



# The Home Building Skills Partnership

## Independent Evaluation

April 2016 – December 2019



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## Reporting Protocols

The Home Building Skills Partnership is referred to as either the Skills Partnership or HBSP.

The people directly employed by HBF (including Director, Manager and other key roles since 2016) with funding from CITB grant are referred to as the Team or HBSP Team.

The Construction Industry Training Board is abbreviated to CITB.

The Home Builders Federation is abbreviated to HBF.

The report refers to engaged home builders and non-engaged home builders. The former is any home builder that has knowingly engaged in at least one of the HBSP's activities since 2016. The latter refers to any HBF member that has not knowingly engaged in any HBSP activity in the same period.

Home builder and developer are terms used interchangeably in the report.

Subcontractors are referred to in this report to mean companies found within a home builder's supply chain.

The HBSP Pledge is a voluntary activity whereby employers sign up to a range of intentions. There are 5 aspects: collaborate and

share; train to a standard; engage and support; champion diversity and inclusion; and promote careers. 70 organisations have signed the Pledge since October 2017.

## Acknowledgments

Skyblue Research Limited would like to thank CITB for funding this independent evaluation since 2016 and their officers since that time.

We would also like to thank the HBSP Team, directed by Jenny Herdman.

Our thanks also to John Tutte, Chair of the HBSP Leadership Board and all Board members, including Activity Group Chairs and members who have similarly supported all evaluative efforts, formal surveys and learning lesson reviews.

Finally, our thanks to all the home builders, subcontractors, further education colleges, training providers, trade federations, combined authorities, Government representatives and delivery partners that have contributed to the evaluation in order to make this assessment possible.

And a special final mention to John Slaughter, Director of External Affairs at HBF, whose foresight helped make the HBSP a reality for everyone.

# 1.0 Summary

## The Home Building Skills Partnership original project description (2016)<sup>1</sup>

Over its first four years it is hoped the Skills Partnership programmes will engage with thousands of companies, workers, colleges and training providers.

### The Skills Partnership's focus is to:

- Influence the development of a more professional, fully trained workforce.
- Increase productivity and the value added per employee.
- Improve the quality and relevance of industry training.
- Co-ordinate the tackling of common workforce challenges.
- Influence and leverage investment in skills to the benefit of the homebuilding industry.
- Develop an improved public identity for home building.

## To achieve this, the Skills Partnership is examining three main areas:

**Attract** – how to attract new entrants into the industry.

**Skills and development** – how the industry trains its staff.

**Supporting supply chain development** – the training interface with subcontractors.

For each of these areas, the Skills Partnership has set up an Activity Group that will focus on shaping individual workstreams and pushing work forwards to ensure the Skills Partnership is functioning to its full capacity. To do this we need to make the Skills Partnership sustainable so that we ensure the longevity of the project past the four-year timescale of the CITB grant. Ultimately, the objective is to instigate a shift in culture and behaviour at all levels of the home building industry – from the major house builders, right through to SMEs.

In its original contract with CITB the Skills Partnership aimed to design common industry standards for critical roles in home building, engage 100 businesses in training needs analysis and upskill 1,000 individuals through training. These outputs were varied as a result of continuous learning since 2016, with greater emphasis on the direct delivery of training to many thousands more individuals.

## 1.0 Context

Home building is a fragmented industry with 85% indirect employment on site. Its workforce comprises a greater % of EU workers than construction as a whole; and is not diverse. The industry self-rated its image as poor five years ago and tragedies since that time have impacted on parents' and young people's perceptions of working in construction. Home builders felt that industry career opportunities were not recognised, compounded by varying investment behaviours i.e. retaining and investing in the skills of staff is a challenge due to cyclical industry affects. And since 2016, whilst housing output has increased year on year, workforce growth has correspondingly grown and the Government demands to build more and better quality homes has provided a demanding landscape within which the Skills Partnership has been formed.

**Assessment:** The Skills Partnership has been alive to its wider social and economic context and sought where possible to have strategic conversations where these might lead to beneficial investment in the home building sector. It has sought to navigate reforms for skills and training funding and influence investment behaviours through the provision of persuasive information about what workforce is required to build additional homes.

## 2.0 Infrastructure

The Skills Partnership successfully created a structure of governance to focus on three areas of agreed workforce challenge facing the home building sector. A senior industry figure chaired the Leadership Board throughout providing important continuity. A relatively stable Board comprising home builders and wider strategic partners has also been retained for the duration. Three Activity Groups have been chaired by industry representatives, each with specific qualities relevant to their workstreams. At times, the structure grew to accommodate shorter term task and finish groups. These convened a wider range of subject matter experts (e.g. communications, digital, human resources, talent, learning and development, commercial, construction, supply chain and production) widening the HBSP's appeal and calibre.

**Assessment:** This structure has successfully sustained the interest, appeal and contributions from a range of large and medium sized home builders and other partners since 2016 attracting 39% more in-kind investment than originally forecast. Attempts to deviate from the core Activity Group structure were less successful mid-term. The structure for 2020 onwards retains the important ingredients of an oversight Board, Partnership Steering Group and 3 workstreams with the support of 10 dynamic task and finish groups. The loss of one Board member was seen to potentially weaken the Partnership's ability to represent smaller builders and developers, a gap that has proven difficult to replace.

### 3.0 Mission

The original mission of the Skills Partnership, and its primacy in the context of its Fund Agreement with the Construction Industry Training Board (CITB) was to reduce skills gaps in the existing workforce<sup>1</sup>. Over time, that mission has transitioned into something much wider, particularly influenced by the Skills Partnership's early appetite for collaborating around sector attractiveness. In order to recruit the workforce required, home builders emphasised the need to find ways of engaging in joint activity to reposition the image of the home building industry as a career choice, promoting it as a positive place to work. This shift led to outputs, achieved by the Skills Partnership, never anticipated in 2016.

**Assessment:** What started as a funded project with a dominant training delivery mission, has grown into a partnership with wider ambitions for creating longer term change: *"to ensure that the home building industry can recruit and train the people necessary to deliver the supply of good quality new homes the country desperately needs."*<sup>2</sup>



### 4.0 Reach and engagement

Home builders have engaged with the Skills Partnership in over 20 different ways since 2016 ranging from technical work, to participating in training activity, sector attractiveness campaigns and supply chain project engagement to supporting research and co-ordinated proposals. There have been different depths of engagement by home builders: - a core of 30 have invested heavily in Activity Groups; 70 signed the HBSP Pledge in 2017/18 and engaged to suit their business needs and interests in a mix of activities; whilst a wider group of at least 218 have invested the time of their staff to receive HBSP enabled training opportunities. Furthermore as at January 2020:

- Just under 7,000 individuals (6,948) had been trained as a result of the Skills Partnership.<sup>3</sup>
- A further 830 individuals received training/experience via two pilot projects managed by the HBSP since 2017.
- A further 1,715 individuals have received mental health first aid training separately organised by the HBSP.
- 875 individuals are expected to be recruited to home building by 2022 via a new HBSP project.

- Between 400 and 500 supply chain companies have received HBSP managed training (in site management and bricklaying) and 177 participated in the separately CITB-funded HBSP Supply Chain Collaboration Pilot.
- 34 colleges have engaged in the brickwork CPD opportunity for their tutors.
- Training has been delivered in hundreds of locations on sites, in formal training settings and in company premises from Inverness to Truro, Liverpool to Ipswich and South Shields to Carmarthen.
- 156 trained home building careers ambassadors have reached at least 2,300 young people at events.
- 12 million people have seen the 3 'Attract' campaigns since 2018.
- 67,000 users have clicked onto 142,000 [www.housebuildingcareers.org.uk](http://www.housebuildingcareers.org.uk) pages.
- There have been 6,183 page views of the skills frameworks section of the HBSP website.<sup>4</sup>

**Assessment:** The Skills Partnership has successfully engaged and maintained a core of 30 larger home builders to support its infrastructure since 2016. They have had the capacity and motivation to support the HBSP's ambitions through the deployment of their staff as subject matter experts across Activity Groups. Of the larger set of 70 Pledge Signatories, 66 (94%) have taken at least one direct training action as a consequence. Once the HBSP had products in place it had greater confidence to reach out to a wider set of home builders (including non-Pledge signatories) and supply chain companies; in turn reaching nearly 7,000 individuals with practical short duration training<sup>2</sup>. Sector attractiveness and communications activity has reached millions of individuals, however the conversion of that activity into higher sector favourability remains untested. 78% of (22) non-engaged home builders within the HBF membership reported in 2019 they had not heard of were unsure if they had heard of the Skills Partnership. Of those that had heard, they all felt the HBSP was relevant to their business, however, they lacked in-house resource to give time to it.

The CITB grant for the Skills Partnership was framed in a Fund Agreement that expected agreed activities and outputs to be achieved, and these were performance managed accordingly. There have been two agreed variations leading to the redeployment of the grant towards more training than originally planned. The HBSP Team and Board reports it would have liked to have engaged more mid-sized-, smaller developers and supply chain companies.

<sup>1</sup>The strategic priorities that the Project intends to align with are in order of priority: (1) reducing skills gaps (2) increasing access to the right training (3) increasing the value-add per employee (4) reducing skills shortages (5) increasing the appeal of working in construction.

## 5.0 Resources and Leverage

The Skills Partnership always had an ideal to sustain itself beyond December 2019. It set itself the objective of creating a long-term model for the Skills Partnership so that it can continue to support and develop the future workforce of the industry as skills needs evolve. Importantly, the Skills Partnership was enabled by 4 years of catalytic 'Structured Fund' resources and strategic and operational officer support from the CITB.

These resources combined with assets of larger home builders and other organisations, such as NHBC and Homes England, to provide momentum for technical work and collective measures to happen. The initial grant (£2.7m), still one of the five largest Structured Fund investments by CITB, was enough to create the infrastructure and to catalyse specified training outputs. The Skills Partnership would only realise its wider ambitions for 'Attract' and 'Supply Chain Collaboration', however, if it successfully leveraged further resources.

**Assessment:** CITB's growing commissioning role has enabled the Skills Partnership to leverage further support aligned to its wider ambitions. Including industry co-investment the Skills Partnership has leveraged £10.3 million to the benefit of the sector (to 2022) that might not otherwise have been galvanised in this period. It has contributed to wider thinking around the need for an improved curriculum to meet the sector's needs and has been sufficiently influential to be seen by the current Minister<sup>5</sup> as one of Government's seven priorities (for CITB in England) for the next 12 months; and the expectation that there will be a 'strengthening of the Skills Partnership with the Home Builders Federation; working closely with Homes England, the Federation of Master Builders, housing associations and small and medium-sized developers'.

## 6.0 Short term and medium term outcomes for home builders

Sample 18-20 home builders, November 2019

Engaged home builders were surveyed at the end of the evaluation period to ascertain the extent to which 16 possible outcomes had happened, and the contribution that the Skills Partnership had made to these outcomes.

The main changes that home builders said the Skills Partnership had made a significant or positive contribution to i.e. more than 40% contribution ascribed to the HBSP in ascending order were:

Outcome as a result of HBSP engagement	Significant contribution	A positive contribution	A minor contribution	No contribution
<b>Collaboration:</b> The way in which your business is more likely to collaborate with other home builders on tackling common workforce challenges	32%	53%	0%	16%
<b>Sector attractiveness:</b> the way in which you are able to make your business more appealing for people to choose (for their career)	11%	56%	33%	0%
<b>Influence:</b> the way in which you think your business' needs have been represented to influence Government and other organisations to support its workforce needs (e.g. through access to funding, grant or other incentives)	11%	53%	37%	0%
<b>Development:</b> the way in which you have learned from others and been inspired / used it in your business' approach	11%	37%	47%	5%
<b>Training:</b> the way in which you have been able to locate, access or actually put staff on contextualised training relevant to your business	11%	37%	42%	11%
<b>Knowledge and understanding</b> (of skills, training and recruitment challenges and solutions)	15%	30%	50%	5%

Other benefits where a positive contribution had been reported as a result of the HBSP included: their ability to invest in and demonstrate a more professional, fully trained workforce (39%); attracting and recruiting from diverse pools of talent (37%); making decisions about which people and what training to invest in (i.e. the critical roles) (34%); business reputation and public identity (32%); reduced costs e.g. of recruitment or training (27%); reducing skills gaps by accessing relevant training that fills the 'holes' in their knowledge and competence (26%); improving the quality of home building through training and development (17%); reducing skills shortages (16%); sharing risk with and investing in the supply chain (11%); improving productivity (5%).

Another way of measuring outcomes has been to investigate whether home builders that signed the HBSP Pledge in October 2017 have changed their behaviours since that time. Two years on, the evaluation finds that more activity is being reported against the 5 areas covered by the Pledge by between three-fifths and four-fifths of engaged home builders; and that between a quarter and a third of home builders say that the way in which they do some of this Pledge activity has also changed suggesting the HBSP has been influencing behaviours in some home builder organisations.

Have you increased the amount or changed the way in which you have delivered Pledge activities listed below in the last 12 months compared to previously in your business? (sample: 19 to 23 home builders)

Yes, changed approach    Yes, increased activity

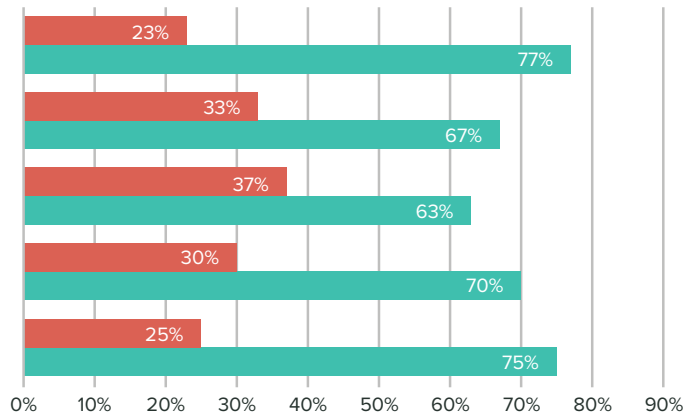
**Pledge 5.** Promoting careers in home building

**Pledge 4.** Championing diversity and inclusion (e.g. recruiting a more diverse workforce)

**Pledge 3.** Training all recruits to the industry standards being developed and actively supporting your subcontractors to do the...

