



**Summary Annual  
Report 2017-2018**



## Chief Executive's Foreword

**Throughout 2017-2018 CITB NI's Board and Staff have continued to pursue Aims and Objectives set in 2015 to develop a strategy to deliver a combination of financial return of Levy direct to NI employers, mixed with directly facilitated training that is available at low or no cost to the industry.**

This year CITB NI delivered more direct training in partnership with industry bodies and the provider network than previous years. In total, 2,986 of training hours have been delivered in areas as diverse as Social Media training and workshops to improve small business performance.

CITB NI continues it's collaborative working with the National Federation of Roofing Contractors (NFRC) and People 1<sup>st</sup> (training provider) to deliver the only Roofing Apprenticeship programme available in NI. This is vital part of the skills network required for our sector which is not covered by the further education network. This programme will continue over the coming years.

A partnership with the industry-led initiative Mates in Mind, in collaboration with BuildHealth, IOSH and other industry bodies, has led to CITB NI funding training in mental health awareness for the industry

linked to practical training backed up by specialist support organisations such as Inspire, Samaritans and Mind.

We continue our development of training for those progressing to supervisor level within the industry to promote competence and quality in the delivery of construction services.

This year also saw the development of an entry level training programme aimed at those wishing to enter the industry from a base of low or no qualifications. It is hoped that, working with partners, this will be a key element in providing people with a pathway to employment and qualifications in the construction sector.

Our core support to the industry is through the Grant system. This year we reviewed how we support Apprentices in the industry, an area that employers have identified as a key area. We launched our Apprenticeship 100 scheme to encourage the industry to employ 100 Apprentices. It worked. We have reviewed this strategy again and enhanced it for the coming year to continue to focus on the next generation of skills.

The coming years will be significantly influenced by the UK leaving the EU.

Consideration of the availability of a skilled and competent workforce will be an issue that is high with many construction employers. CITB NI will work with the industry to continue to support skills development within the existing workforce.

We will continue to focus on attracting the next generation. CITB NI will also be working with the industry over the coming year to promote the industry and developing the skills needed for the future.

**Barry Neilson**  
CHIEF EXECUTIVE



## About CITB NI

CITB NI combines the roles of an Industry Training Board and Sector Skills Council (in partnership with CITB GB) and is working with the Department for the Economy in reviewing and energising the NI qualifications framework.

CITB NI will also continue to improve the skills and productivity of the industry by engaging with employers to determine their skills needs, and working with Government and stakeholders to meet those needs through direct intervention to facilitate the development and delivery of critical skills for the industry.

## MISSION & VISION

### Mission

**To develop and embed a training culture which will improve the skills and productivity of the Northern Ireland construction industry.**

### Vision

**A construction industry where skills and competence are at the core of every business supported by a respected and valued CITB NI.**

## Aims

- CITB NI is respected and valued by industry stakeholders and staff.
- The industry invests in skills and qualifications to improve safety and profitability.
- CITB NI is customer focused, flexible, responsive and supportive.
- CITB NI is the voice for skills and informs government policy.
- Communication is clear and direct.
- Qualifications and occupational competencies meet the needs of NI industry.

CITB NI is delivering these aims through a range of actions which will improve our organisation and its services to the construction industry in NI.

CITB NI has reviewed how it identifies new employers who may be in-scope to its activities.



## What have we done for you

### Levy

**The CITB NI levy means that all employers in the industry make appropriate financial contributions based on the annual levy rate of the wages bills for work in Northern Ireland.**

- The levy rate for 2017-18 remained at 0.65% of employers emoluments.
- 96% of the invoiced levy was recovered during the year which compares favourably with previous years.
- The levy funds a wide range of activities including:
  - Grants
  - Training Advice
  - Research and Development
  - Provision of the Mobile Training Unit
  - Careers Promotion
  - Standards and Qualifications Development

### Grant

**Each year CITB NI invests a significant proportion of its income to provide a grants scheme to employers. The grant scheme has three separate tiers that facilitate a high degree of flexibility for employers to undertake training relevant to their organisational requirements.**

- During 2017-2018 CITB NI has paid and accrued £112k more in grants to the industry than in the previous year (2016-17: £947k), which represents an 12% increase in the grant support to employers.
- During 2017-18, 511 employers claimed a grant (2016-17: 457), with a total of 5,283 grant applications.
- Over the year, 396 levy paying employers claimed grant and 115 employers who are below the levy threshold and do not pay levy claimed grant. This is an indication of the support provided to smaller companies.



