed later in the year and early next year by Carpentry & Joinery, Plastering, Plant Operations, Civil Engineering Groundworker, Steelfixing, Roofing and Painting & Decorating.
- **Accelerated apprenticeships** which will provide the progression route from the occupational traineeship.
- **Flexible apprenticeships** which will allow employers and training providers more freedom in designing the delivery model such as day-release, frontloading, block training or combinations of all of these.
- **Flexi-job apprenticeships** which will allow an apprentice to work for more than one employer, during the period of their apprenticeship.

As part of the push to increase the numbers of level 2 apprenticeships starts the sector needs to complete the transition from the old Frameworks to the new Apprenticeship Standards. For the Standards that are already operational, some providers have struggled to make this change and more effort is needed to fully implement and embed all of the knowledge, skills and behaviours (KSB) now required in the sector.

Increasing level 2 starts will require the sector to ensure it has enough Standards and that these are up to date. As well as potentially increasing the number of Standards, employers need to work with the Institute (IfATE) to resolve some of the difficulties there are with some of the single level 2 Standards. This is where a single Standard is trying to support a level 2 and the level 3 progression in an occupation and as a result it does not satisfy industry’s total needs.

T-Levels will have no impact on addressing skill shortages for skilled trades and plant operations occupations.



Level 4 and 5 apprenticeship starts in construction have changed from 1,080 to 778 in 2019/2020

Associate Professional and Technical Occupations

The Government's workforce data shows that currently there are some 165,000 i.e. 7.2% of the workforce in associate professional and technical occupations, which require level 4 and 5 qualifications. This should increase by 2024 to 181,000 i.e. 7.6%. This indicates an increase of 16,000 addition level 4 and 5 jobs in the next few years; plus of course replacements for retirement.

There are now still only a limited number of, level 4 and 5, Apprenticeship Standards for construction. Since 2018/19 the number of level 4 and 5 apprenticeship starts in construction have changed from 1,080 to 778 in 2019/2020. This is a 38.8% decrease; which is in the opposite direction to Government policy to increase the number of people with level 4 and 5 achievements.

The same apprenticeship flexibilities are available as there are given above for the skilled trades and plant operative occupations. In addition, for this range of occupations employers can aim to make use of the new 'Bootcamp' programme, in the same way that occupational traineeship will work for skilled trades and plant operatives.

T-Level (Design and Planning) will provide a progression pathway to levels 4, 5 and 6 apprenticeships. However, to maximise the opportunities for people to progress the industry needs to review the number of level 4 and 5 Apprenticeship Standards to see if it needs to add further occupations.



7.2% (165,000) are in professional and technical occupations

'Green' Policy Changes

We all know that to achieve the Government's 10 Point Plan of zero carbon by 2050 construction needs to change to support the Low Carbon and wider 'Green' agenda. Construction can do a huge amount in terms of support by:

- Low Carbon operations, including different methods and materials;
- Reduction in Waste;
- Producing Greener buildings;
- Supporting the UK energy, transport and built environment

Between 250 - 350,000 jobs are expected to be created from new green jobs. Many of these will be in the new and reinvigorated trades of:

- Offsite manufacture - because this creates less waste and requires less transportation of materials;
- Drone mapping - to support better design, planning and to reduce journeys;
- Retrofit of insulation, cladding, energy efficiency measures and micro generation;



Apprenticeship starts in construction has a 38.8% decrease

- Installing and maintaining Carbon absorbing spaces like living walls, roof gardens and green roofs;
- Installing energy management systems and energy data management;
- Installing Electric Car charging points; and
- Material management roles to maximise recycling and minimize unnecessary waste.

All these initiatives are being supported by the industry stakeholder organisations and Government, leading to a level of adoption and engagement that we have not seen before. After a few false starts, the 'Green' construction revolution, the skills it needs and the jobs that it will produce is now here.'

If ATE is looking at ways of readily upgrading the Apprenticeship Standards to embed the 'Green' agenda by:

- Adding standardised KSBs into occupations where general common 'green' initiatives apply;



Between 250k - 300k green jobs are expected to be created

- Adding new KSB to certain occupations to enhance them; and
- Developing Apprenticeship Standards for new occupations.

Clearly the pace of change is not slowing so we all need to be flexible and responsive to it, but that is what people in construction do well.



