



Cross-industry  
Construction  
Apprenticeship  
Task Force™



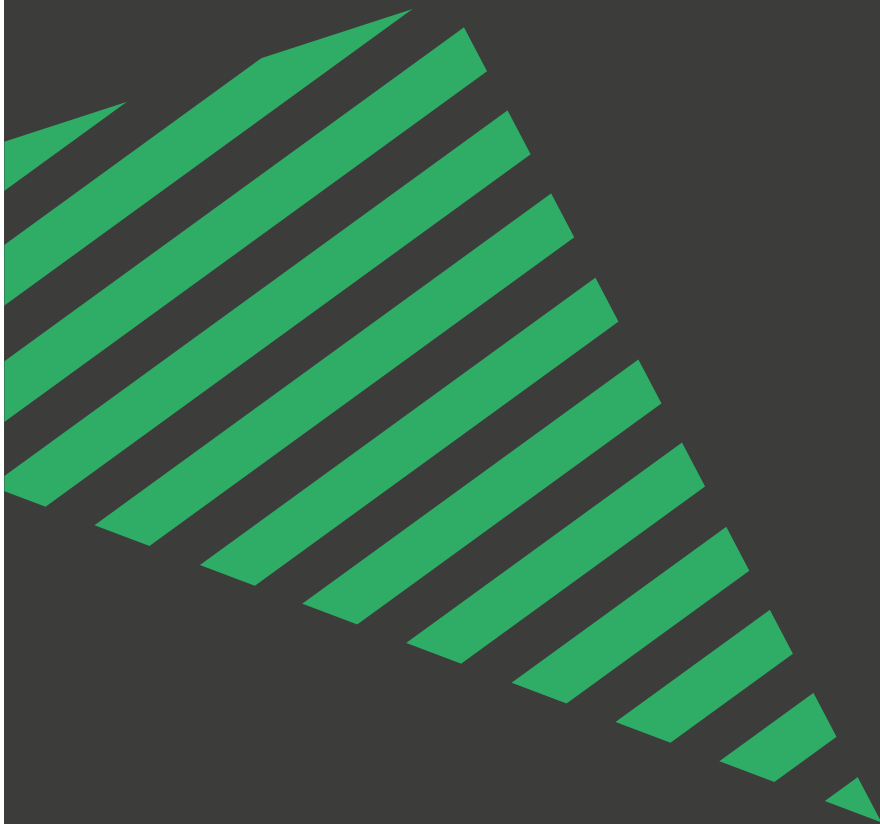
# T-Levels

Shaping skills for the future  
of the construction industry



“The construction industry is in dire need of change... With digital technology advancements pushing ahead in almost every other industry and with the construction labour pool coming under serious pressure, the time has come for action.”

Mark Farmer - 'Modernise or Die' - 2016



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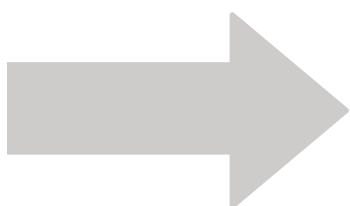