**FACT:**

Forty one percent of employers thought that the levy and associated services were either quite or very important within their own firm in 2018, compared to 37% in 2017 (Employer Tracking Survey December 2018)

## Training Interventions

- CITB NI's involvement in direct training Interventions allows essential training and knowledge to be disseminated to the industry where it does not exist or is not readily available in Northern Ireland. It is important to help the industry remain competitive and provide a good service to its clients.
- CITB NI supports training that the industry has identified as important to development, innovation and productivity. These interventions continue to target areas identified by the industry representative bodies as critical to employers in dealing with the current economic climate and for the future wellbeing of the industry.
- Training Interventions provided directly by CITB NI were aimed at three specific areas; health and safety training delivered on-site by the Mobile Training Unit (MTU), scaffolding training, and the Undergraduate Development Programme (UDP). A total of 806 training days were delivered to the industry via these three training and competence measures.
- Other interventions, that were either organised and delivered in partnership with external bodies or procured and facilitated by CITB NI directly, included;
  - NVQ Level 4 programmes in Construction Site Supervision
  - NVQ Level 2 Roof Slating and Tiling Apprenticeship Scheme
  - Basic Guide to Risk Assessment
  - Build Quality & Site Inspection
  - Concrete Basics Course
  - Certificate in Controlling Health Risks
  - Contract Law for Sub-Contractors
  - Training Programme for the Northern Ireland Demolition Contractors
  - Leadership Workshop Series
  - Laying the Foundation for Mental Health in the NI Construction Industry
  - GDPR Awareness Training
  - National House Building Council Programme (1) & (2)



### Training Interventions

This year's programme of Training Interventions has resulted in positive feedback from the industry, particularly the initiative to highlight mental health issues within the industry which has complemented other training and strategic approaches to meeting employer needs.

**FACT:**  
**Training is good for business, two thirds of construction employers based in United Kingdom (67%) have funded or arranged training in the last 12 months. (Skills and Training in the Construction Industry Nov 2018)**

### Mobile Training Unit (MTU)

- The Mobile Training Unit (MTU) provides a convenient way of meeting training requirements with minimum disruption to the site and production.
- The MTU currently travels throughout the Province delivering an extensive range of construction related, health & safety and bespoke training to operatives, supervisors and managers.
- A total of 2,050 individuals attended training by means of the MTU or via an on-site venue.
- To ensure the content of the training delivered is as current and up to date as possible CITB NI undertook a review and updating of the five most popular health & safety courses delivered on the MTU. These presentations are; General Health & Safety, Working at Height, Manual Handling, Abrasive Wheels and Asbestos Awareness.
- Further to a review of the MTU's suitability as an on-site training facility the CITB NI Board agreed to purchase a replacement unit that is smaller and more flexible so it can deliver a wider range of training and awareness raising events.
- The replacement unit is scheduled to be operational in the spring of 2019.

### Scaffolding Training

- The scaffolding programme provided training and assessment for 152 individuals through the Construction Industry Scaffolders Record Scheme (CISRS) Part 1, Part 2 and Advanced Scaffolding. Seventeen operatives achieved either NVQ level 2 or NVQ Level 3 through the scheme allowing them to acquire their industry recognised scaffolder card.
- CITB NI remains the only facility in Northern Ireland able to provide the Construction Industry Scaffolders Record Scheme (CISRS).

### **Undergraduate Development Programme (UDP)**

- A major evaluation was undertaken, which included the formation of a Steering Group made up of employers, educationalists and CITB NI representatives.
- Research undertaken by CITB NI with employers, students and education representatives concluded that the basic content of the former programme was acceptable but that it needed a different approach to encourage participation and to better reflect current employer needs and construction practices.
- The project uses a team approach to design, construct and install a foot bridge using the skills of planning, estimation, project management.
- 42 undergraduates across 84 training days participated in the programme and attained a Construction Skills Register (CSR) Registration Card.

