

Educating the educators

Construction's unique opportunity to work with careers advisers to inspire a new generation of recruits

A grey circular graphic with a white border containing the text 'Research Report February 2014'.

Research
Report
February
2014



The golden opportunity



“any student who really feels they would like face-to-face advice should get it.” Damien Yeates, Chief Executive, Skills Development Scotland.

After five years in recession construction is growing again. And as the industry gears up to deliver more homes, new schools, offices and infrastructure it needs to build smarter and greener. More than ever construction needs to inspire and win over the most talented people to meet these challenges. In return the industry can offer rewarding and multi-faceted careers.

There's no doubt that the construction sector is becoming more sophisticated. The magnificent venues for the London 2012 Olympic Games have been built safely, on time and on budget. Progress on the Commonwealth Games in Glasgow is on track. The planned nuclear power plant at Wylfa in Anglesey is part of a nuclear renewal programme bigger than the construction of our Victorian railways. But the perception of what it means to work in construction continues to fit an outdated stereotype: a hard, dirty manual job for boys.

Such negative perceptions were thrown up yet again in a comprehensive new survey by Pye Tait Consulting commissioned by the CITB to find out what careers advisers and teachers think of construction, and how best the industry might change their opinions and support their work.¹

their knowledge is by working more closely with employers.

It's clear the industry needs to heed the rallying call from David Cameron. Speaking in early November 2013 at the CBI conference the Prime Minister said: *“We need to get more businesses into our schools to inspire young people about enterprise, about small business, about entrepreneurship and about industry itself.”*³ This has also been felt in both Scotland and Wales, where it was reported that negative stereotypes were further exacerbated by a lack of face-to-face contact between the construction industry, careers advisers and young people as a result of 'too much focus on online services'.

Equally, Government needs to provide the necessary resources for careers advisers to have the time and space to benefit from such support. Recent changes in career advisory service funding at all levels mean that teachers often have to double up as careers advisers and cannot always do the job justice, although this issue is less prevalent in Scotland.



Meanwhile, the Pye Tait survey reveals how careers advisers in England are desperate for more help from companies to provide information and materials. This is particularly the case with schools, which are already struggling to fulfill legal commitments to offer impartial careers advice to year 9 to 11 pupils, that is 14 to 16 year olds, and are now having to extend this to both younger and older age pupil groups.



According to the Sutton Trust, only 14% of schools in England say they have the resources to fulfill legal commitments to offer impartial careers advice.⁵ These findings certainly reinforce the views of Ofsted, which said in a report published in September that the arrangements for careers guidance in schools are not working well enough. Three quarters of the schools visited for the Ofsted report were not fulfilling their legal duty to provide impartial careers advice effectively.⁶

The research report also found that guidance for schools on careers advice in England is not explicit, and there is a lack of employer engagement in schools. This view was echoed in Wales, where Careers Wales has this year assumed a new brokerage role between employers, schools and colleges to encourage greater face-to-face contact. And in Scotland, where Damien Yeates,

Chief Executive of Skills Development Scotland, tasked with supporting the delivery of careers information and guidance across the nation, recently told the Times Educational Supplement Scotland that *“any student who really feels they would like face-to-face advice should get it.”*⁷

One of the opportunities the industry must seize is to fill the vacuum left by the withdrawal of face-to-face contact between advice seekers and providers, and the reduction in careers advice resources.

CITB is keen to work with both large and small businesses to make this happen and help convey a sense of excitement about opportunities in the built environment sector. It's an opportunity we can't afford to miss.

35% of careers advisers believe a career in construction is unattractive.²



Remarks like this one from a teacher in southern England - *“I do not think that a career in the construction industry is a good fit for the children I advise”* - were sadly all too common. Interestingly, the attractiveness rating of the industry reduced moving down the country from north to south – yet London and the south east is often where construction activity and job opportunities are more plentiful. We need to urgently change the perceptions of careers advisers on construction and educate them about the breadth of opportunities available to their students across the industry and throughout England, Scotland and Wales. Influencers say that the most valuable way of improving

¹ The research by Pye Tait Consulting was conducted during July and August 2013, involving an online survey that was responded to by 745 careers influencers. This was complemented by 10 focus groups in England, Scotland and Wales. The target groups were school teachers with responsibility for providing careers advice, careers advisers and coaches for schools, further and higher-education levels, independent advisers, national careers organisation advisers, local authorities and Job Centres.

² 35% of construction workers rating the industry between 1-5 with views that construction has limited attraction, typically involving dirty hard work, but may have some appeal depending on ability and aspiration. 65% rating construction between 6-10 seeing construction as attractive, involving good prospects and job security, with varied skills sets and training opportunities recognised by higher scores.

