

Independent Evaluation of BuildForce



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1 Introduction and method

1.1 About BuildForce

- BuildForce is a collaborative employer-led programme, designed to reduce skills gaps in their businesses by inspiring, engaging and enabling service leavers and veterans¹ to understand and pursue careers in construction and the built environment.
- It will deliver training and individual support to service leavers to translate their existing skills, gain new ones and access sustainable employment and progression opportunities in construction companies across the UK.
- The programme partners have determined that their long term objective is for BuildForce to become a sustainable organisation, so the exit strategy will be that (within the 18-month CITB-funded period) a business model is created, in collaboration with all potential future users of BuildForce.²

¹ Hereafter referred to as Service Leavers.

² Source: Bid document to CITB, April 2016.

1.2 Evaluation Approach

Skyblue Research were commissioned by CITB and BuildForce to undertake an independent summative evaluation for the period from 1st July 2016 to 31st March 2018.³ The overall level of investment has been £835k (comprising £440k from industry and £395k from CITB Structured Fund grant).

1.3 Outcomes Evaluation

The focus for this evaluation, agreed between the consultants, BuildForce and CITB's Evaluation Team, has been to consider the important outcomes for construction firms and the wider Construction Sector, as well as Service Leavers and Veterans (SLs),

The training and employment opportunities created by the Programme are contributing to CITB's priority areas of reducing skills shortages and improving the attractiveness of the industry. Of particular interest is whether the construction firms that have provided opportunities / jobs to service leavers / veterans notice any distinct advantages⁴ or assets for these kinds of individual compared to other recruitment/talent options.

1.4 Process Evaluation

The original bid⁵ affirmed that BuildForce had a strong learning dimension, so this report also includes an assessment of the key lessons learned.

1.5 Methodology

This evaluation draws on feedback from:⁶

1. 44 industry representatives from 30 construction firms and BuildForce partners (42% of 72 BuildForce Alliance members)
2. 48 industry representatives from 41 construction firms and BuildForce partners taking part in a follow up survey to consider sustainability (57% of Alliance members)
3. 50 online and 10 telephone interviews with Service Leavers (9% of registrants)
4. A knowledge capture workshop with the BuildForce Steering Group and CITB
5. A secondary review of BuildForce's management information, previous reports and case studies

³ There have been three main phases to BuildForce: Phase 1: initial research and pilot brokerage in 2012. Phase 2 2013-2015; (lead delivery partner, Construction Youth Trust; project manager, Circle Three Consulting); Phase 3 national roll-out 2016-2018; (lead delivery partner, Ethos VO; training partner, Carillion Training Services); and Phase 3b Interim phase (the funding from CITB ended in March 2018 and BuildForce is currently funded by Lendlease).

⁴ Firms might for example comment on whether the service leavers they employed were more job ready than alternative candidates / recent applicants filling the same occupational role in their business; or perhaps were more productive quicker in their job.

⁵ Structured Fund Bid to CITB, signed April 2016.

⁶ Please see Technical Appendix for further details of the methodology employed and analyses undertaken.

2 Key findings

2.1 Performance

Monitoring information provided by BuildForce identifies progress to 31st March 2018.⁷

TARGETS	Revised Targets	Final Position	Variance	Comments
Beneficiary Engagement	300	692	392	26% were looking for employment in South and South East, 31% in either North East or North West, 14% Midlands, 7% Scotland, 5% Wales and 2% overseas. 5% were willing to work 'anywhere'. ⁸ 122 (19%) were privates and 525 (81%) officers. ⁹
Induction & TNA	300	301	1	These Service Leavers then received further BuildForce support. BuildForce has a live 'pool' of circa 230 Service Leavers.
Beneficiaries completing job specific training	120	126	6	
Beneficiaries engaged in 1-2-1 mentoring	60	256	196	
Guaranteed interviews	300	464	164	A proportion of these interviews are practice and not linked to actual jobs
Work placements	60	72	12	
Genuine employment opportunities ¹⁰	100	93	-7	Of this total, 46 Alliance members have created 80 job starts. A further 12 firms (from the supply chain of Alliance members) have created 13 jobs ¹¹
Mentor training	63	67	4	
Industry events held	6	25	19	
Employer Engagement - Firms	30	76	46	Alliance members comprise: Tier 1 (14 firms, 19%), Tier 2 (49 firms, 68%); Supporter (4 organisations, 6%) and Institution (5 organisations, 7%)
Grant income	£395,115	£395,115	0	
Match funding	£319,227	£440,207	£120,980	38% more than target

⁷ Source: BuildForce 2, final project claim to CITB.

⁸ Base 785 responses (Service leavers could pick more than one preferred location).

⁹ Based on 622 records. The sample from Skyblue's primary research broadly reflects this breakdown.

¹⁰ The wording used in the original bid to CITB dated 24th September 2016

¹¹ Based on analysis of 93 jobs created by end March 2018

Conversion ratios

Analysis of the performance data reveals the following, which are compared to the expectations set out in the original 2016 funding bid:

Measure	Actual	Target
Jobs to registrants	1 in 3 for <u>inducted</u> registrants. 1 in 8 for all engaged ¹²	1 in 3
£ invested per job	£8,981 ¹³	£7,143 ¹⁴
Interviews to jobs	1 in 5 ¹⁵	1 in 3 ¹⁶
Mentors to Service Leaver	1:2 ¹⁷	1:5 ¹⁸

As part of the Training Needs Analysis process, Service Leavers were assessed on their knowledge of construction, and also if they had a clear job role in mind. Of the 252 who provided a response, 70% had a reasonable knowledge of construction and 86% had a preferred job or role in mind.

Evaluator comment

The Key Performance Indicators agreed with CITB reflect the range of activities undertaken. Over-performance against all KPIs except for jobs created showed that it was necessary to engage with a greater number of Service Leavers in order to identify a 'pool' of suitable candidates who are then supported by BuildForce. There are a range of factors influencing the number of jobs created, including the wider state of the sector that are beyond BuildForce's control, hence the longer timelines required,

The over-achievement of Service Leavers engaged may have resulted in creating more demand for BuildForce services than can be serviced by the operations team.¹⁹ Managing expectations is critical, and Service Leavers are judging BuildForce primarily on whether they have been successful in finding a job.

Table 1 and 2 show the job starts gained, and the context for that role.²⁰

¹² 93 from 692 engaged and registered and 301 inducted. The ratio of jobs to inducted Service Leavers is 1:3.