Graham Hasting-Evans, M.Sc.
C.Eng, MICE, FIC-CMC
Chief Executive,
NOCN Group



APPRENTICESHIP VISION – ‘LEVELLING UP’ FOR ALL

“At VGC we prioritise helping people to achieve their potential – creating tomorrow’s talent today. Apprenticeships are a part of the wide range of personal development opportunities we offer to all our staff, and a key part of our corporate social responsibility strategy.”

Through the VGC Academy we contribute to creating a lasting education legacy for construction projects; helping all staff to achieve their potential and grow their careers; and creating career pathways for new entrants to the industry. In 2020, despite the pandemic and over half our 1,200 staff being furloughed, we delivered a total of 2,164 development interventions.

Not just for school leavers

VGC’s apprenticeships help new starters to join the construction industry, and they also help our current employees upskill. While candidates must be at least 16, there is no upper age limit. Apprenticeships are available for new entrants with no prior qualifications, as well as to those who already have qualifications and even degrees, who want to diversify their skills and knowledge base. So anyone can learn a skill – and anyone can join the construction industry, whatever they did before.

As set out in the May 2021 Queen’s speech, the Skills and Post-16 Education Bill will introduce new opportunities for everyone aged over 16, up and down the country.

This is great news for the construction industry, which is expected to create 230,000 new jobs by 2025.

Multiple routes into construction

VGC’s apprentices come into the business through many routes.

Our schools engagement and NEET support programmes promote the multiple career opportunities within the construction industry, and help to equip young people with the skills they need for the world of work. We also run information and employability days in partnership with JobCentre Plus and further education colleges. We are an approved Kickstart employer, and we anticipate these six-month placements will lead to apprenticeships and long-term employment with VGC for our candidates.

We work in partnership with Project Recce and BuildForceUK to recruit ex-military personnel; our award-winning “Go Beyond the Gates” programme gives a second chance to ex-offenders. We work with Women into Construction to help women into site careers, and we’re working with City Hearts Bright Futures to create sustainable careers for victims of modern slavery. Site work trials give the opportunity for up to two weeks’ mentored experience in an area of interest. These often lead to work offers and the start of a new sustainable career.

Mayor of the West Midlands Andy Street said: “I’m particularly impressed by VGC’s efforts to diversify their recruitment and make these opportunities and careers open to all.”



VGC actively encourages and supports staff to achieve professional qualifications. This is underpinned by the VGC value:

‘We achieve potential’.

The VGC Academy helps staff to create their own tailored development plans, so they can work toward their career goals and achieve their potential. It covers:

- apprenticeships
- technical training
- life-long NVQ qualifications
- behavioural safety
- ICE-approved graduate scheme
- personal competency development

This broad range of opportunities ensures VGC people have the skills to deliver our clients’ projects, can progress through the business, and gain career fulfilment and economic security.

As members of The 5% Club, over 7% of our workforce are currently in earn-and-learn positions

Levels range from level 2 (GCSE equivalent) to levels 6 and 7, the equivalent of a bachelors’ or masters’ degree. We are working with the CCATF to develop new apprenticeships for the skills requirement of the UK’s infrastructure in the future. We need to ensure that our current apprenticeships are equipping our people with the skills and knowledge required for the future including off site construction methods, digitalisation and carbon reduction.

“The apprentice route was a much better option for me than attending a college full time. It has allowed me to continue to gain valuable work experience and skills while earning. I feel more comfortable in the work environment than in a classroom.”

Ganger Jason Waring (Hinkley Point) achieved NVQ level 2 and 3, as well as SSSTS and ILM (Nuclear) leadership.

In 2020, despite the pandemic and over half our 1,200 staff being furloughed, we delivered a total of 2,164 development interventions

The construction industry, which is expected to create 230,000 new jobs by 2025

“I really enjoy my job.” Resourcer Nirvana Murray has been with VGC since she joined as an apprentice after leaving school in 2011. She has gained several promotions since she achieved her level 2 and 3 NVQs in business administration, and is now mentoring our new KickStart candidates.