³ The Rt Hon David Cameron MP, Prime Minister. (2013). CBI Annual Conference 2013. Available: <https://www.gov.uk/government/speeches/prime-ministers-cbi-speech-2013>.

⁴ Over 80% of respondents asked this question coming from English secondary schools.

⁵ You Gov survey for Pearsons cited by the Sutton Trust. (2013). Real Apprenticeships: Creating a revolution in English Skills. Available: www.suttontrust.com/public/documents/apprenticeships.pdf.

⁶ Ofsted. (2013). Going in the right direction? Careers guidance in schools from September 2012. Available: <http://www.ofsted.gov.uk/resources/going-right-direction-careers-guidance-schools-september-2012>.

⁷ Julia Belgutay. (2013). Interview with Damien Yeates. Available: <http://www.tes.co.uk/article.aspx?storycode=6331292>.

Why teachers urgently need help to help their students

The central findings of the CITB's 2013 Pye Tait report are mirrored by research conducted on behalf of the Association of Colleges for England in 2012. This earlier report found that:

44%

of school teachers admit to giving a pupil bad or unformed advice in the past.

82%

of school teachers don't feel they have the appropriate knowledge to advise pupils on their careers and **82%** are calling for better guidance on advising pupils about their options post-16.

These findings support one of our key recommendations for mandatory teacher training in vocational careers and job opportunity awareness.



What careers advisers and influencers said about construction

CITB's Pye Tait survey highlights how careers advisers across Great Britain often have very limited views of the careers construction offers.

The following observations by careers influencers indicate how much work needs to be done to help advisers appreciate the richness of opportunities available in the construction industry.

"Generally the construction industry tends to be attractive to those students who enjoy more practical and less academic tasks." College, Northern England

This limited, and limiting view takes no cognisance of the many professional career routes available to highly educated and qualified engineers and contractors.

"I teach entirely boys and the construction industry provides some active roles and some good career prospects. But the economic downturn has made parents and pupils more nervous, although we actively promote it to prevent a skills shortage in future years." Secondary School, Scotland

Construction's perceived over-dependency on the economic cycles of the UK does deter some potential recruits, but as we come out of recession, the opportunities for employment should outweigh any negative perceptions about career longevity.

"I contacted CITB to get information on behalf of an employer regarding support available if recruiting an apprentice. The CITB adviser was very helpful but the preconceptions of the employer was the systems for accessing help were very bureaucratic." National Careers Organisation, Wales

CITB and Government need to continue to develop their partnership work to help employers gain a better understanding of how to benefit from the apprenticeship system.

How the careers advice landscape is changing

A host of factors make it difficult to change age-old stereotypes about construction – and one of the main factors is the state of flux of careers information and the effects of recession.

The complexity of careers advice delivery is exacerbated by differing systems in England, Scotland and Wales.

From this September, the legal duty of English schools to provide independent and impartial careers guidance has been extended from years 9 to 11 to include pupils in year 8 (12 to 13 year olds) and years 12 and 13 (16-18 years olds).

Again, this presents an opportunity for the industry to step in and engage more fully, an initiative being encouraged by the Department of Education.

In Scotland, recent changes to the provision of careers advice and the Introduction of Curriculum for Excellence, provide new opportunities for construction, particularly with regard to employer engagement.

The report also finds that Welsh careers advisers are concerned about recent moves away from a more universal face-to-face offer towards only targeting specific groups, and which will not be available to over 25s.

What careers advisers want from construction employers

Careers advisers and influencers are conscious of knowledge deficits in construction opportunities and would welcome additional input from CITB and the industry.

Their favoured methods of imparting knowledge are:



There is a strong inclination towards face-to-face methods and interaction, including employer talks and visits; this is followed by online; and then printed material.



“We need to get more businesses into our schools to inspire young people about enterprise, about small business, about entrepreneurship and about industry itself.” David Cameron.



Careers advisers and influencers – a knowledge gap to fill

The views of careers advisers and influencers about construction are most often based on their knowledge of craft and trade roles. Traditional perceptions of the industry as hard work for low pay are common. National careers organisations are the best informed on the types of job roles and the most in-demand skills, as well as pay and salary levels.

Pye Tait reports that careers advisers and influencers are aware of a construction knowledge gap. To counter this gap, careers advisers would like more ‘real life’ examples, including case studies from people working in the industry, as well as opportunities to engage with industry ambassadors and ‘role models’. This type of assistance and support should be readily available from the construction industry, providing a valuable opportunity to offer compelling and inspiring career-track stories.

The research also suggests that the complexity surrounding careers advice offers CITB the opportunity to introduce clarity by signposting up-to-date intelligence on new and emerging roles. And it also notes that sustainability initiatives, Building Information Modelling and off-site construction may enhance the industry’s appeal to those who have previously viewed it as a blue-collar vocation.