¹³ £835,322 / 93 job starts.

¹⁴ £714,432 / 100 job starts.

¹⁵ 93 positions from 446 interviews. However, it is important to note that a proportion of these interviews were practice ones, and not linked to an actual vacancy.

¹⁶ 100 positions from 300 interviews.

¹⁷ 67 mentors supporting a 'opted in' portion of 301 inducted Service Leavers (not all require or ask for mentoring)

¹⁸ 60 mentors supporting 300 Service Leavers.

¹⁹ The rationale for engaging with greater numbers of Service Leavers was highlighted in a July 2017 report to CITB: 'Ethos had underestimated the amount of manual effort that would be required to administer the process. This is particularly true for the process of matching beneficiaries with mentors and chasing feedback from mentoring, placements, interviews and jobs. The other issue is that we didn't fully appreciate is that many beneficiaries want to register with BuildForce some time (up to 2 years) before they leave the military, whereas construction companies want almost availability to resources. The end result requires us to register considerably more beneficiaries than were originally envisaged to satisfy the original target.'

²⁰ Job titles were not available to the evaluators for 12 roles created by Morgan Sindall.

Table 1: Job starts by Service Leavers who left the Armed Forces as privates

Rank		ROLE	Construction Firm
1.	Private	Tradesman	Base Contracts
2.	Private	Property Maintenance	Heroes4Hire (via Building Heroes)
3.	Private	Civil Engineering Groundworker	Roche Civil Engineering
4.	Private	Surveyor	Builders Beams
5.	Private	Trainee Assistant Site Manager (E Yorkshire division)	Persimmon Homes
6.	Private	Bricklaying	Brick Baron
7.	Private	Project Manager	Careys
8.	Private	Groundworker	National Grid
9.	Private	Groundworker, Midland Metro	VGC
10.	Private	General Operative	Jenner Contractors
11.	Private	Plant Fitter	Neil Price Construction
12.	Private	Driver/labourer - BEP Delivery Team	BEP Delivery Team (Sellafeld)
13.	Private	Groundworker	Roche Civil Engineering
14.	Private	Maintenance operative	Heroes4Hire
15.	Private	Tradesman	O'Donnell's Civil engineering
16.	Private	Labourer	Brick Baron
17.	Private	Site Manager	MIDAS
18.	Private	Trainee Site Manager	Barratt Homes, Scotland
19.	Private	Construction Manager	Laing O'Rourke (HS2 enabling works)
20.	Private	Property Maintenance	Heroes4Hire (via Building Heroes)
21.	Private	H&S Advisor	QSC Safety
22.	Private	Property Maintenance	Heroes4Hire (via Building Heroes)
23.	Private	Assistant Site Manager	Lee Warren
24.	Private	Tradesman	HSA Group
25.	Private	Groundworker, Midland Metro	VCG

Table 2: Job starts by Service Leavers who left the Armed Forces as officers

Rank		ROLE	EMPLOYER
1.	Able Rate (RN)	Logistics Manager	Knorr Bremse
2.	Captain	Assistant Site Manager	Thakeham
3.	Captain	Project Manager	WYG Consulting
4.	Captain	Assistant Project Manager	Lendlease
5.	Captain	Head of Operations for Europe	Breather (PropTech)
6.	Captain	Assistant Project Manager	Lendlease
7.	Captain	Site Agent	Balfour Beatty (Thames Tidal framework)
8.	Captain	Senior Consultant	EY
9.	Captain	Project Manager	Jacobs / HS2

10.	Colour Sergeant	Training Assistant Site Manager	Barratts
11.	Colour Sergeant	Site Manager	Midas Construction
12.	Commando (RN)	Training	VGC
13.	Corporal	Property Maintenance	Heroes4Hire (via Building Heroes)
14.	Corporal	Trainee Engineer	BT Civils
15.	Corporal	Tradesman	Local Plumbing company
16.	Engineering Technician (RN)	Tradesman	Beddall Electrical Services
17.	Lance Corporal	Site Engineer	Hinkley (Baylor)
18.	Lance Corporal	Logistic	Base Contracts
19.	Lance Corporal	Mobile electrical engineer	Boden Group
20.	Lance Corporal	Construction Supervisor	Vinci Construction
21.	Lance Corporal	Assistant Site Manager	David Wilson
22.	Lance Corporal	General maintenance	Powertherm Contract Services
23.	Lance Corporal	Crane Operator	Bryn Thomas Cranes Ltd
24.	Lance Corporal	Assistant Site Manager	Harrison Jorge
25.	Lance Corporal	Engineer	Granite wind turbines
26.	Lance Corporal	Change Management	Southwestern Railway
27.	Lance Sergeant	H&S Manager	Persimmon Homes
28.	Lieutenant	Construction Interface Engineer	National Grid
29.	Lieutenant	Property Maintenance	Heroes4Hire (via Building Heroes)
30.	Lieutenant	Head of Logistics Heathrow Expansion	Wilson James
31.	Major	Construction Planner	Balfour Beatty
32.	Major	Performance Manager	Skanska
33.	Sargent	Railway Electrification	Carillion
34.	Staff Sergeant	H&S and Training Adviser	Churngold
35.	Staff Sergeant	Engineer	A14
36.	Staff Sergeant	Project Manager	Lendlease
37.	Staff Sergeant	Site Foreman	Ian Williams
38.	Staff Sergeant	Assistant Site Manager	Gallagher Group
39.	WO	Training Centre Manager	Carillion
40.	WO1	Logistics Manager	Multiplex
41.	WO1	Health, Safety Environmental Advisor	Pullman Rail
42.	WO2	Nuclear Engineering	Babcock
43.	WO2	Plumbing and Heating Engineer	Self Employed
44.	WO2	Heating engineer	CarillionAmey
45.	WO2	H&S Advisor	MHH Contracting Ltd.

Evaluator comment: In summary, and with notable exceptions, Service Leavers who left as officers were likely to secure supervisory, managerial or professional roles. Privates were more likely to take site based, trade positions.

