



# Summary Annual Report 2015-2016



# Foreword

## Barry Neilson

Chief Executive



The past few years have been really tough for the construction sector but our forecasts suggest we are over the worst and we will start to see real growth in our local construction industry over the next five years. Developments in the commercial sector will drive growth, and the promised delivery of further investment by Government in capital expenditure projects will be vital to ensure that future growth is sustained.

Skills are widely accepted as a key driver in how Northern Ireland can achieve our economic goals, preparing our young people for work, investing in the skills of those already in work, and ensuring that we have the skills required to grow the economy are essential for all sectors, in particular construction.

In response to the ongoing skills challenge, CITB NI has developed a new virtual environment training facility which will bring a new dimension to construction training. We are also developing the skills of supervisors and leaders through our Site Supervisor and Leader in Construction Programmes. We also continually promote construction careers to the younger generation through our website, careers fairs and working closely with the Department for Employment and Learning through their careers advisors and with careers teachers in schools. By encouraging new entrants, attracting those workers who have left the industry to return, and upskilling those currently in the sector, we can help deliver the upcoming projects forecast for Northern Ireland faster and better.



CITB NI is both Industry Training Board and Sector Skills Council for construction.

Our role is to work in partnership with the industry improving their performance and productivity through improving the skills of those employed or intending to be employed in the industry.

[www.citbni.org.uk](http://www.citbni.org.uk)

# Levy

CITB NI collects levy funds from construction employers and reinvests the money in the industry to help training and skills development.

The levy system is the fairest way of gathering funds from employers to pay for the training needs of the collective workforce.

The CITB NI levy means that all employers in the industry make the appropriate financial contributions.

Last year the levy was used to fund direct benefits to registered employers such as:

- Grants
- Training Advice
- Research & Development
- Skillbuild NI
- Delivery of upskilling projects
- Provision of our Mobile Training Unit
- Careers Promotion
- Standards & Qualifications Development





# What have we been doing for You?

## Training Grants

Our grants scheme is designed to encourage training and assessment in the construction industry.

During 2014/15, 609 employers claimed grant with a total of 5,693 grant applications.

The main areas of grant claims are short duration training, NVQ achievement (non apprenticeship), H&S training and Technical Management & Professional.

Over the year 438 grants were claimed by levy payers and 171 by those who are below the threshold and do not pay levy.

In addition to direct support to the industry through grant, CITB NI has invested resources to secure external funding to support skills within the industry. Funding to support skills development was obtained through successful bids to the Heritage Lottery Fund, European Funding and the Department for Employment & Learning.

## Training Interventions – In Partnership with Industry Bodies

The Training Intervention programme has received positive feedback from the industry and has resulted in more flexibility and a method of obtaining training on strategic or new approaches to employer needs at low cost.

Four initiatives were grant funded during the year;

- Performance Improvement Programme  
– in partnership with the CEF
- Training to achieve Nvir-o-Cert Accreditation  
– in partnership with the CEF
- Basic & Intermediate Estimating  
– in partnership with the FMB
- BS5534 CoP Roof Slating & Tiling  
– in partnership with NFRC

## Training Interventions – Training Procured by CITB NI

This section of the Grant Scheme aims to procure and deliver training that is either not currently available to the industry within NI, is introducing new or novel skills and competencies not yet widely available or is strategically important in terms of skills and competencies. These grants are often in partnership with industry bodies. Once demand is established, provision is sought and purchased through normal procurement procedures. It is then offered to the sector at low, or no cost.

Seven areas of intervention were delivered within the year;

- Pilot Shared Apprenticeship Scheme
- Basic Access Systems Erector (BASE) Scaffolding
- Scaffolding Anchorage
- Temporary Works
- Lead Burning
- Train The Trainers
- Directional Drilling

## FACT

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*88% of employers are satisfied with the ease of claiming a CITB NI Training Grant. (Employer Tracking Survey 2015)*



## Industry Training and Support

The provision of a number of training initiatives continued to be made available to the industry where it was identified that they were of strategic importance to the industry and a comparable alternative did not exist or was not practical due to cost or limited numbers.

The industry training that was provided directly by CITB NI was limited to 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 1,130 training days were delivered to the industry via these three training and competence measures.

### The 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. It is a tried and tested way to train and develop experienced workers on site and has been recognised as a flexible and innovative approach to meeting employers training needs. A total of 2,716 individuals attended training by means of the MTU or via an onsite venue.





## Scaffolding Training

The scaffolding programme provided training and assessment for 84 individuals through the Construction Industry Scaffolders Record Scheme (CISRS) Part 1, Part 2 and Advanced Scaffolding. Seven 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).

The Basic Access Systems Erector (BASE Scaffolding training course is a relatively new competence course for individuals that are not approved scaffolders but who may be required occasionally erect or dismantle basic scaffolding up to 6 meters high. A need for this training was identified and through support funding from the Skills Solutions Department within the Department for Employment and Learning (DEL) 15 individuals completed the five day course.

