

# Home Builders Skills Partnership Fast Track Pilot Project Final Independent Evaluation Report



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# 1 Executive Summary

## Key Messages

1. The pilot has been of strategic importance in helping to raise awareness with the industry training boards, homebuilders and colleges about the market failure in the current training system that sees fewer than one in four young people from a construction course enter the sector.<sup>1</sup> The legacy of the pilot is the Learners to Workers pilot programme run by CITB and focussing on bricklayers.
2. Enabled 48 young people the opportunity to taste, 32 young people to experience and 14 to sustain a career in homebuilding, a cost of £5.7k per recruit. Evidence from young people suggests that broadly half of this cohort would not have likely found work in the homebuilding sector were it not for this pilot.
3. Tested an alternative fast track route into the sector, with mixed results and an appetite from employers for such an alternative. Despite the knowledge gained on their college course, a lack of sufficient practical experience, and funding arrangements mean that young people from both cohorts have been placed on Apprenticeship programmes. Young people were judged, qualitatively, to be on a par with other workers of a similar age, or slightly ahead of a (typically younger) apprentice.

From a college perspective, 'fast tracking' learners to complete their NVQ on site reflected the demand they were seeing from employers:

*"It made logical sense given the demand for bricklayers out there, and increasingly, students are not lasting two years with us at college because they are being taken out by employers a lot sooner than what used to be the case. So, this model works with everything we are trying to do." (College)*

- The systemic challenges that prompted this pilot persist. Too few construction college graduates go on to work in the sector, despite having trained in areas where skills shortages are at critical levels. The pilot has raised awareness, not only of the issue, but also of the practical and logistical problems involved in seeking a solution.
- This final evaluation report provides a summary assessment of the results achieved through two-year pilot project delivered between 1 July 2017 and 1 August 2019.

## Outputs

- The total contribution for the Fast Track pilot was £182,061, (comprising £113,091 from CITB and £68,970 match contribution from employers.<sup>2</sup> funded by CITB for £210k (direct) with homebuilders contributing £113k of in-kind contributions. This combined resource delivered seven bootcamps and 32 job starts.
- In 2017 / 2018, 48 young people attended one of seven bootcamps in Bricklaying (Coleg Gwent \*2), West Suffolk College and Leeds College of Building, two in drylining

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<sup>1</sup> CITB Destinations of Construction Learners in Further Education (2017)

<sup>2</sup> This is £130k less (39%) than originally projected (£210k CITB grant and 113k employer-in-kind contribution).

offered by Barking and Dagenham College in Romford and one bootcamp in carpentry & joinery (Burton and South Derbyshire College).

- 32 completed the bootcamp and secured jobs as a result, with evidence suggesting approximately half of these young people would not have entered the homebuilding sector otherwise, 28 managed remained in employment for 26 weeks or longer.
- 20 completed an NVQ Level 2
- In 2019, 14 (44%) from cohort 1 and 2 remain in employment (31%), the majority with Persimmon, where the programme complemented other initiatives to boost recruitment from the FE sector
- Nine homebuilders and supply chain companies were involved, with the largest contribution by some distance from Persimmon. Others include St Modwen, Stanmores, Astins and Measoms. Measoms has subsequently invested in a purpose build training centre at Havering College.

### **Outcomes**

- The cost per job secured was £5.7k, slightly higher than the expected £5k. The brokering between college and employer, and the attendance administration means the programme is expensive to run in its current form
- Four in ten young people from this sample would likely not have joined a homebuilder if they had not taken part in the bootcamp, while the other half would probably to have joined anyway
- Positive application of skills from the bootcamp resulting in participants who consider themselves more work ready, and by their employers to be at least on a par with other workers their age.

### **Skills shortages**

- The training outcomes gained most quickly related to knowledge and awareness of health and safety requirements. The ability to work at pace required took the longest. Looking back, participants said it took at least six months, and they were still slower than more experienced workers after two years
- Participants thought the programme has increased their skills and speed on the job and they have had more practice working in teams
- Young people recognised that the bootcamp gave them a grounding, a way into the world of work (although some were already doing one or more jobs alongside their college course). The approach on site compared to the bootcamp was also different, requiring the young person to again adapt
- While young people considered they were psychologically ready to work; and had the right attitude (some were already working alongside college), with hindsight they recognised did not have all the technical skills.

## **Speed to competence**

- Employers monitoring systems do not enable comparison between the fast track cohorts and other recruits and apprentices. Qualitative feedback suggests that fast track young people are at least as competent as other recruits of a similar age, and perhaps slightly ahead of (younger) apprentices. However, aptitude and attitude were determining factors, and there was variety in both across the small sample
- College feedback also highlighted attitudinal factors, and described how the experience had helped them to act like tradesmen
- For the young people, they felt better prepared for both the world of work and homebuilding as a result of the bootcamp experience. While approaches on site differed to the both the skills learned in college and the bootcamp approach, the 'real world' aspects of the format were valued
- Compared to the baseline, young people have grown in confidence and maturity, with the bootcamp experience a contributory factor.

## **Employer / college collaboration**

- The pilot has raised and refined awareness of the importance of employers engaging with FE, and also the practical and logistical challenges involved. There is little evidence that employers have deepened their relationships with participating colleges, with two examples of the relationship stopping, for different reasons Persimmon, the most active employer, had already decided to invest in recruitment from FE prior to this pilot. However, the fast track model was attractive to Persimmon since they had found direct recruits from college needed significant further training to be site ready
- Employers report a number of potential learning points for colleges, in terms of both bootcamp delivery and follow up support. The perceived investment and support given by one college was seen to be lower by employers than the other four
- The availability of apprenticeship funding means employers continue to focus the majority of their efforts in this area.

## **Change in recruitment behaviours**

- Engagement with the pilot is directly linked to the availability of funding (for completion of the NVQ) and the bootcamp a critical factor.
- The majority of homebuilders continue to recruit experienced workers (from one another)
- There is no evidence that the pilot has led to a more systemic change in recruitment behaviour. As the bootcamps have been generally small 'one offs' this is not a surprising finding. There was nevertheless employer interest in further bootcamps.

## **Sustainability**

- The model tested in this pilot has directly informed a further, larger pilot delivered by CITB 'Learners to Workers'. It has enabled CITB and the Home Building Federation to make the case for reform in FE at ministerial level.
- The model of a co-designed bootcamp acting as the work experience component is directly relevant to T-levels

- 80% of the sample agreed the experience had made a career in construction more appealing
- Young people engaged in the pilot are all intending to stay in the homebuilding sector
- Seven in ten would recommend the programme to their peers.

## Learning

*"We and other trade bodies need to think about how the model would work and see how the employer side would work more effectively." (HBF Board member)*

- The fast track pilot has led to valuable operational learning that points to:
  - ✓ The need for, and difficulty in finding, a scalable solution to support those leaving FE construction courses with skills (subject to further development) to undertake critical roles but lacking the experience to find work in the sector
  - ✓ The importance of a trusted broker to support all parties and connect young people to employment opportunities, informed by insight from employers on their recruitment needs, and with sufficient resource to manage connections at a number of levels
  - ✓ The status of the bootcamp graduates was sometimes confused, and they were often referred to as 'Apprentices'. A clear, shared agreement between employer, young person and training provider would add clarity
  - ✓ To engage not only colleges and employers in delivering bootcamps, but to influence the course curricula at more strategic levels.

## Conclusions and recommendations

The model tested has directly informed subsequent pilots being undertaken by CITB with bricklayers and, potentially, those to be asked to implement the recommendations from the Letwin Review.

The evaluators make three recommendations to build on the results and learning from this pilot.

1. Creation of an independent strategic hub to gather insight from industry on recruitment needs, and to connect this intelligence to colleges to inform future provision
2. Creation of a cross-construction steering group to focus on connecting talent into trades, alongside a focus on quality and reducing errors and defects.
3. Continue to influence at strategic levels to implement the recommendations from the Letwin review and T-level innovations.

## 2 Introduction

The Homebuilding Skills Partnership (HBSP) aims to develop, grow and sustain a programme to provide the workforce the industry requires to deliver the further increases in housing supply the country desperately needs. It will focus on attracting new entrants into the industry, and on providing focussed training to develop the qualified workforce needed to construct today's high-quality new homes. This pilot aligns well with these over-arching objectives.

The programme objectives were:

- ✓ 65 students will be enrolled, engaging with up to 40 employers selected and up to 10 colleges
- ✓ The programme aims to have a 100% employment start rate – young people completing the programme, CSCS card issued and still in employment or self-employed
- ✓ A pathway being opened up to employment – 95% will still be working after 26 weeks
- ✓ Filling skills shortages with young people leaving full-time FE courses; practical skills and speed together with the required NVQ and CSCS card
- ✓ Support the development of supply chain relationships and build a supply chain management culture and support CITB's priority of making construction seem more appealing;
- ✓ Transfer from FE development to full time employment and semi-skilled to skilled worker

### **Market failure**

This pilot takes place at a time when the home building sector is under pressure to build a greater volume of homes, to a higher quality. A shortage of bricklayers has received particular, national attention:

*"The analysis suggests a shortage of British bricklayers will have a 'significant biting constraint' on government plans to boost the number of new homes built from 220,000 a year to 300,000."*<sup>3</sup>

The Letwin Review recommended a 'flash programme' of training for bricklayers over a five-year period.

