



Alex Burghart MP

Parliamentary Under Secretary of State for Apprenticeships and Skills
Sanctuary Buildings, 20 Great Smith Street, Westminster, London, SW1P 3BT
tel: 0370 000 2288 www.education.gov.uk/help/contactus

Peter Lauener
Sand Martin House
Bittern Way
Fletton Quays
Peterborough
PE2 8TY

17 January 2022

Dear Peter,

Annual Priorities for the Construction Industry Training Board (CITB), 2022-23

This letter sets out the Government's priorities for the CITB, so that the CITB Board can ensure current priorities are fully considered and woven into the CITB's business plan (2022-23). This letter should be considered alongside industry feedback during the consensus process, the Construction Sector Deal and our broader commitments on technical education as detailed below. 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

The CITB has an important role in supporting the success of the construction sector at this critical juncture of building back better. That success looks like an industry that is productive, innovative, increasingly diverse, responsive to the advantages of digital technology both for access to training and in delivery of modern methods of construction and proactive in its role to achieve net zero carbon emissions by 2050. This ambitious shift can only be achieved by sustained investment in skills.

I would, once again, like to thank the CITB for the work delivered in response both to the immediate impact of the Covid-19 pandemic and to the Green Jobs Taskforce report. The CITB 2020-21 Skills Stability Plan was an integral step in a programme of actions which enabled employers to retain existing skills within the workforce. The CITB's relationships with industry, key stakeholders and government resulted in quick identification of the priority skills and training needed to support industry and pivot quickly to focus on those. I know the industry welcomed the CITB's clear communications at this time and I encourage the CITB to continue this approach as it returns to its pre-Covid remit but with a more targeted approach. Similarly, the Green Jobs Taskforce report has highlighted the important role the construction sector 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 construction sector to ensure our skills reforms adequately support the labour market transition to net zero.

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; these will be communicated separately.

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

1. The overarching priority remains the very reason the CITB was created in law – **to make better provision of training to people aged over 16 years within the construction industry**. The CITB has a defined role in identifying skills needs and plays a part, with others, in addressing them. Leading on from the Skills Stability Plan, the CITB should continue to make demonstrative progress on the skills and training needed to develop our own talent and support the growth of the workforce.
2. Whilst the CITB has the freedom to determine how it will deliver the above priority, I ask that the CITB lends its visible and proactive support to Department for Education policies such as those below. It can make an important contribution by helping to shape these interventions and to communicate to employers how they fit together and to identify which of the specific measures will best help them meet their skill needs.
 - **Apprenticeships**: Increasing uptake of construction apprenticeships and supporting the improvement of the transfers system, so that unspent levy funds can better support apprenticeships in SMEs;
 - **Construction T levels**: encouraging employers who can benefit from T levels to get involved, offer work placements, and help shape reforms to improve and grow higher technical education;
 - **Construction Sector Traineeships**: improving the supply of skilled labour and tradespeople, in both traditional and future skills;
 - **Construction Bootcamps**: encouraging progression and retention within the construction workforce and giving skilled employees the opportunity to improve their wages by further upskilling.
 - **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.

Beyond the Department for Education policies, I ask the CITB to continue supporting and championing skills development necessary for:

- Meeting the Government's ambition to **build 300,000 homes a year**;
- the shift to increased construction delivery using **Modern Methods of Construction** (MMC), building on the government and the Construction Leadership Council's work through the Construction Playbook;
- Preparing the workforce for the transition to **net zero** carbon emissions by 2050, helping providers of qualifications and training and those responsible for standards (such as IFATE) understand the skills and knowledge needed to deliver decarbonisation projects in line with the cross government net zero strategy.

3. The CITB should continue to **promote diversity in the construction sector**. I would like the CITB to commit to the development of a plan to increase and attract workers from more diverse backgrounds. This plan should have a clear timeframe and achievable milestones, identifying the role that the CITB and industry will play.
4. I would like the CITB to urgently address **labour shortages and skills development** in relation to the **remediation of unsafe cladding on high-rise residential buildings** in response to the Grenfell fire tragedy, by ensuring that appropriate training is available and that is clear how that training can be accessed.

It is important that you work effectively across government to develop a strategic approach to supporting construction skills in line with national priorities. It is also of vital importance that the CITB responds to industry feedback to ensure its priorities reflect the needs of industry. I would strongly encourage the CITB to fully engage with relevant industry bodies representing small, medium and larger employers, the Construction Skills Delivery Group supporting the objectives of Project Speed, the Green Jobs Taskforce, the Infrastructure and Projects Authority, procuring Departments, and the Construction Leadership Council.

The sponsorship team in DfE will work with you to develop and strengthen these relationships where relevant. This will include helping to remove any barriers preventing you meeting your objectives such as facilitating engagement with policy teams.

As a next step, I should be grateful if, through your business plan or other official correspondence, you could outline how the CITB plans to align its work with the priorities outlined above. You should continue to use your regular Strategic Performance Review meetings to keep my officials updated on CITB'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,



Alex Burghart

Parliamentary Under Secretary of State for Apprenticeships and Skills