## Introduction

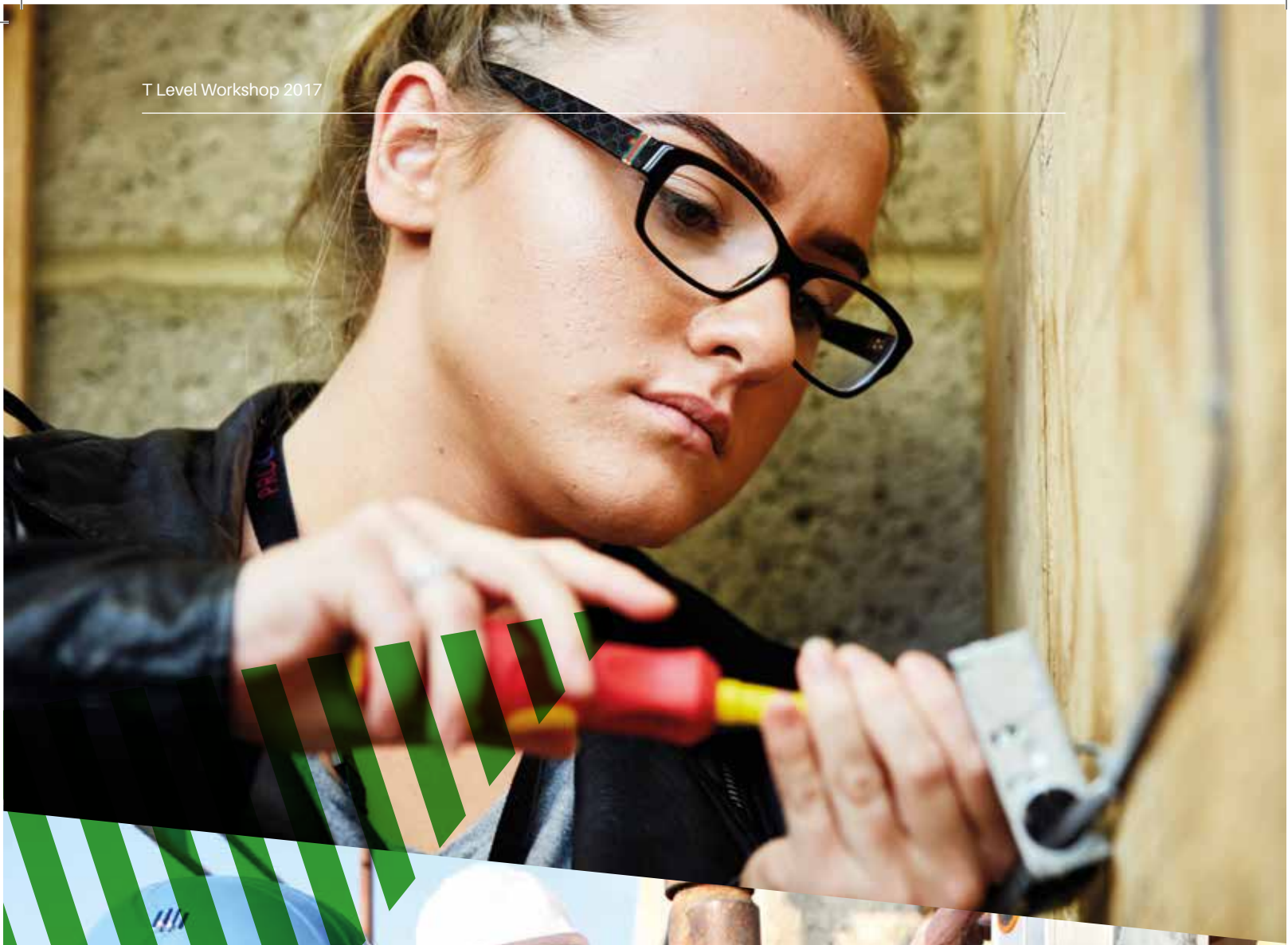
On 13 July 2017, City & Guilds hosted and chaired a workshop with leaders from the Construction industry on the emerging T-Levels. The aim of the workshop was to have a robust discussion around construction skills, the changing landscape, and how to incorporate the ideas from Mark Farmer's report 'Modernise or Die' which considered the importance of technical education in the construction sector. This report is the product of this workshop, including the proposed actions raised by the attendees, recommendations to Government, and highlighting the barriers that industry will need to overcome to ensure the success of the 14-19 education reforms.

### Workshop Attendees:

- **Mark Farmer**  
CEO  
*Cast Consultancy*
- **Martyn Price MBE**  
Chairman  
*Cross-Industry Construction  
Apprenticeship Taskforce*
- **Jean Duprez MBE**  
Managing Director  
*Duprez Consulting Ltd*
- **Ian Billyard**  
Principal & Chief Executive  
*Leeds College of Building*
- **Kat Healey**  
Training Manager  
*Seddon Construction*
- **Jon Chadwick**  
Learning and Development  
Manager  
*Interserve*
- **Jenni Carrott**  
Workplace Manager  
*Berkeley Homes*
- **Edward Shaw**  
Industry Manager  
*City & Guilds*







# Foreword

## Sir John Armitt



Now is a time of unprecedented and, some may argue, much needed change to vocational education in the UK. The Government's Technical and Further Education Act aims to streamline this education system for 16 - 19 year olds and put it on a par with academic education. In practice, the reforms will mean that all technical qualifications fit into 15 key industry routes that support the needs of the UK economy, with young people ultimately achieving 'T-Levels' in their chosen subject. Naturally construction will form one of these routes.