**Pledge 2.** Training and qualifying your workforce to a recognised standard

**Pledge 1.** Collaborating and sharing best practice about skills, recruitment and sector attraction to improve quality and productivity



**Assessment:** Highly competitive home builders are now routinely collaborating on a range of skills, training and sector attractiveness initiatives. On average they have engaged in 7 different ways with the Skills Partnership depending on their business needs. HBSP has enabled 1 in 4 to feel that its activities has made a positive contribution to helping them reduce existing workforce gaps through training; and 1 in 7 feel it has contributed towards them addressing skills shortages. Contributions are recorded for most of the 16 intended outcomes tested. The outcomes where the Skills Partnership has had less direct contribution include productivity gains, supply chain shared risk/investment cultures and influencing the way in which home builders make decisions about how to use their own assets to invest in workforce training more generally. That said, 4 in 5 home builders say they are investing more in training and development of their workforce in 2019 compared to 2018; and navigating the changing landscape of skills and training (including CITB reform) meantime has become easier in 2019 compared to 2018.

## 7.0 Impact

In order to assess impact it is necessary to understand what might have happened in the absence of the Skills Partnership; and also to explore what kind of outcomes and effects directly attributable to its activities might endure in future. Research with an equal number of home builders that have engaged with the HBSP and those who have not engaged since 2016 finds that there are some notable differences between the severity of challenges they face with their workforce; and the way they have sought to overcome them. Home builders that have been engaged report that ‘training’ and ‘attraction’ challenges have decreased whilst the non-engaged home builders report that they have increased in the period. Approaches to tackling challenges by engaged home builders are more developmental and less transactional than their non-engaged peers.

Engaged home builders and Leadership Board members – including strategic organisations – meantime assessed qualitatively what would have happened in the absence of the HBSP and there is consensus that the sector would not have organised itself to focus on common workforce challenges as well as it has been able to; nor would they have invested collaboratively, as they have proven to do so via the workstreams. Instead, most feel that the sector would not have progressed its ability to work together nor turn expansive ideas into focused action. Moreover, in light of CITB’s significant reforms and maturing commissioning role, the sector would

not have been ready to be able to come forward with collective proposals. An alternative picture was painted if the HBSP had not existed, which suggested large home builders would have worked in greater isolation from one another, and that poaching and wage inflation could have been higher still.

There is correlation between the activities the HBSP has provided and the effects reported by those home builders that have used them in terms of training and developing staff or feeling more confident to make their business more appealing for people to choose as a career. The strongest evidence of positive gains from training comes via follow up research with Assistant/Site Managers who received pilot training modules; and from sampled research with individuals attending a bricklaying masterclass. There have been gains in confidence, commitment, technical competence, soft skills and more positive attitudes and behaviours on sites as a consequence.

Impacts on other stakeholders are limited. The Leadership Board feel that there has not been any radical change within the college market yet, despite efforts to raise the HBSP’s profile at key conferences and meetings. More work will be required to encourage greater awareness and usage of the skills frameworks that have been devised by the HBSP for 12 critical roles in the sector. To create impact HBSP will need more proactive, relational marketing with a clear proposition for organisations who could reach a greater number of supply chain companies via their memberships and training providers (colleges, independent private providers and universities) in localities.

**Assessment:** Of the benefits described by 15 engaged home builders in 2019, two thirds (67%) have been additional i.e. they would not have happened at all (7%), as effectively (7%) or as quickly (53%) in the absence of the HBSP; whilst 33% of the benefits were defined as ‘deadweight’ i.e. they would likely have happened anyway and / or HBSP was only a small contributor compared to larger factors that brought about change. These results suggest that the main effect of being engaged in the HBSP has been to accelerate or bring forward multiple, varied benefits for home builders. Sampled evidence from Assistant/Site Managers and Bricklayers trained through the Skills Partnership suggest positive benefits too in order to improve their competence / reduce their skills and knowledge gaps; increase their confidence, commitment and attitudes and behaviours on site. One home builder also reports that A/SMs trained via the HBSP stay longer than A/SMs that have traditionally not been trained to the same extent deriving financial benefits from avoided re-recruitment costs of £7,500 per hire.

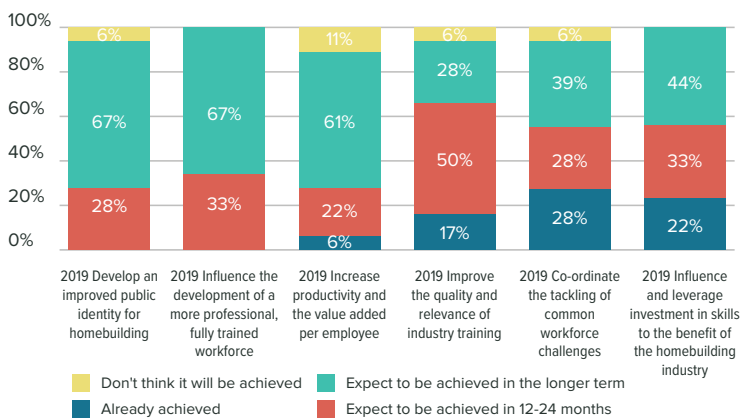


## 8.0 Return on investment

**Just under 4 in 10 home builders (38%) that have engaged in the Skills Partnership perceive in 2019 that it has provided an ROI in line with their expectations, with slightly more (44%) suggesting it has yet to provide the expected ROI and 19% say it's too early for them to tell. This is partly explained by the feeling that the Skills Partnership needs longer to achieve its original ambitions.**

Two home builders that worked with the evaluators on an experimental method of ROI estimation in 2019 found that for every £1 of time they had invested in HBSP since 2016, they received a positive return of between £1.72 and £2.36 suggesting that they received value from sustained engagement.

HBSP achievements against original ambitions



**Assessment:** By 2022, the HBSP is expected to satisfy the expectations of at least 50% of engaged members in respect of three of the original ambitions - co-ordinating the tackling of common workforce challenges (56%), improving the quality and relevance of industry training (67%) and influencing and leveraging investment in skills to the benefit of the home building sector (55%). The remaining three ambitions will not likely be achieved by 2022 and may require reframing so as to be more achievable for the Skills Partnership as it transitions into its next phase.

## 9.0 Learning lessons

The full evaluation report provides detailed learning lessons for each aspect of the Skills Partnership's workstreams, as well as a summary of achievements, frustrations and innovations. They relate to:

- The appropriate deployment of resources (too much, just enough, too little) in different circumstances
- The skill in sustaining expert contributions by people who must justify their time on HBSP to others
- The difficulty in achieving company-wide awareness and buy-in for HBSP amongst large home builders
- The need to build trust through different forms of engagement and participatory activity over time
- The different levels of commitment that home builders can give towards short-term tangible training activities compared to longer-term cultural or behavioural change activities
- The need to avoid duplication of effort with other wider sector campaigns, integrating wherever possible
- The need for a skilful, dedicated HBSP Team able to manage existing and new stakeholder relationships
- The need to have a strategic mind-set, but action-oriented persona to sustain HBSP engagement
- The potential of the HBSP to be a powerful pressure or advocacy group through its collaborative culture
- The challenge of engaging medium and smaller developers and supply chain companies
- The challenge of activating the HBSP at regional / devolved / local levels
- There have also been lessons at three distinct phases of the HBSP's chronology that others in the wider construction sector could usefully learn from when considering sector partnership working:

### Development phase (years 1-2)

- The importance of taking time to build understanding and trust rather than deliver activity prematurely.
- The need to create strong governance foundations with clear leadership and ownership.
- The challenge of creating multiple ways for different stakeholders to engage to build critical mass.

### Delivery (years 2-3)

- The importance of having clear, simple accessible solutions that resonate with the intended audience.
- The need to have reliable delivery partners who buy-in to the wider strategic ambitions of the Skills Partnership.
- The challenge of ensuring there are adequate routes and channels to reach the intended markets.

### Evolution (continuous)

- The importance of having a flexible main funder willing to redirect resources responsive to new insight
- The need to show courage when negotiating changes to service delivery when necessary.
- The challenge of planning for the future whilst delivering activity effectively to agreed milestones.

## 10.0 Sustainability of the Skills Partnership

The Skills Partnership has agreed to continue its work beyond the CITB Structured Fund period. This is a significant achievement as it means that the Skills Partnership has become 'more than a funded project'. The Skills Partnership has become a department of HBF. The HBSP Team will continue to be employed and provide important continuity in 2020 and 2021. This responds to the evaluation survey results in 2019 where 100% of engaged home builders feel it is very (52%) / important (48%) that HBSP continues in future. Its suggested focus on career attraction, skills and supply chain engagement and diversity and inclusion and wellbeing marries quite well with sector expectations. Survey work in late 2019 by the evaluators also found a strong appetite to ensure the HBSP helps the sector with multi skills (76% reporting this to be very / important); and digital skills (88% very / important). Given the wider trend that it is also more of a serious challenge to train people in new things and approaches this theme needs to be embedded across all planned workstreams to respond to these findings. Longer term, the HBSP needs to be certain that the aggregation of its effort can clearly contribute to the performance of the sector in respect of quality and productivity.

**Assessment:** The Skills Partnership has secured sufficient support to continue beyond 2019, but it will need to become even more skilful and adept in the next 18 months to develop a clear income model that comprises a mix of revenue generation and grant in order to cement its long term presence for the sector's benefit. Leveraging its know-how, the skills frameworks, virtual card developments and ability to test the demand for, then create the conditions for training across the critical roles will be success factors. Subcontractor engagement and quality is still the single biggest workforce challenge in 2016 and 2019 for the sector, and it will need significant, additional effort by multiple partners including Government to more thoroughly address this challenge. The evaluators have co-designed a suggested 'HBSP Roadmap' that could help the Skills Partnership take practical next steps via its new governance arrangements whilst also making sufficient time to galvanise the assets of existing and new stakeholders in future.

The impact of the Covid-19 crisis will also need to be factored in to future work. In addition to the challenge of developing new ways of working safely, the crisis potentially creates an opportunity to work more closely with the subcontractor supply chain on improved practice and competence. It may also help drive moves to new technologies and digitalisation. The HBSP should engage with the industry to understand new needs and how it can contribute to meeting these.

## 11.0 Conclusions and Recommendations

Progress has been made towards the 7 strategic outcomes (see full report) especially in respect of helping to reduce skills gaps for two of the critical roles in the sector. The key outcomes of the HBSP have been twofold: catalysing training activity; and encouraging a maturity in collaborative working – neither of which would have happened to the same extent in the absence of the Skills Partnership. Much longer will be needed to achieve wide-spread cultural and behavioural change. The evaluators make three key recommendations to the Home Building Skills Partnership.

1. Develop and agree a transition plan until July 2022 including output, outcome and impact measures and revenue plan for delivering activities that are not yet considered to be 'business as usual'.
2. Consolidate delivery of projects already underway (brickwork masterclass and Pathways to Construction), whilst embedding and valorising key products including the skills frameworks.
3. Create the conditions and co-ordinate a Home Building Sector Workforce Development Strategy 2022-2027 to contribute to the Government's wish to see the industry develop the skills it needs to meet its ambition to build 300,000 homes a year by the mid-2020s. This will see the HBSP activated locally as well as nationally contributing to longer-term quality and productivity outcomes in the sector.



## 2.0 Context

During interviews with Leadership Board members in December 2019, they reflected that the past 4 years had seen significant, often, turbulent change affecting the home building and wider construction sector.

- The Skills Partnership officially came into existence in March 2016.
- Three months later there was the referendum that would become Brexit.
- Twelve months on, in June 2017, there was the Grenfell Tower tragedy.
- And in January 2018, Carillion went into compulsory liquidation.
- And as this report was being prepared in December 2019, the world was about to suffer the unimaginable impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic with consequences for all people and economic sectors.

*“Since 2016 we’ve had the industry under the spotlight on quality, quality of design, leaseholds, executive pay and customer service.”*

Leadership Board Member, 2019

All of these macro factors were reported by the Construction Industry Training Board (CITB) and Home Builders Federation (HBF) to have impacts on confidence in the industry and the ability to present a positive career image to the future workforce. Against this context though the industry has continued to grow, increase housing and economic output and take action to improve quality.

**Housing Output:** When the HBSP was conceived in 2015, there were just over 155,000 new builds, whereas by March 2019, latest data suggested there had been 214,000 new builds<sup>6</sup> – an increase of 38% during the lifetime of the Skills Partnership. The industry generates an estimated £38bn of economic output<sup>7</sup>.

**Employment:** Different published data sources point to the same trend, which is a growth in the home building workforce between 2015 and 2017. ‘The Economic Footprint of House Building in England and Wales<sup>8</sup>’ reported that there were 239,000 people directly employed in home building (18% of the construction industry) in 2017, up from 233,000 two years’ earlier. Alternative data<sup>9</sup> reported a change from 202,200 to 227,000 in the same period (17% of the construction industry). Including indirect and induced employment in the supply chain, the home building industry may support 639,000 jobs up from 600,000 in 2015<sup>10</sup>. These secondary sources of data resonate with the results of the four annual HBSP Industry Workforce Surveys that have been carried out since 2016, where almost all participating home builders had been planning for, and experienced workforce growth in these years.

**Quality:** In July 2016, the All Parliamentary Group for Excellence in the Built Environment published 'More Homes, Fewer Complaints', a report from the Commission of Inquiry into the quality and workmanship of new housing in England. It sought to 'ensure that there is a clear process whereby developers can be held to account and are responsible for correcting any below-par workmanship as soon as possible'.<sup>11</sup> By investing in skills and training it was always hoped that quality would improve. Since 2016, the industry has taken action to improve quality. Sampled Construction Quality Review (CQR) data from the National House Building Council received by the evaluators in January 2020 suggests that, certainly for bricklaying, thanks to concerted effort, quality has been improving. Meantime, the national new home customer satisfaction survey suggests that the percentage of new home owners that would recommend their builder to a friend had increased.

**Skills, training and education reform:** There has also been significant reform since 2016 affecting the landscape within which the Skills Partnership has needed to position itself, deliver its Business Plan and leverage the assets of other organisations to the benefit of the home building sector. This includes the Government's post-16 skills plan published in 2016, comprising technical education reforms based on the work of Lord Sainsbury's independent panel; the advent of the Apprenticeship Levy introduced in April 2017; and the significant reforms by CITB in relation to its Agenda for Change and modernisation encapsulated in its Vision 2020 Business Plan (2018-2021). During this time, CITB was the largest single investor in the Skills Partnership and since 2016 has been developing its commissioning capability and approach to investing in skills and training to meet the industry's current and future needs.