This market failure that this pilot sought to tackle was the fact that six months after leaving a construction course, only 25% were in employment in the sector, despite the significant skills gaps faced by employers.<sup>4</sup> Analysis by the Homebuilding Skills Partnership shows that in order to build an additional 10,000 homes (to meet Government targets of 300,000 home per year

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<sup>3</sup> <https://www.gov.uk/government/news/analysis-from-independent-review-into-building-homes-published>

<sup>4</sup> 'The Federation of Master Builders recently reported. "We've been experiencing a severe shortage of bricklayers and carpenters for quite some time —[and] skills shortages are now seeping into other key trades such as roofers and plumbers. Indeed, of the 15 key trades and occupations we monitor, 40% show skills shortage."  
<https://www.ukconstructionmedia.co.uk/case-study/skills-shortage-rising-cost-construction/>

by the mid-2020s<sup>5</sup>) over 8,000 additional recruits are required. The three trades represented in this pilot, bricklaying, carpentry and drylining account for 3,900 of this total.<sup>6</sup>

*“Most leavers entered a non-construction job or apprenticeship in another sector. More than three quarters of leavers (77%) were engaged in a non-construction job or training. The sectors in which they worked were varied, with wholesale and retail (21%) leading the way.”<sup>7</sup>*



### Pilot format

The pilot tested a simulated site based and/or college or in-house<sup>8</sup> transitional development programme developed to benefit FE construction diploma students - so participants developed site experience and are able to transition from college into full time employment in the homebuilding sector sooner than they might otherwise have achieved without the intervention. The pilot delivered bootcamps in bricklaying, carpentry and drylining

At the end of bricklaying and carpentry bootcamps, a recruitment process took place involving one or more homebuilders. For the drylining bootcamps, the link with an employer had been made before the bootcamp started. Young people were then recruited and paid to work, while they completed their NVQ on site. The pilot paid for the NVQ delivery.

### T-levels

Officials at the Department for Education implementing the new T-levels were interested in the results of this pilot.

Digital route	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Digital Support and Services T Level</li> <li>Digital Business Services T Level</li> </ul>
Construction route	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Onsite Construction T Level</li> <li>Building Services Engineering T Level</li> </ul>
Health and Science route	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Health T Level</li> <li>Healthcare Science T Level</li> <li>Science T Level</li> </ul>

Every T Level will include an industry placement with an employer focused on developing the practical and technical skills required for the occupation. These will last a minimum of 315

<sup>5</sup> NHBC reported that a total of 159,617 new homes were built. <http://www.nhbc.co.uk/media-centre/articles/statistics/2018-annual-stats/>

<sup>6</sup> Source: HSBP Leadership Board, March 2019. N.B This data is based on building homes rather than apartments.

<sup>7</sup> CITB White Paper (2017) Achievers and Leavers: Barriers and opportunities for people entering construction

<sup>8</sup> This could be offered by a participating homebuilder where they have the training infrastructure and assets to offer the whole experience for the FE trainee (some kind of criteria may need to be adopted for this to ensure a consistency and quality of experience for participants)

hours (approximately 45 days) but can last longer. Employers can offer industry placements as a block, day release or a mix of these, and can discuss sharing part of the placement with another employer if necessary.<sup>9</sup> In this context, the bootcamp is broadly analogous with the industry placement element.

### 3 Methodology

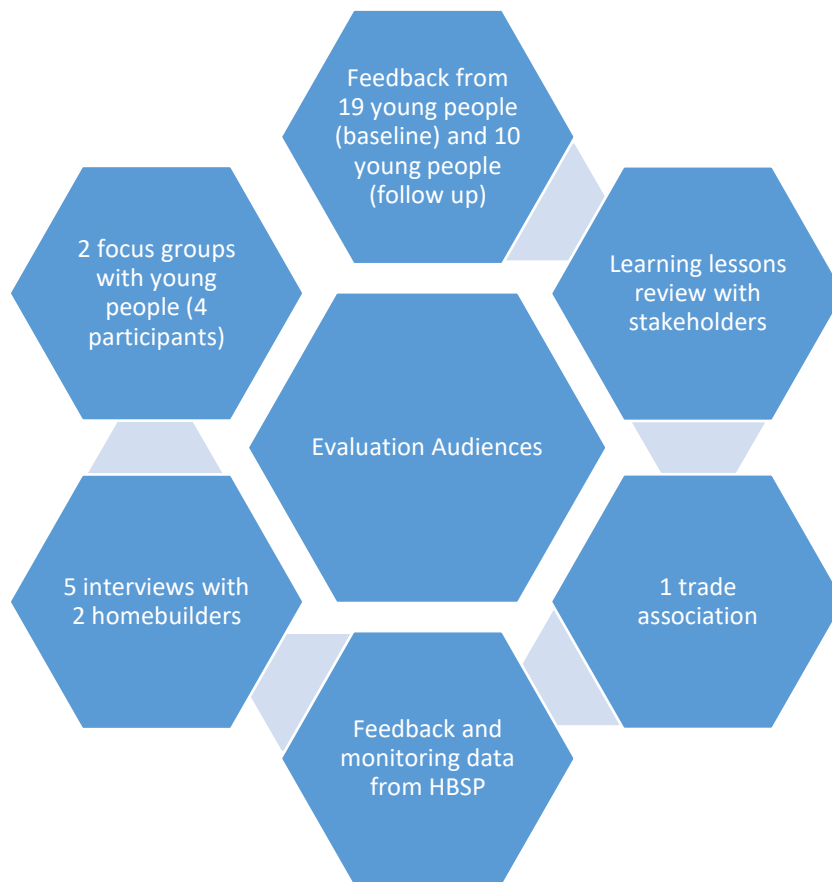
In evaluating this programme, we anticipated addressing the following 'key evaluation questions' (KEQs) to test the extent to which the pilot makes a contribution to the following:



<sup>9</sup> <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/introduction-of-t-levels/introduction-of-t-levels>



This final report is based on feedback from the following audiences:



Limitations: it has been a challenge throughout the evaluation to gather feedback from employers and young people, particularly once they were working on site. For example, none of the drylining apprentices opted to complete the follow up survey. Therefore, the decision was taken to adopt a qualitative, in-depth approach. Non-users, early leavers and young people in FE outside the pilot have not been consulted to test wider interest in the model.

## 4 Performance

This section is based on monitoring data supplied in March 2019, and updated following interviews with employers during May and June 2019.<sup>10</sup>

Following discussions with CITB, the original pilot was reduced in scope (from £313k to £203k) In total £182k direct and in-kind resource was deployed.

Measure	Actual	Target
CITB grant	£113,091	£123,067
Employer in-kind contribution	£68,970	£80,030
Employment start rate	66% <sup>11</sup>	100%
95% success rate	72% <sup>12</sup> Two years the retention rate is 44%. 1 in 2 remain in employment 2 years after cohort 1 and 1 year after cohort two.	95%
£ invested per job	5,698 <sup>13</sup>	£5,048 <sup>14</sup>
Number of employers	12	40
Number of colleges	5	10
Number of trades	3	3

The model appears to have the potential of increasing speed to competence but it has *“turned out to be quite a costly exercise to do”* (HBF Board member).<sup>15</sup>

<sup>10</sup> Source: December 2018 HBSP Leadership Board paper

<sup>11</sup> 32 job starts from 48 bootcamp attendees

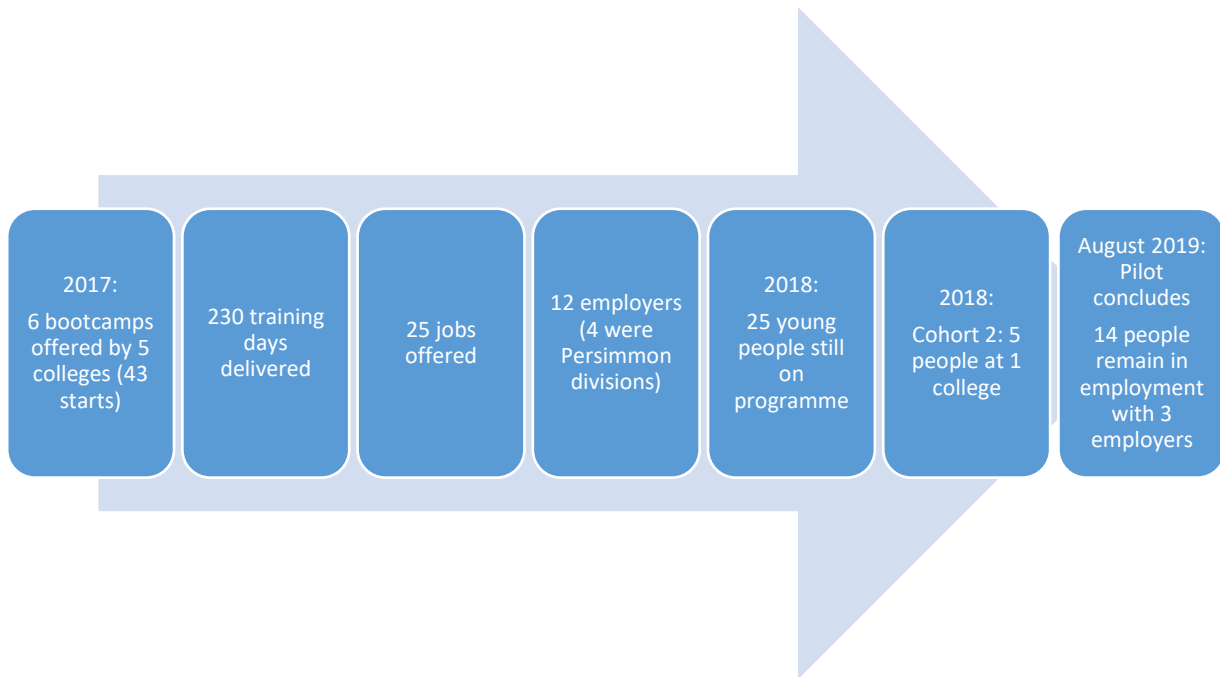
<sup>12</sup> 23 from 32 job starts. Reasons for leaving include road accidents, disciplinary and securing another job.