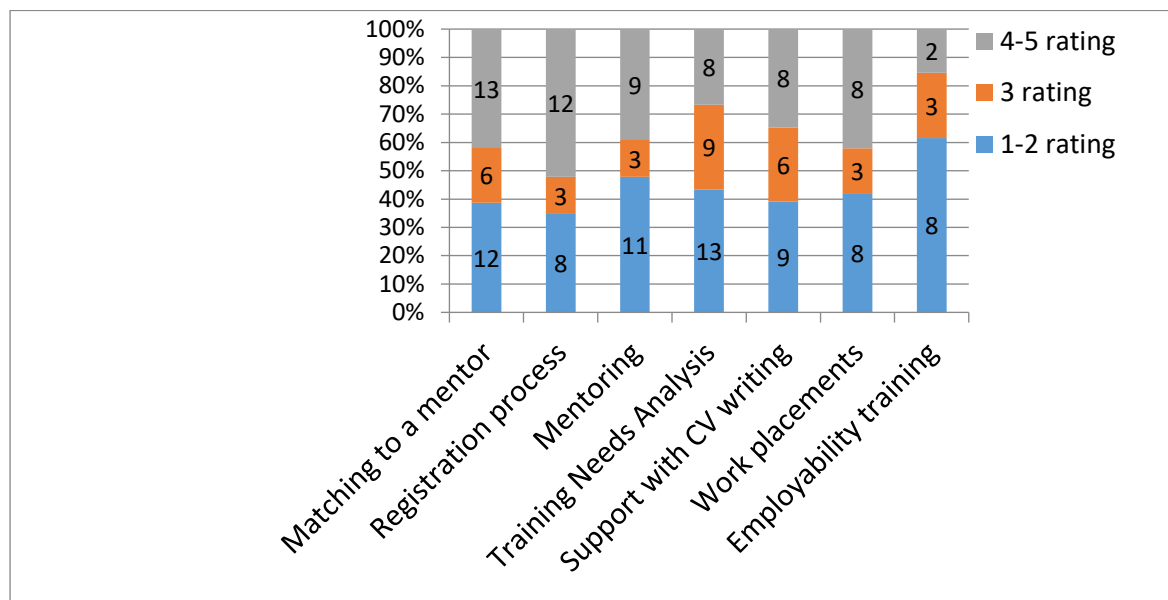
2.2 Meeting expectations

There was divergent feedback from Service Leavers; 70%²¹ reported that their expectations **had been met**, to at least some extent, compared to 30% who said their expectations **had not been met**.

Supporting comments, and feedback from BuildForce reveal that satisfaction was higher if a Service Leaver secured a job. If communications and the service were delivered as expected satisfaction was also higher. The main cause for dissatisfaction was a lack of communication, between BuildForce and the Service Leaver, or between mentor and mentee.²²

A greater proportion of Service Leavers gave satisfaction ratings of 3, 4 or 5 out of 5 than a lower rating (1 or 2 out of 5). The satisfaction ratings for different aspects of the service show divergent levels of satisfaction; for example, almost equal numbers of Service Leavers gave either high or low responses to the 'Matching to a mentor' and 'Mentoring'.

Figure 1: Service Leaver satisfaction with BuildForce support



For each type of support please say how satisfied you have been (On a scale of 1-5, where 1 is very dissatisfied and 5 is very satisfied) Base varies from 13-36 responses.

Feedback from industry and service leavers included a 'Net Promoter Score':²³

- **Service Leavers gave a +19 net promoter score, a 'good rating'**
- **Employers gave a +60 net promoter score, an 'excellent' rating**

²¹ 18 of 26 responding to this question.

²² A typical comment was :*"I have been paired with just one mentee, who didn't respond when emailed him offering to help"*(Mentor).

²³ Technical Note: Given the NPS range of **-100** to **+100**, a "positive" score or NPS above 0 is considered "good", **+50** is "Excellent," and above **70** is considered "world class." Based on global NPS standards, any score above 0 would be considered "good." This simply means that the majority of your customer base is more Source: <https://www.netpromoter.com/know/>

Evaluator comment

The divergent feedback from Service Leavers shows that expectations have not always been effectively managed, with a key recurring theme being the extent to which communications was taking place as expected. Long pauses led to uncertainty and dissatisfaction. Where comms were taking place as agreed, satisfaction was generally high for both mentor and mentee.

Feedback on specific elements of the support received shows that the mentoring process received both the greatest number of positive and negative responses, which illustrates the contrasting experiences reported by Service Leavers.

Using the Net Promoter Score, BuildForce has developed a strong set of advocates who are highly likely to recommend the Programme to others. Service Leaver feedback is less uniformly positive, but on balance there are greater numbers of promoters compared to detractors.

2.3 Outcomes reported by construction firms

Industry feedback

This section of the report is based on evaluation feedback from 44 staff²⁴ from 30 companies.

- 29 were Mentors
- 9 were Ambassadors
- 8 were Champions²⁵
- 40% had an ex-military background
- 23% (5) companies²⁶ reported not targeting Service Leavers / Veterans prior to BuildForce²⁷
- 87% of industry representatives (13 from 15) who had interviewed Service Leavers agreed that, compared to other candidates, they had attributes that were especially attractive. Some of the particular qualities that were mentioned were their work ethic, enthusiasm, work readiness, leadership skills, dedication and loyalty
- 57% of employer representatives said it was more challenging than expected to place Service Leavers within their own organisations
- 40% had offered training to Service Leavers

²⁴ Staff responding were senior representatives in a managerial or executive function.

²⁵ Employer representatives can fulfil more than one BuildForce role.

²⁶ Base 22 firms responding.

²⁷ This finding is divergent from the feedback received by BuildForce that suggests c80% of firms are recruiting for Service Leavers for the first time, often having been recommended by another Alliance member.

Benefits Gained

"I think there's just something in Service Leavers' DNA, you don't need to ask them twice. They've got a very can do attitude, it's all about how they can help." Lendlease

Mentors, Champions and Ambassadors were asked to consider the benefits gained from BuildForce for a) Service Leavers b) As employees and c) for their company and the wider sector. The results are summarised in the table below:

Benefits for Service Leavers	Benefits for the mentors, ambassadors, and champions	Benefits for companies
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Advice (21) • Jobs (3) • Training (1) • Work experience (3) <p>These can be further broken down into financial (4) and non-financial (24) benefits.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Advice (18) • Communication (2) • Networking (2) <p><i>"I received more support than I thought, always there to help and give advice"</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Being able to help Service Leavers (24) • And having a greater understanding of the needs of military leavers (3) <p><i>"I thought I could give something back and help other service leavers join the industry. I found BuildForce helpful when I was doing resettlement so thought I would be able to help others that are leaving the service."</i></p>	<p>Financial (10) Recruitment cost savings Increased productivity</p> <p>Non-financial (2). Morale Culture Reputation Customer confidence</p> <p><i>"We had a couple of good ex-military guys working for us and we thought if we could attract a couple more with similar characteristics we'd be doing really well."</i></p>

Productivity

"Since being involved with BuildForce and the qualities that our ex-military work placements have brought we have noticed a definite improvement in the overall behaviour, attitude and productivity of our on-site workforce."