## Undergraduate Development Programme (UDP)

During the training year 45 construction undergraduates from the local Universities or Further Education establishments attended the 10-day Undergraduate Development Programme (UDP). The aim of the programme is to develop skills which employers are looking for in graduate level entrants to the construction industry.

The UDP contains four elements that contribute to the competence development of new construction managers, these include; team building exercises, health and safety at supervisory level, practical craft awareness and training in core management skills. All undergraduates who participated in the programme attained a Construction Skills Register (CSR) Registration Card.

## FACT

*Half of firms in Northern Ireland (49%) reported having a written training or development plan in place.*

*(Employer Panel Consultation, 2015)*





## Skillbuild NI

Skillbuild is an annual construction craft competition which is managed and governed by CITB NI on behalf of the industry. The Competition was initially conceived in the late 1970's as an inter-college competition and has grown to include 12 trade areas and an average of 100 apprentice competitors.



One of the aims of Skillbuild NI is to develop competitors with the skill and ability to represent the UK at the biannual World Skills event, the largest and most prestigious vocational competition in the world.

CITB NI supported construction representatives at national and international competitions. It was a fantastic year with four Gold, two Bronze and four Highly Commended at the UK National Finals, a silver medal achieved in Carpentry at EuroSkills, and our best ever showing at World Skills held in Sao Paulo, Brazil in August with one Gold, one Silver and a Medallion of Excellence.

## Standards & Qualifications

As the recognised body for skills in the construction industry in Northern Ireland, CITB NI has developed a Construction Standards and Qualifications Strategy (CSQS) in conjunction with the industry. The action plan to support the development of industry training and qualifications in Northern Ireland over the next five years continued to be delivered during the year.

CITB NI met with the devolved administration representatives, the NI Council for the Curriculum, Examinations and Assessment (CCEA), to provide detail on all National Occupational Standards (NOS) construction employer/stakeholder engagement activity that occurred in Northern Ireland.

## FACT

*56% of employers think that if there was no statutory training body providing grants for training then progress towards a qualified workforce would get worse rather than improve.*

*(Employer Tracking Survey 2015)*



## Funded Projects

### Qualifying the Experienced Workforce

Delivery of the second phase of 1000 NVQs continued and at 31 August 2015, there were only 183 places left, with 649 people having achieved an NVQ Level 2 through the programme and a further 168 people registered and in the process of achieving the qualification. Uptake at the end of August 2015 was an average of 15 places a week.

### Energy Efficiency in Buildings and Sustainable Construction

Participants from the second project funded by Leonardo European Funding travelled to Germany for training in September 2014.

A Sustainable Construction Interest Group has been set up, made up of participants from the two Leonardo projects. Two events were held in 2015 – a visit to City Quays in February 2015 and a visit to Corick House Hotel in August. Both were examples of sustainable construction in practice.

### Specialist Apprenticeship programme in Heritage Wood Occupations

The first ever Heritage Specialist Apprenticeship programme in Wood Occupations for 11 experienced carpenters and joiners, which included a 20 day off-the-job training programme and an eleven month placement with experienced heritage contractors, commenced in September 2014. The programme was supported by the Heritage Lottery Fund.

All 11 experienced carpentry and joinery trainees achieved the NVQ Level 3 Diploma in Heritage Skills (Construction) in Wood Occupations.

Also three lecturers from Belfast Metropolitan College, South West College and Southern East Regional College completed a programme of Trainers CPD by shadowing and assisting the delivery of the off-the-job training and are now able to deliver the course in each of their respective colleges.

A team of seven Heritage Ambassadors/Mentors have been appointed to pass on their skills and knowledge to the placements and promote the built heritage sector in Northern Ireland.

The trainees built a wooden test piece as part of their off-the-job training which was thatched at Skillbuild to promote heritage skills and on completion was placed at the Ulster Folk and Transport Museum in Cultra as a shelter to be used by the public.

### Historic Scotland Bursary Scheme

CITB NI has managed six placements, funded by Historic Scotland's Heritage Lottery Funded programme. All placements were with the Northern Ireland Environment Agency and all gained a National Progression Award for the Conservation of Masonry. One trainee remains on the programme and will complete in January 2016.

### UKCES Skills for Innovation in Manufacturing

CITB NI has been working in partnership with the Northern Ireland Polymers Association to help employers identify and develop the necessary skills and management practices to improve innovation and business performance.

The project will bring together a total of 24 employers from the Polymers and Construction sectors to form three separate working groups. These groups, each with eight members (four from construction and four from polymers) will define innovation issues and work together to develop mechanisms and methodologies for effectively upskilling staff in key areas of innovation and commercial exploitation. The project is due for completion in May 2016.