<sup>13</sup> £182,061 divided by 32 job starts

<sup>14</sup> £313k divided by 62 job starts (95% of 65 starts).

<sup>15</sup> Source: June 2019 HBSP Leadership Board.

The project did not achieve its overall engagement targets, reaching 48 young people compared to a target of 65.<sup>16</sup>



<sup>16</sup> Source: Funding bid to CITB 2017

## 5 Key Findings

The findings in this section are arranged by Key Evaluation Question.

The learning from this pilot are presented in chapter 6.

### 5.1: Reduction of skills shortages

Bricklayers were the 3rd most challenging occupation for homebuilders to recruit in 2018.<sup>17</sup>

The young people recruited through this pilot are contributing to the reduction in skills shortages. Young people from the pilot were recruited alongside other recruits starting apprenticeship programmes, or joining directly from school or college.

At the bootcamp, young people reported gaining competency in

1. Understanding health and safety guidelines
2. Team working
3. Competent handling of materials
4. Working to instructions, plans and measurements
5. Working to acceptable quality standards
6. Ability to work at the pace required

Specifically, young people were gaining knowledge and comprehension, and starting to process and apply those insights.<sup>18</sup>

Application of skills

- Follow up research identified, albeit based on a small sample, that
- Feel able to work within H&S requirements, policies and guidelines
- Feel able to work effectively as part of a team
- Feel confident in your use of tools
- Feel able to work to instructions, plans and / or measurements

Looking back, two carpenters reflected on the value added by the bootcamp:

*“The bootcamp helped and it didn’t. It’s completely different from college whereas on site they do it completely different here. The stuff at college is quite outdated. We don’t hang doors. The door linings come and we have to chop out the door.*

*They got us to do plasterboard on at the bootcamp, but they don’t do that here.*

*At college, you have to do everything longwinded, or awkwardly or a way you’d never do it. Like splice in a piece of arch tray. We’d never do that, never.”*

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<sup>17</sup> Source: Homebuilding Skills Partnership Annual Skills Survey 2018. Based on responses from 25 homebuilders. The top two occupations were quantity surveyors and site managers.

<sup>18</sup> Using Bloom’s Taxonomy of Competence: [https://www.unlv.edu/sites/default/files/page\\_files/27/Provost-TTL-BloomsTaxonomy.pdf](https://www.unlv.edu/sites/default/files/page_files/27/Provost-TTL-BloomsTaxonomy.pdf)

## Successful outcomes

It was observed by the Partnership how Persimmon were able to recruit comparatively larger numbers as they were able to connect to actual business needs.

Sustained employment is the key outcome from the pilot for both employer and learner.

*"If you really want to do it, and get off your arse and do something, then this is for you. Its how interested you are that makes a difference. I love my job I am here 6 days a week, do stupid hours because I would rather be here than at home doing nothing. If I go home, I'll either spend money I don't have or stay home and do nothing. I'd rather be earning.*

*No matter what they throw at you have to get on with it. Make the very most of it. You have to stick it out – I probably couldn't eat, run my car. Once I've got my trade I can do what I like."*

Application of knowledge gained on the bootcamp is high, and the experience was seen to be beneficial in making the transition from education to employment.

### Key points:

- **The training outcomes gained most quickly related to knowledge and awareness of health and safety requirements. The ability to work at pace required took the longest. Looking back, participants said it took at least six months, and they were still slower than more experienced workers after two years.**
- **Participants thought the programme has increased their skills and speed on the job and they have had more practice working in teams.**
- **Young people recognised that the bootcamp gave them a grounding, a way into the world of work (although some were already doing one or more jobs alongside their college course). The approach on site compared to the bootcamp was also different, requiring the young person to again adapt.**
- **While young people considered they were psychologically ready to work; and had the right attitude (some were already working alongside college), with hindsight they recognised did not yet have all the technical skills.**

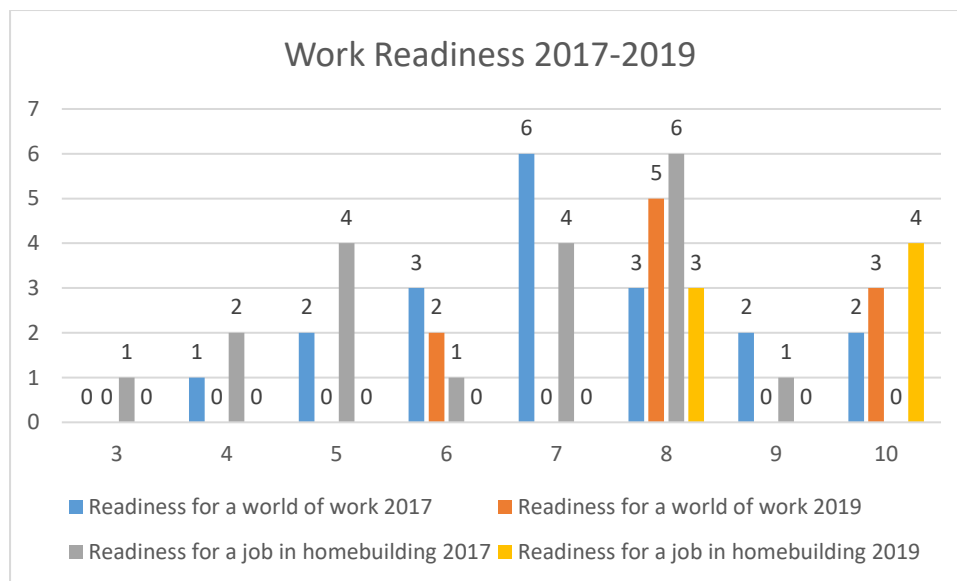
## 5.2: Increasing Speed to Competence

- 6 of 9 young people surveyed have their CSCS card
- 5 of the 9 young people surveyed had completed their NVQ level 2
- Half of this small sample had found it a challenge to balance work and study

### Readiness for work

*"I was working for a friend delivering furniture when I got the call about the bootcamp. I thought I'd do it, and I enjoyed it. They had us wearing hi-vis jackets but we could work inside if it rained. We had our own bay to work in. They told us we had so long to do it then they marked us. I did pretty well."*

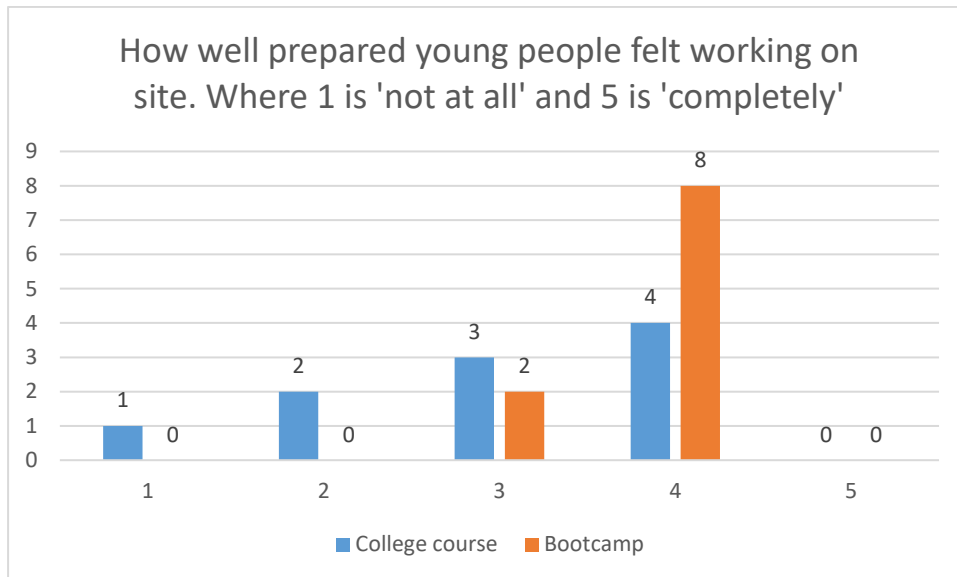
Comparison of baseline (completed shortly after the bootcamps) and follow up research (one to two years later) suggests that young people were adapting to the world of work, and to homebuilding in particular. Follow up interviews show that from a starting point of 71%, 80% feel very or ready for the world of work. Direct exposure to the homebuilding industry has resulted in an increase from 64% to 78% of young people who now consider themselves ready or very ready for a career in homebuilding.