Overall, 2 out of 8 employer representatives (13%) considered Service Leavers more productive compared to others in the same role, compared to 5 employers who assessed them to be 'on a par'. This finding illustrates that each Service Leaver is judged on merit, that companies are making individual judgements about specific service leavers, as opposed to making more general, or wider judgements.

Lendlease Productivity Case Study

As a key partner in the BuildForce Alliance, Lendlease has been actively involved at all stages of the development of BuildForce. This case study focusses on productivity and business benefits – a subset of the outcomes achieved. Angela Forbes, Commercial Director at Lendlease and BuildForce Chair talks about the impact of Service Leavers:

“Lendlease recruited the quality compliance employee – he has a bespoke skill set. We saw what he did in the Army and realised that he did governance and control and worked independently and that’s exactly what we needed in our team.”

A study of Lendlease projects undertaken by the Quality Compliance Manager identified a series of snagging issues linked to planning, assumptions and record keeping. Examination of a set of 14 real issues (8 of which were prevented, 6 were not), there was a potential legacy cost saving to Lendlease of up to £4 million, compared to a snagging cost of £131k – £30 saved for every pound spent. By embedding good practices needed early on, he concluded, ‘Construction compliance equals a quality product’.²⁸

Lendlease Wider business benefits

Angela Forbes, Commercial Director (and BuildForce Chair) stated:

“We have strict KPIs and this feeds into them brilliantly. It’s also hitting other targets around social responsibility and diversity [bringing in talent from other sectors].

The more you see, the more impressed you are. When you are showing a client around you gravitate towards the military guys because you know they will conduct themselves so well, even in that 20 seconds introduction.”

If your team are diligent and talented, skilled, full of potential, then your clients want them. When you’ve got that guy doing our quality control then you know you’re going to get a good product. And all of that affects your bottom line, if you’re not good at what you do then you’re not going to make money. Good staff make money, good staff protect you from losses.

I think there’s just something in Service Leavers’ DNA, you don’t need to ask them twice. They’ve got a very can do attitude, it’s all about how they can help. The Army guys are so assertive and so on the ball. They are such good ambassadors for their age. They are real credit to the Army.

Lendlease is so supportive of BuildForce because it fits with our ethos. With our CSR we will make the right decision if it costs us money, we will do the right thing by our customers, we will always be seen to be doing the right things at whatever cost, with CSR, we hold that up there ahead of making money, that’s what drives our business.

We’ve definitely benefitted from BuildForce. I think we are a better organisation because of it.”

²⁸ Source: ‘Construction General Business Update’ December 2016.

Maturity Matrix

Companies engaged in BuildForce are at different levels of maturity in supporting and recruiting from the Service Leaver market. BuildForce, alongside other initiatives (E.g. Careers Transition Partnership or RFEA) is providing the means for construction firms to make manifest their commitment to support / and benefit from recruiting Service Leavers. The maturity matrix illustrates how companies are developing.

Measure	Not at all	Ad hoc	Defined	Managed	Optimised
Recruiting purposely from the Military	Firm does not recruit Service Leavers	Service Leavers have applied / been recruited but not as part of any formal plan	Service Leavers are actively targeted	Plans and policies are in place to quantify the contribution Service Leavers can make to the company. Key Performance Measures relate to Service Leaver recruitment	Staff at all levels actively consider Service Leavers There is senior accountability for Service Leaver recruitment The impacts of recruiting Service Leavers (ROI) are understood, valued and utilised to benefit the company
Target specific hard to fill vacancies	Service Leavers are not considered for hard to fill vacancies	Service Leavers can apply, but not as part of a planned approach	There is are mechanisms to match Service Leavers to hard to fill vacancies that may match their skill set and values	There is a formal plan to connect Service Leavers to hard to fill vacancies	There is a formal plan in place to connect Service Leavers to hard to fill vacancies. The impact of that plan is understood and used to continuously improve the approach
Increased productivity relative to peers	Service Leavers are not part of any strategy for boosting productivity	Service Leavers may contribute to increased productivity but this is not measured	The potential of Service Leavers to achieve higher productivity is reflected in the CPD approach	The transferable skills and qualities of Service Leavers are amplified in their role and work tasks are deployed effectively	The productivity standard is measured, understood and propagated to the wide workforce
Increased Reputation	The benefits to company and staff from recruiting Service Leavers is not recognised	The company has been opportunistic in deriving association with the military community	The company is making a formal commitment to deriving benefit from connecting to the military community. ²⁹	The company employs Service Leavers and purposely created customer confidence by showcasing their qualities	Business success is directly related to the culture of Service Leaver employment and deployment and is valued by internal and external customers.

²⁹ E.g. signing the Armed Forced Covenant, or the BuildForce Alliance.

Measure	Not at all	Ad hoc	Defined	Managed	Optimised
Recruiting purposely from the Military	5 firms don't recruit but expect to in the future	22 firms had signed the Armed Forces Covenant	6 Alliance members had taken on more than 1 Service leaver		<i>"We have strict KPIs around growth and this feeds in to them brilliantly. It's also striking other targets around profit, social responsibility and bringing in talent from other sectors."</i>
Target specific hard to fill vacancies		9 companies have identified roles that can be filled by Service Leavers		3 companies have recruited Service Leaver to hard to fill roles	
Increased productivity relative to peers	8 companies can give a view on the relative productivity of a Service Leaver			<i>"Since being involved with BuildForce and the qualities that our ex-military work placements have brought we have noticed a definite improvement in the overall behaviour, attitude and productivity of our on-site workforce."</i>	
Increased Reputation	12 Alliance supply chain companies have taken on 13 Service Leavers		72 companies have joined the BuildForce Alliance	<i>"The more you see, the more impressed you are. When you are showing a client around you gravitate towards the military guys because you know they will conduct themselves so well, even in that 20 seconds introduction."</i>	

Industry case study: Balfour Beatty

Tony Ellender, the Emerging Talent Manager at Balfour Beatty describes the original motivation for engaging with BuildForce:

"We are a signatory to the Armed Forces Covenant and BuildForce provides an additional route to recruiting Armed Forces Leavers."

