



**Summary  
Annual Report**  
Sept 2016 - Aug 2017



## Chief Executive's Foreword

The 2016-17 year has been, paradoxically, one of uncertainty and inaction mixed with operational change.

Uncertainty due to the introduction of the Westminster led Apprenticeship Levy and its impact on the NI construction sector and CITB NI. As the NI construction sector grows outside NI, the impact on policies and processes in the other UK regions has an impact on the processes, finances and training plans of NI construction companies. The absence of an NI Assembly and decision making process to develop proposals on how the CITB NI Levy can work alongside the Apprenticeship Levy means that the construction employers, more than other business sectors, are disadvantaged in comparison to their English counterparts.

In addition, important changes in CITB NI's legislation, first proposed five years ago, to support training of NI workforce operating outside NI for NI companies has not yet been considered for industry consultation due to political focus on other issues.

CITB NI's industry forecasts were published during the year and were predicting an average annual growth over the next five years, however it also acknowledged that the industry is likely to suffer from a slowdown in its recovery over the coming year due to the current political inactivity which is hampering the approval and implementation of the Assembly's draft Programme for Government and Industrial Strategy.

All of the factors above make long term business planning difficult for CITB NI.

However, the Board and Staff have continued to pursue Aims and Objectives set in 2015 to develop a strategy to deliver a combination of financial return of Levy direct to NI employers mixed with directly facilitated training that is available at low or no cost to the industry.

This year CITB NI delivered more direct training in partnership with industry bodies and the provider network than previous years. In total 2986 of training hours have been delivered in areas as diverse as Flood Damage Restoration Courses (not otherwise available in NI), Fall arrest systems to improve Health and Safety of our workforce and CITB NI's bespoke Leadership development programme aimed at those current middle managers who have the potential to be the industry leaders of the future.

The coming years will be significantly influenced by the UK leaving the EU. Consideration of the availability of a skilled and competent workforce will be an issue that is high with many construction employers. CITB NI will work with the industry to continue to support skills development within the existing workforce. However a renewed focus must be on attracting the next generation. CITB NI will also be working with the industry over the coming year to promote the industry and developing the skills needed for the future.



**Barry Neilson**  
CHIEF EXECUTIVE

## About CITB NI

CITB NI combines the roles of an ITB and Sector Skills Council (in partnership with CITB GB) and is working with the Department for the Economy in reviewing and energising the NI Apprenticeships Framework.

CITB NI will also continue to improve the skills and productivity of the industry by engaging with employers to determine their skills needs, and working with Government and stakeholders to meet those needs through direct intervention to facilitate the development and delivery of critical skills for the industry.

## MISSION, VISION & AIMS

### **Mission;**

To develop and embed a training culture which will improve the skills and productivity of the Northern Ireland construction industry.

### **Vision;**

A construction industry where skills and competence are at the core of every business supported by a respected and valued CITB NI.



The Board approved CITB NI aims as being;

- CITB NI is respected and valued by industry stakeholders and staff.
- The industry invests in skills and qualifications to improve safety and profitability.
- CITB NI is customer focused, flexible, responsive and supportive.
- CITB NI is the voice for skills and informs government policy.
- Communication is clear and direct.
- Qualifications and occupational competencies meet the needs of NI industry.

CITB NI is delivering these aims through a range of actions which will improve our organisation and its services to the construction industry in NI.



## What have we done for you

### Levy

**CITB NI has reviewed how it identifies new employers who may be in-scope to its activities. This identified that many new companies were not aware of their obligations to CITB NI, or indeed how CITB NI could support them in training their workforce as they develop skills and systems for their emerging companies.**

The CITB NI levy means that all employers in the industry make appropriate financial contributions based on the annual levy rate of the wages bills for work in Northern Ireland.

- The levy rate for 2016-17 remained at 0.65% of employers emoluments.
- 96% of the invoiced levy was recovered during the year which compares favourably with previous years.
- The levy funds a wide range of activities including:
  - Grants
  - Training Advice
  - Research and Development
  - Provision of the Mobile Training Unit
  - Careers Promotion
  - Standards and Qualifications Development

### Grant

**Each year CITB NI invests a significant proportion of its income to provide a grants scheme to employers. The grant scheme has three separate tiers that facilitate a high degree of flexibility for employers to undertake training relevant to their organisational requirements.**

- During 2016-17 457 employers claimed grant (2015-16: 534), with a total of 5,287 grant applications.
- Over the year 373 levy paying employers claimed grant and 84 employers who are below the levy threshold and do not pay levy claimed grant.
- Employers are actively encouraged to provide suggestions on changes for the Grant Scheme and areas for support through Tiers 2 & 3 of the Grant Scheme.