These reforms have come at a crucial time for the UK construction sector as it needs to deliver on high-profile infrastructure projects such as HS2 and the need to increase house building to support the UK's growing housing crisis, all whilst suffering from growing skills gaps. As an industry we are already heavily reliant on foreign labour and Brexit will create even more need to develop a sustainable and home-grown talent pipeline.

However, training our talent has never been our strong point. The Farmer Review 'Modernise or Die' published in 2016 highlighted what it called construction's 'dysfunctional training model' and its lack of innovation and collaboration. The technical education reforms are an opportunity for the industry to cast off this label and modernise the way we deliver training. Through real engagement with the development of T-Levels we can help create high quality qualifications that have clear progression to careers, and in doing so put our sector back on the map as a career of choice for young people.

As with the apprenticeship reforms, employers will be placed in the driving seat in the development of these new T-Level qualifications. But as well as opportunities there are issues with the proposals we need to address. A hugely challenging timeline has been proposed which may make it difficult to deliver and moves are afoot to radically change

the supplier structure, potentially creating a monopoly market. Now is the time for the industry to come together and influence this process whilst we have the chance, securing the future of our industry for generations to come. If we get this right, it will allow us to create the much-needed home-grown talent to allow our industry to meet demand in the UK and to compete on the world stage. The alternative doesn't bear thinking about.

To support this process, during summer 2017, City & Guilds brought together a group of industry professionals, including Mark Farmer himself, to discuss T-Levels and how we can best make these work for the sector. The following report is the product of this workshop, including the proposed actions raised by the attendees, the recommendations to Government, and the barriers that industry will need to overcome to ensure the success of the 16-19 education reforms.

I hope that this report provides some food for thought and encourages people from the sector, as well as policy-makers, to come together to grasp this once in a lifetime opportunity to create a skills system that can unleash the enormous potential of the UK construction industry, both now and in the future.



Sir John Armitt CBE  
Chairman - City & Guilds

# Foreword

## Martyn Price



Earlier this year the CCATF and City & Guilds announced a collaborative agreement for the promotion and development of the 'skills agenda'. This was to be a collaboration aimed at developing stronger, more robust and capable deliverables and outcomes in the critical skills development and apprenticeship uptake areas of construction.

Since its creation in 2008 the CCATF has acted as a champion and catalyst for understanding and development of the apprenticeship agenda within the construction sector and, critically, the supply chain that underpins it.

Following the introduction in March this year of what was billed as a 'radical' overhaul of technical education the new 'T-levels' can form a critical component in bolstering the skills gap within the sector and, with the negative impact of Brexit on migrant skills, act as a form of barrier against an increasing dearth of talent and skill.

This is, of course, all conditional upon the industry getting to grips with just what 'T levels' are, how they will impact upon the skills agenda and how best they are implemented, administered and managed.

To understand their impact and to make a coherent start in getting to know what effect they may have on the sector the CCATF and City & Guilds brought to together key industry personnel to take part in a 'T-level' workshop.

The workshop examined the 'T-levels' and raised several issues and concerns that are reported on within this document.

The CCATF will continue its efforts, alongside City & Guilds, to ensure that all necessary changes are implemented and to promote a culture of learning, development and upskilling the UK's construction workforce.



Martyn Price MBE  
Chairman - CCATF







## Three key actions

Below are a series of actions for Government, employers and stakeholders that we see as being integral to the successful implementation of the government reforms to the technical education system.

# 01



**A call to Government not to pressure industry into committing to challenging timescales. There must be further extensive consultation with industry before any implementation can begin.**

**"Education is leading at the moment and therefore has too much control. We need industry to take the lead. If we rush into this it will undermine everything we are trying to do as an industry."**

- Kat Healey, Training Manager, Seddon Construction

**"T-Levels must not be an afterthought of trailblazers, it must be led by industry and done in parallel. It does not feel that employers are currently in the driving seat and this needs to change."**

- Martyn Price MBE, Chairman, CCATF

# 02



**A call to industry to take this opportunity seriously and engage with these reforms with a unified voice.**

**"There is a significant opportunity for employer engagement. Now is the time to influence Government thinking."**

- Martyn Price MBE, Chairman, CCATF

**"We need stop paying lip-service, we need to come together and get things done."**

- Jean Duprez MBE, Managing Director Duprez Consulting Ltd

# 03



**A call to industry, Government, and all actors in the sector, to collaborate for the good of the industry and put individual priorities to one side**

**"To maximise this opportunity, all employers must engage to support the industry as a whole, not just defend their own priorities."**

- Jon Chadwick, Learning and Development Manager, Interserve

**"The bar needs to be raised."**

- Mark Farmer, CEO, Cast Consultancy

# Recommendations

## 1. The design and development of T-level programmes in Construction must be led by the sector

The workshop attendees would like to reaffirm the first principle of the Post-16 Skills Plan, that employers must play a leading role. "Employers, working with expert education professionals, need to set the standards; they must define the skills, knowledge and behaviours required for skilled employment".