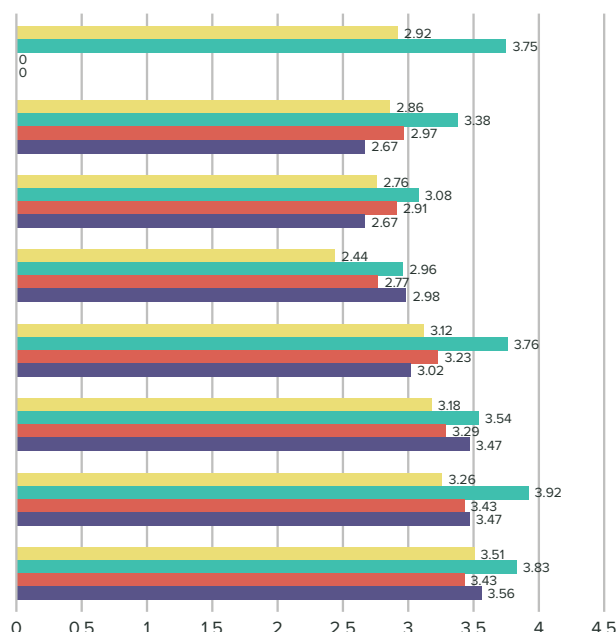
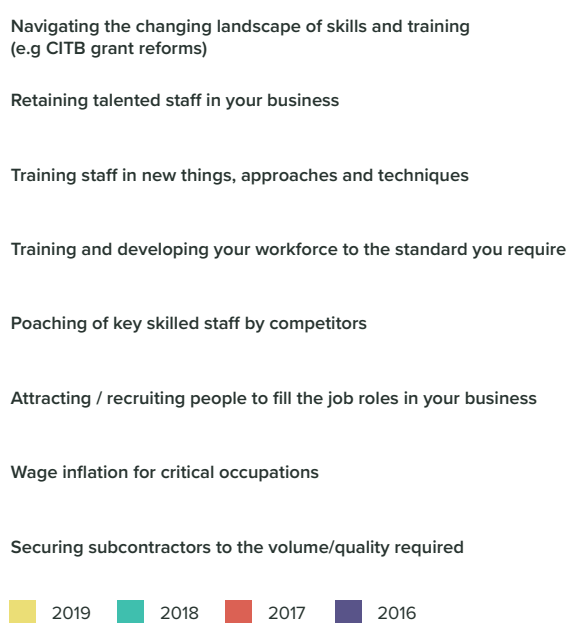
## Workforce challenges 2016-2019

There have been persistent challenges since the Skills Partnership commenced in the industry in relation to securing subcontractors, wage inflation for critical occupations and poaching. These 'wicked problems' continue to inhibit the

sector's potential. However, some challenges have de-escalated, for example in home builders being able to train and develop their workforces to the standard required<sup>12</sup> and in attracting / recruiting people to fill the job roles available.<sup>13</sup> The Skills Partnership is felt to be a contributor to these changes which is encouraging given the focus of its resources in these particular areas of activity.

How difficult do you find these issues? (1=not an issue, 5 = a serious issue).

Samples: 43 firms October 2016, 54 firms November 2017, 26 firms November 2018, 44 firms November 2019



Whilst 2019 survey results are much more positive than 2018 across all the challenge indicators that have been tracked, there has been an increase in the seriousness of two issues suggesting more work needs to be done in the next chapter of the Skills Partnership's lifetime: training staff in new things, approaches and techniques;<sup>14</sup> and retaining talented staff.<sup>15</sup>

There is currently, no reliable sector-wide data to assess any change in the levels of investment in training or development by the home building sector since 2016. Ofqual data, however, suggests a 58% increase in achievement of NVQ qualifications at Level 2+ for many of the critical trades occupations<sup>16</sup> involved in home building from 25,915 in 2015 to 40,525 in 2018, suggesting an increase in the overall qualification level of this part of the workforce, however, this is due to a range of factors external to the Skills Partnership.

*"I perceive that skills has always been a difficult area historically with fragmented approaches, large home builders being proprietorial and a relative lack of investment in the workforce over the past couple of decades. There are those that do invest and those that do not. The latter group think they have an advantage by not investing in the workforce."*

Leadership Board Member, 2019



## 3.0 The purpose of The Home Building Skills Partnership

When the Skills Partnership was initiated, it developed a logic model with CITB to express its overall intentions<sup>17</sup>

It was hoped that the Skills Partnership would develop a sector infrastructure that would define how it attracts, trains and retains a skilled and professional workforce sufficient to build over 1 million new homes in the next 5 years. By engaging up to 100 homebuilders and targeting specific occupations, and with the support and leadership of the homebuilders the project would create and develop an industry-responsive infrastructure which will communicate the benefits of smart recruitment, training and retaining to up to 3,500 homebuilders and homebuilding supply chain companies across the UK.

There were 3 expected outputs:

- The design of common industry standards for critical roles in homebuilding – **achieved**.
- Engagement of 100 businesses in the development of a training and development needs analysis – **contract was varied. At least 218 home builders have been engaged by the HBSP in training activity.**
- Upskilling of a 1,000 individuals in a range of modules<sup>17</sup> – **exceeded**.

As the HBSP established itself through the creation of its Leadership Board and Activity Group infrastructure, it undertook and published research about the 'Size of the Challenge' faced by the industry. The concomitant creation of a Business Plan for the HBSP at the request of the Chairman in 2016, saw the original contract intentions shift slightly more towards the appetite for home builders to collaborate on making the sector more attractive.

Market testing of the demand for a training needs analysis (TNA) tool found that this would not meet the diverse needs of developers and its supply chain. These fresh insights led to two agreed contract variations with CITB. This resulted in a redeployment of HBSP resources, firstly, diverting funding for the TNA tool into the direct delivery of (bricklaying masterclass) training; and secondly, a greater focus of time and funding on training delivery to two critical roles (site management and bricklaying) rather than diluting the available resources across all 12 selected occupations.

Contract variations also led to changes in the outputs expected, which CITB have reported to the evaluators in January 2020 were all successfully met in order to satisfy the conditions of grant payment in full.

<sup>17</sup> Please see the logic model at <http://www.skyblue.org.uk/HBSPevaluation/index.php/the-logic-model>

## 4.0

# Measuring the success of the Skills Partnership

Within the contractual and wider context described, an independent evaluation framework was developed for, and approved by, the Leadership Board in December 2016. Since that time, monitoring and evaluation data has been collected in order to assess the extent to which the HBSP has:

Theme	Intent 2016-2019 (key evaluation questions)	Long-term intended measure of success
Skills and Development	.... led to the design of a common set of forward-looking industry training standards for critical roles in homebuilding that can improve quality of workmanship?	Standards that are adopted by the sector and that influence provision / education curriculum.
	.... enabled training and development solutions that are valued by those working in the homebuilding sector which lead to measurable gains in skills and job competence?	Reduction in skills gaps.
Attract	.... created direct impact on the recruitment behaviours of large home builders and their key sub-contractors within 4 years?	More home builders reporting a reduction in recruitment and re-training costs.
	.... helped reposition the image of the home building industry as a career choice, promoting it as a positive place to work?	More home builders reporting a perceived better quality of applicants.
Supply Chain Collaboration	.... enabled more collaboration between home builders and their subcontractor supply chain enabling smarter investment in training and development?	More positive supply chain collaboration in evidence on skills and training.
Leverage	.... leveraged investment nationally and locally to activate practical activities that lead to smarter recruitment and effective training across the sector?	Investment leveraged to sustain the HBSP to, and beyond, 2020.
Learning	.... demonstrated its ability to continually improve its effectiveness?	Learning lessons are used to improve the conditions for the HBSP's success to, and beyond 2020.

## Evaluation Methodology

Since 2016, independent evaluators (Skyblue Research Ltd) have attended all Leadership Board meetings, many Activity Group sessions and each annual HBSP conference. Quarterly reports have presented the progress being made against the 7 key evaluation questions.

- For industry workforce trends data, the evaluators conducted four annual industry surveys of home builders yielding 181 responses in total.<sup>18</sup>
- Follow up research with a sample of 32 assistant / site managers during the piloting of training modules helped assess their effectiveness in 2018.
- To assess the effectiveness of the HBSP pledge, a survey (yielding 42 responses) was carried out six months after its launch; and then tracked in the 2018 and 2019 annual surveys.

- 100 organisations contributed to the summative evaluation process comprising engaged and non-engaged home builders, subcontractors involved in Activity Groups, members of the British Association of Construction Heads (BACH), representatives from Government and combined authorities and trade federations.
- Two home builders have worked with the evaluators on a model to calculate their retrospective return on investment from engaging with the HBSP included in this report.
- Analysis of responses between home builders that have engaged or not engaged with the Skills Partnership has enabled a commentary on the added value of HBSP participation.
- Monitoring data and outcomes evidence from independent evaluations of separately funded HBSP Pilot Projects ('Fast Track' and 'Supply Chain Engagement and Training') have been included.

For access to all evaluation reports and methodologies please visit <http://www.skyblue.org.uk/HBSPevaluation/>

## 5.0 Engagement and reach

When the Skills Partnership was created, there were a limited number of ways for companies to engage, either as a member of the Leadership Board or as a contributor to the three Activity Groups that sought to deliver agreed Business Plan workstreams – ‘Attract’, ‘Skills and Development’ and ‘Supply Chain Collaboration’. Engagement since 2016 has, encouragingly, manifested itself in many ways for different stakeholders.

