



Northern Builder

Circulation: 5.300

Page: 49

Date: 07/03/2025

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BRIEFING REPORT: CONSTRUCTION TO OFFER 5,200 JOBS BY 2028



NI'S CONSTRUCTION SECTOR IS FORECAST TO REQUIRE AN ADDITIONAL 5,200 WORKERS BY 2028, PRESENTING EXCITING OPPORTUNITIES FOR YOUNG PEOPLE TO BUILD REWARDING CAREERS...

CITB NI encourages next generation to choose a construction career

❶ The construction sector faces significant risks due to skills shortages, an ageing workforce and a poor industry image. To overcome these challenges and meet future demands, the sector must actively promote itself to young people, careers influencers and other key audiences. According to the Construction Skills Network Labour Market Intelligence Report (2024-2028) for Northern Ireland, construction activity is projected to grow at an average annual rate of 2.8%, requiring an additional 5,200 workers by 2028. This growth presents exciting opportunities for young people to build rewarding careers and be part of a dynamic, evolving industry. The construction industry offers a range of entry points, from apprenticeship programmes to third-level education. Construction provides a challenging and rewarding path, and CITB NI supports students in exploring a wide range of careers in construction, by offering comprehensive information and guidance tailored for students, parents and teachers. Visit its dedicated careers web portal www.citbni.org.uk/careers for practical tools, career pathways and inspiring content designed to shape the future construction workforce. Through its 'Build Your Career - A Future in Construction' programme, CITB NI delivers construction Bootcamps on its in-house simulated site. These bootcamps provide meaningful experiences for students who have not yet decided on a career path. Recently, CITB NI partnered with W5 and Cool FM to provide interactive job sampling for Year 10 and 12 pupils from across NI. These events allowed students to hear more about construction, have a go at hands-on activities, find out more about apprenticeship pathways and connected students with employers



L-R: Hannah McAreavey, an apprentice at H&J Martin who shared her experience during a CITB NI event for NI Apprenticeship Week 2025, and Barry Nelson OBE, Chief Executive of CITB NI.

offering apprenticeship opportunities. Its Adopt A School Programme connects construction companies with local post-primary schools across Northern Ireland, providing careers talks, events, work experience and site visits. To further strengthen career promotion, CITB NI also engages industry professionals as careers ambassadors who actively promote construction careers at schools, fairs and conferences. CITB NI is also actively working to widen entry routes into construction and, in collaboration with NIACRO, has developed initiatives to help individuals progress from the justice system into the construction sector, benefiting individuals, the economy and the industry. These include tested Virtual and Augmented Reality tools, which can also be adapted in the future to promote the industry as a career choice. Skills competitions remain a key focus for CITB NI. Each year, the SkillBuild NI Regional Competition showcases the exceptional skills within the college

and training network. Categories range from brickwork to wall and floor tiling, highlighting the talent and professionalism across the industry and serving as an excellent showcase for school pupils. The next competition will take place on May 20 at SERC's Downpatrick campus. There is still work to be done to better align the various industry-wide initiatives that support individuals in starting and advancing their careers in construction. As demands on infrastructure, construction and the built environment continue to grow, the drive for greater energy efficiency and a net-zero carbon society presents a major challenge. Addressing these needs will require both upskilling the current workforce and equipping new entrants with the skills needed for the future. For further information on CITB NI, visit www.citbni.org.uk, like it on Facebook at <http://www.facebook.com/CITBNorthernIreland>, or follow it on X (@CITBNI), Instagram (@citbni1), and LinkedIn (<https://bit.ly/423SWsS>)