

Construction

Workforce Development Action Plan 2002-2005



Introduction

This action plan has been developed with our partner organisations and follows initial research and consultation with employers in the sector. This action plan is one of 12 sector action plans and four generic issue action plans.

Sussex Learning and Skills Council is focused on delivering its **overarching objectives** for Sussex employers, people and communities, namely:

- A step change in the number of level 3 qualifications obtained by the under 30 year old population
- A step change in the reduction of adults who lack basic skills in literacy and numeracy
- A step change in the skills of the workforce and the ways in which employers access training

This action plan is an important tool in achieving these objectives.

"Learning brings major benefits to everyone in the community and has been proven to provide the basis for a successful economy."

Henry Ball, Executive Director, Sussex LSC

The research findings and outcome of the consultation with employers are set out on pages 2 and 3. A detailed action plan is outlined on page 4.

The Strategy

As set out in our Local Strategic Plan 2002-2005, the **demand for learning** needs to be considered in three ways:

- Economic Demand – the current and projected employer skills needs
- Individual Demand – the projected number of learners, their choices, goals and aspirations
- Community Demand – promote social inclusion and support local regeneration activities

This action plan has been developed on these **three drivers of demand**.

The Sector

Construction is an important sector within Sussex employing nearly 30,000 people, with an additional 26,000 self employed. Employment in the sector is set to rise by 2,000 by 2006, or by 1.2% per year.

Construction is a broad sector including:

- Site preparation
- Building of complete constructions or parts thereof; civil engineering
- Building installation (including electrical wiring and fittings, insulation work, plumbing and other installation)
- Building completion (including plastering, joinery, floor or wall covering, painting, glazing and other completion work)
- Renting of construction or demolition equipment with operator

> Occupations & Qualifications

- Craft and skilled labour account for nearly one in four construction jobs in Sussex
- Although there has been a parallel trend towards upskilling craft-level work in some construction activities into technical-level work, in Sussex this has had little effect and technicians account for only 3% of all jobs
- Professional & support occupations are forecast to grow more quickly than craft and operative occupations (2.6% per year compared with 0.9%)
- The average demand for non-manual occupations across Sussex is nearly 750 jobs a year. This figure is forecast to rise to nearly 2,000 in future years
- Most of this demand will be in carpentry, joinery and plastering
- 60% of construction workers have NVQ equivalent level 3 or above
- A significant minority of construction employees in Sussex have low qualifications
- 22% of craft and skilled occupations have low qualifications

> Training Supply

Higher Education

- There were 11,000 acceptances to construction-related courses in Higher Education (HE) across the country in 1999/2000
- This represents a decline of just under 10% in three years at a time when overall HE intake is rising

Further Education

- The intake to Further Education (FE) courses at craft and technician levels in England fell by a third from 1990 to 1997
- There has been some expansion since then but this has not kept pace with changes in demand in the industry
- 82% of enrolments are in craft-level training, particularly in carpentry, joinery and bricklaying

Other provision

- Modern Apprenticeships have made slow but steady progress nationally in construction
- In 2000, 84 of the 4,300 MA completions in construction across the country were in Sussex
- In 1999/2000 there were just over 400 starters of Foundation MAs, MAs and dedicated NVQ programmes in Sussex
- MAs have had most impact in Sussex in carpentry and joinery (49%) and bricklaying (21%)
- There has been little impact in 'generic' trades like electricians and plumbers, which are rising areas of demand but where few employers are supporting trainees

> Main Skills Issues

Skills shortages and gaps in construction in Sussex

- High-level skills shortages are present in site engineers, quantity surveyors, estimators, planners and in ICT skills for design and build and related needs
- Shortage of site managers and supervisors is affecting companies across the sector
- Generalised skills shortages for some craft-level skills – and for carpenters, joiners and bricklayers in particular. For recruiters, this seems to be an issue of supply constraints, and for labour-only sub-contractors an issue of often poor quality or limited relevant experience of those individuals who are available
- More selective shortages for plumbers, plasterers, roofers, operatives in steel frame assembly and in a wide range of heritage craft skills
- Selective shortages also for general labourers and operatives, although this still seems to vary greatly within local labour markets in Sussex

Other issues

- Often uncompetitive earnings in Sussex set against elsewhere in the South and London
- Weak work-based training to upskill employees
- Low and falling levels of unemployment in much of Sussex – an important source of supply into operative vacancies
- A legacy of a net outflow of skilled labour from Sussex employers during times of recession for Sussex construction
- Labour-only sub-contractors having a rising profile in the sector, but generally not as trainers of skilled labour
- Sub-optimal recruitment and utilisation of skilled labour by some employers and a residual failure by the sector to attract women into stereotypically male roles

"More highly skilled labour is, and will be, required across all occupations in the construction industry."

