



Alex Burghart MP

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Annual Priorities letter to the Engineering Construction Industry Training Board (ECITB), 2022

This letter sets out the Government's priorities for the ECITB for this year and is intended to support you in aligning your work with broader reforms. This letter should be read in conjunction with other policy statements, including the Nuclear and Offshore Wind Sector Deals as part of the Industrial Strategy, and our technical education reforms. As we saw in 2020, government or industry priorities may change for unforeseen reasons. Should this be the case your DfE sponsorship team will be your initial point of contact

I would like to take this time to thank you for the work the ECITB has delivered in response to COVID-19 and the Green Jobs Taskforce report. The ECITB launched a crisis response package, investing levy in a range of critical initiatives. These measures have been crucial to the retention of young talent in the industry and in providing a pipeline of new entrants post the Covid-19 pandemic. I am also pleased that the ECITB kept training and assessment going through lockdown, by investing in remote learning and directly purchasing training on behalf of employers – enabling workforce development to continue through the pandemic. Similarly, the Green Jobs Taskforce report has highlighted the important role the engineering construction industry plays in supporting a green economy. With your help, we are keen to build on the evidence base collated on green skills needs within the engineering and construction sectors, to ensure our skills reforms adequately support the labour market transition to net zero.

The ECITB has a vital role in ensuring that the Engineering Construction Industry has the technical skills to deliver for the UK. This is essential to our economic success, in our drive to build back better and transition to a low carbon model of growth. To help support these government objectives, it is very important that the ECITB continues to focus its efforts across the entire Engineering Construction Industry landscape.

As you know, skills policy is a devolved matter. The Devolved Administrations have their own priorities to meet the needs of their economies and distinct skills systems and these will be communicated separately.

Hence, the Government has four priorities for ECITB in England for the next 12 months:

1. The overarching priority remains the very reason the ECITB was created in law – **to make better provision of training to people aged over 16 years within the engineering construction industry**. The ECITB has a defined role in supporting government infrastructure priorities and to enable industry to develop the pipeline of skills it will need to deliver infrastructure investments earmarked over the next decade.
2. Whilst the ECITB has the freedom to determine how it will deliver the above priority, I ask that the ECITB lends its visible and proactive support to Department for Education policies such as:
 - **Apprenticeships**: increasing uptake of apprenticeships;
 - **T levels**: encouraging the provision of employer industrial placements, helping to shape reforms to improve and grow higher technical education;
 - **Traineeships**: improving the supply of skilled labour and tradespeople, in both traditional and future skills;
 - **Bootcamps**: improving wages for skilled employees and encouraging progression and retention within the workforce;
 - **Free Courses for Jobs Level 3 offer**: offering free qualifications to adults without an existing Level 3. From April, this will also be expanded to include any adult in England who is unemployed or earning below the National Living Wage, even if they hold a Level 3 qualification or higher.
3. Beyond the Department for Education policies, I ask the ECITB to continue supporting and championing skills development necessary to prepare the workforce for the transition to net zero carbon emissions by 2050. This should include identifying skills needs at a granular level, and developing training interventions to equip learners with the skills and knowledge they will need to deliver decarbonisation projects, in line with the cross government net zero strategy.
4. I encourage the ECITB to continue to **promote diversity in the engineering construction sector**. I would like the ECITB to commit to the development of a plan to help industry increase the diversity of their workforce, by delivering skills interventions that actively support employers to increase inclusion and widen participation. This plan should have a clear timeframe and achievable milestones.

As a next step, I should be grateful if, through your business plan or other official correspondence, you could outline how the ECITB plans to align its work with the priorities outlined above. As part of this, I am keen to understand how ECITB can help the Engineering Construction Industry to better engage with the skills system. You should continue to use your regular Strategic Performance Review meetings to keep my officials updated on ECITB's progress against these and other priorities.

I am copying this letter to the Secretary of State for Education, the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, Parliamentary Under Secretary of State for Business and Industry, Scottish Minister for Higher Education and Further Education, Youth Employment and Training, Welsh Minister for Local Government, and the FE Commissioner.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, reading "Alex Burghart". The signature is written in a cursive style and is positioned above a horizontal line that extends across the width of the signature.

Alex Burghart MP

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