## Virtual Training Facility - VET 360

Throughout the year we were developing our brand new VET360, an innovative new tool that provides a unique and memorable immersive training experience which gives the user instant access to construction sites in a workplace environment.



Used as a training tool VET360 allows greater understanding and awareness of the work location. Viewers can experience real time situations and identify hazards in complete safety raising awareness and understanding of health & safety issues. Purpose built advanced 360° camera technology is used to create customised imagery allowing the viewer to be placed into the middle of real site locations without the logistical and safety problems involved in workplace visits. The specialised technology creates an immersive experience which makes the user feel as if they are actually on the site.





## Recruitment & Careers

CITB NI works in partnership with 16 Construction Ambassadors to promote careers in construction. All ambassadors are employed in construction companies in Northern Ireland and during the year attended nine events.

CITB NI staff attended a wide range of careers events during the year engaging with schools Careers Teachers and DEL Careers Advisors. They also promoted the construction industry as an excellent career choice at a “Careers in Construction” event ‘Building Outside the Box’ held at Mount Stewart House.

By attending these events CITB NI staff and ambassadors engaged with over 3,500 potential new entrants.

## GCSE Construction

The GCSE Construction textbook to support the current GCSE in Construction & the Built Environment has sold over 500 copies. Bursaries were awarded to the top 3 students studying the qualification and 545 undertook the qualification in June 2015 giving a total of 5651 students achieving the qualification in the last 11 years. 33 schools currently deliver the qualification across Northern Ireland.

## Women in Construction Network

CITB NI signed up to the STEM CEO Charter to help promote women into STEM careers. The Charter is run by the Equality Commission NI. Monthly updates to the events section of the Women in Construction Network website were completed and news articles uploaded.

A new ‘Women in Construction’ case study booklet featuring nine case studies was developed and launched at a WICN event in February 2015 which included a presentation on developing and maintaining a LinkedIn presence.

A site visit to the A8 Road Dualling Project was facilitated by Lagan Ferrovial Costain in May 2015.

## FACT

*A third (32%) of firms in NI said they are likely to take on apprentices, graduates and interns over the next 12 months.*

*(Employer Panel Consultation, 2015)*



## 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.

### Annual Skills Statement

CITB NI's first Annual Skills Statement was published in July 2015. The Skills Statement is a synopsis of research findings carried out by CITB NI amongst NI construction employers, employees and stakeholders, as well as monitoring research completed by other industry stakeholders and trade bodies to give an overview of the current and future skills and training needs of the industry. The Skills Statement was sent to employers and MLA's

### Labour Market Intelligence

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 in June 2015. The 2015-19 LMI Report for the NI construction industry was published and distributed to stakeholders in January 2015.

### We also commissioned our annual:

- **Employer Tracking Survey and Stakeholder Survey.**
- **Employer Attitudes and Motivations to Learning and Training**
- **Workforce Mobility Survey**







## Marketing & Communications

The year started with the launch of the rebrand of the organisation from CITB-ConstructionSkills NI to CITB NI to coincide with the 50th Anniversary. A celebratory event was held for past and present Board Members at Nutts Corner Training Centre to mark the occasion.

Throughout the year a series of publications were produced and distributed to employers, these included two Newsletters, two Bulletins and a Construction Indicator. Supplementary promotional flyers were published to support employer engagement events, the Undergraduate Development Programme, business information seminars and the Qualifying the Experienced Workforce (QEW) programme.

We also published 'The Top 10 things that CITB NI does for the NI Construction industry' and distributed this to all registered employers and MLA's in order to promote the key products and services we provide. This series of publications help to keep employers up to date with industry performance and our progress on key outputs and to promote on-going training events and interventions.

Sponsorship support was provided to a series of stakeholders including the BEST awards through Colleges NI, CIOB Annual Lecture and the GCSE in Construction.

Combined marketing and event activity resulted in engaging with registered employers on average every eleven days and with stakeholders every five days.

Regular press releases were developed and sent to local and trade press which generated 208 press clippings with a total PR value of £101,720 and contributed to 87% of employers being aware of our services.

## E-Business

CITB NI is committed to increasing its use of technology to improve the effectiveness and efficiency of administrative processes and through our website **[www.citbni.org.uk](http://www.citbni.org.uk)** we averaged over 5000 visitors per month throughout 2014-15.

CITB NI has been engaging more pro-actively through social media and has established a Facebook Page with 320 likes and a Twitter account with 225 followers. We also introduced a LinkedIn Company profile throughout the year and by the end of 2014-15 we had established 90 followers.

**[www.citbni.org.uk](http://www.citbni.org.uk)**

## FACT

*70% of employers surveyed  
had heard about CITB NI  
via email.*

*(Employer Tracking Survey 2015)*



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CITB NI are working as a partner in ConstructionSkills, the Sector Skills Council for Construction.