N= 2017: 19. 2019: world of work: 10, homebuilding 9 (Using a 1-10 scale where 0 is not ready at all and 10 is entirely ready).

*"I'm not keen on doing door frames and skirting boards which take too long. I enjoy putting a porch, front or a garage door on. These are little bits earn you money and don't take very long."*

The chart below shows how well young people considered a) their college course and b) the bootcamp to have prepared them for the world of work. Albeit based on small sample, the bootcamp was seen to have been more effective at preparing young people for working on a live site compared to their college course.



*"We were treated like we were actually on a site. Like they were getting us ready for the real world."*



## Application of skills

All of the small sample of bootcamp graduates considered that, in a typical week, they often or very often

- ✓ Felt able to work effectively as part of a team
- ✓ Feel competent in handling materials
- ✓ Feel confident in the use of their tools
- ✓ Feel able to work at the pace required
- ✓ Feel able to work to acceptable quality / standards
- ✓ Could work safely

In a typical week, on a scale of 0-5 (where 1 is never and 5 is all the time) how often do you...?	3	4	5 (all the time)
Feel able to work effectively as part of a team	0	4	6
Feel competent in handling materials	0	5	5
Feel confident in your use of tools	0	6	4
Feel able to work at the pace required	0	7	3
Feel able to work to acceptable quality / standards	2	5	3
Feel able to work within H&S requirements, policies and guidelines	1	6	3
Feel able to work to instructions, plans and / or measurements	2	5	3
Use the skills and knowledge you learnt on the bootcamp	5	3	2

One or two years on, the skills and knowledge from the bootcamp were being used regularly, but new skills and knowledge had been acquired on-site as is to be expected. Bricklayers were slightly more likely to be using skills and knowledge from the bootcamp.

*"The first time they gave me something to do on site, they gave me a house that wouldn't be signed off for months and months. So if it went wrong there would be time to adjust and get it right. If I dropped a door on a house that's nearly finished, the spare wouldn't come in time and it would be unfinished.*

*If you needed help, those around you had the knowledge. But some people say, 'work it out yourself', while others will show you. It depends on the person and what mood they are in.*



*The support from the managers on site has been spot on. If you ask them something they will get straight on the phone and ask."*

Other examples given of skills acquired on the bootcamp being used on site were:

- *3 4 5 method of squaring and setting out*
- *Working to gauge*
- *Fixing joists*

### **Pace and quality**

In the focus group, carpenters considered the transition from college to working on site, and the quality and pace required in their current roles. The follow up surveys showed that working at pace was one of the challenges young people had found on site (alongside working around the weather and communication).

The focus groups with carpenters went into more detail:

*"It's an awful lot faster on site. I am still slow, but getting quicker at certain things. A set of first floor joists, first fix roofs, stud walls, door frames etc. I can smash a four bedroom house in a day - I just get on with it and get lost in it to be honest."*

*"You go to college and learn new techniques, but if you are working on newbuilds you aren't doing old build stuff. So, it will take you longer to learn once you get here."*

*"At college you couldn't be a millimetre out, but on site nothing is going to be perfect perfect. But as long as the quality is there."*

This viewpoint was echoed by a college that noted "this Pilot makes learners a lot more switched on and they act like tradesmen, whereas before the college environment 'slowed them down."

*"I'd say you have to work a lot quicker here than in college. To start I was always being badgered. One minute you could be working somewhere and get a call saying I need you to do this. Then another call five minutes later saying have you done it yet?!"*

A drylining apprentice said it took him 6 months before he felt able to work at the pace and quality required.

*"It took me about six months to get up to speed. In the first six months you are doing lots of different things but being trained up the way they want you to do things. Only then can you board a wall. The NVQ was a really good, quick process. I would perhaps have liked a bit more time at college, maybe to learn more of the technical stuff."*

The level of support received by young people seems to have varied significantly, with the dryliners and bricklayers feeling well supported. The experience of the carpenters was more mixed, with examples of both excellent and poor levels of support.

## Persimmon case study

### Supervisor

*"Our bricklaying apprentices are still learning; they are working on a plot full time now. They work together as a gang, and are off the apprentice wage and onto our bonus scheme, and doing garages etc. They probably call me three times a day to ask for advice. However, the quality of what they produce is really good. While they are not as quick as the more experienced ones, for their age they are doing well, at least on a par with others who've come 'off the street' so to speak. Because they have been to college, they may even have an edge in some areas.*

*We try to take good care of them, helping with housing for example. At Persimmon we directly employ, so we can maintain high quality standards."*



### Persimmon Carpentry Apprentice

*"I am definitely getting better. Its common sense to be fair. One minute I do roofing with one bloke, next joists with another. Sometimes I do snagging.*

*I've always said, I will work on a construction site. there were 8 of us but only three got an NVQ..*

*I think we was taken on because we showed more enthusiasm and we did our work to a good standard. I am surprised the level four guy didn't get a job. I think he was over-qualified. He works in a shop now.*

*We are the only two apprentice carpenters on this site. I felt a bit lost on my first day. When I look back, I wasn't ready for work. I was prepared to do it, ready for it, but not ready. Everyone treats you with respect. There's no shouting, they treat you like friends.*

*What surprised me was how quickly people move around. I worked first with one bloke. We didn't get along*

*at the start, as he makes a lot of money and he had to sort out my mistakes. He was losing money. I went with another bloke, and he got moved too. Truthfully, if I hadn't have got on the bootcamp I'd probably be working at McDonalds, getting there on my little moped. Or I'd still be a college doing a different course.*

*It's just a job isn't it (laughs). You get paid to be here. [To other apprentice] You might think it's rubbish money, but I don't. If you get paid right and you think it's fair pay, and they are pretty decent at doing it you've all sorts of options.*

*I didn't do very well at school. I didn't get many grades. Here it is all about the experience and skill. They'd rather have a person who actually likes doing the job and have some sort of skill rather than qualifications."*

**Key Points:**

**Employers monitoring systems do not enable comparison between the fast track cohorts and other recruits and apprentices. Qualitative feedback suggests that fast track young people are at least as competent as other recruits of a similar age. However, aptitude and attitude were determining factors, and there was variety in both across the small sample.**

**College feedback also highlighted attitudinal factors, and described how the experience had helped them to act like tradesmen.**

**For the young people, they felt better prepared for both the world of work and homebuilding as a result of the bootcamp experience. While approaches on site differed to the both the skills learned in college and the bootcamp approach, the 'real world' aspects of the format were valued.**

**Compared to the baseline, young people have grown in confidence and maturity, with the bootcamp experience a contributory factor.**

### 5.3: Improved College / Employer Collaboration

*"The engagement activity involved to recruit, hire, match, supervise, mentor and progress each new entrant trainee from college to employer should inspire enhanced or deeper levels of relationship that already experienced..." (Interim evaluation report (December 2017))*

Following the first cohort, on a scale of 1-5 where 1 is 'poor' and 5 is 'excellent', the three providers rated the level of collaboration with local businesses as 4 out of 5. Three out of four employers rated the collaboration as either four or five, with the other business giving a '2/5' rating.

The case study below highlights that two years on, those collaborations have not always continued, but others have emerged in their wake. The pilot did catalyse new connections between employers and college. The case study also shows how employers are investing in education partners to better develop the skills they and other employers require.

### **Measom Case Study**

*"For us the college was a useful lead, giving young people the chance to try drylining and make a choice to follow that path. For Measom it meant the young people at the college were already aware of the trade and had some suitable skills to build on."*

The relationship with the college was strained.

*"It was a bit messy to be honest. The bootcamp took place in a small area off to the side, and we had to look through piles of scrap for metal of a suitable length. I didn't think the college seemed that interested to be honest. Once we had taken the young people on they cut all ties, and without the support of FIS, they wouldn't have completed their NVQs."*

Measom is now investing in a new facility at the Havering College's Rainham campus, which will open in September.

Persimmon Wales has decided to focus their apprenticeship investment with Cardiff and Vale College rather than Colleg Gwent, to train larger cohorts, and for the practical reason that the Apprentice Master is able to visit the college on a weekly basis.

Relationships with Burton and South Derbyshire Colleges and West Suffolk College continue. St Modwen Homes who took part in the recruitment stage of the bootcamps but did not recruit, are now engaged with the college directly.