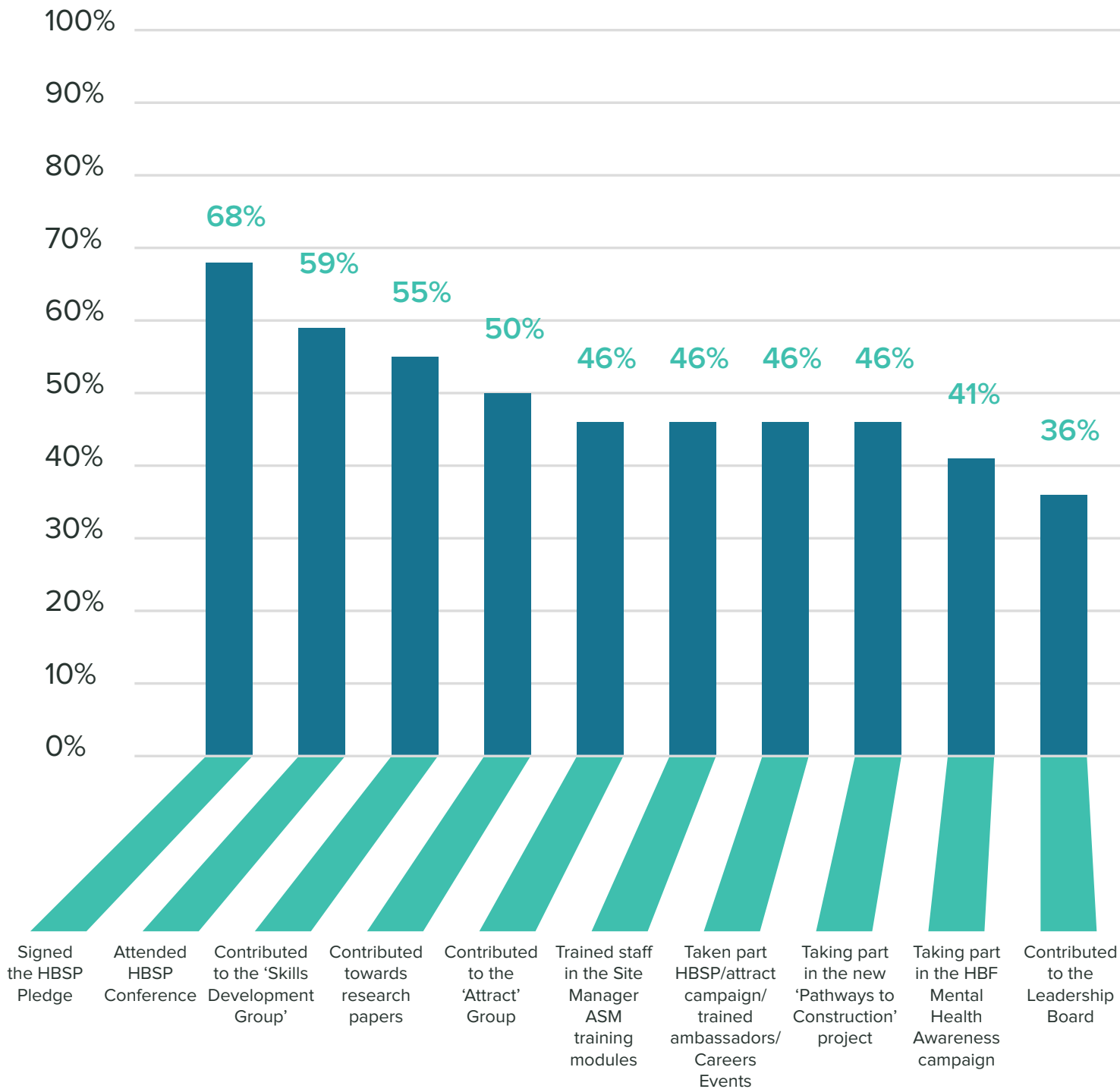
### Home builder engagement

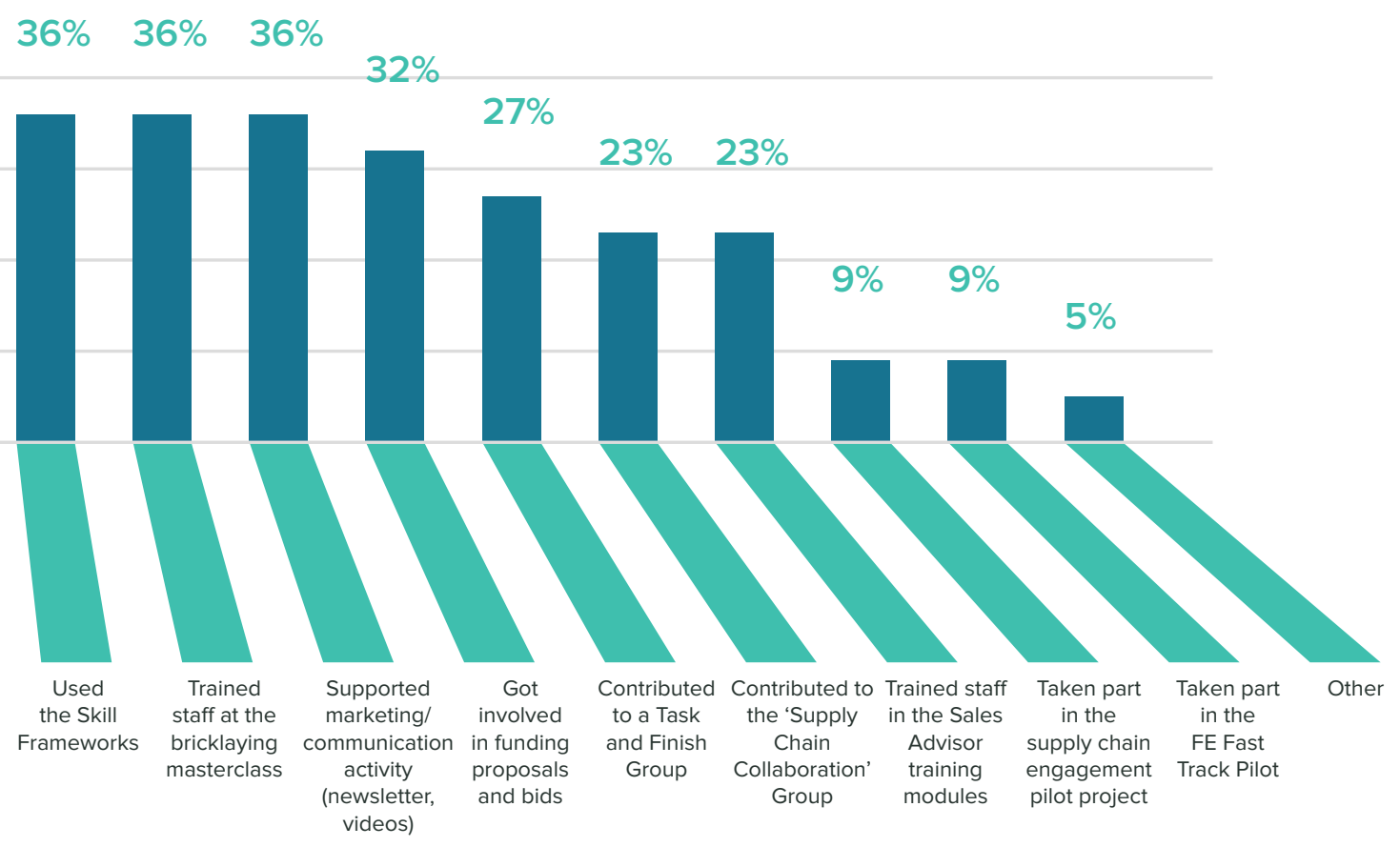
- 70 companies<sup>19</sup> (covering at least two thirds of all new homes built) signed up to the Home building Skills Pledge agreeing to ‘collaborate and share’, ‘train to a standard’, ‘engage and support’, ‘promote careers’ and ‘champion diversity and inclusion’
- 218 home builders (including 66 Pledge signatories) invested the time of their staff to receive training modules made available via the HBSP for Assistant / Site Managers and Sales Advisors
- 131 home builders have invested the time of their staff to receive brickwork masterclasses<sup>20</sup>
- 22 home builders participated in a programme to train up their staff as home building careers ambassadors that could go out into schools, colleges and communities to promote the home building industry and careers, attract new entrants.

- 50 companies signed up to the HBSP-led mental health campaign in 2019
- 8 home builders have continually supported the Attract Activity Group and campaigns
- 4 home builders have invested time and energy in the HBSP Supply Chain Collaboration Pilot
- 7 home builders participated in the Fast Track Pilot Project managed by the HBSP
- 18 home builders are engaged in the Pathways into Construction Project until 2022

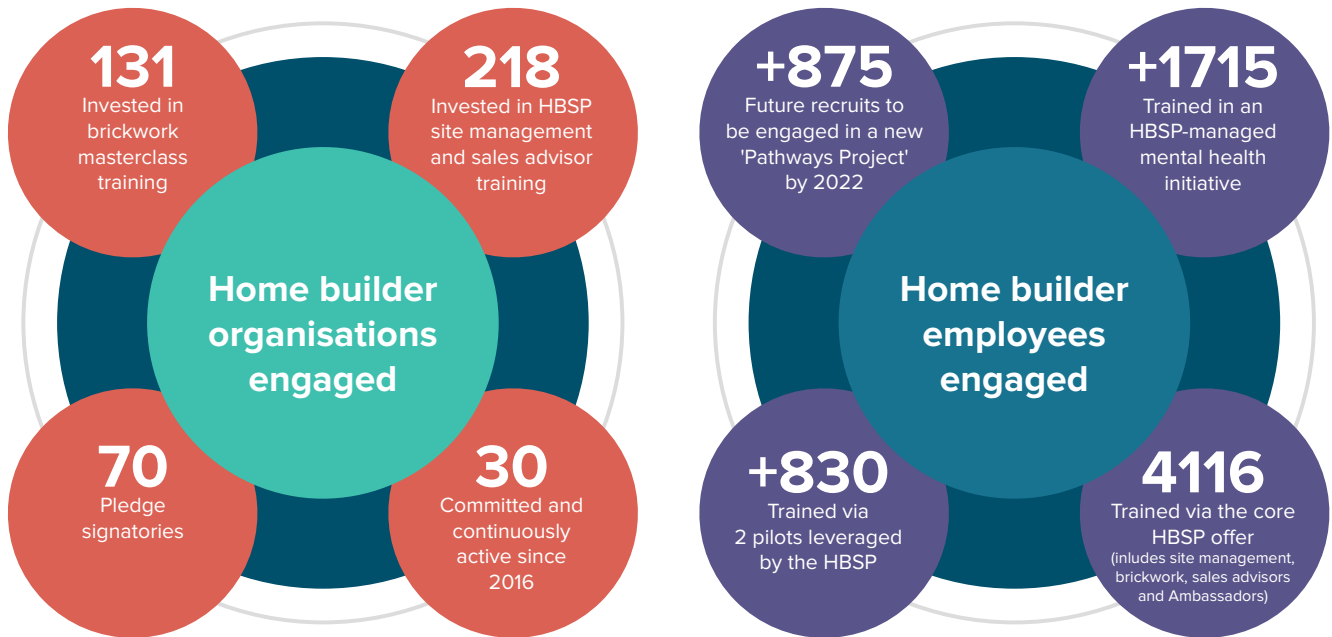
As this graphic illustrates, based on surveys with 22 companies, by December 2019, there have been 20 different ways in which home builders have been able to engage with the Skills Partnership.

The average amount of engagement by these home builders was in 7 activities, whilst some engaged in only 1 and some engaged in up to 17 activities.

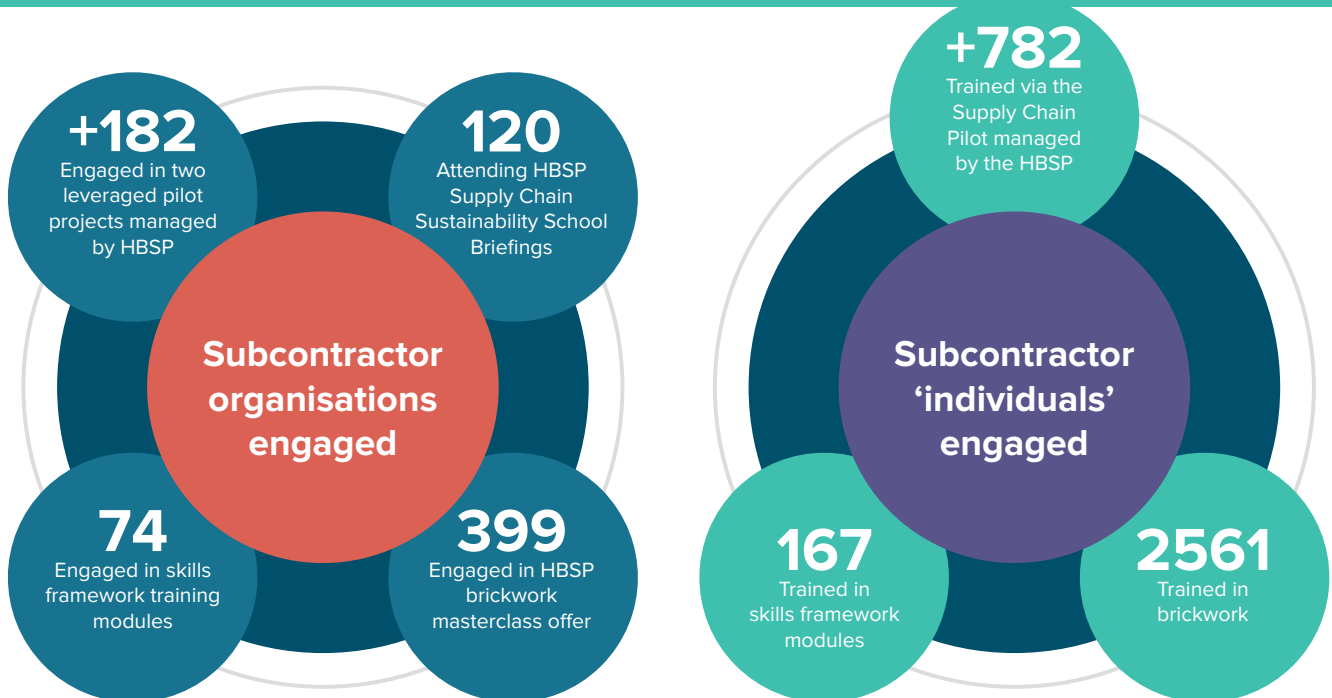
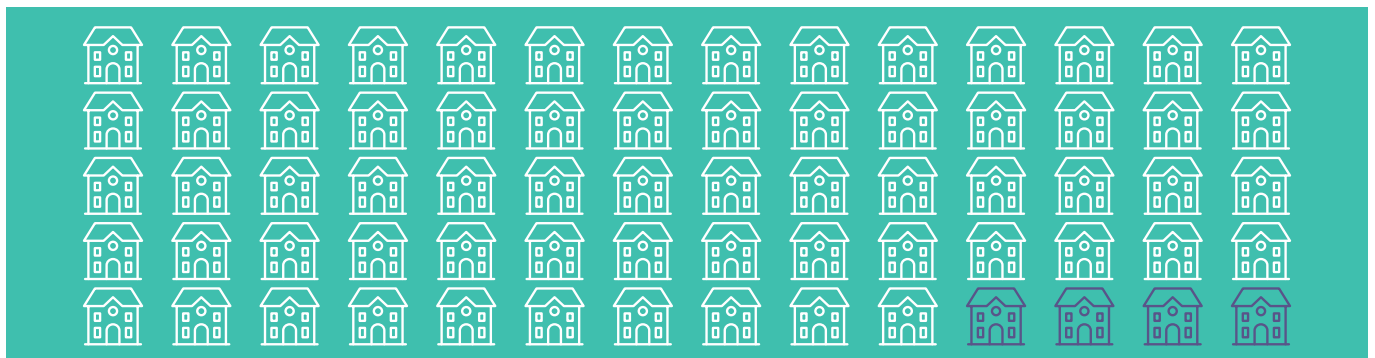




## Reach and engagement



## Proportion of Pledge signatories that took action and invested in training 66 out of 70 (94%)





## Workforce engagement (individuals trained)

- A total of 2,036 people from 292 companies have attended the training modules specifically designed for site managers and sales advisors, collectively, receiving 3,926 training days
- 1,869 individuals (92%) were employees of home builders, whilst 167 individuals (8%) were employees from supply chain companies
- 4,652 individuals have participated in a brickwork masterclasses, of which 2,091 (45%) have been employees of home builders, whilst 2,561 (55%) have been employees from supply chain companies<sup>21</sup>
- 112 trainers from further education colleges have received brickwork CPD
- 156 employees of home builders have been trained to be home building careers ambassadors
- 782 individuals were trained as part of the HBSP Supply Chain Collaboration Pilot
- 48 young people participated in the 'Fast Track' pilot project in 2017-2018 project boot-camps, of which 32 progressed to work experience and 14 progressed to (sustained) jobs in home building.
- 875 new recruits from under-represented groups to be retained in the industry via the Pathways into Construction Project by 2022
- 1,715 individuals in the sector have been trained in mental health first aid or awareness

## Subcontractor engagement

- 74 supply chain companies invested the time of their staff to receive training modules made available via the HBSP for Assistant / Site Managers and Sales Advisors
- 399 supply chain companies have invested the time of their staff to receive brickwork masterclasses
- 5 supply chain companies participated in the Fast Track Pilot Project managed by the HBSP
- 177 supply chain companies participated in the HBSP Supply Chain Collaboration Pilot
- 120 supply chain companies learned about the HBSP at Supply Chain Sustainability School briefings



## Further Education College and training provider engagement

- 34 colleges have invested time in their staff to receive brickwork CPD via the HBSP
- 5 colleges participated in the Fast Track Pilot Project managed by the HBSP
- 14 colleges are engaged in the Pathways into Construction Project until 2022
- 10 private training providers supported the HBSP Supply Chain Collaboration Pilot
- 2 private training providers have delivered A/ SM, sales advisor and brickwork training
- HBSP has presented at the BACH national conference to over 100 FE providers since 2018

## Other stakeholder engagement

- Ambassadors have supported at least 34 events delivered to an estimated minimum of 2,300 secondary age young people and school leavers in 2018 and 2019
- 9 trade federations<sup>22</sup> have supported HBSP activity (skills frameworks)
- 7 other stakeholders<sup>23</sup> are engaged in the Pathways into Construction Project until 2022

## 'Passive' engagement

- 12 million people have seen the 3 'Attract' campaigns since 2018
- 67,000 users have clicked onto 142,000 [www.housebuildingcareers.co.uk](http://www.housebuildingcareers.co.uk) pages
- 6,183 page views of the skills frameworks section of the HBSP website<sup>24</sup>
- The latest edition of the 'Home Skilled' newsletter has had 767 clicks (14% of its 5,395 circulation)

# 6.0 Skills and development

## Key Evaluation Question:

To what extent has the Skills Partnership led to the design of a common set of forward-looking industry training standards for critical roles in homebuilding that can improve quality of workmanship?

## Success Measure:

Standards that are adopted by the sector and that influence provision / education curriculum

## Why did the HBSP wish to develop training standards?

Greater numbers of skilled workers were required to address the Government's 2015 target of 1,000,000 new homes by 2020, to the quality required.<sup>25</sup> Prior to the HBSP commencing in 2016, 4 in 10 home builders and 1 in 7 subcontractors reported training and development challenges. In a sector, where poaching was / is rife, there was limited collaboration on workforce development and skills. Both capacity and quality within the training provision sector were also considered issues by employers who felt that college curriculum did not reflect the needs of industry.<sup>26</sup>

## What did the HBSP want to achieve?

It was agreed that the HBSP would design and implement a consistent set of professional industry standards (for a time called skills matrices and then renamed skills frameworks) focused on critical job roles. These skills frameworks would define the minimum competencies needed to work in these roles in a home building context. If used, the skills frameworks would ultimately help with standardising, understanding, developing, deployment and the tracking of people and their skills leading to a more competent, productive workforce, improved quality and reduced costs and re-work ('snagging').