Tony is both a Champion and a Mentor for BuildForce, contributing four and six days respectively since 2017.

"I have invited BuildForce to a number of Company events, including a Supply Chain event. As a mentor, I've spoken to a large number of Leavers but there has been a low conversion rate to actual jobs".

One factor here is the varying level of challenge in convincing hiring managers within the organisation.

Tony describes the main benefit of his contribution as *"Advice and guidance because Service Leavers often don't realise their transferable skills."*

BuildForce has resulted in a 'raised profile of Armed Forces Leavers in the business. Other outcome that have occurred are:

- Increased their understanding and capability of how to approach recruiting Service Leavers
- Identified a range of specific job roles that could be filled by Service Leavers / Veterans as a result of their increased understanding of the skills and qualities Service Leavers could bring to the business
- Developed a formal structured plan for recruiting from the Military in future on a sustained and routine basis

Staff at Balfour are supportive of BuildForce, and also see opportunities to develop themselves: *"I am also aiming to better myself in my role."* says Site Engineer and Mentor, Jon Coldric.

Tony would be highly likely to recommend BuildForce. *"I think it should remain free and funded by CITB Levy. It's a good organisation".*

Tom Baron, former Corporal. Site Agent.

Seven months into his new job, Tom's responsibilities include running the construction site, health and safety reporting, programme, quality, finding sub-contractors, and managing a team.

"There's lots more to my role. I've learnt a huge amount since being here – it's a lot more commercial than I thought it would be, so I've learnt lots of business skills that are useful for outside of the Army."

"The single biggest benefit to me of taking part in BuildForce has been.....the BuildForce networking event where I met my current employer. I always say the best thing about BuildForce is how they facilitate work experience. During my work experience I demonstrated transferable skills that were relevant to the site manager role and I believe that is why they gave me the job in the end.

"The single biggest improvement I would suggest for BuildForce is some of the careers fairs³⁰ were a bit of a waste of time. Often you don't know what type of fair it will be until you get there. One was really good because it was more towards the managerial jobs but another was a total waste of time as it was for people working on the tools.

And it would be good if there were better connections with Balfour Beatty and other large contractors because the principal contractors are where the best opportunities are."

Tom was offered his role following his work experience facilitated by BuildForce. Asked why he stood out, Tom responded:

"My previous military experience, that unique operational experience, helped. There was an overlap between the two roles – maybe a graduate wouldn't have that sort of experience. Service leavers like myself bring discipline, wanting to see a job through and attention to detail."

Tom is putting his skills to good use for his current employer: *"I am about to deliver a training course on public speaking which will help to improve communication for the business."*

Since January 2018, Tom has been also been acting as BuildForce mentor, 'to give back' and has also found his colleagues receptive to offering opportunities: *"Everyone I have approached at Balfour Beatty has been helpful and encouraging."*

2.4 Outcomes reported by Service Leavers

Analysis of the sample of Service Leavers taking part in the evaluation revealed:

- 59% had a specific job or industry in mind when registering. Sectors included: Construction, Logistics and Power / utilities³¹
- 53% said they wanted to work in construction, while 21% had not previously considered the sector prior to BuildForce³²
- 42% had 'some' or 'a lot' of prior knowledge of construction³³
- 51% had worked in construction before, during or immediately after their military service.³⁴

³⁰ CTP organised events not managed by BuildForce.

³¹ 27 Service Leavers from 46. This is lower than the 86% of 252 Service Leavers completing a Training Needs Analysis.

³² 23 from 43 Service Leavers.

³³ 18 of 43 Service Leavers. By comparison, 70% of 252 Construction TNA completers had a reasonable knowledge of construction.

³⁴ 23 of 45 in total; 9 before their military service, 7 during and 7 immediately after leaving.

Outcomes for Service Leavers

Since July 2016, 93 jobs can be directly attributed to BuildForce support.³⁵ The job starts created range from trade roles through to senior management and professional positions. Broadly speaking, those who ended their service as a private or equivalent were more likely to be placed in site roles, whilst officers were likely to be placed in supervisory, managerial or professional jobs.

As well as employment outcomes, BuildForce is also contributing to additional cognitive (awareness and knowledge) and affective outcomes (for example perceptions of the sector, and willingness to work in construction).

After coding the open responses, **Service Leavers** said the biggest benefit to them was **non-financial**, for example: *"The confidence gained through being able to talk to individuals already in the industry."*

- 36% of Service Leavers agreed that a career in construction was a more attractive proposition
- 28% have been inspired about working in the Construction sector
- 25% would not be as positive about their future careers outlook without BuildForce
- 60% disagreed that other support had proved more valuable to them than BuildForce

Success factors

In order to explore which 'type' of Service Leaver was most likely to have a successful BuildForce facilitated move into employment, additional analyses were carried out, firstly using BuildForce's management information:

- Analysis of 70 job starts shows that 45 (63%) were officers. Of this sample, 33 (46%) were assessed to have a reasonable prior knowledge of construction prior to BuildForce, and 38 (54%) had an aspiration in mind on registering.

Analysis of the primary research carried out for the independent evaluation showed:

- Of the 18 Service Leavers in full time work (from the sample of 50 completing the evaluation survey), 13 said construction was a sector they wanted to work in prior to becoming involved in BuildForce.
- Of the 16 Service Leavers in full time work who answered the question, 7 had experience in construction and 9 did not. The average age was 39.
- Of the 13 unemployed Service Leavers who answered the question, 6 had construction experience and 7 did not. The average age was 41.
- Prior knowledge about careers in construction may be a factor. Of the sample of 19 in full time work, 14 had some prior knowledge of careers in construction.³⁶

³⁵ Each role created was considered to be sustainable, but requires validation once 26 weeks have elapsed (September 2018).

³⁶ Eight of 17 people *not in work* had no prior knowledge of careers in construction. Due to the small sample size care should be taken when make general conclusions or wider extrapolations based on these findings.

Thames Tideway Case Study:

Sam Arnold is a sergeant in the Royal Marines. After 22 years in the Royal Navy, Sam has been working with BuildForce during his transition period:

"I thought that BuildForce would gain me access to work placements which it has done. I have completed two work placements now, one of which was fantastic".