### **Key points:**

**There is little evidence that employers have deepened their relationships with participating colleges, with two examples of the relationship stopping, for different reasons.**

**Employers report a number of potential learning points for colleges, in terms of both bootcamp delivery and follow up support. The perceived investment and support given by one college is seen to be lower than other four.**

**The availability of apprenticeship funding means employers continue to focus their efforts in this area.**

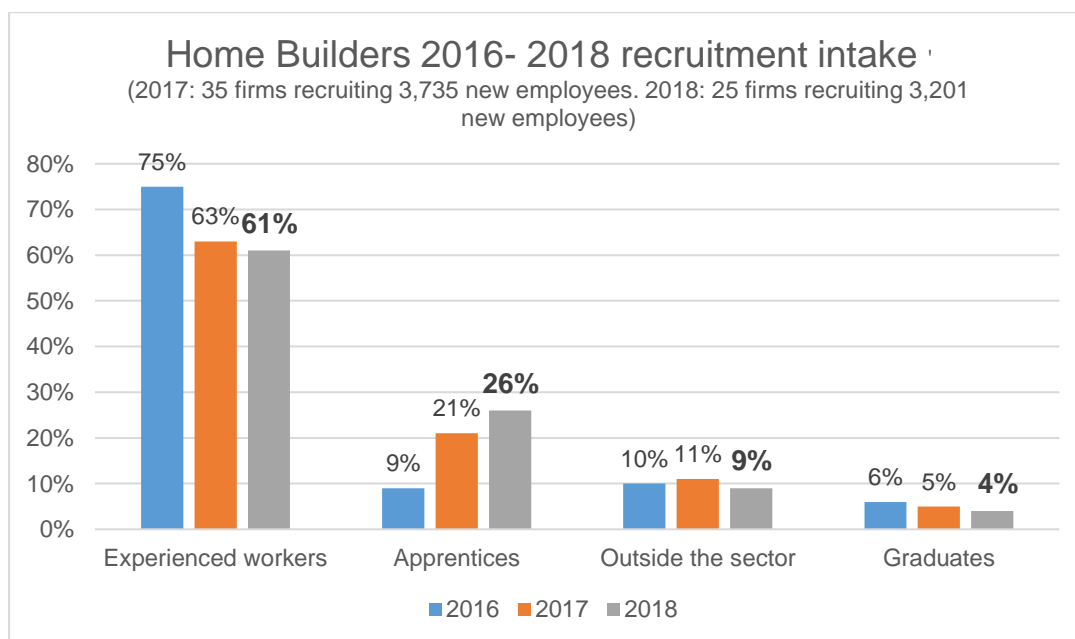
## 5.4: Recruitment Behaviour Change (cost effective talent acquisition)

*'It will develop a quicker route to productive worker as the industry needs people quicker than the current apprenticeship programme can produce. It will also sit alongside other initiatives such as pre-apprenticeship or traineeships. It is not a replacement product but an additional method of bringing young people into the labour market, an alternative and extra route to employment for young people.'* (Funding bid to CITB, March 2017)

While satisfaction levels naturally varied according to the recruit and the extent to which they fitted within a business, at this stage employers provided a broadly similar level of satisfaction with recruiting through the pilot compared to their usual other methods.

The pilot is designed to test an alternative approach to recruitment. Feedback from employers is anecdotal. For homebuilders that are looking to recruit from the FE market, this pilot has been a further strand of activity, with a desire to do more. The bootcamp has been the crucial element to attract employer interest. Without the bootcamp, there is less incentive for employers to engage.

Homebuilders primarily recruit experienced workers, and as the chart below shows, the young people in the pilot form part of the apprentice cohort that represented 26% of 2018 recruits.<sup>19</sup>



There was interest in the CITB initiative which builds on the fast track experience, and also includes financial support to employers for the first six months of work onsite.

Employer records do not enable comparison to be made between the progress of different types of learner. Employers note that progress and retention are broadly on a par with

<sup>19</sup>Based on a sample of 25 homebuilders who recruited 3,201 people last year, of whom 830 were graduates.

apprentices, perhaps slightly ahead, but heavily dependent on the attitude of the young person. The example below highlights how this can affect performance.

*. It's further from home but so much better. I helped out over Christmas and realised I wanted to be here. By putting me on here, they are getting far more out of me. I'd rather be on here getting on with my work and having a better quality of life. I've done four 12-hour days this week and I'm happy to do that. I can earn good money here, there is 2-3 years here and 10,000 homes going up on the other side of the motorway. There's 10-20 years' worth of work that side."*

Young people who attended the bootcamp were considered more capable than those recruited directly from college.

56% (18 of 32) of those who were recruited through this pilot have subsequently left their employers. Reasons given included young people moving away, behaviour issues and failing quality assessments.<sup>20</sup> The case study below is of a young person who was considering leaving, but thanks to the efforts of his employer stayed and is thriving.

#### **Measom Case study:**

Training Manager Rikki Wild says: *"One lad was struggling with his commute. But we have since provided extra support as he's excellent with a superb attitude. We don't care too much about maths or English, but the right attitude is critical."*

Oliver, picks up the story: *"I am 21 now, and a drylining apprentice with Measom.*

*I've always been hands on, so a trade was the best route for me. While none of my family are dryliners, we've got sparkies. With a trade behind you, you are better off in my view than doing something and coming out at 21/22 and not knowing what to do. If I hadn't done this, I think I'd be doing one sort of trade for a career.*

*The bootcamp gave you a taste of what it's like to be on site, but with no commitment if you didn't like it. It gave me the basic idea of what was going on. Without it I'd have been asking the fixer all sorts of stupid questions. After the bootcamp we were given the news just before Xmas that we'd got the job. That was a good feeling, but later I split with my girlfriend and was commuting. It was killing me and I was thinking of leaving. Luckily Measom talked to me, and offered to pay for accommodation during the week. They've been 100%, they couldn't have been more supportive to me.*

*Looking back now, I wasn't really ready for work, I needed to get it straight in my head. Some of the things I couldn't do then, I look at and think, 'how?'. I'm in a good gang now, they are mostly lads in their 20s and 30s (including two others from the bootcamp). Later this year, I'll be self employed but working for Measoms. Sometimes I'll get price work, other times a day rate. It depends on the contractor running the site. I'd like to be fully qualified in a more superior role, and have someone working for me."*

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<sup>20</sup> To put this figure in context, in 2018 homebuilders reported that on average, **26%** of directly employed site employees left their organisation in the last 12 months. Based on a sample of 23 homebuilders.

## Changes in recruitment

There is no evidence that the pilot has created systemic change in recruitment. The traction gained by the pilot in Persimmon, the largest contributor to the pilot is partly explained by the fact it had already made the strategic decision to recruit more actively from this marketplace.

For Persimmon Wales, there was a motivation to show leadership in the sector, as well as recruit locally. Persimmon Wales stated that they felt the approach was important to help them tackle local skills shortages, and to 'lead from the front' on recruitment. It was also to reflect well on the division in the wider business.

### Key points:

**Engagement with the pilot is directly linked to the availability of funding, with the bootcamp a critical factor.**

**The majority of homebuilders continue to recruit experienced workers (from one another)**

**There is no evidence that the pilot has led to a more systemic change in recruitment behaviour. As the bootcamps have been generally 'one offs' this is not a surprising finding. There was employer interest in further bootcamps.**

## 5.5: Sustainability

One outcome from a pilot programme is that it becomes mainstream, or influences mainstreams provision to some extent. The HBSP is not continuing to deliver bootcamps beyond the pilot period. However, to construe this as a failure would be inaccurate.

Strategically, the pilot has enabled the Homebuilding Skills Partnership to develop a positive relationship with the British Association of Construction Heads (BACH).



CITB can be seen to have taken the blueprint tested by the fast track pilot, and expanded it in their own planned pilot.<sup>21</sup> Two bricklaying bootcamps, in large urban areas with a critical mass of construction college graduates and homebuilders were expected to take place in June 2019.<sup>22</sup> CITB is also seeking to influence the curricula of construction courses through the Association of Colleges.

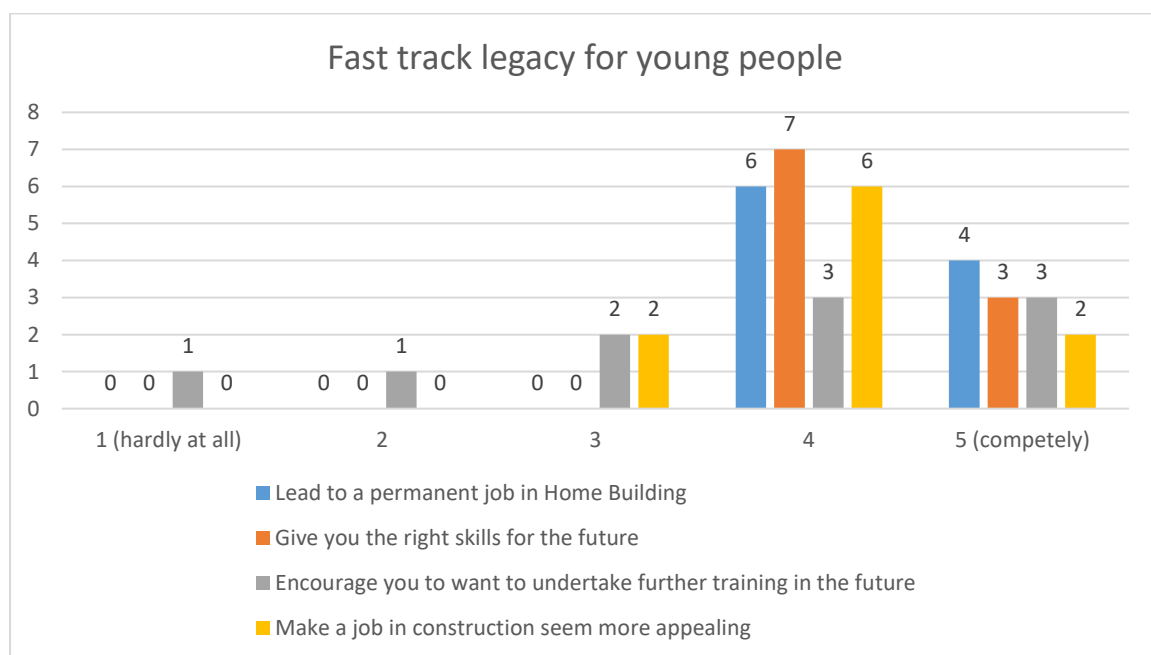
<sup>21</sup> CITB's business plan 2019-2021 states: 'A Bricklaying Pilot will [...] improve the employability of learners on bricklaying courses. If successful, we'll widen this to other occupations. We'll also work on other pathways from FE to employment, including T levels in England.'