*"We need more employers committed to training to these standards; and more colleges to use them. We need to track individuals' use and CITB's grant funding aligned to these occupational routes."*

## What did the HBSP do?

An Occupational Working Group (OWG) was formed in the summer of 2016 to start technical work and select the critical roles. From 650 possible roles, 20 and then 12 were ultimately selected owing to the severity of their skills shortage and / or impact on productivity and quality on sites. The OWG transitioned into the Skills and Development Activity Group comprising home builder employees who convened to develop skills frameworks for the 12 roles.



Bricklaying



Carpentry



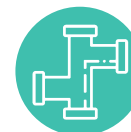
Dry Lining



Engineering



Groundworks & Plant Operations



Plumbing



Plastering & Rendering



Quantity Surveying



Site Management



Roof Slating & Tiling



Sales



Wall & Floor Tiling

In 2017, the Activity Group produced the first skills framework, for the role of Assistant/Site Manager, and once agreed, the HBSP was able to use its activity budget to pilot contextualised training to A/SMs from willing home builders, who did not have to pay any direct training costs. As 8 of the 12 roles being examined were more typically employed by the supply chain, the Activity Group and HBSP Team collaborated with relevant trade federations for these roles. All 12 frameworks were completed in a phased approach and published in May 2019.

The frameworks<sup>27</sup> demonstrate a series of key competencies and training modules. Workforce development tools were also created to complement frameworks. Available at [www.hbf.co.uk/skillsframeworks](http://www.hbf.co.uk/skillsframeworks)

The Skills Partnership also engaged with key partners to represent new home building<sup>28</sup> and instigated ways of engaging nationally (via BACH) and regionally with local providers.

The approach to the skills frameworks has altered from the original bid. The Activity Group invested more time and energy over a longer period to explore how the skills frameworks could be translated into a 'Training Needs Analysis' tool for the sector, but having tested the market for this solution, it was felt to be the wrong solution.

Instead, it was agreed the approach would be to make the skills frameworks freely available so that individuals and employers can make their own training needs assessment. Wider changes in the industry linked to the phasing out of certain industry cards<sup>29</sup>, technological advances, and employer feedback eventually coalesced in the plan to develop a digital card system for the sector. The first phase of the Home Builders virtual card launched in December 2019.<sup>30</sup>

Elements of each skills framework are described by the HBSP as accredited. 21 out of a total of 56 units of training defined in the 12 frameworks have a developed CITB training standard which are considered by the HBSP as therefore accredited. This means there are gaps and further technical work will continue with CITB, for example, in respect of the latter's work relating to softer skills, management and leadership.

## What difference did the HBSP make?

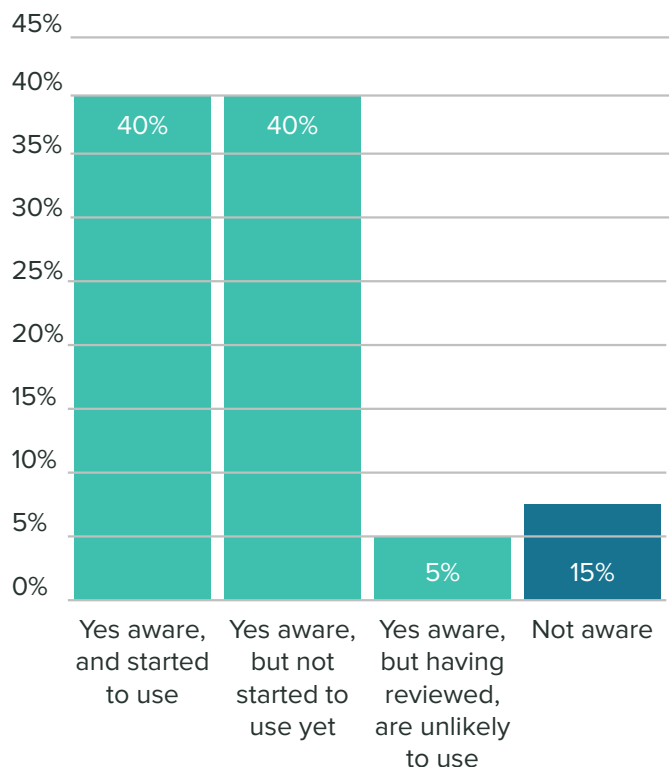
12 skills frameworks have been designed through an employer-led process and 11 have been published online. The webpage that hosts the skills frameworks has been viewed 6,183 times (May 2019 - Jan 2020). The frameworks have been publicised by HBSP with home builders (via HBF) and colleges (through the British Association of Construction Heads).

The frameworks define the minimum competencies required to work in the 12 critical roles, and if adopted at scale over time by the industry and training and education market have the potential to create longer-term change, however, as at January 2020 whilst awareness is growing, take up is limited by stakeholders.

### Home builders

16 / 20 (80%) of engaged home builders were aware of the skills frameworks 6 months after their launch. 8 / 20 (40%) had started to use some of them specifically Site Managers (3); Assistant Site Managers (1); Sales Advisers (2); and Surveying (1) to map their training plans against or to use as a benchmark.

Are you aware of / have you started to use the new skills frameworks for critical roles in your business? (sample: 20 home builders, November 2019)



### Evidence of a change in practice, processes and behaviours:

One of the most motivated home builders reported that they had successfully linked the skills frameworks to their Internal People Development Review process as a means of embedding them in their company for the future. The successful business case made by this employer was partly inspired by the frameworks and the wider work of the Skills and Development Activity Group.

Another has changed their training behaviours by increasing their recognition of the importance of soft skills in critical roles partly inspired by the skills frameworks. They have invested in a programme for senior site managers, site managers and commercial staff (50 in total) to go through a 5-day training course to learn soft skills around people management, motivating teams, delegation, giving and receiving feedback.

Other home builders that have started to use the skills frameworks said they assessed their own approaches against them, and used them to identify agreed training plans. One example was that all sales staff in the business follow a structured training programme with 9 modules aligned to the frameworks consistently delivered.

### British Association of Construction Heads (FE colleges)

Meantime, 6 out of a sample of 13 British Association Construction Heads were aware of the frameworks 6 months after their launch. 3 had downloaded and planned to use them, finding them relevant to help shape college delivery to meet the needs of home builders. It was commented that lecturers would be able to use them to diversify their delivery accordingly. 8 out of 15 colleges stated that the Skills Partnership meantime had made a positive difference to the way they were planning to train and develop people in the 12 critical occupations in future.

*“We passed the brickwork one out, but hadn’t realised there were others.”*

Estimates provided by 8 of these colleges suggested that if the frameworks for the critical roles could be established, then over the next 3 years they might be able to deliver curriculum / training modules aligned to them to reach between 3,800 and 5,000 students expected to be enrolled in these roles. Interestingly, some colleges were very prudent saying that they might only penetrate 10% of their student market in 3 years adopting the frameworks, whilst some felt that 100% could be reached in that time period.

Desire to collaborate with FE Colleges: Colleges are seen to be critical in creating take up of the skills frameworks at scale. Feedback from BACH colleges has revealed a general desire to collaborate, with an invitation extended to the Skills Partnership to ‘sell their frameworks’ in the regions.

*“The frameworks will help us to improve our college delivery. We are ultimately measured on success in training people for the world of work. The HBSP need to get the right people in the right room, and to shout a bit louder.”*

### Trade federations

Interviews with 5 (out of a possible 9) federations in late 2019 found that despite their involvement in co-designing the frameworks, none had publicised them to their memberships directly. NFRC and FIS are reported to be close to having qualifications that take the roofing and relevant finishes and interiors sector frameworks into consideration and NFRC are keen to promote these. While collaboration has improved, the HBSP needs to remain alert and connected to similar training standard and virtual card developments by federations<sup>31</sup> and organisations e.g. OCN and BuildUK.

## Roofing collaboration and culture change

The RoofCERT accreditation programme is managed by the NFRC and supported by the CITB. Roofing is one of the 12 critical trade roles identified by home builders. HBSP's Manager has been a key advisor to RoofCERT, and a member of one of their Activity Groups. Sara's counterpart at RoofCERT says:

*“Sara has been key to having the HBSP on board. We need home builders to say what they want, and help us develop upskilling cultures in the roofing industry. We are also developing skills matrices for each discipline, and making sure these technical documents talk to one another. Traditionally, federations working in isolation has been the biggest problem. A culture change is underway, and Sara and I are in regular contact.”*

RoofCERT representation has been invited to join one of the HBSP Activity Groups as to achieve RoofCERT's target of 5,000 accredited individuals by 2021, they will require access and the support of home builders. Ideally, the home builders would insist on roofers having accreditation, but that is a discussion yet to take place. Promotion to the sector is expected to begin at scale in 2020. The intended benefits of the frameworks and the accredited training is reduced re-work and improved industry reputation.

*“Homebuilders want a job done properly. We can develop CPD based on what's wrong. CPD is the future.”*

## Association of Brickwork Contractors Collaboration

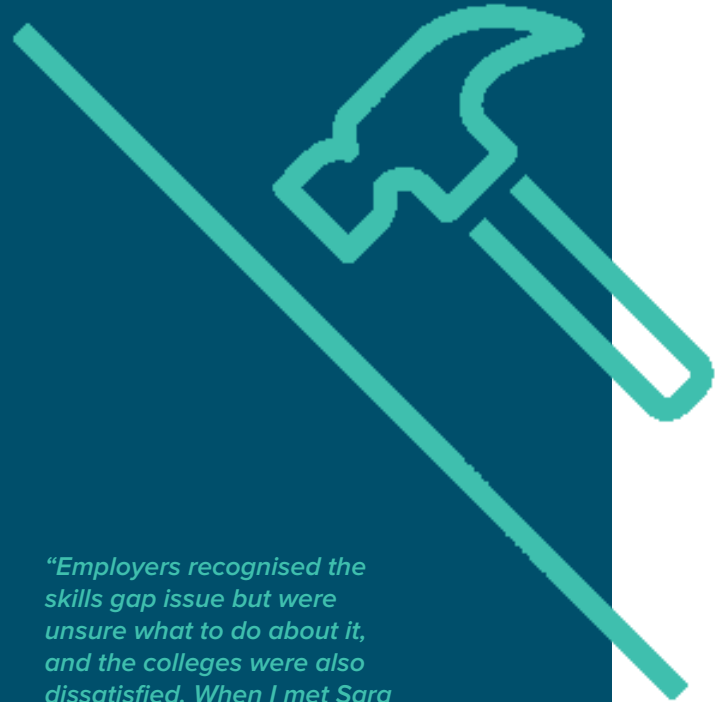
Alongside groundworkers, and with site managers, bricklayers are 1 of 3 'most' critical trades. The Letwin review forecast a need for 15,000 more trained bricklayers between 2018 and 2023, not just to fill existing skills gaps, but also to meet Government targets to build new homes. Recognising the criticality of the role the Skills Partnership has worked with the Association of Brickwork Contractors since 2018. The Chief Executive Office, Eve Livett says:

*“Employers recognised the skills gap issue but were unsure what to do about it, and the colleges were also dissatisfied. When I met Sara Cartin from the HBSP at a meeting with CITB about short course reforms, it was clear that we should be working together. Everyone is trying to do their own thing, and there is not enough collaboration.”*

The Federation went on to produce the productivity thresholds in the bricklaying skills framework. The Skills Partnership and ABC enabled employers to come together in a neutral space.

*“There has been some real sharing of knowledge, and there is strength in sharing.”*

The framework is relevant to industry, supported by training that is designed with a modern site in mind. In 2019, ABC has developed training standards with CITB and employers on new modern methods. Training content is next. The HBSP bricklaying masterclass format (see next chapter) has also informed CITB's wider brickwork academy initiative.



## Wider changes in the sector

In 2018, the Pledge to ‘train to a standard’ was regarded as the most valuable to both home builders and the wider industry. A year later, 30% of home builders reported that they had changed their approach to training to a standard, and 70% were more active in this area. Moreover, compared to 2016, home builders engaged in the HBSP report that the workforce challenge of training and developing their workforce to the required standard is seen to be less serious.<sup>32</sup> One third of home builders (34%) say the Skills Partnership has had a positive influence on the effectiveness of decisions taken about where and on which roles to prioritise training.

## What did the HBSP learn?

- Skills framework co-design and testing took 3 years rather than 12-18 months to achieve.<sup>33</sup> Completing the technical task as well as socialising it within home builder businesses takes longer than expected.
- It proved to be more of a challenge to bring together home builders to discuss roles that they do not directly employ. As a result, the HBSP engaged with the appropriate trade federations.<sup>34</sup>
- The frameworks have limitations, for example, FMB home builders whose typical requirements (reported to be linked to different skills) were felt not to be fully accommodated. Consequently, FMB withdrew from the Leadership Board.
- This Activity Group has also identified the importance of engaging with the training provider marketplace in order to ensure that any standards and modules developed for the critical roles have a greater likelihood of widespread adoption in the longer term. Engagement by the Skills Partnership with BACH has fulfilled this function – although the benefits of these efforts lie in the future.
- The conditions for collaboration between HBSP and federations are more favourable in 2020 than they have been previously, the mind-set is more open than has been witnessed in the past.

*“Jointly promoting training will become more important. We can help each other” [and]. “Skills is one of the areas with greatest potential for collaboration. Not being able to speak with one voice as federations is a weakness.”*

Trade federation, November 2019



## Success factors

- A shared voice from home builders on the competencies they consider essential in critical roles.
- Use of external subject matter experts, and trade federations, a clear plan and terms of reference.
- Flexibility of funding to redeploy resources away from a TNA tool to direct training delivery.
- Presenting the frameworks ‘on a page’ as a checklist enabled some home builders to more readily use it in their planning of training for roles and also for their recruitment processes.

## What next for the Skills Partnership?

- Market the skills frameworks to improve awareness and usage across industry and education.
- Complete technical work to map training modules to CITB Training Standards.
- Agree the mechanisms for maintaining the frameworks and embed digital-, technology- multi- and environmental skills as well as modern methods of construction where appropriate.
- Evolve the potential of the frameworks into the proposed family of home building virtual cards.

Please also refer to the HBSP Roadmap found later in this report.



