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# CAREERS IN TOUCH

Spring issue 2021

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## WORKING IN THE CONSTRUCTION SECTOR

In this edition of Careers In Touch we focus on the construction sector. We look at what is influencing the sector and hear from construction employer, bmJV.



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**MARK DE BACKER**  
IAG Commercial manager

***“Good quality careers guidance has the ability to cut through some of this noise and help young people make sense of the options they are now facing”***

What’s the direction of travel for youth careers policy in England? Well at the end of January we perhaps got the first glimpse.

The current Careers Strategy for England is now over 3 years old and is starting to feel dated, especially in light of the pandemic. At the same time there have been few hints on future policy direction from government, nor an indication on when we might see a new Careers Strategy. That was until the 21st January, when we had the publication of the FE White paper ‘**skills for jobs, lifelong learning for opportunity and growth**’. While clearly a paper focused on FE and concerned with a levelling up of vocational education, Chapter 3 perhaps gives the greatest indication of current government thinking on careers, particularly in schools and colleges.

So what does it suggest? There are proposals to lower access to independent careers guidance to year 7, a publishing and update of statutory guidance on careers, supporting and strengthening the Baker clause, which means schools have to provide access to FE and training providers to their students. Also the continued roll-out of Careers Hubs, investing in more training for Careers Leaders, a whole school approach to careers, and a revamping of the National Careers Service Website. This is all good solid stuff that I wouldn’t disagree with. Although perhaps how ambitious is this given some of these are already happening in some schools or areas?

There is also a nod to Ofsted and the need to quality assure provision. With Ofsted being asked to carry out a thematic review to provide an up-to-date assessment of careers guidance in schools and colleges and provide recommendations to improve practice.

Fragmentation of provision within the youth careers landscape is also recognised, there is a desire to create an all-age careers system through alignment between the Careers and Enterprise Company and the National Careers Service. This is positive, although of course you don’t need alignment if you go one step further and create a single organisation responsible for all age careers guidance, which is the position in the other devolved home nations.

It is not clear yet how other initiatives such as Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) schools' advisers will align or not with such an initiative. Sir John Holman of Gatsby benchmark fame has been named as strategic adviser on this alignment.

We then come to the other issue, it is not what is in the paper, it is what is missing, very limited mention of the importance of personal careers guidance. This suggests that there may not be additional funds to support Gatsby benchmark 8. I believe this is important because there is a lot of noise at the moment for young people. New and varied pathways from Kickstart to T-Levels and a constantly evolving and developing labour market in light of Covid. Good quality careers guidance has the ability to cut through some of this noise and help young people make sense of the options they are now facing. The other obvious omission seems to be a lack of dialogue around how schools and colleges can support and prevent the burgeoning NEET figures. While it is fair to say there is much being done in the 'NEET' sphere including Kickstart, employer incentives for traineeships and apprenticeships, sector-based work academies and youth hubs to name a few, these all firmly sit in the DWP arena and need aligning. What will be critical is ensuring that education and work-based solutions are connected at the point of transition. It might be possible to design an excellent school and college-based careers system, but it needs to connect beyond education.

So, an interesting glimpse into the possible future direction of careers policy in schools, with many positives and a few considerations. Hopefully, this is the start of a dialogue government will undertake to ensure careers provision really does give the best start to young people ahead.

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# Sharing best practice

**In this edition, we share with you an example of how we are supporting schools to link with construction employers through our Careers Clusters programmes.**

We manage two Careers Clusters programmes in Croydon and Hillingdon, funded by the Mayor's European Social Fund (ESF) 2019-23, working with schools and colleges to improve labour market relevance and responsiveness of careers programmes to employers' needs and so better equip young Londoners for the world of work.

Key elements of the programme include meaningful work experience opportunities and employer activities, teacher CPD linking the curriculum with careers and developing a 3-year careers strategy with each school/college. Sustained engagement with employers (including SMEs) and HEIs is key to the success and legacy of Careers Clusters.