This placement was with Tideway East.

"I've just finished a two-week placement at Tideway East. I have been embedded with the Health, Safety and Wellbeing team. My placement has given me a really broad experience of the project. I've been on site performing SHE inspections and was also able to gain experience with some of the other teams such as Quality and Logistics."

Sam described the biggest benefit to engaging with BuildForce as:

"Gaining confidence and networking opportunities. I think I was quite sheltered until I came to Tideway. Doing something different after 22 years in the same job has really exposed me to new ways of working. I've seen how the management system works at Tideway East, how people can collaborate to succeed. It really has been a broad learning experience."

I want to take what I have learnt and be able to apply it. I've got my NEBOSH (National General Certificate in Occupational Health and Safety) – being able to add a practical Health and Safety experience will really help me elsewhere."

Mentors supporting Service Leavers at Thames Tideway include ex-Service personnel who are able to relate to those they support;

"I remember that I had so many questions about the construction industry and other areas of leaving the service that I had difficulty finding answers to that I thought I could help other leavers now that I've been through the process" says Paul Wilson, Mentor and Health & Safety Adviser

"I hope to reassure a leaver that the future is bright"

3 BuildForce SWOT

To ensure both that the evaluation captured the key learning points from this phase of BuildForce, and these insights were available to inform future development, a Knowledge Capture workshop took place with the industry steering group and CITB. One of the outputs from that workshop was SWOT table set out below.³⁷

Strengths	Weaknesses
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The base of industry support • Construction demand/ need • Relationships – both forces and industry • Passion for supporting Service Leavers • Programme connections • Brand/ image of BuildForce • Collaboration/ support (CTP and other charities) • Industry interest • Military interest • Other sectors following the BF model • Economy (construction has growth forecast) • 1-2-1 support ('It helps service leavers make an informed decision, even if they don't necessarily want to work in construction') 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Communications – e.g. managing expectations – is BuildForce a direct deliver or an enabling organisation? • Regional presence • Sustainability/ funding uncertainty • Military unit presence (getting actually into each unit) • OPs team size/ depth • Volume of military leavers • Tier 1 regional contacts • Communicating the diversity of the construction industry • Breadth of training • Knowledge of funding opportunity 'black spots'
Opportunities	Threats
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Communications • Geographies – regions • Targeting non officer level Service Leavers • Diversity • Demand/ skills gaps • Closer relationships with the military • Presence within individual units • Infrastructure pipeline (HS2, highways, power, Heathrow expansion) • Community benefit targets • All the additional roles that there are in the military, for example back office functions • Target priority segments from construction companies that have signed the Armed Forces Covenant • Supply chain engagement 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Funding • Other sectors • Economy/ Brexit • Future skills • Other military related organisations/ charities/ competitors • Other career changes • War • Cost to SMEs to retrain • Procurement targets (also different in England and Scotland)

4 Learning points

The Steering Group reflected on progress since July 2016, and highlighted the following learning lessons; summarised in the table on the next page. Points marked with an asterisk (*) are learning points for the next phase of BuildForce (April 2018 onwards).

³⁷ Please see Technical Annex for further information.

People/ partnerships	Process
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Engaged companies have approached BF rather than vice-versa. • Clearer on process / journey / timings • Managing expectations* • CRM has improved • More engaged with industry • More diverse military pool • Better interaction with regions* • Employers allowing mentors time • Forward planning (engaging earlier with resettlement leavers)* • Constant nurturing needed • SMEs more engaged • Regional contacts/ country contacts* • Broader base of businesses required. E.g. Scottish employers* • CTP more engaged • Focus eligibility on Service Leavers* rather than veterans 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • CRM has improved, but still requires manual manipulation. Also opportunity to mapped against Service Leaver's location*. • Improve quantitative measurements; e.g. 26 week sustained employment check • Organogram needed for each region/ country and strategy • Exit / referral strategy for Service Leaver who BF cannot place needed • Eligibility criteria to exclude veterans who have been out of the Military for longer than an agreed number of years • Process for those employers not engaging • Review and clarify requirements of mentors • Review of employers to focus resource on active rather than inactive • Consider a payment by results model • Engaging with other CITB projects/ funding • Operations team size is limited – e.g. this impacts on ability to carry out additional comms, e.g. newsletters
Product (Service)	Communications
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Communication / relationships critical • Mentors are key • More work placement programmes • Funding/ training blind spots* • Stronger training programme achieved • Greater success with skilled rather than unskilled roles has been achieved • Evolve to suit sector/ geography/ trade/ emphasis* • Free service • Offer fewer events* (resource intensive) • Employers offering further training* • More work experience programmes with employers 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Brand and website have improved, e.g. now approached for stories by trade press. 'We explain the service better but need to be better still'* • Use phone opposed to email • TNA by phone works • Inconsistency / lack of clear protocols in communication between mentors and Service Leavers • Mentoring approach ('If we can get more service leavers in the same locations then we can get mentors to support more people and improve the mentoring offered') • Newsletters produced were good • Slowdown in SME engagement; e.g. due to funding or know-how • Steering group marketing to major infrastructure projects • Develop media tools to explain what construction is and the diversity of the industry*

Evaluator comment:

This phase of BuildForce has created valuable operational and strategic learning that can be used to further refine the core approach. As part of a full review of the BuildForce process, areas for future improvement have been identified; including refining mentor engagement and developing communication protocols for the delivery partner

The programme is focussing in ensuring the conditions are optimal to focus efforts to best meet the critical challenges facing the Construction sector. For example, this could entail tailoring the offer to meet particular recruitment needs (whether critical roles or supporting SMEs / supply chain) or an approach targeting geographies where needs were greatest.

The BuildForce team has developed an in-depth understanding about the different services, and how they are perceived by construction firms.

"We're learning all the time. The military is quite complex, within the three services, they have very different cultures. It's less difficult for those coming out of the RAF or Navy to find jobs because of their skills, even for the most junior airman or sailor they have very high level skills. But for the soldier level it's not always the case. The Army often recruit from cities where there is a different intake. The cohort of officers is easy to place but for soldiers it's a different issue." Steering group member

Similarly, construction companies are not homogenous, and size of company was highlighted as a key factor. While all firms support the BuildForce ethos, the experience of, and the support received by a Service Leaver in an SME may be very different to their counterpart in a large contracting firm. *"The smaller the company, the less likely they are willing to be pay for training for someone."* Yet, SMEs and supply chain firms typically find it more challenging to recruit staff.