**FACT:**  
**54% of respondents feel it is important to maintain the levy & grants system in terms of impact it has on maintaining the level and quality across the construction industry as a whole. (Employer Tracking Survey 2017).**

# UNDER CONSTRUCTION



# Training

## Training Interventions

- CITB NI's involvement in direct training Interventions allows essential training and knowledge to be disseminated to the industry where it does not exist or is not readily available in NI.
- The industry training that was provided directly by CITB NI was aimed at 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 642 training days were delivered to the industry via these three training and competence measures.
- Other interventions that were either organised and delivered in partnership with external bodies or procured by CITB NI included; two NVQ level 4 programmes in Construction Site Supervision (30 individuals), an Apprenticeship Scheme with 12 students working towards NVQ level 2 in Roof Slating and Tiling. Plus, short duration technical training courses in Lead Welding, Safety Net Inspection and Water Damage Restoration.

## 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.
- The MTU currently travels across the Province delivering an extensive range of construction related, health & safety and bespoke training to operatives, supervisors and managers. A total of 1,883 individuals attended training by means of the MTU or via an onsite venue.

## Scaffolding Training

- The scaffolding programme provided training and assessment for 126 individuals through the Construction Industry Scaffolders Record Scheme (CISRS) Part 1, Part 2 and Advanced Scaffolding. Seventeen 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).



### **Undergraduate Development Programme (UDP)**

- As it has been a number of years since the introduction of the Undergraduate Development Programme a major evaluation was undertaken, which included the formation of a Steering Group made up of employers, educationalists and CITB NI representatives.
- Research undertaken by CITB NI with employers, students and education representatives concluded that the basic content of the former programme was acceptable but that it needed a different approach to encourage participation and to better reflect current employer needs and construction practices.
- The project uses a team approach to design, construct and install a foot bridge using the skills of planning, estimation, project management, budgeting and time management all skills which employers are looking for in graduate level entrants to the construction industry.
- All undergraduates who participated in the programme attained a Construction Skills Register (CSR) Registration Card.

### **VET 360 (Virtual Environment Training 360) – an innovative approach to learning**

- CITB NI purchased this facility in 2015, following research into innovative approaches to learning and would encourage industry approaches for use, beyond CITB NI Interventions.
- The system allows participants to experience complex and hazardous sites or work locations in a safe environment. The viewer becomes immersed within a 360 degree real life time environment allowing greater understanding and helps to improve design, planning, induction, briefings and training. Simulated or CAD environments can also be created.
- To date the facility has been used to enhance the learning experience of participants on our NVQ Level 4 in Construction Site Supervision courses. We are also developing a suite of training activities involving VET360 including the Basic Guide to Risk Assessment in partnership with SERC.

### **NVQ Level 4 Diploma in Construction Site Supervision**

- The pilot NVQ Level 4 in Construction Site Supervision was introduced as a result of industry feedback on the need to improve the quality and competency of individuals who undertook the role of a site supervisor or site manager.
- The concept behind the intervention is to combine a formal qualification (NVQ Level 4) with an interactive approach to common supervisory activities that would be innovative and unique in its approach to competence and knowledge improvement.
- Due to over subscription of numbers for the pilot programme a second and third programme was advertised, recruited and ran during this training year with 28 candidates achieving the NVQ Level 4 Qualification.

# Training

## Basic Guide to Risk Assessment

- CITB NI in partnership with South Eastern Regional College (SERC) developed an introduction to risk assessment course that is non sector specific and gives participants a good understanding of why and how risk assessments are undertaken. The course uses a blended learning method which combines traditional presentation, practical observation and the use of the VET360 to display scenes and scenarios containing hazardous actions. The course was held four times during the training year with the intent to schedule four to six each year depending on need.
- The QEW project was completed in March 2017 with 198 qualifications having been achieved in this fourth delivery tranche. Since the initiation of the project in 2011 this brought the total number of qualifications attained by existing, experienced but unqualified workers, to 1,769.

- Safety Nets for Managers (Inspection) - A short training programme was delivered to 11 participants. Further consideration will be given to delivering a Safety Nets Installation programme in 2017-18.
- The pilot Leader in Construction programme resulted in 15 participants successfully completing the programme. Planning for three workshops for the incoming 2017-18 year began in summer 2017 providing the programme over a short course format.
- A Water Restoration Technician Training course was delivered to 5 participants in August. This course was delivered by the National Flood School over three days and following an exam participants were able to gain the Institute of Inspection Cleaning and Restoration Certification.

## Employer Engagement / Business Improvement Seminars

- Six employer engagement / business improvement seminars were delivered in 2016-17 with site visits incorporated into two of the seminars. Topics covered included waste management, BIM, credit control, tendering, family businesses, and social media. The events were attended by a total of 80 people from 49 companies.

