

HBF and FIS drylining initiative to boost house building skills training

A new drylining boot camp aimed at college leavers is set to make significant inroads into fast-tracking newly skilled young people into jobs within the house building sector.

Helen Yeulet, skills delivery director at FIS Skills, tells us more.

A new CITB-funded pilot training course has been developed by the Home Builders Federation's Skills Partnership in collaboration with FIS Skills, and supported by FIS member Saint-Gobain, in response to industry pressure to build more houses. This pressure is all the more acute given the significant skills shortage in some very key trades hampering housing delivery against government targets, drylining being one.

FIS identified that close to 1,500 new drylining entrants are needed every year to bridge the skills gap (as covered in the Stockerl Report). That was pre-Brexit.

Moreover, up to two-thirds of construction college leavers with the appropriate qualification fail to gain employment in the trade for which they were trained. According to HBF and FIS research, this is because, in the words of employers, they just aren't site-ready. Following two years in a 'theoretical environment' these 18-year-olds have no real awareness of what the actual role on-site will require them to do, day in day out. As a result, they are not seen as 'employable' and despite success at college, drift out of construction into other industries, or even into unemployment.

The HBF / FIS pilot has been developed with this in mind, and will work alongside local colleges

to identify potential leavers and, together with employers, put them through an assessment / interview day.

Successful candidates will receive an offer of employment letter from the employer. This will be subject to an individual passing an end-point assessment test. Employers will work with training providers to agree what the end-point assessment needs to be and the training providers will tailor the course accordingly. Whilst the boot camp might be expected to take on average four weeks to complete, anyone completing early can be taken straight into employment.

This enables all students to 'deep dive' into a very specific trade and get their skills to the level required so that they can be fast-tracked into employment.

The initial pilot will offer 20 drylining and 45 bricklaying places in the coming months, but with the ambition to roll out across the country to become a consistent pathway for youngsters into the house building industry.

Jenny Herdman, director for the HBF's Home Building Skills Partnership, said: "The skills gap in house building requires new thinking and new approaches against a backdrop of a rapidly changing training landscape.

"We are delighted to be piloting



this unique training model with FIS, which will help guarantee a pipeline of employable skilled young people coming into the sector and enable us to be at the forefront of the new T-levels [technical qualifications for 16- to 19-year-olds] when they come in."

CITB funding will cover the cost of training and health and safety tests, and, once successful, also cover the cost of the further training required to get every new employee to NVQ Level 2.

Saint-Gobain is committed to supporting the programme delivery as well as working to identify

potential candidates within partner colleges. Shenaaz Chena, Saint-Gobain's director of industry and community training, said: "This is an ideal opportunity to work in partnership to get young people into employment whilst meeting the skills needs of construction employers. Saint-Gobain is delighted to be able to assist in working with FIS and HBF to trial a new approach."

Contact FIS Skills for further information on getting involved as an employer.

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