## 2. The construction sector deal should be incorporated into education reform

The Construction Leadership Council (CLC) is currently bringing together key representatives of government, clients and industry to align around a proposed "sector deal". The sector deal is currently expected to be presented at a similar time to the Post-16 construction route going out for tender. This cannot happen. The proposals that come out of the sector deal must be fully understood and incorporated into any Post 16 curriculum design before any implementation plan can start.

## 3. Industry consultation is not yet visible, this has to change urgently

To be successful, this highly-fragmented industry, needs to establish a collective voice. There are positive signs that this is now beginning to take shape, with many employers and employer groups starting to actively discuss the potential of the education reforms, including the CLC's sector deal and the workshop behind this report. The desire for engagement needs to be understood by Government, and the increasing collaboration should be utilised for consultation and made more visible to industry. As ambassadors for the industry, this group can support Government in reaching out to industry.

## 4. The construction industry itself must engage more in Further Education

Much progress has been made towards greater collaboration within the industry, however the attendees of the workshop has also acknowledged that more was needed from industry. The reforms can only be a success if industry actively contribute to overcoming existing barriers in place. This workshop therefore set out the core barriers to mirror these recommendations, and which require the attention of the construction industry.

## 5. The full progression into the sector, from initial contact at school through to entry into work, should be considered in the context of T-level

Construction is not highly regarded as a career choice, with under half of 14-19 year olds seeing Construction as a positive career choice. (City & Guilds, Great Expectations, 2015). This outlook needs to change if we are to address the current skills shortage. This group therefore welcomes any initiatives, or changes to legislation, that might encourage stronger careers advice in construction to 14-19 year olds.

## 6. The T-levels must address the spectrum of skills and knowledge required

The construction industry is rapidly evolving, and there will be significant changes over the next two to three years, in construction legislation and with emerging technologies and the pre-manufacture of materials and buildings. Innovation and modern practices must be delivered in combination with traditional skills if the industry is to thrive. T-Levels must therefore be flexible enough to embrace the new skills and training that these changes will bring.

### **7. The impact on training delivery must be considered to ensure the reforms are sustainable by training providers**

Government must appreciate the demands of technical training on the training provider and teaching staff. Construction courses can be costly to deliver and an increase in teaching time will stretch an industry where skilled training staff is already in decline. Flexibility should therefore be championed, allowing training providers to design both effective and efficient training courses.

### **8. Work placements must be both structured and flexible to meet the demands of the sector**

Careful consideration must be given in setting out the requirements for work placements. Securing meaningful work experience within the construction sector has always been challenging for training providers due to the relative unpredictability of construction work not always coinciding with fixed placements. The proposed duration of the work placement will also mean that employers will now need to plan, and manage the costs, in parallel with potential apprentice places. It is also not clear whether employers will receive any remuneration for taking on work placements, or whether it is expected that employers will absorb any costs.

To ensure that work placements add value, there should be a structured approach to what is covered (i.e. developing their technical and employability skills), but allowing for operational flexibility (i.e. placements staggered throughout the year, or split over different sites as proven effective in the shared apprenticeship scheme). The time allocated for work placements could also be used to give young people a broader 'industrial experience'. Work placements should be varied, encompassing industry visits, skills shows, industry speakers, site visits as well as actual work experience.

### **9. Transitional flexibility is essential for the sector to respond to its acute skills shortage in the immediate term**

The skills shortage in construction needs to be addressed by industry immediately, and will not be able to wait for the first cohorts in T-Levels to achieve this. It must therefore be accepted that there will be employer and provider-led training taking place over the next one to three years that must be recognised. Existing training must be supported and people that are currently being trained must not be disadvantaged when the reforms come in.