**Key Evaluation Question:**

**To what extent has the Skills Partnership enabled training and development solutions that are valued by those working in the homebuilding sector which lead to measurable gains in skills and job competence?**

**Success Measure:**

**Reduction in skills gaps**

**What did the HBSP want to achieve**

The objective has been to reduce skills gaps by offering industry relevant training, aligned to the new skills frameworks (in the words of one Leadership Board member) “on site on time and in the right place”, for the right staff and subcontractors. By focusing on critical roles training would more likely help improve the productivity on site; with an ultimate impact on increasing quality and reducing build times.

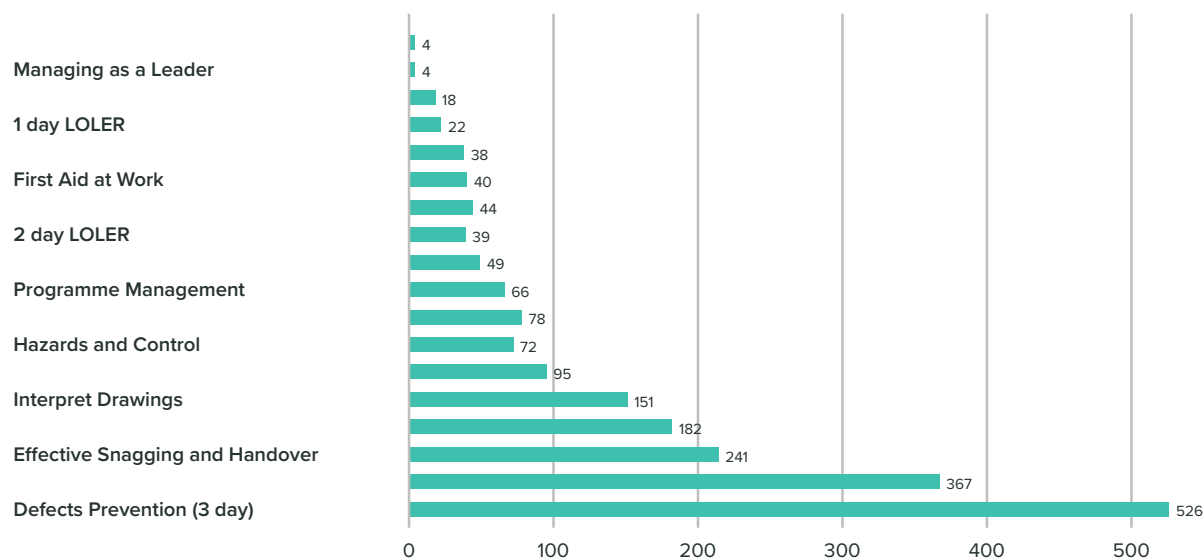
**Why did the HBSP want to enable training and development solutions?**

Prior to the HBSP 4 in 10 home builders and 1 in 7 subcontractors cited training and development challenges with limited focus on ‘new things’ (e.g. modern methods, new technology in their training approach). Although an estimated £375m was being spent by the home building sector on employee training and development in 2016 the course curriculums were not felt to be reflective of industry needs especially in respect of how it has modernised (low carbon / efficiency knowledge, new build methods and materials).<sup>35</sup>

**What did the HBSP do?**

Through the process of developing skills frameworks, HBSP identified the skills and knowledge required for critical roles and prioritised site management and sales advisor training. They sought training delivery partners – NHBC and Hamilton Deed - who would work with them to contextualise the training offer to meet the distinct needs of these roles in a home building context, and piloted training in 2017. Home builders were invited to put forward some of their employees for free (1<sup>36</sup>-3<sup>37</sup> days) training. The pilot was deemed successful enough to widen it to the industry.

The number of individuals trained in site manager or sales advisor modules (2017-2019). Total: 2,036 people.



Owing to the delays in skills framework finalisation, and limited training activity budget, the Skills Partnership agreed with CITB to focus on the site management role as time and again this role was reported as the one most impacting home building productivity. In 2018, following some influential research by the HBSP about the bricklaying role, and owing to an agreed

redeployment of HBSP resources away from the design of a Training Needs Analysis Tool into direct delivery instead, a 90-minute bricklaying masterclass solution was devised. This was delivered by NHBC to home builder and subcontractor companies as well as CPD to tutors in willing further education colleges.

## What difference did the HBSP make?

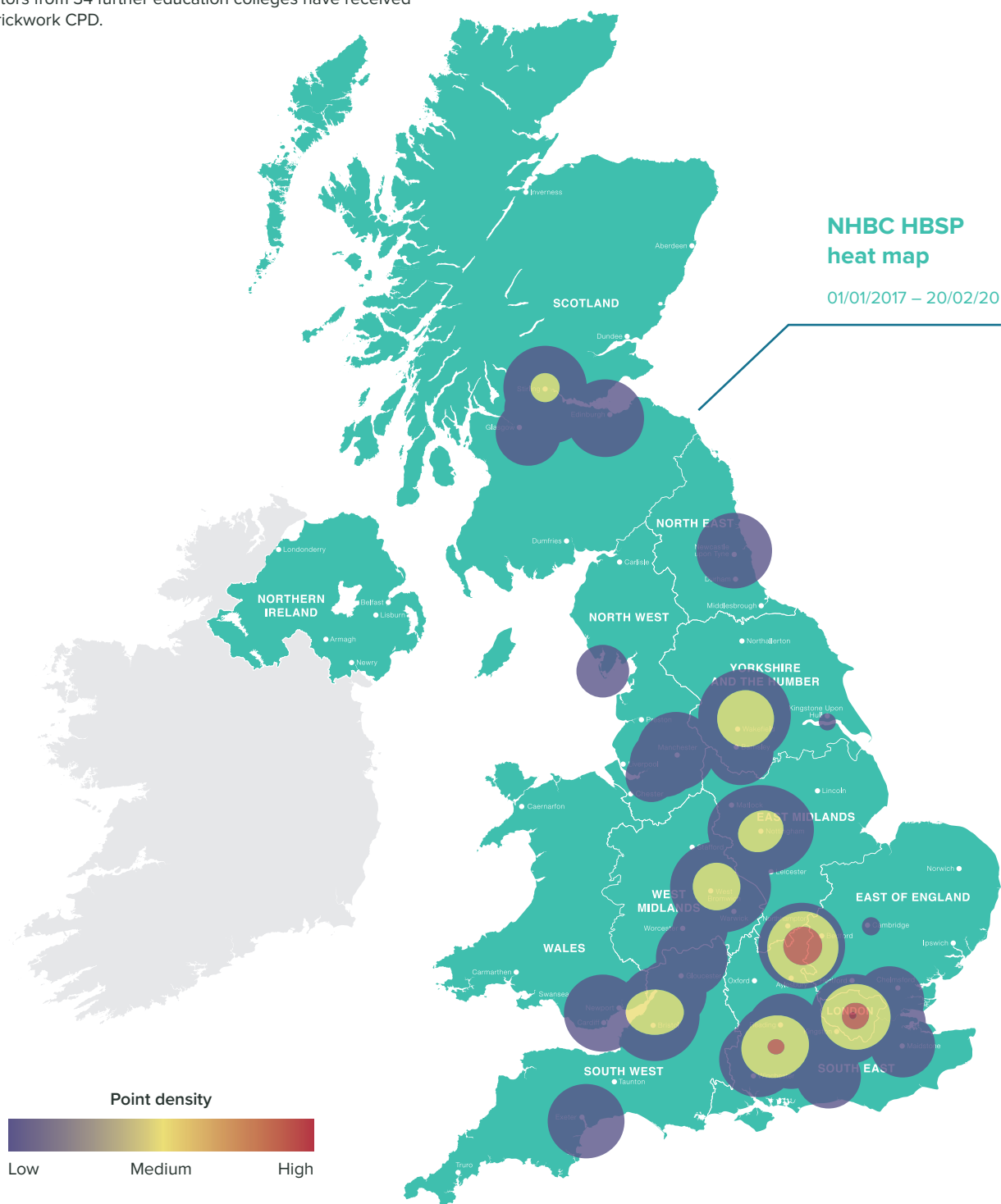
- A total of **2,036** people from 292 companies have attended the training modules specifically designed for site managers and sales advisors, collectively, receiving **3,926** training days. **1,869** individuals (92%) were employees of home builders, whilst **167** individuals (8%) were employees from supply chain companies.
- **4,652** individuals from 530 companies (131 home builders [25%] and 399 supply chain [75%]) have participated in a brickwork masterclass, of which **2,091** have been employees of home builders, whilst **2,561** have been employees from supply chain companies.<sup>38</sup> In addition **112** tutors from 34 further education colleges have received brickwork CPD.

- The Skills Partnership's funding enabled training to take place across England, Scotland and Wales demonstrating its ability to activate itself nationally largely due to NHBC's scale of reach and assets.

### Training for site managers and sales advisors

Training to site managers and sales advisors took place mainly in the South and South East, West Midlands, North West and Border areas.

To view all of the courses delivered by NHBC please visit this site [NHBC HBSP](#).<sup>39</sup>





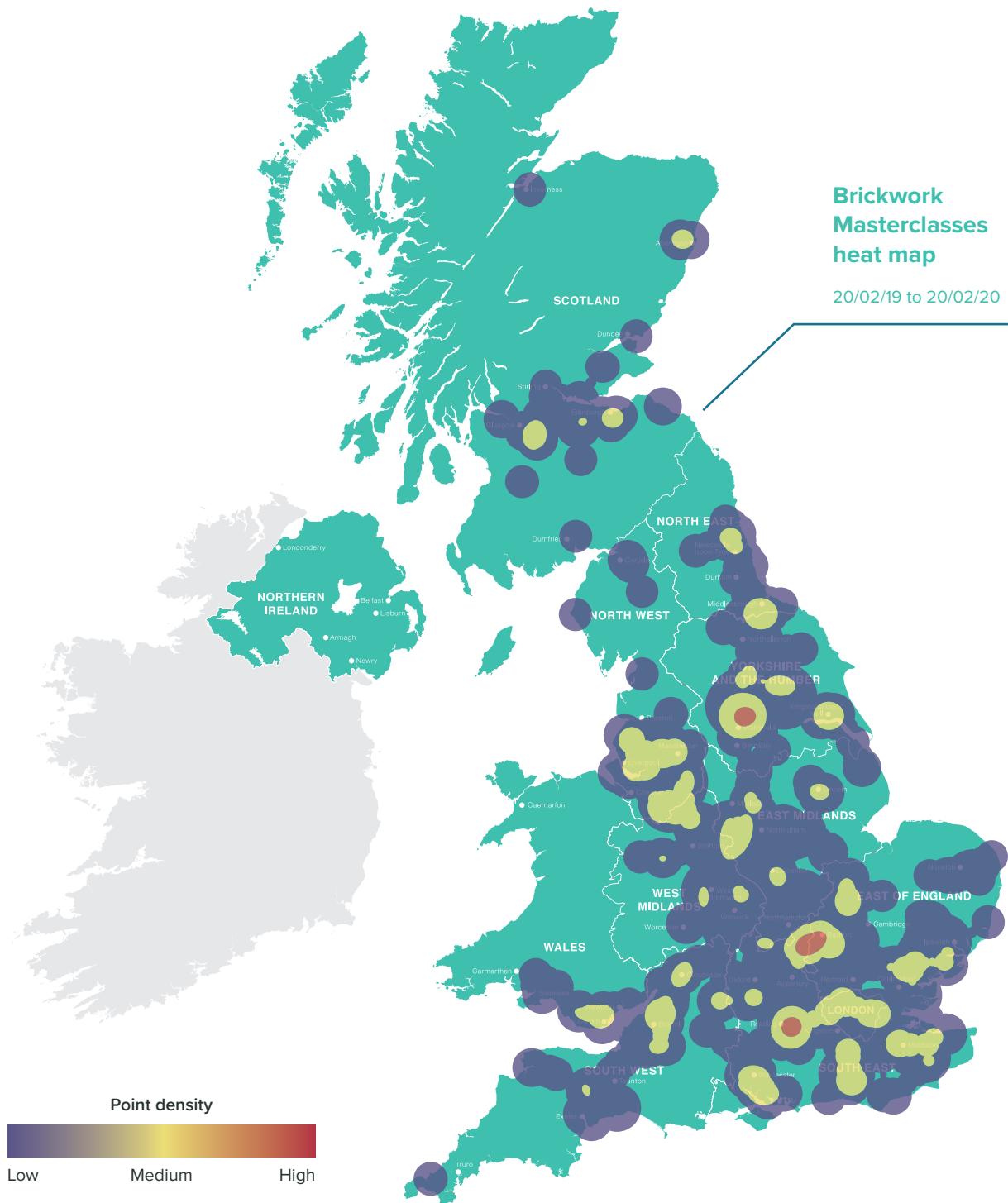
## Brickwork Masterclasses

Brickwork masterclasses, delivered at scale, took place across England, South Wales and the central belt of Scotland, with a higher concentration in the zone between London and Manchester. To view all of the courses delivered by NHBC please visit this site [Brickwork Masterclass](#).<sup>41</sup>

## Masterclass outcomes

The errors and defects masterclasses to bricklayers and tutors were evaluated by NHBC, who are also responsible for the delivery of training. Follow up surveys 3-6 months after training found that the most significant benefits were improved quality (25%) followed by greater dialogue and co-operation between the trades (24%). Overall benefits were seen to be knowledge and productivity (91% noting some degree of positive change).<sup>42</sup>

Participants gave strong feedback on the relevance and usefulness of the training, and the Net Promoter Score (willingness to recommend) for the training is 74. This is a 'world class' approval rating.<sup>43</sup>



## Case Study: Miller Homes Pilot of HBSP Training Modules

Follow up evaluation with a sample of 29 (from 32) Assistant Site Managers (ASMs) from Miller Homes found that their contextualised training led to increased competence. There were measurable gains in confidence, commitment and competence; seen to be leading to improved performance at work<sup>40</sup>. The practical skills courses (defects, snagging/handover and building regulations) served to reinforce existing knowledge and add specific understanding of what NHBC inspectors would expect and how to meet those standards. The soft skills courses (managing others and roles and responsibilities) appeared to break new ground for most of the ASMs equipping them with new ways of thinking about people

on site that they had not known before; this is where additionality is clearest.

The short-term financial support for training helped create momentum within Miller Homes to target ASM competence as part of a structured approach to their personal development. Miller Homes now incorporated the framework into their staff evaluation process. Their aim has been to have all people in these roles reach a minimum standard as identified via HBSP. This process allows them to evaluate each individual and identify specific training needs from which a defined training plan can be delivered. The benefits will be a highly trained and competent management and supervisory team, improving performance on site and delivering improvements in worker behaviours and ultimately increasing the quality of the new homes they build. That is all ultimately seen to lead to increased customer satisfaction.