Assistant quantity surveyor Krista Edwards changed career from the catering industry. Her degree apprenticeship involves studying at London South Bank university for a Construction Quantity Surveying Technician HNC qualification, and then she will progress onto a BSc (Hons) Commercial Management (Quantity Surveying).. **"I am very grateful that VGC has supported me to gain a qualification and a career while I work. I am excited about the opportunities that are ahead of me."**

Gurpreet Singh joined VGC’s team on the A14 Cambridge to Huntingdon scheme in 2017, having spent several years in other industries. After his apprenticeship, he gained promotion to multi-skilled operative. As the A14 project wound down, we transferred him to HS2 for client Balfour Beatty Vinci (BBV). Gurpreet said: **"I am delighted to be part of the VGC team on HS2. I am learning new things every day and have lots of support from my supervisor, colleagues and BBV staff."**

One of our newest apprentices is Natalia Lagos, who joined in April 2021. After leaving school she is really happy with her apprenticeship role on the HS2 project for client Skanska Costain Strabag (SCS). She is enrolled on an NVQ level 3 Diploma in Business Administration through Harrow College. **"I’m working with a wide range of people and**

roles, and developing practical and interpersonal skills you can’t get at school. It’s an opportunity to do something completely different, gaining independence and earning a wage while I’m learning."

Stepping up to management and leadership

Completing an apprenticeship is not the end of someone’s learning – it’s just the beginning. Apprenticeships are part of the building blocks of our learning culture at VGC. Everyone from new entrants to senior leadership at VGC is encouraged to make learning and development part of their everyday role, so that they can truly achieve their potential.

To build on the development, at VGC, our behavioural competency framework (see below) focuses on positive behaviours that enable people to work well together and deliver results. We link successful behaviours with each role in VGC, so people can see what is expected of them and how they can progress. Everyone is more aware of what successful behaviours look like – and how their actions affect others. All VGC employees benefit from core and intermediate behavioural development programmes. Those in or aspiring to senior positions are offered the management and leadership programme. This includes a course for site supervisors, to help

them develop ‘softer’ skills, including self-awareness, collaboration, and emotional intelligence. They become the managers of the future by combining their technical expertise with the positive behaviours needed to deliver excellent results. The need for this has never been greater than during the coronavirus pandemic where our teams have had to put behavioural competencies such as problem-solving, adaptability and resilience to the test. We are delighted that a CITB Leadership and Management grant has enabled us to further develop this programme and deliver it to a wider audience in 2020/21.

By supporting people to work towards their career goals, we help them to be the best they can be and leave a lasting legacy in terms of lifelong qualifications, benefiting the construction industry as a whole.



Ciara Pryce,
Chief Operating Officer,
VGC Group

VGC Vales	Competency clusters	Behaviours
We achieve potential	Delivering results	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Achieving through commitment • Problem solving • Innovation and adaptability • Tenacity and resilience
We deliver on our promises	Strategy and planning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Advocacy • Development focus • Knowledge focus • Networking
We look after each other	Collaborating relationships	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Client focus • Teamwork and team leadership • Influencing • Diplomatic sensitivity

25,000

The CCATF provides support, advice and guidance to members that are supporting or delivering over 25,000 apprenticeships within the construction sector.

For further information, please contact:
www.ccatf.org.uk | 07860 286384

THE BUSINESS CASE FOR ADDRESSING THE GENDER IMBALANCE IN CONSTRUCTION

“Less than 15% of the entire workforce in the UK construction industry is represented by women, and in trade roles, that reduces to less than 1%. The construction industry faces an uncertain future in the wake of the Covid-19 pandemic and Brexit, but CITB scenarios show a recovery in UK construction output and a growth of 5.4%, requiring an additional 258,000 workers by 2025¹. Infrastructure and housing growth are expected to be key drivers for recovery. ”

In order to weather the storm and build resilient businesses for the future, companies need to widen the talent pool, bring new skills and diversity into their businesses. By encouraging a wider range of people into the industry – and welcoming them when they get here – the industry will benefit from better solutions, more collaborative teams, and stronger businesses.

Now, more than ever, construction as an industry needs to support more Women into Construction and help them add value to their businesses .



UK construction requires an additional 258,000 workers by 2025

Commercial benefits for more women working in construction

Driving innovation

A diverse workforce is an innovative workforce. Diversity—from gender diversity to culture, age, and race—has been shown to foster creativity and innovation. Men and women will inevitably have different experiences and backgrounds, which shape their approach to business. Challenging each other and collaborating with people who think differently can breed creativity and promote the innovative ideas that push organisations forward.

Greater profitability

The most gender-diverse companies are 21% more likely to experience above-average profitability.

Increase in women in leadership

Diversity and inclusivity matter – at every level. Companies with the most ethnically/culturally diverse boards worldwide are 43% more likely to experience higher profits. Not only do more women in senior roles create commercial benefits, the increased visibility of successful women positively affects aspirations and awareness to future female talent as they become role models.



