

# Addressing the skills priorities in the construction sector in Buckinghamshire



## Introducing the Local Skills Improvement Plan

The Local Skills Improvement Plan (LSIP) is a three-year plan that sets out changes that need to be made to post-16 technical education and training to address priority skill needs.

In Buckinghamshire, this is being developed by Buckinghamshire Business First and the construction sector has been identified as a priority sector.

## Gaining your views

This document outlines the main skills priorities identified for the construction sector and potential solutions to address those priorities. These have been developed in consultation with employers and key partners, and we welcome your views to ensure we have got it right.

Once you have read this document, there is a short survey for you to complete which [you can find here](#).

# Skills priorities in Building Services

Engagement with sector employers has found a **lack of applicants with the right skills** for the following roles:

- Electricians
- Carpenters
- Plumbers
- Gas engineer
- Heat pump and air conditioner installers

Applicants do not have sufficient:

- Practical skills to apply their technical knowledge
- Work readiness skills (see below)
- Communication skills

The **existing workforce need support to upskill** them in the following areas:

- Heat pump installation
- Heat pump maintenance
- Supervisory skills
- Management skills
- Environment impact/net zero awareness
- Environment impact/net zero management
- Work readiness skills
- Communication skills

## Skills priorities in Trades

Engagement with sector employers has found a **lack of applicants with the right skills** for the following roles:

- Electrician
- Carpenter
- Plumber
- Bricklayer
- Painter & Decorator
- Plasterer
- Gas Engineer
- Heat pump and Air Conditioning installers

Applicants do not have sufficient:

- Practical skills to apply their technical knowledge
- Work readiness skills (see below)
- Communication skills

The **existing workforce need support to upskill** them with the following:

- Heat pump installation
- Heat pump maintenance
- Supervisory skills
- Management skills
- Environment impact/net zero awareness
- Environment impact/net zero management
- Work readiness skills
- Communication skills

# Skills priorities in Professional Services

Engagement with sector employers has found a **lack of applicants with the right skills** for the following roles:

- Civil Engineers
- Structural Engineers
- Town Planners
- Surveyors

Applicants do not have sufficient:

- Practical skills to apply their technical knowledge
- Work readiness skills (see below)
- Communication skills

The **existing workforce need support to upskill** them with the following:

- Supervisory skills
- Management skills
- Environment impact/net zero awareness
- Environment impact/net zero management
- Work readiness skills
- Communication skills

# Skills priorities in Infrastructure

Engagement with sector employers has found a **lack of applicants with the right skills** for the following roles:

- Labourers
- Steel fixers
- Civil engineers
- Scaffolders
- Plant operators
- Site supervisors

Applicants do not have sufficient:

- Practical skills to apply their technical knowledge
- Work readiness skills (see below)
- Communication skills

The **existing workforce need support to upskill** them with the following:

- Supervisory skills
- Management skills
- Environment impact/net zero awareness
- Environment impact/net zero management
- Work readiness skills
- Communication skills

# The importance of Work Readiness Skills

Employers from across the construction sector and across other priority sectors have identified that new entrants and applicants often lack essential work readiness skills.

Based on employer views, Buckinghamshire Business First has identified five aspects of work readiness:



Potential work readiness model for Buckinghamshire based on employer feedback

# Key reasons for the current skills challenges in the construction sector

We found that:

- Awareness of careers options in the construction sector are limited
- Specific courses needed are not being delivered in Buckinghamshire
- Existing full-time courses need more emphasis on increasing:
  - Practical skills
  - Job readiness of students
  - Alignment of health and safety

## Addressing the skills priorities in construction

The following outline the potential solutions that have been identified to tackle the current skill priorities in the construction sector:

### Careers awareness and guidance

- Produce a career map of the sector showing the occupations and the routeways into and through the construction sector
- Explain the nature of each occupation, its main tasks and bring each role to life for someone who may not be aware of what someone in this role may do
- Develop a self-assessment to help job seekers link their interests and skills with relevant roles across the construction sector to identify potential occupations that may suit their profiles

### Apprenticeships

- Undertake a campaign to promote construction apprenticeships and link to available job and apprenticeship opportunities
- Pilot a moped scheme or provide driving lessons to help apprentices get to work

### Immersion programmes or bootcamps

- Develop intensive courses offered over approximately two months aimed at career changers to develop essential technical and work readiness skills in specific occupations

### **Review appropriate of provision**

- Review the existing full-time courses to make sure they are relevant to Business Services
- Start to deliver the Diploma in Refrigeration and Air conditioning at levels 2 and 3 in Buckinghamshire

### **Add value to current courses**

- Increased the number of employers helping deliver the technical content of construction courses
- Increased the number of placements being offered

### **Continuous Professional Development**

- Identify or develop a range of short courses to be delivered at times to suit contractor

## **Moving forward**

The LSIP priorities and solutions will be submitted to the Department for Education by the end of May 2023. If you would like to be involved in the process, [click here](#) to email John Browning (Programme Manager of the Local Skills Improvement Plan in Buckinghamshire) or call 01296 798774 / 07507 690892.