### Expansion of the brickwork initiative

CSN data suggests there are circa 77,000 bricklayers in construction, of which 60% are in home building. The brickwork interventions are specifically aimed at tackling the most frequent defects appearing on the NHBC Construction Quality Reviews (CQR's) site visits to home builders year on year – DPC's and trays, cavities, weep holes and insulation, fire stopping and sound proofing.

Using these subjects as the key content for imparting knowledge for the quality improvement campaign, HBSP with delivery partner NHBC designed a series of programmes for 3 audiences:- Bricklayers on site, a 4 hour blended learning approach with a 90 minute upskilling programme embedded within it, delivered on site; 3 day and 1 day Defects Prevention programmes developed for Site Managers, Assistant Site Managers, Engineers and Quantity Surveyors; Half day CPD programme for FE trainers to pass on learnings to new entrants.

HBSP, NHBC and the Association of Brickwork Contractors (ABC) developed in conjunction with industry the initial brickwork masterclasses. In just a week after launching the Brickwork Masterclasses on site for bricklayers, over half of the sessions offered were booked reaching around 1,750 bricklayers. The HBSP's existing grant would reach around 4,480 bricklayers, but based on the encouraging feedback from the initial masterclasses HBSP made an investment case to CITB seeking further funding to help extend this campaign and further develop the blended learning to include additional video content, reading material and further development into a CITB Training Standard, enabling a sustainable solution for access to the material well into the future.

With the suggested amount of £294k, a potential total of around 17,920 bricklayers – almost half the bricklayers in the home building sector - could be reached. This intervention however is also available to members of ABC and BDA. Feedback to date has been excellent or good and Inspectors will revisit sites to understand the impact of the sessions on site. HBSP believes this is an effective, high impact intervention being delivered in a way which makes it possible to reach a lot of people quickly and engage them in upskilling and which can provide demonstrable benefits in terms of build quality and productivity.

## What difference did the HBSP make?

### Contribution to skills gaps reduction

The Skills Partnership may have been a contributory factor for helping engaged home builders that have accessed site manager and bricklayer training modules reduce skills gaps in their workforce since 2016, but of course other factors will have been important too. Just under 6 in 10 home builders (58%) reported skills gaps in 2019, compared to 7 in 10 in 2016. The proportion saying they have no skills gaps increased from 30 to 42%.<sup>44</sup> Just over one quarter (26%) said that the HBSP had made a positive contribution to reducing the skills gaps in their existing workforce and 17% to the quality of work produced. Nearly half of home builders (48%) surveyed considered that the HBSP had made a positive contribution to the way in which they have been able to locate and use training that is contextualised and relevant for their businesses.

*“I think the brickwork masterclasses are one of the most important pieces of work we have done; it resonates with everyone; everyone knows there’s a shortage and the big numbers helps us as well. Personally, I think it’s been a huge success – it’s got right to the coalface.”*

HBSP Leadership Board Member 2019

It is also worth noting that NHBC and Hamilton Deed were regarded as effective providers by those who received their courses; appreciating their flexibility to deliver open and closed (in-company) courses to increase accessibility.

### Maturing training practices and focus on skills and development amongst some home builders

In the 2018 Pledge Survey, two thirds of firms described their level of maturity around training to a standard as either starting out (8% or 3 firms) or developing (58% or 22 firms). Within 6-8 months of signing the Skills Pledge, 6 in 10 home builders reported carrying out new activity in this area, including half who described themselves as developing their capabilities. New activities included developing a new training academy or appointing a training manager. By the end of 2019, 30% of all home builders surveyed had changed their approach to workforce training and development, and 7 in 10 were doing more to ‘train to a standard’.

*“Our businesses offered site manager training courses as well as our own portfolio, so it definitely added value rather than displacing what we were doing anyway.”*

Leadership Board member

### Other training delivered by the HBSP

Tutors and Assessors in FE Colleges	Supply chain company staff
<p>34 colleges participating in the brickwork masterclass initiative have received CPD training for tutors and assessors to ensure content and knowledge is integrated in local curriculum.</p> <p>Responses from 6 BACH FE Colleges receiving this CPD all confirmed it to be very / useful. <i>“This enabled the lecturers and apprentices to recognise some of the issues on site and be in a position to rectify them.”</i></p> <p>There was appetite for further training of this kind especially for bricklaying, carpentry, plumbing, electrician and quantity surveyor roles.</p>	<p>The HBSP managed a pilot project that delivered 1,052 training interventions to 782 individuals employed by 177 supply chain firms in these topics: Health, safety and environment, Site Supervisors Safety Training Scheme (SSSTS), Customer service, Management development, IT training and Mates in Mind mental health awareness.</p> <p>A formal evaluation was completed. Please see supply chain section later in this report.</p>
New entrants to home building (Fast Track pilot)	Ambassadors (home builder employees)
<p>The HBSP managed a project to help fast track young students from FE colleges into the home building industry via a ‘bootcamp’ model. Technical competence and improved work readiness outcomes were reported in the formal evaluation of this project.</p> <p>Please see the Fast Track case study in the ‘Attract’ section of this report.</p>	<p>There has been no evaluation of the benefits of training to Ambassadors, but this would be a helpful insight for the future. The ambassadors are described by the HBSP Team as comprising young (two thirds) and mature (one third) individuals. The 156 ambassadors are from over 80 occupations ranging from site management, quantity surveying, planning and engineering to land management, design, IT, human resources and marketing.</p>
<p>Mental Health First Aid and Awareness training has been organised by the HBSP and delivered since March 2019 to 1,715 employees in the industry in response to the groundswell of demand for action from home builders.</p>	



*“Site Managers need 120 hours a week!”*

Home builder commenting on the sheer breadth of what site managers need to know and understand.

## What did the HBSP learn?

- There is demand for relevant training offered to home builders for low or no direct training cost.<sup>45</sup>
- While time consuming to administer, the Skills Partnership has consistently met or exceeded its training targets which accounted for the largest proportion of its activity expenditure.
- Training for A/SMs leads to an appetite for further learning and personal development e.g. in customer liaison training and site meetings.
- ASMs inspired by their training experience, reported being frustrated by negative cultures when they returned to site hindering their ability to apply their learning fully e.g. when speaking up to prevent errors.
- An original intention to develop a £5m Centre of Excellence for site skills was considered to be unnecessary, and instead the time that would have been deployed to that ideal was better spent on other HBSP activity.
- The bricklaying masterclasses have proved popular in the sector and they have enabled the HBSP to reach supply chain companies in a practical fashion at scale.
- Aligning grant or funding support to all skills framework training modules has not been possible. 26 out of 56 areas are currently on the CITB Training Directory which mean they are in scope and construction specific.
- As a result of the sustained focus on the quality of training in relation to bricklaying, the dialogue between home builders and British Association of Construction Heads at colleges is now more open and constructive.<sup>46</sup>

## Success factors

- Focus on 3 rather than all 12 critical occupations
- Using a small number of trusted providers to deliver training interventions in an efficient manner
- Focussing training on known challenges directly linked to quality – for example installing cavity trays – particularly for short duration masterclass courses
- Offering training locally at low cost.

## What next?

- Complete the successful delivery of brickwork masterclasses ultimately reaching 17,000 individuals.
- Assess the demand for training across the remaining 10 critical roles (as has been achieved with site management and bricklaying) and promote training modules and associated grant (where available).
- Work closely with the trade federations to assess demand and promote training modules focusing on those occupations where there is already a structure in place to support this work e.g. RoofCERT for roofers or groundworkers mindful of the Fareham College model identified by the Supply Chain Activity Group.
- In advocating any training to the sector ensure it is sufficiently modern and forward-looking with the introduction and embedding of new methods, skills and approaches within the curriculum of training modules.

Please also refer to the HBSP Roadmap found later in this report.

## 7.0 Attract

### Key Evaluation Question:

To what extent has the Skills Partnership helped reposition the image of the home building industry as a career choice, promoting it as a positive place to work?

### Success Measure:

More home builders reporting a perceived better quality of applicants.

### Why did the HBSP want to change the attractiveness of the sector?

Prior to the Skills Partnership's launch in March 2016 research by HBF found that the strongest appetite for collaboration (out of 14 ideas tested with 21 home builders) was around developing an industry wide sector attractiveness campaign. Further research with 20 home builders and 204 subcontractors later that year confirmed that the lack of a unified public identity for home building was perceived to be limiting the sector's attractiveness. Having established the case for an 'Attract' workstream, as part of its Business Plan preparation in the first year of operation, the HBSP published a 'Size of the Challenge' paper which stated: 'within the wider construction sector the home building sector has a reputation of being very cyclical and making major cuts when business needs prevail. This image does not build loyalty from subcontractors, who identify themselves by their individual trades rather than 'home builders'. The range of roles and career progression paths in the industry is not well understood by potential new recruits'.<sup>47</sup>

### What did the HBSP want to achieve?

The Attract Activity Group had three over-arching objectives:

- To develop a positive public identity for the industry.
- To attract a bigger and more diverse workforce.
- To promote the industry as a first-rate career choice with diverse career opportunities and career development potential.

### What did the HBSP do?

Led by Andy George, Head of Talent at Barratt Homes, with the support of a core group of 10 employees from 8 home builders and CITB, the Attract Activity Group collaborated to:

- Conceive and implement 3 campaigns<sup>48</sup> targeting critical roles and aimed at school and college leavers, service leavers and influencers.<sup>49</sup>
- Develop and co-deliver<sup>50</sup> with CITB a training programme to develop industry ambassadors who can advocate house building careers in schools and colleges
- Redesign and improve the [www.housebuildingcareers.org.uk](http://www.housebuildingcareers.org.uk) (HBF) website to provide an engaging landing page and jumping off point to home builders' own sites.
- Improve the prominence of home building content in other platforms such as CITB's 'Go Construct'.

#### Campaign 1 April-July 2018

Sought to raise awareness of career opportunities within the home building sector, including trade and office-based roles. This campaign was viewed by up to 10 million people.

#### Campaign 2 March 2019

Sought to attract school and college leavers to consider a career in home building and to show the range of careers and including apprenticeships (timed to coincide with National Apprenticeship Week).

#### Campaign 3 December 2019 – January 2020

Sought to showcase careers in the sector and reposition it as a career place of choice and positive place of work. It used video in order to engage a larger and more diverse workforce and build awareness and attraction around critical occupations.

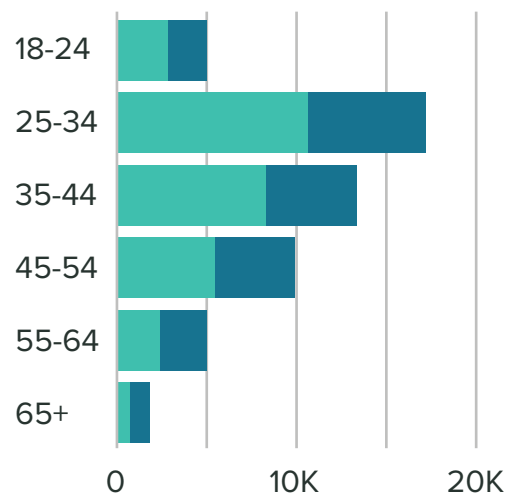
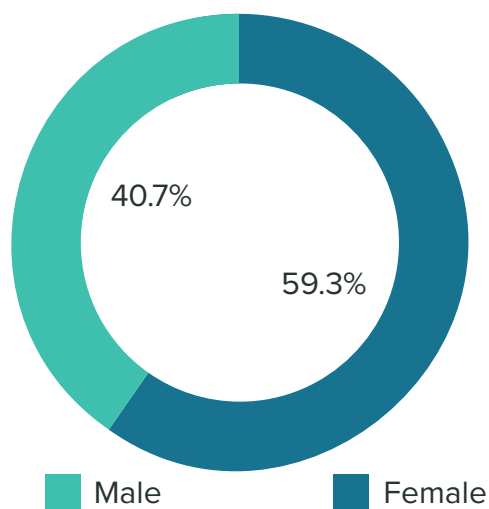
A core group of 8 homebuilders participated in the campaigns between April 2018 and January 2020, while a total of 300 were invited to support them by using a Skills Partnership-authored social media toolkit.<sup>51</sup>

## What difference did the HBSP make?

### More visibility for home building careers online and in schools and at events

- The 3 'Attract' campaigns have been seen by almost 12 million people.<sup>52</sup>
- 67,000 users have clicked onto 142,000 [www.housebuildingcareers.org.uk](http://www.housebuildingcareers.org.uk) pages, most coming through social media, a Google search or Snapchat.
- Content for parents and teachers was the most visited page, followed by 'careers in homebuilding'. The most viewed job pages were for site manager and quantity surveyor roles, followed by bricklayer.<sup>53</sup>

- 60% of those engaged were male (of this group, 71% were aged 25-44). From the female sample, a slightly older audience was engaged, with 37% aged over 45.
- The campaigns generated spikes of interest with overall usage of the site up 174% between April 2018 and January 2020.<sup>54</sup>
- As a result of the process to recruit and train home building ambassadors, 13 courses have trained 156 ambassadors,<sup>55</sup> from 22 home builders.
- Ambassadors subsequently took part in at least 34 events<sup>56</sup> delivered to at least 2,300 secondary age young people and school leavers.<sup>57</sup>



A major home builder used an application tracking system to identify 141 applicants who have come to them via the careers website during this period. They have also supplied their cumulative data which showed greatest interest in the graduate and Apprenticeships development programme, followed by site management and sales advisors roles.<sup>58</sup>

*“Looking at people who apply for jobs with us we notice a different, wider set of people from outside the sector compared to 4 years ago, which is partly attributable to the HBSP efforts.”*

Major home builder, 2019

### Changing attitudes and behaviours amongst home builders

- Overall, 77% (23) of engaged home builders surveyed in 2019 said that they had done more activity to promote home building careers since the HBSP Pledge was launched in 2018.
- Being part of the HBSP has enabled home builders to learn from one another in ways that were not taking place before. This is in turn reflected in the finding that for almost one in four engaged home builders (23%) have changed their approach to attracting talent. Home builders for example have developed new strategies and invested in new campaigns and website content for their own

businesses. By comparison, the tactics employed by non-engaged HBSP home builders since 2016 were typically more transactional; spending more (on agencies and head hunters) and increasing salaries.