# Barriers for the construction industry to overcome



The industry must find a way to advance the following:

01



## Collective industry leadership is needed

**"If we do not engage all employers, including SMEs, we will see the construction industry fail."**

- Jean Duprez MBE, Managing Director  
*Duprez Consulting Ltd*

**"As a collective, we need to be ambassadors for the sector."**

- Martyn Price MBE, Chairman, *CCATF*

02



## Effective career guidance is needed

**"The careers narrative is not strong enough. It needs to be broader and it needs to look towards the future."**

- Mark Farmer, CEO,  
*Cast Consultancy*

**"What is happening at ages 11 to 14 to ensure more entrants are coming into the construction industry?"**

- Martyn Price MBE, Chairman,  
*CCATF*

**"We need to get young people to realise about the exciting world of Construction"**

- Kat Healey, Training Manager,  
*Seddon Construction*

03



## Clear routes and career pathways (including cross overs within industry, and between T-Levels, Apprenticeships and academia)

**"We need people to have freedom to change careers, and not get stuck in set career paths. Shifting between full-time learning and employment is essential."**

- Jenni Carrott, Workplace Manager,  
*Berkeley Homes*

**"We have to transform what we deliver and we need multiple delivery channels."**

- Mark Farmer, CEO, *Cast Consultancy*

04



## Innovation and modern skills (whilst retaining traditional skills)

**"Innovation linked to skills must be at the heart of what we do but without losing the focus on hard skills. Training courses need to reflect what is going on now and what is coming in over the next two years and beyond with a spectrum of skills from current to future. There will be significant changes over the next two years, and curriculum design must be flexible enough for industry to respond."**

- Mark Farmer, CEO, *Cast Consultancy*

## 05



## Meaningful and flexible work experience

**“On-site experience is important because it allows people to learn, make mistakes and come out with skills and experience.”**

- Kat Healey, Training Manager, *Seddon Construction*

**“Further Education should deliver contextualised work environments in conjunction with employers if work experience is to be relevant and attractive.”**

- Martyn Price MBE, Chairman, *CCATF*

**“Commerciality is a core experience that you can only get through meaningful work experience. Students need the understanding that they are getting paid for their services to the organisation they are working for.”**

- Jean Duprez MBE, Managing Director, *Duprez Consulting Ltd*

**“Finding the right site, at the right time, in the right location will become a potential barrier.”**

- Jenni Carrott, Workplace Manager, *Berkeley Homes*

**“Unlike other industries, construction work is not a constant. Employers will not be able to provide meaningful work placements if there are no immediate projects running in the locality.”**

- Jon Chadwick, Learning and Development Manager, *Interserve*

## 06



## Making it valuable for employers to train young people

**“Training providers are under a lot of pressure to progress students but by keeping costs low. Training providers and employers need to be working together for to allocate funding more efficiently with a focus on the student.”**

- Ian Billyard, Principal & Chief Executive, *Leeds College of Building*

**“It does not currently pay to run a construction course.”**

- Mark Farmer, CEO, *Cast Consultancy*

## 07



## Addressing the shortage in skilled staff

**“An increase in training time will be a significant logistical issue, especially in retaining and recruiting skilled staff. The capacity and standard of tutors is a real risk and needs to be addressed across all elements of the curriculum.”**

- Ian Billyard, Principal & Chief Executive, *Leeds College of Building*

**“The calibre and availability of tutors and assessors need to improve to make this work.”**

- Mark Farmer, CEO, *Cast Consultancy*

# Statement of Intent

## "We, the undersigned..."

Responding to the recommendations put forward in The Farmer Review of the UK Construction Labour Model, "Modernise or Die," a cross-section of the Construction industry has come together to further recommend actions that the Government needs to undertake to ensure the Post-16 Skills Plan is a success.

Modernise or Die presents a stark picture of the future of the industry. The review warns of potential marginalisation and deterioration that might not be recoverable. This must not happen to an industry that underpins much of UK productivity and its housing supply. The sector is an essential part of the Government's Industrial Strategy. A new Construction sector deal is anticipated towards the end of 2017 that should also define the future of education in the sector.

As an industry we welcome the opportunity to reform the education and skills landscape to support the sector. However, we have concerns that the reforms are being pushed through too quickly, with little understanding of the revolutionary changes happening in the sector, not at some point in the distant future, but over the next two to three years.