The sector focus for both clusters includes construction and the team has been successfully engaging with employers including Willmott Dixon, SCS Railways, Sir Robert McAlpine, BAM construction, Potter Rapper. The employers have been delivering a range of activities to support young people including employer talks, work experience, virtual tours of sites and employability sessions. The aim of these sessions is to increase the awareness of the sector and future opportunities.



# Spotlight on construction by bmJV

Do you want to know why I believe construction is the most exciting and vibrant industry? It is all around us! Whether you live in a quiet village or a busy town, there is a construction project nearby. Look around next time you are out on your travels, see how many you can spot. We humans are genetically programmed to constantly improve things around us. We want them to be better, prettier, more efficient, more environmentally friendly.



There are so many epic projects happening right now, even in the pandemic world – HS2, Sellafield, Crossrail, Hinkley Point, Tideway, Lower Thames Crossing and thousands more smaller sites that are equally as important to our lives: roads are being repaired and improved; motorways are being upgraded to allow more cars and improve traffic flow; new residential estates and shopping centres are being built; hospitals and schools are expanding. Where I live, my neighbour next door is building an extension and the other is replacing their windows – but what do all these projects have in common? They all require specialists to deliver them.

There is, and always will be a demand for construction workers. This will never end, thanks to our nature and the resilience of the construction industry, as proved during the pandemic. We don't stop - we march on!

There is a career for everyone in this sector! If you are creative and good with tools there are several technical roles available - you could become a carpenter, bricklayer, electrician, plumber, plant operator, digital engineer, IT lead, draught person or design engineer. If you are passionate about the environment – maybe ecology or environmental roles would be your perfect role! If you are good at motivating people and getting the best out of your team – you could consider supervisory or managerial positions. If you enjoy working on spreadsheets and like numbers, then accounting or quantity surveyor roles might be a good fit. Or as a school leaver, you could help support the entire time by fulfilling an administrative role, helping various departments meet their objectives before progressing onto a fully qualified position.

Have I mentioned how well you will get paid for your work? Almost all companies I have worked with pay competitive, above minimum wage salaries, even to those just starting their career at an apprentice or entry

level and offer great additional benefits and perks.

Impressed yet? What if I tell you we welcome people from every background, of any age, any gender and any religion? We embrace each other's differences and work together to create an inclusive and supportive environment for everyone. We celebrate our uniqueness as we know we all bring different skills to the table and deliver better results through the mix of different cultures, skills and experiences.

How do we do it I hear you ask? At the BAM Nuttall Morgan Sindall Joint Venture (bmJV) we believe we are leaders in engaging with local communities, while building a diverse workforce. Our mission is simple – enhance communities by bringing economic, social and environmental benefits, and address inequality and boost social mobility.



bmJV has been working with a wide range of employment support organisations to help get people into work, who have previously found it hard to secure employment or are often excluded. In collaboration with local job centres, we have actively recruited young people with learning disabilities, as well as people who have been long-term unemployed. We have also given meaningful employment opportunities to homeless people through our links with the homeless charity 'Crisis'.