Effectiveness

Employees in BuildForce roles were asked how much time they had given to the task. The model ('most common') response for Mentors and Champions was 1 day, and Ambassadors less than one day.³⁸ Between 4 and 5 in 10 Ambassadors, Champions and Mentors self-assessed themselves as operating effectively in their BuildForce role – and broadly those that were investing more time were more likely to consider themselves as effective.³⁹ Further research is required to explore whether BuildForce mentors with an ex-military background are more effective in their role compared to other mentors.

It is noteworthy that employer representatives reported contrasting experiences of placing Service Leavers within their companies, with 16 out of 28 giving a response stating it was 'very challenging' or 'more challenging than expected'. One senior manager noted: *"Some managers in the business do need more persuading."*⁴⁰

Adding Value

The learning lessons were used as a basis for considering which aspects of BuildForce were 'core' to the service and would ideally be retained. BuildForce was considered to be an adaptable proposition, which could be aligned to different outcomes; for example recruiting critical roles, or supporting the transition to employment.⁴¹

³⁸Out of the 11 Ambassadors who answered, this ranged from <1 day to >10 days; 12 Champions ranged from <1 to 5 days; 29 Mentors ranged from less <1 to over 10 days.

³⁹ Ambassadors 43% (base 11), Mentors 45% (base 29) and Champions 46% (base 12).

⁴⁰ This is consistent with other research, for example Skyblue (2016) on the Homebuilding sector which identified that Site Managers wanted 'oven ready' candidates, so were not selecting candidates requiring development.

⁴¹ This flexibility is potentially a good match for the insight-led approach adopted by CITB's Structured Fund.

The BuildForce journey was seen to align well to CITB's 'discover, engage, experience, join' pathway.⁴² Comments from the steering group highlighted the following critical factors:



Partner case study: The Chartered Institute of Building (CIOB) has worked closely with BuildForce, and is a strong supporter of their work.

"There's no one doing what BuildForce is doing on that scale with that ambition. No one giving Service Leavers the experience and skills they need and helping them transition into jobs. A lot of construction labour is employed from Europe so Brexit will lead to fewer people being in the sector. We are going to have to look at recruiting our own, so BuildForce will only become more important."

BuildForce could make sure they are a bit more engaged with the other big professional bodies, such as RICS, RIBA and ICE, as they would be great to get involved. They represent the big 4 bodies across the UK and globally so I think more opportunities could be explored by working together in other ways.

We also have a chartered building company network and there could be opportunities to explore more partnerships there as well."

Evaluator comment:

The 'beating heart' (to quote an Alliance member) of BuildForce is considered to be the genuine construction input (as opposed to generic or HR), with honest, tailored support to effectively match Service Leavers with sustainable job opportunities.

Building on the lessons from this phase in BuildForce's development, and using the current infrastructure, there is scope to target available finite resources on providing more support to a smaller pool of (more active) Service Leavers and construction companies and mentors. Partners expressed a desire for more engagement with BuildForce, and suggested other partners who might contribute to a scaled up BuildForce.

⁴² Michael Lennox, CITB Partnerships Manager - Scotland, Knowledge Capture event (May 2018).

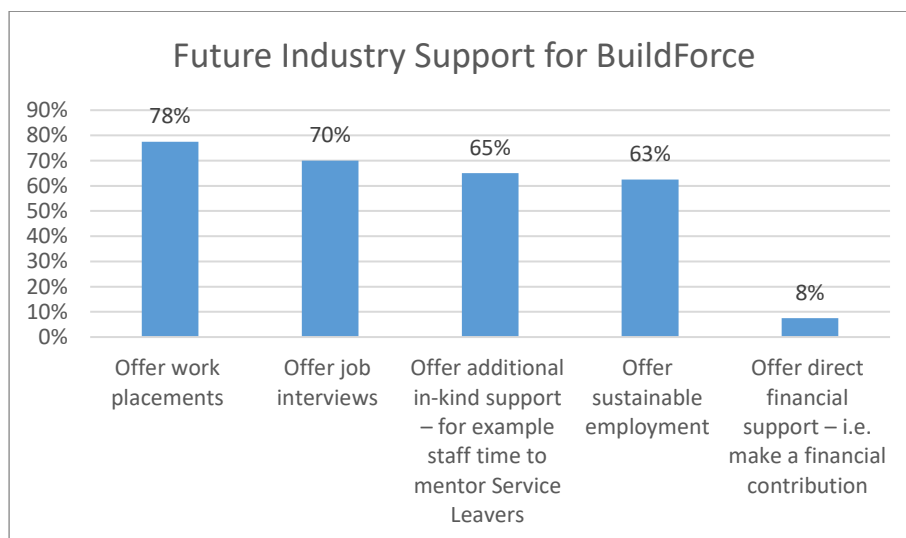
5 Sustainability

“The objective is to create a sustainable model... It is complex. We can say certain elements are sustainable but the management needs to be funded.” Steering Group Member (May 2018)

A sustainability survey was undertaken, and completed by 42 companies.⁴³

- **85% of firms (34 from 40) would choose BuildForce if they were looking to recruit a Service Leaver, rather than the Career Transition Partnership, CITB or a recruitment agency**
- **The three aspects of BuildForce that add the most value to industry and the Construction sector were: ‘the skill in matching Service Leavers to vacancies’ , ‘work placements to Service Leavers’, then ‘the ability for employees to become mentors’.**
- **76% (31 from 41) favour ‘an enhanced BuildForce model’, enabled with CITB funding with employer support, and 15% (6 from 41) ‘a mixed funding model, combining CITB, employer and other funding support.**
- **85% (34 out of 40) agreed it was important or extremely important that BuildForce continues to connect Service Leavers to the Construction sector.**

Figure 3: Future industry support for BuildForce



Base =113 responses from 41 firms (multiple options allowed)

BuildForce has been supported through to March 2018 by a mix of CITB grant and industry in-kind contributions, and this approach remains the preferred route, by both the Steering Group and construction firms.⁴⁴

⁴³ 35 companies opted to provide a named response.

⁴⁴ Using a seven-stage ‘Sustainability Model’ (UK Commission for Employment and Skills (2013), BuildForce can be situated between Stage 2 ‘sustained with public investment’) and Stage 3 ‘sustained with partner delivery investment’.