Over 400,000 workdays are lost each year through stress, depression and anxiety

Improves staff wellbeing

Currently, the construction workforce is in a mental health crisis. According to figures from the Office of National Statistics, the suicide rate for male labourers is three times higher than the average male suicide rate for the UK. Also, 20% of all cases of ill health in the sector are due to work-related stress, depression and anxiety. As a consequence, over 400,000 workdays are lost each year. More diverse workforces benefit from improved, open communication and collaboration. Discussing mental health openly will be encouraged through a diverse culture with better communication.

A wider economic benefit

A study conducted by the World Economic Forum found that closing the gender gap could increase GDP by an average of 35%. While 80% of this effect comes from adding workers to the labour force, 20% is directly due to increased productivity from gender diversity. A higher GDP can have a major impact on the construction industry - it will lead to a larger overall economy, increased spending, more building. It leads to fiscal stabilisation and higher living standards for citizens, your employees, which will ultimately increase morale amongst your workforce.



Closing the gender gap could increase GDP by an average of 35%

Women into Construction

Women into Construction is an independent not-for-profit organisation that promotes gender equality in construction.

WiC provides work experience, training, mentoring, and financial support for disadvantaged women to access sustainable employment and develop long term careers in the Construction sector. We also assist contractors to recruit highly motivated, trained women, helping to reduce skills gaps and create a more gender-equal work-force. By working with WiC, your business will benefit from:

Increased tenders won, leading to business growth and enhanced reputation

By evidencing the impact of our partnership in your development proposals and investment partnership plans, you will be able to demonstrate your commitment and achievements that contribute to your client's social and economic impact goals. Through the development of bespoke employability programmes for new partnerships and tender opportunities, we can demonstrate innovation and impact. This will increase your scores for CSR and Social value questions, provide evidence with you comply with planning and developer requirements and directly contribute to your business growth objectives.

1. https://www.citb.co.uk/documents/research/csn_outlook_2021_2025.pdf

Increased recruitment of female employees including apprentices

WiC takes a targeted approach to raising awareness and challenging preconceptions about careers in construction engaging with school students, parents, teachers and local referral partners (such as Job Centre Plus). This increases the volume of suitable applicants to you and your supply chain's recruitment campaigns without the cost of an internal dedicated resource.

Working with WiC gives you access to our established network with a focus on increasing awareness and aspirations of roles in construction to girls and women specifically. Members also report an increase in applications from women when using our 'Positive about Women into Construction' logo on job adverts.

Increased diversity, retention, and wellbeing in employees; reduction in Gender Pay Gap

When recruited via a WiC programme, newly recruited female employees will continue to be supported by WiC and empowered to identify progression pathways within the company and sector. Peer group and 1-1 support will improve wellbeing and job satisfaction; creating a group of high-profile role models within your company to support your diversity and inclusion strategy. An increased number of total women across the workforce, including in more senior positions will contribute to an improvement in your mean and median Gender Pay Gap statistics.

Support to use your influence

Being diverse within your own business is one thing. Being on the forefront of creating a more diverse industry is something else entirely – WiC are here to help you – sub contractors, main contractors, councils, housing associations we work with everyone in the supply chain to open up more opportunities for women. By embedding diversity into your supply chain and demanding it of all your suppliers and representatives – your business goes one step further.

Public Relations

We work with our members and partners to highlight best practice and successes across the industry through our network of over 150 construction stakeholders and our social media platforms. We share case studies and hold industry events to showcase our partners D&I work to the industry. This exposure has led to our partners winning industry awards – such as Hill winning the "Best Recruitment or Training Initiative" at the 2020 Housebuilder Awards for their partnership in Cambridgeshire with Women into Construction.



Kath Moore MBE,
Managing Director,
Women into Construction

Women into Construction offers a bespoke, highly personalised service for women and employers. WiC is the only organization in the UK that offers a 'wrap around service' with on-going support throughout placements and an on-going sponsorship to enhance the retention of women in the industry. The WiC approach is a proven model, which endorsed by over 80 member companies from the past 12 years of experience in the sector.

If we've convinced you that there are business benefits to improving gender diversity in your company, then come and work with us!



So...

We are valued

We are being trained as we work

We are improving our skills

We are getting paid

We are apprentices



**Cross-industry
Construction
Apprenticeship
Task Force™**



Apprenticeships



**Cross-industry
Construction
Apprenticeship
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For further information:
Email: info@ccatf.org.uk
Visit: www.ccatf.org.uk
Twitter: [@ccatfapprentice](https://twitter.com/ccatfapprentice)