<sup>22</sup> Source: June 2019 HBSP Leadership Board meeting – with recruitment again proving challenging.

Sustainability ‘on the ground’ has also proved challenging. With only one exception, at College Gwent, none of the providers involved in the first cohort has run further bootcamps. *We have put a lot of effort into this we have got to have a sense of sustainability.”*

One provider regarded a successful outcome for them as *“for all of the learners to be in worthwhile employment”*. They also said *“We are increasingly measured on progression rates. A longer-term aim is for these boys to go into employment then come back and take on apprentices from the college. That would be my goal for former students to come back and take them off us. And this does happen in the construction industry.”*

Young people were asked to what extent their fast track experience has led to a series of outcomes; including both tangible outcomes (a permanent role in the sector, or relevant skills) and intangible (interest in further training or increased the appeal of the sector).



N=10

All of the young people agreed the experience had ‘given them the right skills for the future’ and ‘led to a permanent job in Home Building’

80% of the sample agreed the experience had made a career in construction more appealing.

There was greater diversity of opinion about the extent to which the experience had ‘created a thirst for further training/ 60% agreed, but 40% did not. The carpentry apprentices interviewed all admitted to struggling with the written components of the NVQ, so were reluctant to progress to level 3, which was also seen to entail a pay cut.

*“We’ve all refused point blank to do our level 3. We’ve all struggled with level 2. I can’t do half the paperwork that’s there. I’ve no interest in doing it. I’ll have the conversation and tell them point blank. They’d drop my money, but I want to be on a decent price a week and know I can do the work”*

Young people engaged in the pilot are all intending to stay in the homebuilding sector.



Seven in ten would recommend the programme to their peers.

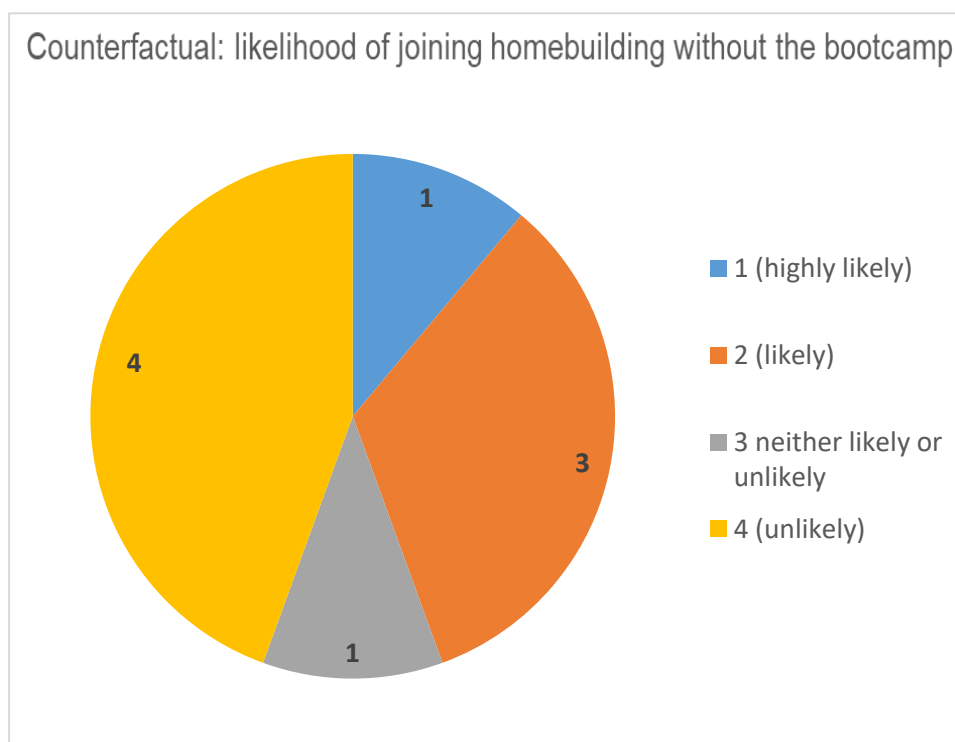
Qualitative interviews showed the degree to which the bootcamps had opened up a career in homebuilding, and considered the likely alternative.

*"I'd never really thought about going on site before. Once I realised what I wanted to do (it was the smell of the timber that drew me in. I got on really well with the tutor. I was really getting on with it. I did about 100 hours of work experience in a forestry centre – building an outdoor classroom. I really enjoyed that. I just loved being out in the open, cracking on with it. I got a job out of the bootcamp.*

*I was thinking about this the other day, where would I be? I wouldn't be able to run my car. I'd probably still be a college doing my level 3, and helping out here there and everywhere. Working with my cousin, helping my dad run his pub."*

### Counterfactual

Young people were asked 'How likely is it that you would have found work in Home Building anyway (regardless of the bootcamp you attended last summer)'. As the pie chart below shows that four in ten from this sample would not have joined a homebuilder if they had not taken part in the bootcamp, while the other half were likely to have joined anyway.



*"Truthfully. I'd probably be working at McDonalds on my little moped. Or I'd still be a college doing a different course.*

*"We are contracted to work here until 2022 – three years apprenticeship then another two years."*

*I want to be an employee. You'd work for Persimmon on a bonus scheme, but they take your tools out of your bonus. We have to pay for our own tools and equipment.*

**Key points:**

**The model tested in this pilot has directly informed a further, larger pilot delivered by CITB 'Learners to Workers'.**

**The model of a co-designed bootcamp acting as the work experience component is directly relevant to T-levels.**

**Half of the young people taking part consider they would not have joined the sector if they had not taken part in the bootcamp**

**80% of the sample agreed the experience had made a career in construction more appealing.**

**Young people engaged in the pilot are all intending to stay in the homebuilding sector.**

**Seven in ten would recommend the programme to their peers.**

## 6 Learning

*"We are not giving people the chance they deserve." (HBSP Chair).*

*"There is still work to be done. This is a sticking plaster solution." (HBSP).*

*"I would make sure everyone knew what was happening after. I wouldn't rush through because if afterwards we don't get a placement or a job, or NVQ then the past 4 weeks have been a waste of time." (Young person)*

### Learning from the pilot

#### Employer engagement

The model appears to have the potential of increasing speed to competence but it has *"turned out to be quite a costly exercise to do"* (HBF Board member). The costs and labour intensive effort to get the model established (particularly the employer engagement aspect at the start) are seen as high and this might present difficulties to take forward as is but is nevertheless thought to be *"worth finding a solution"* because there is still a need to find a bridge for the 45,000 young people in FE to connect them into construction.

*"What we want are models that will work at scale. It did surface that we were struggling to find matched employers but together we found them [for the Pilot]"* (CITB Board member)

*"We and other trade bodies need to think about how the model would work and see how the employer side would work more effectively." (HBF Board member)."*

*"Need colleges to work a lot more with us."*

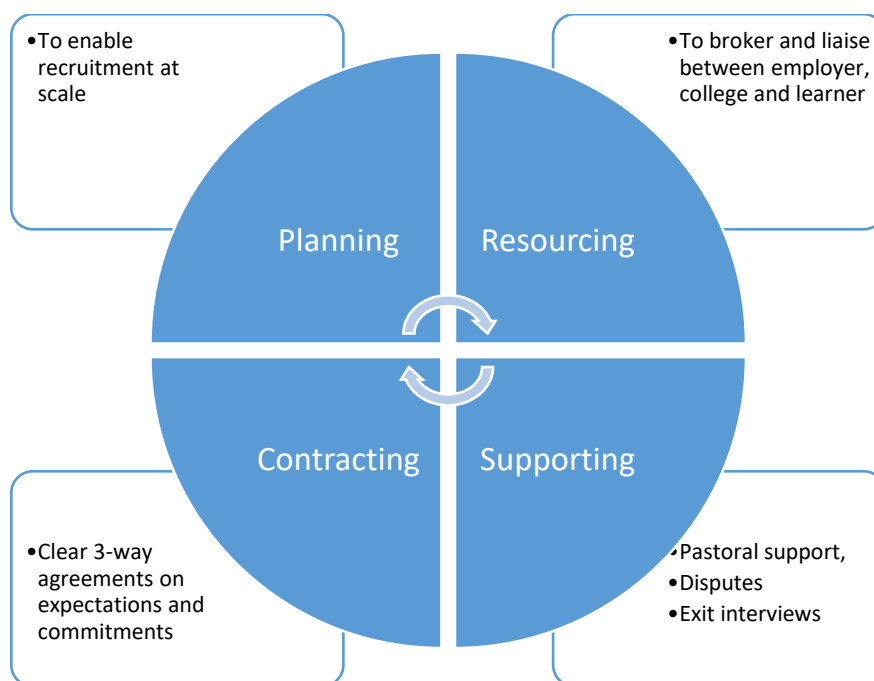
There were a number of challenges matching young people to employers, and once on site, there was a lack of recognition that young people joining would not come with their own tools. This stems from treating young people in a similar fashion to fully qualified workers, rather than trainees.