### **VET 360 (Virtual Environment Training 360) – an innovative approach to learning**

- The VET360 System allows participants to experience complex and hazardous sites or work locations in a safe environment. The viewer becomes immersed within a 360-degree real life environment allowing greater understanding.
- To date, the facility has been used to enhance the learning experience of participants on our NVQ Level 4 in Construction Site Supervision courses. We have also developed a suite of training activities involving VET360 including the Basic Guide to Risk Assessment and Environmental Management in Construction.
- Various other uses of VET360 include working with employers to develop their own training packages to be delivered within VET360 suite, allowing students to experience site visits at sites locally, cross water or overseas without the associated risks and expense of actually doing so and also BIM presentations by employers to their clients.

### **NVQ Level 4 Diploma in Construction Site Supervision**

- The NVQ Level 4 in Construction Site Supervision was introduced in response to industry feedback on the need to improve the quality and competency of individuals who undertook the role of a site supervisor or site manager.
- The concept is to combine a formal qualification (NVQ Level 4) with an interactive approach to common supervisory activities that would be innovative and unique in its approach to competence and knowledge improvement.
- The use of CITB NI's VET360 to enhance and improve the learners understanding and collective approach to problem solving has been a major development in the attainment of the qualification with very positive feedback from both the course participants and the training provider.
- The third Construction Site Supervisor Programme commenced during this training year with 13 candidates completing the programme.

## Employer Engagement / Business Improvement Seminars

- Nine employer engagement events were held during the year. Each included a business- improvement workshop or session on topical areas such as Cyber Security, Recruiting Apprentices, Credit Control, Digital and Social Marketing, Tendering and Training Needs Analysis
- CITB NI worked in partnership with InterTradeIreland to deliver the Tendering workshops, which were aimed at employers tendering in the public sector construction market. The Training Needs Analysis workshops were delivered in partnership with InvestNI. A total of 114 employers attended the employer-engagement events, which were held throughout Northern Ireland during the training year.
- CITB NI participated in 'Meet the Buyer' events in Belfast and Armagh, engaging with a wide range of employers providing information on training, grants and industry forecasts.

- An Industry Engagement Strategy, aimed at specialist sub-sectors, was developed and commenced with visits to flooring-sector employers with the aim of identifying their training needs and providing information on CITB NI's products and services. Nine employers participated and a report on the findings was circulated to the industry and support was sought to form a working group to address the issues identified.
- CITB NI supported the Heritage Angels Awards and participated in the steering group and judging panel. The awards recognise people who champion their local heritage and share and practice forgotten craft skills. They also celebrate young people, recognising their effort to learn about heritage.

## Laying the Foundation for Mental Health in the NI Construction Industry

- Within the year, CITB NI has worked with BuildHealth, HSE, IOSH and the NI Mental Health Leadership Group to forge a relationship with the UK-wide industry initiative Mates in Mind. The partnership aims to develop and embed a culture of better mental health within the construction sector over the coming years and this, initial, intervention is intended to raise awareness and develop knowledge within the industry. The programme commenced in July, has already been delivered to 143 individuals within this financial year.

**FACT:**  
**On average, employers in Northern Ireland provided each person trained with 5 days on-the-job training last year, one day less than the UK average. (Skills and Training in the Construction Industry (Nov 2018))**

## SkillBuild NI

- SkillBuild NI is the annual construction craft competition which is managed and organised by CITB NI on behalf of the industry. The competition, conceived in the late 1970's has grown over the years to include twelve trade areas and an average of 90 -100 apprentice competitors.
- The apprentices selected to compete at SkillBuild NI have all competed at Inter Campus Competitions held in the college they attend. Over 300 young people compete to be among the top apprentices from across the Province in their chosen trade area.
- Competitors who score in the top percentile across the UK can be invited to compete at the UK National Finals held as part of the World Skills UK Skills Show.
- One of the aims of SkillBuild NI is to promote the skills within the NI construction sector by developing competitors with the skills and ability to represent the UK at the biannual World Skills event, which is the largest and most prestigious vocational competition on a global level.
- CITB NI supported the 18 construction apprentices who competed at the UK National Finals held in the NEC during November. Our competitors returned with two Silver Medals, one Bronze Medal and a further three competitors were Highly Commended

## Marketing & Communications

- 2017-18 was the first year of an updated Marketing Strategy which led to a detailed external audit in April 2018 of CITB NI Marketing activity to help enhance the current strategy. Key actions identified focused on further campaign activity, additional PR and scheduled media content.
- A number of press releases were developed and sent to local and trade press, which generated 134 press clippings with a total PR value of £78,872 and contributed to employer and industry awareness of our services.
- A minimal amount of advertising was placed with trade press, however editorial was placed in Specify, Modern Builder, Plant and Civil Engineer and Northern Builder during the year and all publications supported CITB NI by publishing press releases throughout the year which helped promote coverage of on-going training initiatives.