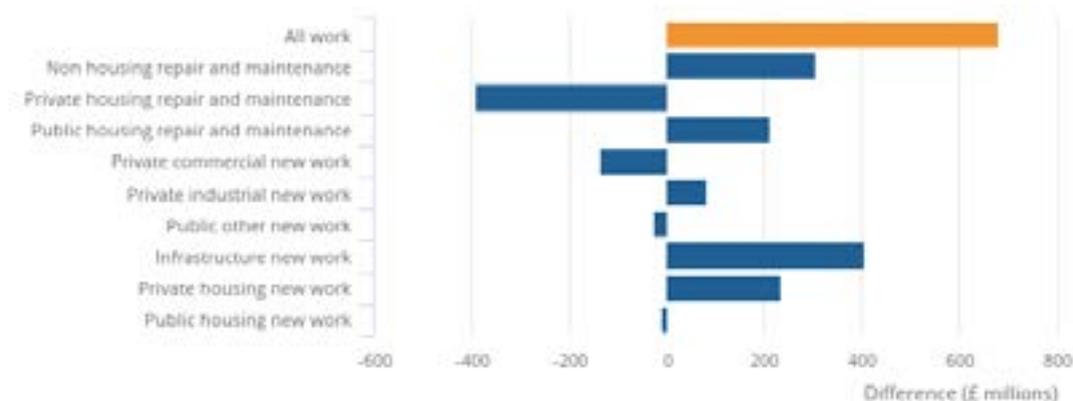
We designed bespoke educational engagement programmes that targeted groups in schools and colleges that have previously been under-represented in the industry, such as women and those from minority groups. We also run recruitment and career information events, targeting specific hard-to-reach groups such as care leavers, young 'not in employment, education and training' (NEET) people, career changers and local career advisors.

In the last two years alone, we have engaged with over a thousand people, hosted 150 students on our work experience programmes, and have organised or participated in 31 schools and local authorities events such as career fairs, insights days, meet the professional, mock interviews and CV writing workshops. In partnership with Hampshire County Council, we've delivered three pre-employment programmes for 23 in care or care leaver young people, so far leading to eight permanent apprenticeship positions. This is what it's all about!

Maggie Stefaniak  
Project Skills Manager, bmJV

# LMI update – the construction sector

The construction sector can be broken down into several areas: repair and maintenance, housing, infrastructure and industrial, therefore it is worth remembering the breadth of this sector. It can be influenced by public investment, large infrastructure projects, private sector investment and home owner behaviour. We can see from the following chart that construction output grew by 1.7% in the three months to January 2021<sup>1</sup>, compared to the previous 3 months. The greatest demand being for infrastructure. This also reflects the Construction Skills Industry Outlook<sup>2</sup> which acknowledges the challenges that the sector has faced (and will continue to) due to Covid-19 restrictions, and also indicates that infrastructure and new housing are predicted to be more buoyant than the other sectors.



In terms of job vacancies in the construction sector, you can see from the graph<sup>3</sup> overleaf that they declined drastically between April and June 2020 (as lockdown 1 really took hold). Vacancy numbers have begun to rise again, reaching pre-covid levels between Nov 2020 and Jan 2021.

Due to the uncertainty created around both Covid-19 and Brexit at the minute, it is hard to look too far into

1 <https://www.ons.gov.uk/businessindustryandtrade/constructionindustry/bulletins/constructionoutputingreatbritain/january2021>

2 [https://www.citb.co.uk/documents/research/csn\\_outlook\\_2021\\_2025.pdf](https://www.citb.co.uk/documents/research/csn_outlook_2021_2025.pdf)

3 ONS Vacancy Survey Data

the future and project demand. What we can however say is that construction seems to be faring better than some other sectors such as the accommodation and food sector.



Another thing influencing the sector is that the UK has responded to the climate emergency with a legally binding target to reduce greenhouse gas emissions to Net Zero by 2050<sup>4</sup>. The construction industry has a huge role to play in this as 40% of emissions currently come from construction and the built environment. With this in mind, skills required in the sector will change and develop. For example there will be more demand for retrofit to make existing buildings more environmentally friendly. Those at every stage of the construction process will need to have this awareness, whether they are working on the design of a building or installing heat pumps.

With all of this in mind, key messages to pass on to students you are working with who are interested in construction include making them aware of the breadth of the sector and the variety of roles available. Also that the sector is changing to support the governments Net Zero target. This will require new skills and new roles. There are routes into the sector at various levels. A good starting point for those interested in the sector is the GoConstruct website. The **Career Explorer tool** on here lets students find roles suited to them based on skills, interests and qualification levels. There is also an **'educational resources'** section which will provide you with resources to support your guidance and teaching.

# Tools and resources

In each newsletter we share a selection of free careers tools & resources that may be useful in your careers programme or practice.