## Scalable solutions

Delivering a scaled up version of the model tested was considered to be challenging, but essential, with T-levels still 'years off'.

*'We need to talk about thousands and transformational change, not tens here and there.'*  
(HBSP Chair)

The key operational learning points are summarised below.



Young people in the first cohort experienced first-hand the challenges of piloting a new model for the first time. In effect, they describe being seen as both experienced (on account of their college course) but also apprentice (in terms of pay); so caught between the two.

*"Our wages have gone up, but it's a bit of a grey area. We're qualified but not as experienced...We've been under the radar from the start."*

### **The interim evaluation report set out early learning in the following areas:**

Timing	Capabilities of young people
Location	Approach and format of the bootcamp
Young people's aspirations	Literacy challenges
Early Employer engagement	Contact time

One provider noted that employer buy in had been a challenge.

## Strategic learning

Looking forward, the Homebuilding Skills Partnership team point to the need of engaging, alongside CITB, with the Housing Minister, to argue for structural change from the Department for Education. The main legacy of the pilot is to inform CITB's 'Learners to Workers', programme. This programme refines the fast track model, for example by improved candidate selection, an extended bootcamp duration, and providing financial support to employers for the first six months.<sup>23</sup>

The Fast Track pilot has positioned the Partnership so it can talk strategically about the FE transition issue (sometimes referred to as a scandal), and to work alongside trade associations such as FIS and trade associations supporting brick workers (for example the Association of Bricklaying Contractors)

*"The fast track pilot drew attention to the issue around construction in FE, it was the right thing to do. The pilot has positioned the HBSP well to engage on this issue."*

The fast track programme helped to develop the relationship with FE, and BACH group (British Association of Construction Heads) in particular (where the partnership presented at their national conference). HBSP continues to seek change in this space.

*"The bootcamp experience would be the practical work experience in the T levels, and the FE learners would work on the last house on the block. This would be a route for employers to recruit."*

This aspiration is considered 'a long way off, but moving forward'.

The view of senior leaders from the Homebuilding Skills Partnership Leadership Board) is that for some FE-based courses the percentage of time allowed for the learner to practice the main technical skills is less than 33%. Whilst the Board could not estimate an optimum percentage required, they were all agreed that the bigger need is to influence FE curriculum per se; and to this end CITB is working to influence this through the Association of Colleges.

*"I suggest it's about the breadth and depth of experience not the time [%] related issue."*  
(Chair)

A further longer-term aspiration is how to engage with the self-employed bricklayers in the sector (to encourage them to recruit, develop and train others).

*"The big nut to crack is that 90% of bricklayers are self-employed. How do we engage with this 90%?"*

Site experience in a controlled environment is seen to be 'the deal breaker'. West Suffolk College for example are building a space where they can build scaled down homes.

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<sup>23</sup> CITB's business plan 2019-2021 states: 'A Bricklaying Pilot will kickstart this initiative and will improve the employability of learners on bricklaying courses. If successful, we'll widen this to other occupations. We'll also work on other pathways from FE to employment, including T levels in England.'

## FE construction course content

Drop out on FE courses is greatest at the start – because, the Board theorised – the first bit of content the individual experiences is around functional skills, maths, theory and things that are for many a turn-off. Instead, these should be introduced ‘by stealth’ later in the course “*as a necessary evil*” (CITB Board member), and instead start with something immediately practical to connect better with the motivations of the learner.

*“We need to give them a spirit level and a tape.”(Chair)*

### **Learning Case study: FIS Partner interview**

Paul Glover joined the Skills Team FIS in 2017. The team was established to respond to new evidence about the growing skills gap in the drylining sector, and concerns about the demonstrating the competency of the workforce due to changes in the carding system.

FIS was successful at securing CITB funding to develop pilot programmes targeting the unemployed, LGBT and ex-offender populations. The approach taken included a bootcamp approach called ‘BuildBack’<sup>24</sup>, which piloted in 2017 in parallel to the fast track pilot).

*“It was the most rewarding role I have had. It as great to see the self esteem of the trainees increase.”*

FIS was asked by the HBSP to advise and support the fast track drylining bootcamps.

*“The Skills Partnership are great. They are always open and approachable, ready to share materials and expertise.”*

### **Learning Lessons**

Reflecting on the learning from both programmes, Paul notes:

#### Governance

*“Make sure you have the right governance in place. It is challenging to maintain contact with employers, so having clearly stated expectations helps to keep everyone on track.”*

#### Calibre of learner

*“Ensuring that learners are of a good calibre is one of the most important aspects. Look at every individual and make sure you have a good fit with the employer. A poor experience will put off both employer and young person”*

#### Employer-led content

*“Get employers to define the content of the bootcamp”*

#### Selection

*“Employers pitching to young people, saying ‘this is what we can offer you’ is good practice.*

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<sup>24</sup> <https://www.thefis.org/skills-hub/sector-training/buildback-programme/>

## College relationships

*"There was room for improvement here, as some of the colleges were slow which made employers uneasy. The funding needs to be set up to encourage colleges to care."*

## A shared pledge

*"Gaining shared written commitment from employer and college."*

## **Legacy**

Paul considers that the bootcamp model is still required.

*"With 70% of FE college leavers from construction courses ending up outside of the sector there is definitely still a need. Young people lack site experience so linking employer and learner is vital."*

The core delivery was seen to be good, and Paul using insight to identify areas where there is sufficient employer demand, Manchester for example, using the 'Considerate Construction heatmap'<sup>25</sup> or Building People<sup>26</sup>

Without programmes such as Fast Track, Paul thinks that many opportunities would not happen.

*"T-levels can learn from these programmes by developing shared collateral and insurance so they are ready to knock employer objections on the head."*



<sup>25</sup> <https://www.ccscheme.org.uk/scheme-launches-interactive-map-of-construction/>

<sup>26</sup> <https://buildingpeople.org.uk/>

The learning example below highlights a number of the issues that have arisen from piloting a new model. The challenges, in the frank words of the young person in question, could have been resolved by an early meeting to clarify roles and responsibilities, backed up by written agreements.

### **Learning case study**

*"We needed a joint induction with the college and [employer], with a written agreement. More communication. On the first day they asked where our kit was. The site manager didn't know we were turning up, so we sat for 2 days while it got sorted out. Communication was shocking from day one. We were given this thick health and safety manual, but we just looked at the pictures. Bored out of our head.*

*I don't know what I am. I was being paid as an apprentice but three months ago I got a letter saying they'd reviewed our pay and we got a lump sum out of it. We were promised our kit but that didn't materialise. A nail gun is £500 but I was getting £200, plus putting petrol in my car. A good weekend, then I'd nothing left. I ended up doing some private work, and my mum put the other half to it for my birthday. I've got by and been given stuff.*

*I've not worked with a supervisor as such. I've been jumping around 10 different joiners over the past 16 months. Only one has been in the trade for 30 years, so we are all really still learning. I've needed to teach myself or pick up things from the other lads. I probably haven't done the right stuff. The other two have come to me for help. I don't know how they have stuck at it to be honest. My mum has helped me with all the written work as I have dyslexia, and the others too.*