**FACT:**  
**70% of all NI employers had funded or arranged training for staff in the last 12 months. (Skills and Training in the Construction Industry Survey 2016)**

## Industry Support

### Facilities

- The facilities at CITB NI continue to be utilised with regular hire of classrooms and the practical training areas (both internal and external) to support and drive industry training.
- Over the year a number of industry bodies and external organisations use the premises to hold committee and ad-hoc meetings due to its central location and plentiful car parking. A total of 81 meetings and training events were held at the centre during this period.

### SkillBuild NI

- SkillBuild NI is the annual construction craft competition which is managed and organised by CITB NI on behalf of the industry. The competition, conceived in the late 1970's has grown over the years to include 12 trade areas and an average of 100 apprentice competitors.
- The apprentices selected to compete at SkillBuild NI have all competed at Inter Campus Competitions held in the college they attend. On average over 300 young people compete to be among the top

apprentices from across the Province in their chosen trade area.

- Competitors who score in the top percentile across the UK can be invited to compete at the UK National Finals held as part of the World Skills UK Skills Show.
- CITB NI supported the 15 construction apprentices who competed at the UK National Finals held in the NEC during November. Our competitors returned with four Gold Medals - Bricklaying, Carpentry, Electrical Installation and Refrigeration plus a Silver Medal in Refrigeration, two Bronze Medals in Dry Wall Systems and Joinery. A further three competitors were Highly Commended in Cabinet making and Joinery (2 off) made the haul for the construction and built environment team the best for a number of years with 75% of the team returning with either a medal or a highly commended award.

### World Skills 2017 UK Team Members

- Final UK Team Selection for World Skills Abu Dhabi 2017 happened in the spring with four young people from Northern Ireland selected to participate. Of the four individuals three are from the construction & built environment sector.
- Cameron Nutt from North West Regional College in Carpentry, Armondas Tamulis from Southern Regional College in Wall & Floor Tiling and Adam Ferguson from CAFRE in Landscape Gardening. Both Cameron and Armondas progressed to membership of the UK Team as a result of their participation in SkillBuild NI and subsequent UK National Final competitions.





### Working with the British Council

- The link between CITB NI and the British Council was further strengthened with three projects being undertaken in partnership with local and international colleges and multi-national construction businesses. The international activity carried out by CITB NI meets the NI Governments aim to promote NI companies and skills to other countries
- A project to up skill construction site foremen for a large Middle East construction business resulted in a tender being submitted with Belfast Metropolitan College based on an NVQ at level 4 being delivered.
- Another project with the Government of Nigeria to support their consideration of the establishment of Sector Skills Councils is still at the research stage.
- An invitation to present at an international conference in Cape Town, South Africa on CITB NI's use of virtual reality in training was accepted with the Director of Industry Training and Support delivering two presentations and exhibiting a simulation of how a virtual environment can be used to encourage training and development.

## Marketing & Communications

- 2016-2017 was the final year of the three year Marketing and Communications Strategy to promote the products and services CITB NI provides to the industry. CITB NI continued to produce informative publications and a strategy was introduced to reduce overhead costs by minimising the number of documents printed, therefore short course flyers, Business Improvement Events and Research flyers were all produced digitally for promotion using email, website and social media.
- A number of press releases were developed and sent to local and trade press which generated 137 press clippings

with a total PR value of **£75,777 (an increase of £35,088 in value from the previous year)** and contributed to employer and industry awareness of our services.

- To reduce overhead costs a minimal amount of advertising was placed with trade press, however editorial was placed in Specify, Modern Builder, Plant and Civil Engineer and Northern Builder during the year and all publications supported CITB NI by publishing press releases throughout the year which helped promote coverage of ongoing training initiatives.
- As in previous years support was provided to the CIOB Annual Lecture and the GCSE in Construction students.

- Over recent years CITB NI has been more proactive on social media channels which support ongoing communication activity and promotion. At the end of the training year there were 741 Facebook followers, 659 Twitter followers and 470 LinkedIn followers. There was also regular communication to registered employers through e-mail and SMS text messages .
- A quarterly online magazine was developed and launched in September 2016. The magazine covers key topics about grants, training courses, research and training news. The online magazine has proved popular and plans are to continue to publish this.