**My Learning, My Future** - "My Learning, My Future is a suite of Benchmark 4 resources to support subject teaching staff, from over 20 subjects at KS3 & 4, to engage students in curriculum learning by highlighting the relevance of their subjects to future careers and opportunities".

<https://resources.careersandenterprise.co.uk/my-learning-my-future>

**University Open Days**- links to open days and subject specific talks delivered by various universities

<https://www.ucas.com/ucas/events/find/scheme/virtual-and-digital/type/open-day?layout=list>

**Indigo free careers resources** - free careers based posters from Indigo including UCAS dates 2021, Choosing a degree and University interviews.

<https://indigo.careers/free-resources/>

**Careers Education Information Advice and Guidance (CEIAG) and Transitions in Focus: A guide to support vision impaired children and young people**

<https://www.pocklington-trust.org.uk/children-young-people-families/careers-guide-to-support-vi-young-people/>

## EVENTS 2021

22 April 2021	Discover a career in health & care, Surrey Heartlands (virtual)
28-29 September 2021	Skills North East, Newcastle Utilita Arena
13-14 October 2021	Skills Yorkshire, Centenary Pavilion, Leeds
26-27 November 2021	Skills London 2021, ExCel London



# Focus on - Careers Guidance Qualifications

We are an approved OCR centre for Career Guidance qualifications. Our specialist training programmes, delivered by dedicated and experienced career guidance professionals, upskill and empower candidates.

In response to the situation presented by COVID-19, we have adjusted our delivery model to combine technology with traditional assessment methods such as assignments and professional discussions.

We offer the following range of professional qualifications:

- Career Information and Advice Level 4 Diploma
- Career Guidance and Development Level 6 Diploma
- Level 6 Career Leadership Certificate.

We offer a comprehensive suite of qualifications that allows you to design your own training programme, carefully tailored to your needs and setting. Your training can fit around you; we offer start dates throughout the year and you work at your own pace, with guided and tailored support from your tutor.

*I enrolled with Education Development Trust to study a Level 4 Career, Information, Advice and Guidance qualification. Jo Corbett made this feel that I could achieve anything. She had patience and understanding and was very knowledgeable on the subject. From start to finish it was a seamless process and nothing was too much trouble. I can't speak highly enough about Jo and would recommend her to anybody who thinking of doing a qualification in this field.*

*CIAG level 4 learner*

**To find out more about how we can support you, contact us:**

**Email [jcorbett@educationdevelopmenttrust.com](mailto:jcorbett@educationdevelopmenttrust.com)**

**Telephone**

**07785 627558**



# Our Services



## A QUALITY CAREERS INFORMATION ADVICE AND GUIDANCE SERVICE

Our Level 6 qualified advisers deliver one-to-one interviews, group careers sessions and employability skills workshops, providing a detailed action plan for every student.



## A COMPREHENSIVE WORK-RELATED LEARNING PROGRAMME

We can manage your work-experience programme including employer visits, mock interviews, careers events and our complete end-to-end work experience placement programme. We hold the Fair Train Work Experience Gold Standard.



## TAILORED SPECIALIST CAREERS SUPPORT

Our advisers can deliver one-to-one interviews, group careers and employability skills workshops, parents' evenings and tailored transition support for vulnerable students and those with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND).



## RIGOROUS TRACKING AND INFORMATION MANAGEMENT SERVICES

To support development of your careers programme we can provide bespoke management information and data reporting services, providing you robust, accurate and well-designed data solutions and expert analysis.



## ACHIEVE QUALITY IN CAREERS STANDARD

We support schools and colleges with initial accreditation or reaccreditation. We can assess your readiness and then provide ongoing support and consultancy to help schools/colleges compile evidence and develop their provision and good practice.



## SUMMER SCHOOL CAREERS SUPPORT

We can support your students with the following: information advice and guidance one to one and group sessions, supporting choices, planning for the future, creating a CV, interview techniques and preparation for life after school.