How the industry can educate the educators

The need to improve the image of the industry to enable it to recruit and retain the best talent and improve efficiency and innovation is a key strand of the Government's Industrial Strategy for Construction produced by the Department for Business, Innovation and Skills. In *Construction 2025* it says that:

"It is vital to engage with young people and society at large and that engagement with the public must begin at a young age (from and 11–12, before GCSE curriculum choices are made) and then be consistently applied right through to further and higher education level."

*"There is a pressing need to properly inform all job seekers as well as young people, and their influencers (parents and teachers), about the rewards offered by a career in construction. Too often negative attitudes about the industry prevail, with a 2013 CITB survey of 14–18 year olds showing they were put off by the potential dangers of working on site, as well as the physically challenging aspects of site work and working outside."*⁹

So, as *Construction 2025* points out, despite high redundancy and low vacancy rates, the industry continues to face significant skills shortages, with almost one fifth of all vacancies classified as hard to fill. It concludes:

"These shortages are evident mainly in skilled trades and professional occupations. This leads to inefficiency in the way the industry operates and reduces its overall competitiveness."

"The challenge facing the industry is to identify and target new recruits for skilled trades and the professions and address training and development needs on a more strategic basis."

All industry bodies should be engaged and contribute their educational and recruitment resources."

What CITB is already doing



CITB is already involved in a number of ways to make this possible, which the strategy acknowledges. A few examples of what we do include:

01

Working with employers and Governments to deliver construction information and careers guidance. CITB has a Partnership Agreement with DWP to promote construction careers to NEETs and a similar Partnership Agreement with the National Careers Service which will further join up efforts to promote construction careers. Leading on **14 to 19** vocational curriculum and qualification development, including support for University Technical Colleges and Studio Schools.

02

Working directly with the Welsh and Scottish Governments to ensure that careers advice provides young people the quality of access to the construction industry they need.

03

Running the CITB Construction Ambassador Programme. Our **1,500** trained volunteers come from a range of industry backgrounds to share their positive experiences with young people considering a career in construction. There were **170** engagements in England, Scotland and Wales in the last six months, including site visits, careers presentations, ad-hoc work-experience and undergraduate mentoring.

04

Providing careers advice through Construction Careers Advisers. CITB's network of **24** Construction Careers Advisers across Great Britain works with young people and schools and colleges all around the country providing information and advice on the range of career and training opportunities in construction.

05

Our extensive online resources at citb.co.uk/careers including the careers progression tool, curriculum support materials and the CITB Crest Awards. CITB's Apprenticeships programme, supporting nearly **8,000** Construction Apprentices in England alone and **4,000** in Scotland and Wales. www.bconstructive.co.uk is our Managing Agency's website, aimed at young people. It provides careers/apprenticeship information and our online apprenticeship application.

⁹ Department for Business, Innovation and Skills. (2013). Industrial Strategy: Construction 2025. Available: https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/210099/bis-13-955-construction-2025-industrial-strategy.pdf.

Where next – our recommendations



There is an urgent need to present construction as a modern industry that is developing into a world leader in tackling climate change and harnessing new building information technologies. So how do we do this?

Action is required from three key players – the construction industry, CITB, national and local government.

What industry can do to provide more support

Step up support for the CITB Construction Ambassador Programme so industry role models provide information and inspiration on construction careers in schools.

Boost the CITB website with career case studies and video diaries including details of career progression, roles using new technologies or driving greener construction and more female role models to supplement face-to-face careers advice.

Represent the sector at major careers and recruitment events – promoting the wide range of careers available and the team work that's a feature of the construction supply chain.

Join forces with supply chains, federations, training groups and professional institutions to support local careers events.

What Government can do

Issue more explicit guidance to schools on their duty to provide impartial careers advice, equally supporting vocational education pathways into construction including Apprenticeships.

Make the National Careers Service responsible for linking schools with sector specific careers guidance for ages 13 to 18, from industry-backed bodies such as CITB.

Make it mandatory for teacher training courses to include an awareness raising programme on vocational careers and training opportunities for young people and encourage practicing teachers and careers advisers to keep their knowledge up to date by attending seminars and 'experiencing the world of work' events.

Rethink the policy to make all careers advice 'virtual' – young people, teachers and careers advisers want more face-to-face contact with CIAG professionals across England, Scotland and Wales.

What CITB will do

Work with Local Enterprise Partnerships to make available labour market information and supporting information on labour demand and employment patterns in construction to help match training to skills need.