Construction Workforce Development Planning Brief 2001-2005, CITB

> Key Issues and Priorities

Encouraging demand and future skill needs

- Widen the 'natural' recruitment sourcing of the sector, e.g. taster sessions for 14-16 year old female students
- Build SME value in skills/training by supporting development of managers and supervisors
- Support innovation in supply-chain development of contractor skills through pilot projects
- Support employer-led sector dialogue groups to provide demand-side labour market intelligence
- Review best practice and innovation by SMEs in workforce development

Improving supply

- Facilitate SME engagement in provider/Centre of Vocational Excellence (COVE) innovations and the 14-19 agenda
- Devise a coordinated initiative to raise participation in technician-level courses
- Undertake a review of current provision/participation mix in craft-level training for young people
- Disseminate sector-provider labour market intelligence to providers to ensure supply matches demand
- Target workforce development support on SME management skills (all levels)
- Sussex LSC promotion of South East LLSC development programme on wider access to sub-degree level provision
- Build provider responsiveness and capability by supported structured placements for FE and other tutors/coordinators (project based)



> Contact Us

We welcome your views and reactions to this action plan. We are especially looking for information about:

- Skills gaps and skills needs
- Hard to fill vacancies
- Future trends and challenges facing your industry

**Call the
Learning Pays Hotline
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Objective	Actions	Timescale	Working With...
Creating a demand-led system	Identify which specific management skills are needed, particularly at supervisory level in SMEs	Start March 2003	CITB, employers, Unions
	Improve and promote the image of the sector among groups that do not traditionally enter the industry	Ongoing	Employers, schools, FE Colleges, EBPs, Careers Service, Connexions, NFB, CIOB, IOP
	Run pilot projects to promote innovative approaches to skills development	Completed by March 2004	Enterprise Agencies, FSB
	Support SMEs working towards Investors in People and develop a networking programme specifically for SMEs	October 2002 onwards	
	Identify and develop a network of workplace Learning Champions among employers and employer representative organisations	Begin January 2003	Employers and representative groups eg NFB
	Promote networking and the sharing of good practice in the sector by working with existing Sussex Enterprise and CITB networks	By July 2003	CITB, SSC, NFB, CIOB, IOP
	Pilot an Employer Learning Network	Begin January 2004	CITB, SSC
	Improve quality of sector labour market and skills intelligence by undertaking robust research and actioning outcomes	Begin March 2003	CITB, SSC
	Identify current and future issues which will affect demand for learning and skills in the sector	Ongoing	CITB, SSC, NFB, CIOB, IOP
Improving supply and capacity	Increase the provision of appropriate craft and trade skills training opportunities to level 3	By March 2004	FE Colleges, training providers
	Increase the provision of appropriate supervisory and management learning opportunities targeted particularly at SMEs	By March 2004	FE Colleges, training providers
	Improve flexibility of Further Education provision by using placements, innovative curriculum design and increased employer involvement through initiatives such as the Colleges for Business project	Start January 2003	Provider networks, Small Business Service, SEEDA, training providers
	Integrate Bitesize courses and Modern Apprenticeships into the delivery of training	By March 2004	FE Colleges, training providers
	Develop a COVE for the sector which has the active involvement of SMEs and larger organisations	Target July 2003, planned by July 2004	FE Colleges, training providers, employers
	Establish a pan-Sussex construction Training Framework	Alliance by July 2003	Provider network
	Develop level 3/4 progression in sector specific qualifications	Ongoing	Partnership 4 Progression, HE Institutions

Developing the Sussex workforce

LEARNING PAYS!

Learning+Skills Council
Sussex