Over recent years CITB NI has been more proactive on social media channels which support on-going communication activity and promotion. At the end of the training year there were 828 Facebook followers, 974 Twitter followers and 764 LinkedIn followers.

There was also regular communication to registered employers through e-mail and text messages promoting employer events, short-courses, training grants, levy returns and signposting to the CITB NI website for further information.

**FACT:**  
68% of employers surveyed are aware of CITB NI services (Employer Tracking Survey December 2018).

### Women in Construction Network

CITB NI continued to support women in the construction industry by maintaining the Women in Construction Network website which included events and news articles of interest.

- Three site visits were held: the Marriott Hotel facilitated by Gilbert-Ash Ltd, the Milewater Service Centre facilitated by Translink, and the Energy from Waste project facilitated by Turner & Townsend.
- A joint event with the WOMENS'TEC was held to promote construction careers to schoolgirls and the event was facilitated by the members of the WICN who ran workshops and gave talks. The event was attended by around 60 pupils.

### Recruitment & Careers

- Working with our group of industry ambassadors, CITB NI attended 18 careers events and engaged with around 14,000 students, teachers and career changers to promote construction as a career choice. CITB NI also attended two Careers Teachers events and engaged with 400 careers teachers to advise them of the career opportunities within the construction sector.
- CITB NI hosted a 'Get Skilled' stand at the Skills NI event in Belfast in October 2017, attended by over 6,000 school children, teachers and career changers.
- CITB NI and Radius Housing began working in partnership to provide a £500 award to a construction craft apprentice who, in the period September 2016-August 2018, overcame a significant adversity to allow them to successfully complete their training programme and achieve a construction qualification at NVQ Level 2 or Level 3.

**FACT:**  
86% of stakeholders were satisfied with the overall service CITB NI provides for the construction industry as a whole. (Stakeholder Survey Nov 2018)

## Standards and Qualifications

- The CITB NI Construction Standards and Qualifications Strategy (CSQS) supports the development of industry training and qualifications in Northern Ireland through the implementation and operation of ten action strands which were all progressed during the year.
- CITB NI is leading the development of new Northern Ireland Apprenticeship and Traineeship Frameworks through the Built Environment Sector Partnership which it chairs. Individual surveys were carried out to determine the demand for ten different occupational areas and to identify employers to participate in the apprenticeship reviews
- CITB NI continued to deliver a quality-control programme in Northern Ireland on behalf of CITB GB for the Construction Plant Competence Scheme (CPCS). The programme required the monitoring of plant operator achievement test delivery and provider audits to support and maintain the standard of plant-operator test delivery.
- CITB NI is supporting the review of national occupational standards (NOS) in conjunction with CITB GB for a number of occupations. The reviews are employer led to ensure that the NOS is current and fit for purpose.

## Research

- Throughout the year CITB NI completed or contributed to a number of research surveys to increase its understanding of the training needs of the NI construction industry and to ensure that an adequate supply of training was available for all sectors of the industry.
- The Construction Skills Network (CSN) continued its work to produce accurate and up-to-date Labour Market Intelligence (LMI) for the Northern Ireland construction industry. This included an electronic consultation with members and a meeting of the CSN Observatory to obtain input to draft forecasts from key industry stakeholders. The 2018-22 LMI Report for the NI construction industry was published and distributed to stakeholders.
- The annual Employer Tracking Survey of 100 NI employers was completed and actions from the findings were addressed. The survey sought to determine customer perceptions and satisfaction levels with CITB NI.
- CITB NI obtained funding from the Department for Communities Historic Environment Division to refresh the 2009 research into skills in the Heritage Sector for Northern Ireland. This work was completed with 17 face-to-face interviews and 55 online responses being obtained. The results were presented to the Traditional Building Skills Working Group in June 2018.
- Research into the training needs of several specialist sectors was carried out using an online survey tool. The sectors included flooring, damp proofing and steel fixing.



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