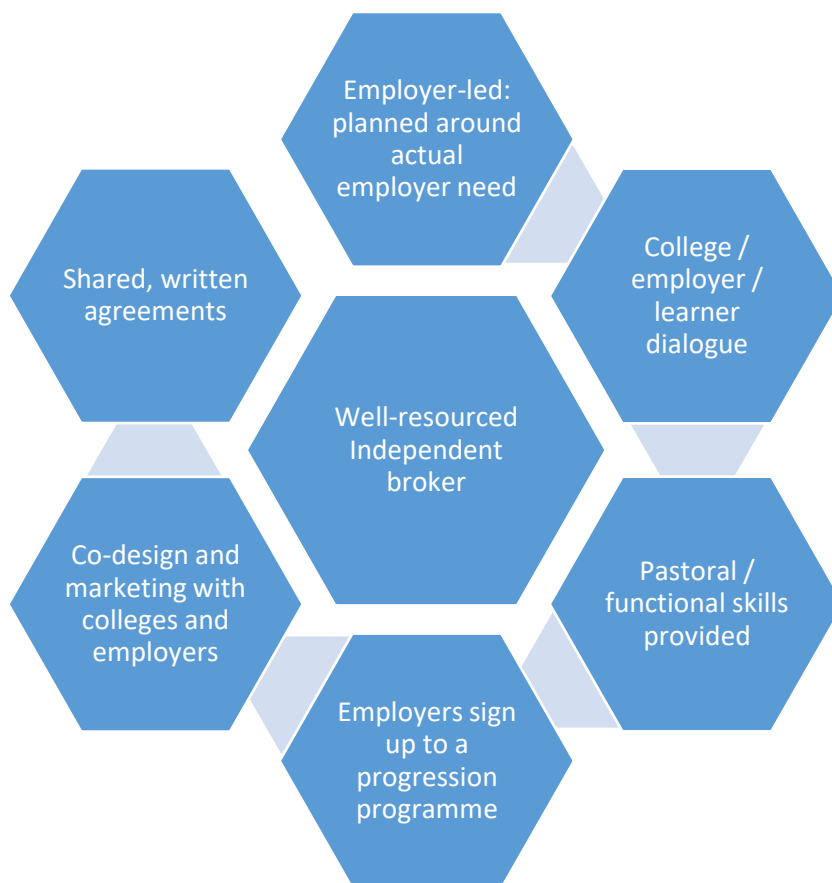
*The college guy who deals with the apprentice lads has kept in touch and put us through the paperwork to get the NVQ. He says we need to go into college to do the diploma stuff, to prove we can do we've written down. I can do an awful lot of stuff, but there's no proof. A mate at another company was asked to explain what he did, I couldn't do that. I just get on with it.*

*There has been miscommunication throughout. For [employer] the relationship with the college was a new one, but they should have all met up beforehand and explained what the lads need to do. I'm sure it's in my contract that I have to go to college so many times, but I've only been twice.*

*While there is money to be made I'd rather be here earning it. We've all refused point blank to do our level 3. We've all struggled with level 2. I can't do half the paperwork that's there. I've no interest in doing it. They'd drop my money, but I want to be on a decent price a week and know I can do the work."*

## Ingredients for success

This diagram below sums up the key success factors, informed by what has worked, and what has not, in this pilot.



### Key points

**The fast track pilot has led to valuable operational learning that points to**

- **The need for a scalable solution to support those leaving FE construction courses but lacking the practical experience to find work in the sector**
- **To the importance of a trusted broker to support all parties and connect young people to employment opportunities, informed by insight from employers on their recruitment needs. A fast track programme must balance both learner and corporate interests**
- **To engage not only colleges and employers in delivering bootcamps, but to influence the course curricula at more strategic levels**



## 7 Conclusions

The systemic challenges that prompted this pilot persist. Too few construction college graduates go on to work in the sector, despite having trained in areas where skills shortages are at critical levels. The pilot has raised awareness, not only of the issue, but also of the practical and logistical problems involved in seeking a solution.

The Fast Track pilot predates the Letwin review, but has tested a model that that could be part of the “flash programme of on the job training” recommended by the review towards a new training programme for bricklayers

*“I concluded that the only realistic method of filling the gap in the number of bricklayers required to raise annual production of new homes from about 220,000 to about 300,000 in the near term, was for the Government and major house builders to work together on a five year “flash” programme of on-the-job training.”<sup>27</sup>*

While the Government has yet to respond to this recommendation, there is a clear appetite from industry to tackle the skills shortages in critical trades. The Fast Track Pilot has helped to raise the profile of this key issue, with employers, colleges, CITB and ministers. HBF is now taking a proactive strategic stance on this issue.

### **1: Reduction of skills shortages**

This is an agreed and shared outcome for both employers and colleges. While there have been challenges getting young people through their NVQs, mainly around literacy issues, the cohort still in employment have or are on track to obtain a full CSCS card. Young people taking part in bootcamps, in bricklaying, carpentry or drylining agreed that the experience had equipped them with valuable skills for their future careers. Employers still needed to continue to train young people to enable them to be site ready.

Two years on, some of the first cohort are now working alone, trusted and competent workers, although still working more slowly than more experienced workers. While the 32 jobs secured in themselves only make a small contribution to the skills shortages the industry, if a mechanism is found to scale up the approach, its contribution could become more significant as half of the cohort would likely not have entered the sector without the bootcamp.

### **2: ‘Speed to Competence’**

Aptitude and attitude are the key factors seen to determine how quickly a young person becomes competent. The boot camp is a contributing factor, but we cannot say that a bootcamp graduate is more advanced than an apprentice of a similar age.

It is not possible to empirically compare the progression of this first cohort with their peers – but employer feedback suggests that are on a par with their peers, at best slightly ahead of a an apprentice (“*They are ahead of lads who joined at 16 but not by much*”). However, this could

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<sup>27</sup> Independent Review of Build Out Final Report. Final Report (October 2019) p9.

[https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/752124/Letwin\\_review\\_web\\_version.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/752124/Letwin_review_web_version.pdf)

be viewed as a relative success, as it suggests that young people have overcome the lack of practical experience on their college course to make the transition to site.

*"They have exceeded the FE norm by bridging the divide that so often leads to failure." (HBF)*

### **3: 'College Employer Collaboration'**

The relationship between employers and colleges remains uneven. Due to the small size of this pilot and the numbers involved (relative to the funding and support in place to promote apprenticeships) it is arguable that neither college or employer gave the programme their total commitment. There were teething problems for both employers and colleges in implementing a new programme which was midway between a traditional FE course and an apprenticeship. Communication was at the heart of the issues, and required the brokering skills of the Homebuilding Skills Partnership and FIS to 'get some young people over the [NVQ] line'.

One of the five colleges in particular attracted criticism for the lack of professionalism in their bootcamp and absence of follow up support.

Persimmon, the strongest advocate gained reputational capital from the pilot and have the largest portion of the cohort now building homes. St Modwen are now engaging directly with Burton and South Derbyshire College after being involved at recruitment stages of one of the pilot bootcamps.

The pilot has drawn attention the homebuilders' attention again to the FE market, but the focus for the major homebuilders is on promoting the apprenticeship route.

### **4: Recruitment Behaviour Change (cost effective talent acquisition)**

One college highlighted the important point that young people who opt to undertake further training on a bootcamp are arguably more motivated to work in the industry than those who don't. Across the cohort this was not always true, with young people dropping out for predictable reasons. The pilot, with the funded NVQ element presented an opportunity for homebuilders to connect to an additional source of recruits, as well, not instead of, their main apprenticeship route. Many of the young people from the bootcamp were placed on apprenticeship programmes.

HBF considers that there is an appetite from industry, as long as the details are worked through, for a fast track alternative to Apprenticeships that would better balance individual learner and corporate needs.

### **5: Sustainability**

The model tested in this pilot is not sustainable without further funding and dedicated brokering resource to connect young people with employment. The lessons and approach have directly informed CITB's current bricklaying pilot and should contribute to the learning to develop appropriate T-level provision.

The challenge remains how to scale up the model without reducing the cohort, whilst responding to fluctuating and geographically disparate demand from home builders.

Collective action from homebuilders to share their requirements with CITB or others is a necessary first step towards a larger scale approach.

The pilot has helped to raise the issue of the employment outcomes of FE students on construction courses, promoting greater engagement and dialogue between FE providers, employers and trade associations. CITB and HBF have met with the Housing Minister where this was the substantive point discussed, and a joint letter was then produced setting out a need for structural reform. All agree that without changes to the curricula of construction courses and the current funding model, pilots such as this are 'sticking plaster' to cover the main challenge; that young people complete college courses without the experience or skills to work on construction sites.

The emphasis on apprenticeship funding means that homebuilders, Persimmon for example, have business models that are based on recruiting young people aged 16 into apprenticeships. While older recruits with the right aptitude are welcome, the primacy lies with apprenticeships.

## 8 Recommendations

Following this pilot, the independent evaluators propose three recommendations for CITB, the homebuilding sector and the wider construction industry.

	Recommendation	Owner	Outcome	Timescale
1	Creation of an independent strategic hub to gather insight from industry on recruitment needs, and to connect this intelligence to colleges to inform future provision	CITB and HBSP and BACH group	A strategic role for HBSP to monitor, analyse and disseminate the recruitment plans, needs and shortages from and on behalf of homebuilders.  Increased engagement of homebuilders with FE  Reduction in the number of FE construction graduates not entering the sector.	2020
2	Creation of a cross-construction steering group to focus on connecting talent into trades, alongside a focus on quality and reducing errors and defects.	CITB, HBF, FIS and other interested trade associations	To ensure the learning from this pilot, CITB's Learner to Worker, FIS' BuildBack pilots are shared with industry, and create the conditions, if successful, for rolling out the model to other trades. Trades to be selected based on insight on skills shortages.	2020
3	Continue to influence at strategic levels to implement the recommendations from the Letwin review and T-level innovations	HBSP	Employer voice to influence and inform vocational training for industry.	2019-2020

### Disclaimer

The information in this independent evaluation report is presented in good faith and is thought to be accurate as at 15<sup>th</sup> July 2019, however the authors cannot accept responsibility for errors or omissions.