Mark Farmer refers to this modernisation of the sector as a 'spectrum' that spans from the traditional craft skills required now, to a future probably dominated by digitalisation, off-site manufacturing and robotics - but one which still needs to retain those traditional craft skills alongside. Recognising that this is a 'chicken and egg situation,' the sector requires the education system to be as flexible as possible, and to recognise the myriad skills and environments prevailing in the sector. Not least, the difficulties the sector will have in delivering work placements if the system is too rigid.

















It is crucial that we find a 'home-grown' solution to our problems that encompasses the views of the entire industry as well as the education professionals and institutions on which it relies. T-levels may be a way to achieve this, but we must not get this transition wrong.

As such, we provide nine recommendations below that should be considered by Government, and we look forward to greater engagement and consultation in future.

### Recommendations

1. The design and development of T-level programmes in Construction must be led by the sector
2. The construction sector deal should be incorporated into education reform
3. Industry consultation is not yet visible, this has to change urgently
4. The construction industry itself must engage more in further education (FE)
5. The full progression into the sector, from initial contact at school through to entry into work, should be considered in the context of T-level
6. The T-levels must address the spectrum of skills and knowledge required
7. The delivery of construction training must be considered to ensure the reforms are sustainable
8. Work placements must be both structured and flexible to meet the demands of the sector
9. Transitional flexibility is essential for the sector to respond to its acute skills shortage in the immediate term

### SIGNATORIES:

 Kat Healey 	 Mark Farmer 	 Jenni Carrott 	 Jon Chadwick 
 Jean Duprez MBE 	 Ian Billyard 	 Martyn Price MBE 	 Edward Shaw 

## Conclusion

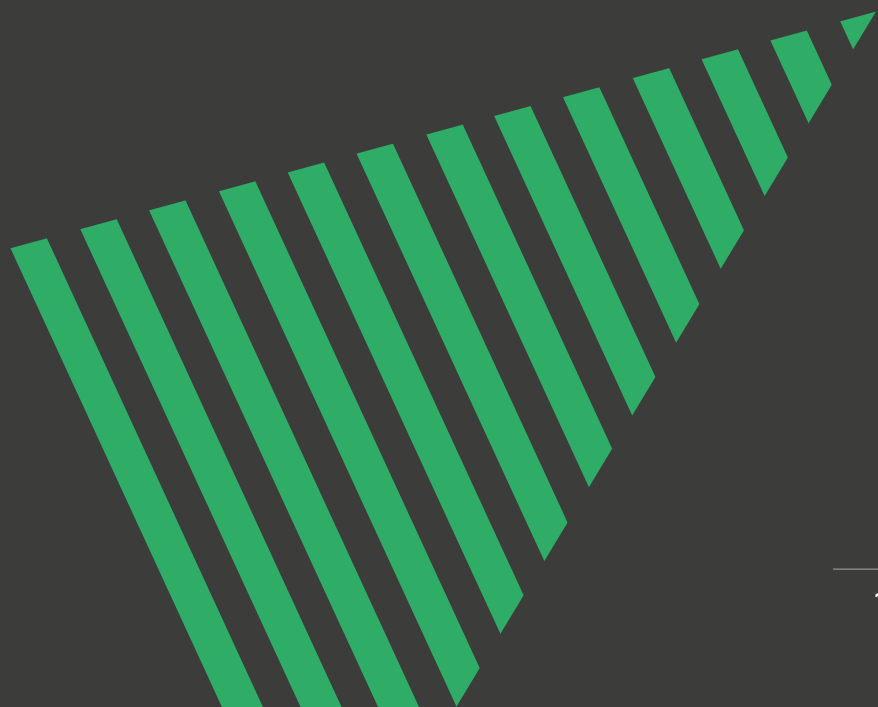
This is a pivotal moment for skills in the construction industry. All of the attendees of the workshop believe there is now an unrivalled chance to ensure businesses, industry and employees are equally well-served by the skills system.

As this report has set out, collaborative working by employers and Government in the implementation of the reforms must have a significant impact.

Our report includes recommendations setting out steps that should be taken by employers, training providers and by Government, aiming to drive up quality, enhance commitment from businesses and public sector managers, widen access, and strengthen leadership.

In the coming months and years our recommendations should be implemented by the key stakeholders noted within this document to ensure the new system effectively meets the needs of the construction industry for decades to come.

There is no one solution, but we are clear that with some policy changes and a rethink of certain operational aspects, the professional technical education system can become a respected and successful tool in building the future workforce and helping young people progress towards meaningful employment.





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