Less preferred options were a mixed funding model (due chiefly to the increased administration to develop and maintain this infrastructure) and a programme funded by construction firms (reliant on the support of senior staff which creates vulnerability).

One aspect of sustainability is the stated willingness to pay for the service by those who benefit from it. Employers and Service Leavers were asked whether, in principle, they would be prepared to pay for BuildForce.

- Employers who provided higher satisfaction levels it were more likely to state they would be prepared to pay for the service.
- Three Alliance members (8%) from 40 would be prepared to pay for BuildForce in future.

Evaluator comments

The knowledge capture workshop demonstrated the Steering Group's commitment to securing the future of BuildForce; one that retained the core support service to connect Service Leavers with construction firms.

Firms see BuildForce as having a role to play in tackling the major challenges facing the Construction sector. The feedback from construction firms is that resource shortages are an industry problem requiring sector-wide solutions; with CITB in a co-ordinating, leadership and funding role. Firms therefore favour a continuation of the current model (building on the lessons from this phase).

The transition phase (April-June 2018) will require active management of risks, and also offers the chance to review all existing relationships and continue only with those that are going to add value (the current role of the Chairman). New partnerships will offer the potential to scale up BuildForce in the next phase targeted towards defined industry needs.

Consideration was also given to further developing a presence in the regions and Home Nations, potentially contingent on securing additional funding.

Companies occupied a clear niche in the marketplace. It was also seen to be important that BuildForce positioned itself to respond to gaps and challenges faced by the Construction sector.

6 Conclusions

1. The core offer is valued and valuable for industry. Engaged companies provided an 'excellent' Net Promoter Score. BuildForce has connected 76 firms to a pool of Service Leavers. In turn, Service Leavers have accessed real construction industry contacts, mentors, work placement and employment opportunities. 93 have secured jobs since 2016 – contributing to reducing skills shortages in a range of critical roles, and attracting new talent into the Construction sector
2. A key learning point is that greater effort has been required to create training, mentoring and employment outcomes for Service Leavers. Engagement targets for firms and Service Leavers have been significantly exceeded. However, managing supply and demand in an 'all inclusive' model is resource intensive. To ensure consistent quality of support, new vetting and communications protocols are being introduced for mentors and mentees
3. Industry provides support to continue, with 85% (of 40 firms) agreeing or strongly agreeing that BuildForce should continue to match Service Leavers to vacancies, and the same proportion stating they would choose BuildForce if they were looking to recruit a Service Leaver, rather than the Career Transition Partnership, CITB or a recruitment agency. Three Alliance members (8% from 40) would be prepared to offer direct financial support to BuildForce
4. BuildForce is contributing to tackling the skills gaps and shortages facing the sector. To most effectively respond to these industry challenges going forward, firms and partner organisations would prefer an industry solution; with BuildForce sustained by further CITB funding, again with employer support.

Learning

- It has been necessary to engage a greater number of Service Leavers and firms than originally envisaged. The additional engagement has resulted in greater effort and more divergent experiences for Service Leavers
- The resources allocated by the delivery partner have been insufficient to ensure a consistently high quality experience for all Service Leavers. Procurement lessons will inform future contracting
- Protocols and guidance would support mentors. Mentors that were able to commit more time were more likely to assess their own performance as effective. Managing supply and demand, and the skill in matching a Service Leaver to an appropriate mentor is critical. There needs to be both sufficient time allowed for the mentee to fulfil this role, and enough suitable Service Leavers requiring support
- The learning programme has provided the insight to refine the BuildForce model; chiefly on the optimal balance required to manage the balance of Service Leaver supply and industry demand. The BuildForce model is now sufficiently versatile and known that it can be adapted to meet a range of industry needs.

7 Recommendations

The evaluators would like to three key recommendations to enable BuildForce to evolve into the next incarnation.⁴⁵

Recommendation	Owner	Timescale	Outcome
1a) Create a transition for BuildForce	BuildForce	April-June 2018	<p>Clarity on how BuildForce will transition post March 2018. To include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Confirmation of continued Lendlease financial support • (Re)formation of the Industry Steering Group • Appointment of a delivery partner so they are embedded prior to the next phase and address quality issues in readiness for the next phase • Contingency planning for how BuildForce could respond to agreed industry priorities (identified by CITB's research)' how the Programme will be managed, whether external partners will add value and an exit strategy for beneficiaries who may fall outside the scope of a repurposed model • Contingency planning if a planned bid for CITB grant support is not successful.
1b) Convene an investors' meeting	BuildForce Steering Group with CITB support	By end June 2018	Seek to galvanise a group of industry representatives, professional bodies and consensus organisations around a Structured Bid to CITB, or to explore other low or no cost opportunities for continuing BuildForce.

⁴⁵From an initial set of five draft recommendations. Proposed and considered by BuildForce, but not taken forward were: testing the remaining construction firms signing the Armed Forces Covenant as a source of interested companies, introducing eligibility criteria to limit BuildForce to recent Service Leavers and seeking funding from military partners including the Royal British Legion.

Recommendation	Owner	Timescale	Outcome
2. Review all BuildForce process to create optimal conditions for further investment	BuildForce	April -June 2018	<p>To learn from the lessons around vetting and communicating with Service Leavers, and create the conditions for a more focused BuildForce model. To include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cleanse the pool of Service Leavers to remove those who are inactive or have found other employment • Review and refresh mentor list and develop communications protocols • Review and refresh firms engaged • Expand network of firms once CITB priorities are published.⁴⁶ • Develop comms protocols for mentors and mentees to more effectively manage expectations from this key aspect of the BuildForce package of support • Create an exit strategy for Service leavers who are not assessed as suitable for BuildForce support
	CITB	2019	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Commission further research to consider whether ex-military mentors provide better quality support to other Service Leavers
3. Define industry's 'strategic intent' on Service Leavers	CITB	June 2018	<p>BuildForce is a versatile Programme that can align well to CITB's 'discover, engage, experience, join' pathway. The Programme can support both advocating 'sector attractiveness' and 'closing skills gaps' – but the approach would differ depending on which of these outcomes was judged most critical.</p>

⁴⁶ Expected end May 2018, and critical to shape the next phase of BuildForce.

Skyblue is a research consultancy with expertise in the fields of skills, employment, training, learning and careers. We provide consultancy to clients in the construction and built environment sector to help them improve their business performance and productivity.

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