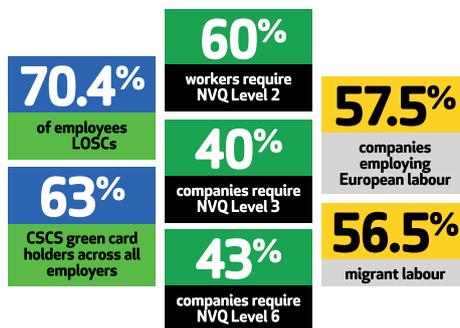
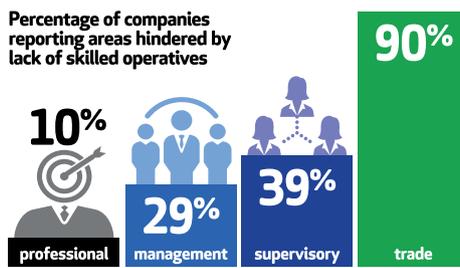
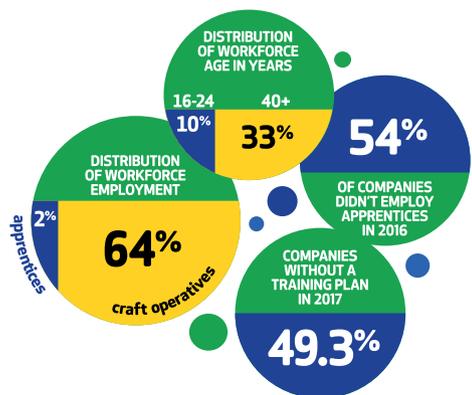


FIS Skills – delivering Fit-Out Futures

Finance director of specialist contractor Tapper Interiors and member of the FIS Skills board **Helen Tapper** sets out what the new FIS initiative, aptly named Fit-Out Futures, has planned for skills development within the finishes and interiors sector.

FIS | Skills



Whether you like it or not, or even care, for that matter, there is a crisis on the horizon. Yes, you've heard it before, but there is no doubt we are heading for a major skills shortage in our industry. That's why I am proud to be part of the FIS Skills board, overseeing the delivery of Fit-Out Futures. So, what's it all about?

It is no secret that skills shortages, caused by lack of new entrants, an ageing skilled population and lack of training and education, are having a major impact on construction now. And things are set to get worse due to the reliance on European and migrant labour and impending Brexit.

Sadly, however, as the results of our recent research show (see infographic), the development of home-grown skills in our sector is, for many, at the bottom of the list, or not even there at all. "It's not my problem!" I can hear you cry. Why should I train? It's expensive, time consuming and then they only go and work for someone else. All of it may be true, but if we don't do something, we are all in trouble!

That's why FIS has developed Fit-Out Futures, an exciting new programme that aims to address the challenges associated with and take responsibility for developing the right solutions to our skills shortage.

So much has been written about the problems in the sector, especially since the Chancellor

delivered his budget in March, but not enough said about the solutions being implemented to tackle these problems head on.

Fit-Out Futures' key purpose is to develop future careers paths for all operating in the sector and ensure the sector's sustainability through a comprehensive programme that provides engagement with employers and coordination on all skills initiatives that are both relevant to and add value to the workforce and your business.

Over the next 12 months, our FIS Skills team will focus on developing initiatives that will help drive a cultural change in our sector. This will include programmes such as BuildBack and Building Heroes – taking people looking for work and giving them basic training in our sector skills so they are good to go when they come to site – and upskilling of the existing unqualified workforce to a minimum of NVQ2 by 2020. Also important is raising awareness about our sector with the younger generation, showing them they can have a career, not just a job. And, crucially, we want to make the process of upskilling and training as simple as possible – supporting you in the identification of quality training and where to find the funding to support that training.

To help fund our ambitions, FIS submitted a large bid to CITB in March, which I am delighted to say has passed the first stage of the CITB process. Prior to the bid being submitted, our FIS Skills team engaged with 161 members and dozens of industry partners to gather evidence and get the delivery plan secured. This included carrying out a Training Needs Analysis of the FIS membership which provided unparalleled insights, leadership and direction to inform the needs of the sector.

The bid is also backed by the research in the Stockerl Report, which reinforces three labour time bombs: the impact of Brexit, the detrimental impact of a high proportion of labour-only subcontracting (LOSC) workforce on training and the age profile of the workforce.

By aggregation of project initiatives within the industry and ensuring these are turned into a cohesive relevant solution for the sector, this programme will join the dots, build on best practice, develop and manage a holistic solution and prevent further fragmentation of training.

We want to develop a model of engagement for existing and new entrant workers that will become sustainable and be focused on careers and opportunities, not short-term training that is not aligned to jobs.

But, of course, we can't achieve all this without your buy-in. This is a problem that isn't going to go away. To find out more, email skills@thefis.org

FIND OUT MORE
www.thefis.org/skills-hub

Fit-Out Futures key projects

BuildBack is aimed at the unemployed. This is currently running in Newcastle in collaboration with the Jobcentre Plus and Tyne Metropolitan college.

Building Heroes is aimed at ex-military and veterans (in partnership).

BounceBack is about working with ex-offenders (in partnership).

NexGen FIS is aimed at Generation X.

Women in Fit-Out Special Interest Forum. Email: womeninfuture@thefis.org if you would like to help shape this.

FIS Inclusive Workforce targets diverse and hard-to-reach groups.

An education programme to raise awareness with schools and colleges about fit-out/construction as a career choice.