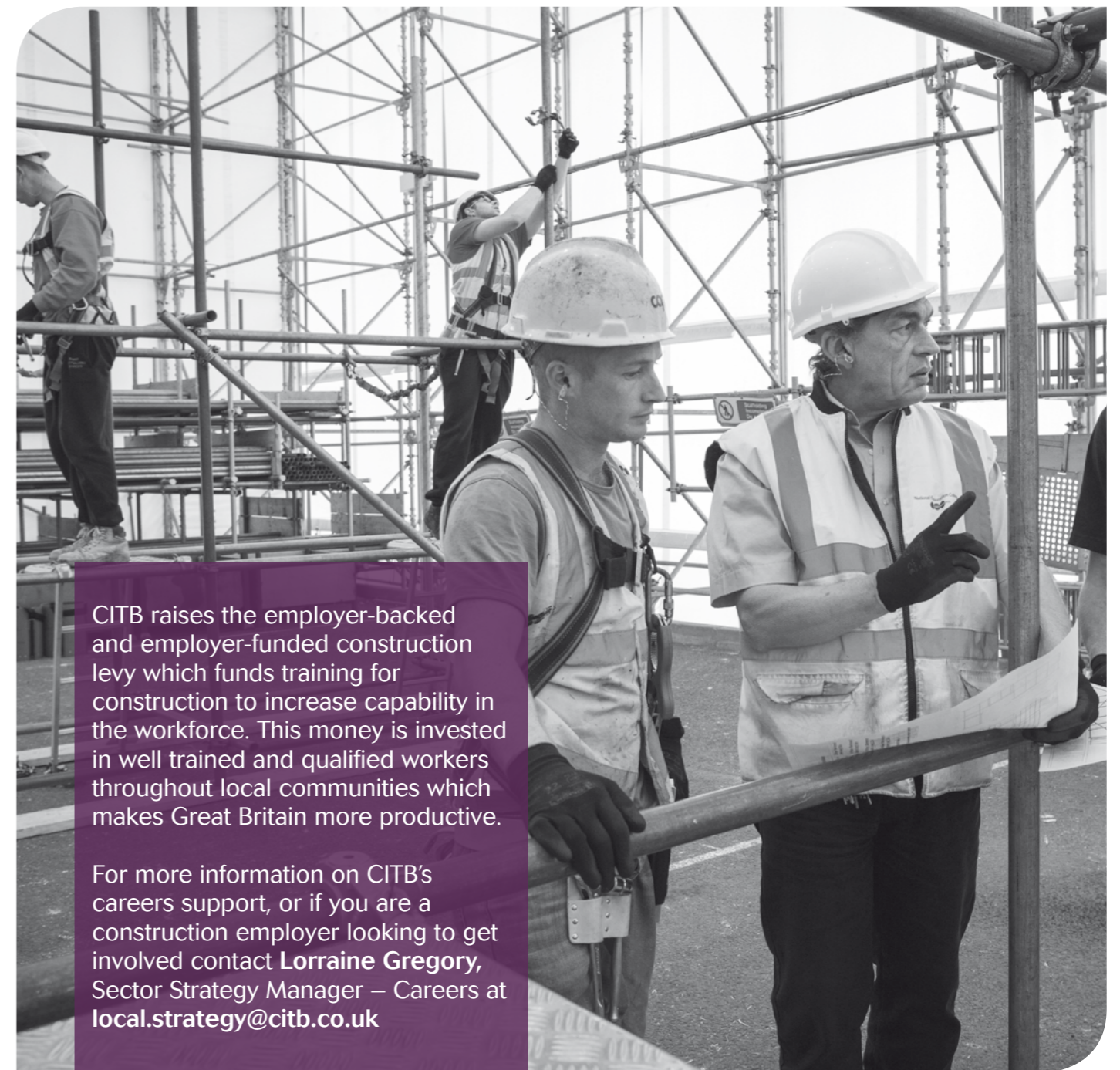
Develop partnership agreements and local networks with careers services across Great Britain to ensure that inspiring and up to date information is being used by teachers, careers advisers and job centres.

Broker relationships between schools and local employers to encourage more face-to-face engagement with young people and careers advisers and to unlock more work experience placements in partnership with Government.

Equip ambassadors, employers and careers advisers with inspiring messaging, new careers materials and activity ideas to help bring construction careers to life.

Continue to track the awareness and appeal of construction careers amongst young people and their influencers so we can ensure that our work is making a difference and improving the image of the industry.

CITB: Supporting careers in construction



CITB raises the employer-backed and employer-funded construction levy which funds training for construction to increase capability in the workforce. This money is invested in well trained and qualified workers throughout local communities which makes Great Britain more productive.

For more information on CITB's careers support, or if you are a construction employer looking to get involved contact **Lorraine Gregory**, Sector Strategy Manager – Careers at local.strategy@citb.co.uk

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