## Stakeholder and Employer Engagement

- Engaging with stakeholders is important to understand and ensure industry training needs are addressed. During 2016-17 stakeholders were directly engaged every five days. Stakeholders included, Construction Employers Federation, Department for the Economy, Federation of Master Builders, Heritage Lottery Fund, Invest NI and Specialist sector bodies.
- CITB NI participated on the Heritage Angels Steering group and judging panel which saw the introduction of the awards funded by the Andrew Lloyd Webber Foundation and the Department for Communities to Northern Ireland. Award categories included Best Contribution to a Heritage Project by a Young Person and Best Craftsmanship or Apprentice on a Heritage Rescue or Repair Project.
- CITB NI participated in four 'Meet the Buyer' events in Belfast, engaging with employers to provide information on training, grants and industry forecasts.
- To increase the opportunity for engagement and provide greater flexibility for industry, ten short videos with voiceover promoting CITB NI products and services were produced in house and can be viewed on the website.


### **Built Environment Sectoral Partnership (BESP)**

- In November 2015 a BESP was established consisting of representatives from industry bodies, further education and the Department for the Economy.
- The partnership aims to provide opportunities to share knowledge and training and provide a collective voice for the industry on qualifications, apprenticeships and youth training.
- The BESP began the identification and development of some apprenticeship frameworks during the year in partnership with industry representatives.

### **Women in Construction Network**

- CITB NI continued to support women in the construction industry by maintaining the Women in Construction Network website which includes events and news articles of interest. A site visit to the Bangor waste water pumping station was facilitated by Dawson-WAM Ltd and included a lecture on the Considerate Constructors Scheme.





**FACT:**  
88% of  
stakeholders felt  
they have a good  
understanding of  
CITB NI's roles  
and objectives.  
(Stakeholder  
Survey 2016).

## Recruitment & Careers

- A marketing campaign was launched in August 2017 promoting construction apprenticeships to both employers and young people in a bid to recruit an additional 100 new apprentices into the local construction industry, and also with greater grant support. The campaign will be ongoing throughout 2017-18.
- Working with our group of industry ambassadors CITB NI attended 18 careers events and engaged with around 17,000 students and career changers to promote Construction as a career choice.
- CITB NI attended two Careers Teachers events and engaged with over 400 Northern Ireland school careers teachers and DfE careers advisers to inform them of the opportunities available within the construction sector. At one of these events a 'Building a Career in Construction' Speed Networking session involving CITB NI staff and Construction Ambassadors was delivered.
- An updated Career in the Northern Ireland Construction Industry Factsheet was developed based on the latest Industry Insights CSN Forecast and produced for distribution at careers events.
- CITB NI continued to promote the GCSE Construction textbook to support the current GCSE in Construction & the Built Environment.
- Bursaries were awarded to the top 3 students of the schools studying the GCSE in Construction & the Built Environment qualification in June 2017. A total of 6,934 students have achieved the qualification in the last 13 years. Thirty nine schools currently deliver the qualification across Northern Ireland.

**FACT:**  
**Average awareness  
of services is 68%  
up 3% from 2016  
(Employer Tracking  
Survey 2017).**



## Standards and Qualifications

- The CITB NI Construction Standards and Qualifications Strategy (CSQS) supports the development of industry training and qualifications in Northern Ireland through the implementation and operation of 10 action strands which were all progressed during the year. The 10 strands are: Consultations, New Entrants, Supporting Specialist Sectors, Mutual Recognition, New Technologies, Development of Employer information guidance, Develop Qualifications and Standards, Maintain Standards, Training & Competence, and Funding.
- CITB NI contributed to the development of a new Consolidated Assessment Strategy for Plant & Lifting Equipment. This strategy dictates the standard required to deliver NVQ qualifications for construction plant operations.
- CITB NI is leading the development of new Northern Ireland Apprenticeship and Traineeship Frameworks through the Built Environment Sector Partnership. This is in context with the implementation of the Department for the Economy Apprenticeship and Youth Training strategies.
- A new Level 3 construction technical apprenticeship framework for civil engineering technicians was developed in conjunction with the Institution of Civil Engineers (ICE).
- CITB NI contributed to a CSR plant operator card scheme working group as part of the review of this section of the CSR card scheme.
- The final Health & Safety booklets and occupational information guides were completed during the year. The publications aim to provide essential Health & Safety information in a user friendly format.

## 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.
- The Annual Skills Statement, which provides an overview of current and future skills needs as identified in CITB NI and other stakeholder research, was published in September 2016.
- 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.
- The annual Employer Tracking Survey of 100 NI employers was completed and actions from the findings were addressed. The survey sought to determine customer perceptions and satisfaction levels with CITB NI.
- The annual Stakeholder Survey which outlines how stakeholders feel CITB NI meets its objectives was published in March 2017
- CITB NI reconvened a meeting of the Northern Ireland Traditional Building Skills Working Group in March 2017 which was attended by many heritage organisations from both North and South of Ireland.

**FACT:**  
**74% of stakeholders think CITB NI is most successful at helping industry better understand its current and future skills through high quality research such as the Construction Skills Network. (Stakeholder survey 2016).**





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