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Page 1 of 1

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## CITB still popular in tougher times

**THE Nutt's Corner based Construction Industry Training Board is still seeing strong support from the sector despite tough political and economic times, according to a new report.**

Recent surveys completed by CITB NI show that the local construction industry still wants to train and 70 per cent of all NI employers had funded or arranged training for staff in the last 12 months.

A spokeswoman for the organisation said: "What a difference a year makes. As we approach the mid-way point of the calendar year and the last remaining months of CITB NI's training year it is poignant that the political landscape has changed and future uncertainty affects industry, growth and skills.

"At this current time we do not have a local Assembly in Government and whilst this is disappointing, the wheels of industry have to keep turning. It is reassuring to see construction work continuing and the development of city centre hotels and offices which is great

for the local workforce and the economy.

"However a lot has also happened on a wider political scale and with Brexit and the apprenticeship levy, things are changing that will impact on the future of the local construction industry, leading to more cautious predictions for the economic outlook. Our January 2017 forecast for the construction industry in Northern Ireland was for an annual average grow of 1.6 per cent over the five years to 2021 and an average annual recruitment requirement of 710.

"With the ongoing changing situation future forecasts may not be as buoyant as previously forecast. However, the industry will still be facing potential skills shortages in some occupations such as bricklayers and roofers.

"CITB NI will continue to work alongside the industry to ensure that sufficient numbers of people are trained to meet the demand and that those already working in the industry have the right skills and qualifications to deliver upcoming construction projects."