- Two thirds of engaged home builders (67%) consider that the HBSP has made a positive contribution to the way in which home builders are able to make their business more appealing for people to choose them.
- Attracting / recruiting people was seen as a slightly less serious a challenge than it was in 2016 for those who had engaged in the Skills Partnership, but a more serious issue for those who had not participated in its collaborative activities.<sup>59</sup>

## What did the HBSP learn?

*"We've shared learning about our approach to graduates and armed forces recruitment and use of digital platforms. The message there about attraction is more cohesive than before".*

- Campaigns orchestrated by the Attract Activity Group have encouraged the use of new, more appealing imagery and platforms not trialled before in the sector.
- Initial expectations for this workstream ('we need TV adverts like the army and navy') outstripped the resources available; and needed to be managed pragmatically.
- Managing the ambitions of this workstream with 'Go Construct' has been important to avoid duplication, but there is still some need to align content around sector salaries.
- A task and finish group approach with digital experts supported by contemporary case studies supplied by home builders has been a useful approach to achieve incremental content improvement for [www.housebuildingcareers.org.uk](http://www.housebuildingcareers.org.uk)
- Absence of an industry wide baseline and follow up tracking research means the evaluators cannot say whether the home building sector's image is more familiar or favourable than it was in 2015; nor whether campaigns lead to better quality / applications for home builders of their supply chains (with the exception of the example provided by one major home builder). Evidence could be strengthened if tracking measures are embedded into all 'attract' related campaigns and the Pathways into Construction Project; though it seems this may be difficult for all but the largest home builders.

## Success factors

- The leadership of the Attract Activity Group chair to define a focus for the workstream.
- The capacity provided by use of an external professional agency to achieve rapid action.
- The collaborative style of working by expert employees on the Attract Activity Group.
- The supply of rich, lively content by home builders to improve website content.
- User journeys to improve the relevance, language, imagery and appeal of content.
- Flexibility from CITB as the main funder to allow a shift of resources for 'Attract' activity.
- Co-ordinated campaigns over a sustained period of time to drive interest in content.

## What next?

- Continuation of this workstream renamed 'Career Attraction' under the existing Chair.
- 4 Activity Groups to focus on: attraction campaigns, careers ambassadors, [www.housebuildingcareers.co.uk](http://www.housebuildingcareers.co.uk) and the CITB-funded Pathways into Construction Project.
- Home building visibility within CITB's sector wide 'Future Made' campaign from January 2020.
- Further Ambassador training has been arranged for 5 home builders and HBSP is actively involved in supporting CITB with a wider migration of their Ambassador programme to STEM Learning.
- Revisions to the 'Get in to home building' booklet to attract a wider group of new entrants aligned to the Pathways programmes, for use at events such as the National Careers Guidance Show.

With over 9 in 10 home builders reporting that their workforce has been increasing,<sup>60</sup> attracting talented individuals into the sector is an enduring priority for them and their subcontractors. While 28% of homebuilders said that creating a more attractive image for the sector is achievable in 12-24 months (2021-2022), the majority (67%) regard this as a longer-term undertaking. For non-engaged home builders especially, sector attractiveness is the top priority they would like the Skills Partnership to address.<sup>61</sup>

## Pathways into Construction

Recognising the continuing challenge to improve the image of the sector to attract new entrants, 18 home builders, 14 colleges and 7 other stakeholders have agreed to work together for 3 years (July 2022) on a co-ordinated project with the objective of engaging, recruiting and retaining 875 new recruits from under-represented groups into the industry including: FE leavers, service leavers, women and individuals not in education, employment or training.

This co-investment of £2.957m (including £1.97m CITB grant) will be overseen by the Career Attraction workstream. The Skills Partnership's growing maturity to leverage support for co-ordinated sector-wide programmes was instrumental in creating a successful 'Construction Pathways' bid to CITB in 2019. At the time 15 home builders gave a commitment to get involved and 8 support networks agreed to deliver programmes to create pathways into employment for four of the currently under-represented groups –women, ex-military, NEET young people and FE learners in Construction. The bid was the largest that was accepted, and also judged to be the strongest by CITB assessors.

### Key Evaluation Question:

To what extent has the Skills Partnership created direct impact on the recruitment behaviours of large home builders and their key sub-contractors within 4 years?

### Success Measure:

More home builders reporting a reduction in recruitment and re-training costs.



## Why did the HBSP want to influence recruitment behaviours?

Prior to the commencement of the HBSP numerous research studies by CITB and HBF highlighted the recruitment challenge in the sector:

**2014:** Major home builders reported they could not recruit the right people with the right skills and experience quickly enough to keep up with current and future demand.<sup>62</sup>

**2015:** 8 in 10 large homebuilders<sup>63</sup> and 4 in 10 subcontractors had recruitment difficulties, seen as the most significant workforce challenge at the time.<sup>54</sup>

**2016:** 9 in 10 home builders<sup>65</sup> agreed that home building was too reliant on traditional recruitment methods limiting its appeal to wider talent. Whilst recruitment was not getting any worse, wage inflation for critical occupations was seen as an equally challenging issue.

The difficulties to recruit skilled workers is partly a legacy from the events of 2007-2012, when the number of newly trained entrants and apprenticeships dropped sharply. Since the recession, home building has significantly increased output again. To go further and build more homes in line with Government aspirations requires more skilled and motivated people.

## What did the HBSP want to achieve?

HBSP hoped that more home builders would consider alternative recruitment methods by learning from each other's approaches; and that collaboration might lead home builders to seek talent from more diverse markets including people from outside the sector. Longer term, this might bring financial benefits to home builders in the form of reduced recruitment<sup>66</sup> and re-training costs because home building was more attractive as a career option.





### What did the HBSP do?

'Recruitment' formed part of the Attract Activity Group's remit, but the topic did not have a dedicated task and finish group, Key Performance Indicators or activity budget. Instead, for some time the Group:

- Provided a forum for home builders to respond to the Apprenticeship Levy – with an increase in Apprentice recruitment observed since 2016.<sup>67</sup>
- Shared good recruitment practice; for example, the value of recruiting service leavers.
- Shared research and insights about different target markets they might recruit from.
- Discussed, and agreed, which target markets they might recruit from as a sector.
- Sought to embed recruitment (and attraction) within the HBSP Pledge initiative<sup>68</sup> so as to reach up to 70 large home builders and influence their behaviour.
- Worked with the HBSP Team to identify the volume of critical roles that would need to be recruited to build an additional 10,000 homes, in order to provoke debate and create influence amongst decision makers and funders.

Having defined a focus to tackle the agreed challenge, the Skills Partnership needed resource to activate its ideas. It was subsequently successful in leveraging CITB Flexible Funding (£113,091) matched by industry investment (£68,970) to develop a 'Fast Track' pilot project to recruit leavers from further education in 2017. (See case study in this section).

## What difference did the HBSP make?

### Home builder perceptions and behaviours<sup>69</sup>

- 17 of 19 engaged home builders said that they felt the HBSP had made a significant (1), positive (6) or minor (10) contribution to the way in which home builders attract then recruit from diverse pools of talent. The extent to which home builders have significantly changed the way they recruit is, however, questionable as there is still an apparent reliance on recruiting experienced workers from within the sector (75% of hires in 2016; 73% in 2019) explaining why there continues to be challenges around wage inflation for critical occupations and poaching of staff.
- 14 said they felt the HBSP had made a positive (3) or minor (11) contribution to reducing skills shortages (i.e. the difficulties they had to recruit people with the appropriate skills at an appropriate wage); and 14 also thought it had made a significant (3), positive (2) or minor (9) contribution to reducing the costs to recruit / and or train.
- Since the launch of the HBSP Pledge, two thirds of (23 surveyed) home builders report undertaking more activity by 2019 to champion diversity and inclusion (for example through recruiting a more diverse workforce) and one third have changed their approach. Three quarters have collaborated more to share best practice about skills, recruitment and sector attraction.

### The added value of being engaged in the HBSP

75% of (23) home builders that have not engaged with the Skills Partnership report that since 2016 their ability to attract and recruit has worsened compared to engaged home builders who have seen this issue de-escalate. Strategies and tactics differ markedly between the two segments:

Engaged home builders	Non-engaged home builders
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Looked outside the sector</li> <li>• Hired more future talent</li> <li>• Implemented a 'People strategy'</li> <li>• Grown own apprenticeship and graduate programme</li> <li>• Delivered marketing and social media campaigns</li> <li>• Enhanced their website's careers section.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Made greater use of agencies</li> <li>• Taken on staff of lower skillset to train</li> <li>• Offered more flexible working / promoted agile working</li> <li>• Invested in prolonged advertising</li> <li>• Done headhunting</li> <li>• Paid top salaries.</li> </ul>

## Case Study

FE Fast Track Pilot  
Start date 1 July 2017,  
end date 1 August 2019

Six months after leaving a construction course, only 25% of further education (FE) students were in employment in the sector. Fast Track aimed to address this issue by testing an alternative, more appealing route into the sector. A partnership of 12 employers and 7 colleges supported the project that enabled 48 young people the opportunity to taste, 32 to experience and 14 to sustain a career in homebuilding.

The project focussed on 3 critical occupations; bricklayers, carpenters and dry liners. Young people took part in a bootcamp experience, then following a recruitment process, found roles within a home builder's or subcontractor's workforce work, as opposed to asking a young person to begin again on an Apprenticeship.

Evaluation found that these individuals gained competency in understanding health and safety guidelines; team working; competent handling of materials;

working to instructions, plans and measurements; working to acceptable quality standards; ability to work at the pace required.

Follow up evaluation found they felt able to work within H&S requirements, policies and guidelines; were able to work effectively as part of a team; felt confident in their use of tools and were able to work to instructions, plans and / or measurements. Follow up interviews also showed an increase in work readiness - from a starting point of 71%, 80% felt post-intervention 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.

Four in ten young people<sup>70</sup> would likely not have joined a home builder if they had not taken part in the bootcamp, while the others would probably have joined anyway. Home builders and colleges in the Fast Track pilot emphasised that aptitude and attitude were determining factors in a young person's route into the sector. Young people coming through

the pilot were judged, qualitatively, to be on a par with other workers of a similar age, or slightly ahead of a (typically younger) apprentice. They were however treated (prematurely) as experienced workers, and this transition was sometimes challenging.

The systemic challenges that prompted the pilot persist. Too few construction college students go on to work in the sector, despite having trained in areas where skills shortages are at critical levels. The pilot helped to highlight the issue again with industry training board, home builders and colleges<sup>71</sup> and has also provided valuable learning around the practical, logistical and economic challenges (i.e. it was assessed to be an expensive model at a cost of £5,700 per recruit) involved in seeking a solution. The legacy of the pilot is the Brickwork Academy programme being run by CITB, with a longer lead in time, more site experience and insight to home building. At regional level, dry lining company Measom used the pilot to 'test the water' and has informed the subsequent opening of a purpose build training centre on Havering College's Rainham site.<sup>72</sup>

## What did the HBSP learn?

- Major competitors will come together to work on joint projects that tackle common challenges such as the recruitment of people from non-traditional labour markets where none of them have a particular advantage.
- Catalytic funding from CITB in respect of 'Fast Track' and 'Pathways into Construction' enables willing home builders to share the risk of trying new things.
- In the absence of a practical joint project opportunity, however, home builders appear to default to their recruitment behaviour norms owing to the continuing highly competitive environment for securing skilled labour for critical roles. Poaching and wage inflation persists.
- The HBSP Team reports that more home builders, are now routinely recruiting from the service leavers market because of the sharing of practice with one another. Those engaged in the HBSP have been able to use learning from each other to take back into their businesses and seem to have more creative or sophisticated ways of trying to address the recruitment challenge they face than those that have not engaged in the Skills Partnership's dialogue and activities.
- For the Fast Track pilot to be scaled up, both national oversight (of planned recruitment and college cohorts) and local/ regional activation to support new entrants is required.
- As the Skills Partnership has matured the conversations have shifted from being about transactional recruitment to include considerations such as the need to improve the diversity of the workforce.

- HBSP's engagement with Local Enterprise Partnerships and combined authorities suggests an appetite for working together on solutions to tackle local and regional skills shortages in home building, but neither they nor the HBSP has been ready until now to explore this potential more fully.

## Success factors

- The HBSP acting as a trusted convenor of home builders to increasingly share information with one another about their recruitment challenges and practices.
- The availability of funding from CITB allied with the dedication of the HBSP Team to enable new methods and approaches of joint working to happen.

## What next?

- The Career Attraction workstream will continue to promote home building as a career of choice through ongoing development of the [www.housebuildingcareers.org.uk](http://www.housebuildingcareers.org.uk) website, promotion of pathways into home building, agreed 'attraction' campaigns and Ambassador activity.
- Oversee the successful delivery of the Pathways into Construction Project (CITB funded) as a focus for recruiting and retaining 875 new entrants into the sector by July 2022. Inclusion and diversity objectives are also embedded into this Project as it will focus on attracting under-represented groups.
- Consider ways of improving outcome measurement to demonstrate the effects of activities.

Please also refer to the HBSP Roadmap found later in this report.

## Supply chain collaboration

### Key Evaluation Question:

To what extent has the Skills Partnership enabled more collaboration between home builders and their subcontractor supply chain enabling smarter investment in training and development?

### Success Measure:

More positive supply chain collaboration in evidence on skills and training.

### Why did the HBSP wish to influence supply chain collaboration?

Research in 2016 with 20 home builders and 204 subcontractors in their supply chains ('The Case for Collaboration in the Homebuilding Supply Chain' identified significant workforce challenges constraining the growth and performance of the sector. 4 in 10 subcontractors reported recruitment difficulties, 3 in 10 reported retention difficulties and 1 in 7 reported training and development challenges. At the same time, home builders reported that finding and securing quality subcontractors in the numbers required was becoming the most pressing challenge for them too.

One in two subcontractors might have to curtail their growth potential as they could not find skilled workers or lacked the confidence to meet home builder demands. Only one in five subcontractors said they received practical support for workforce development from home builders they supply, or wider organisations with a remit for supporting skills and training through grants and funding. The high levels of self-employment in home building, compared to other sectors of construction, emphasised the need to make training as accessible and affordable as possible.

### What did the HBSP want to achieve?

The Skills Partnership's Business Plan 2016-2020 had the stated objective 'to engage subcontractors and suppliers in collaboration across the industry, leading change and the development of a skilled workforce which meets the needs of all.' In its 'Size of the Challenge' Paper in 2017 the HBSP felt that it needed to:

- Get the major home builders / developers / housing associations / LEP's / local and regional authorities to recognise the need to help supply chain improve workforce development.
- Identify what these groups can do to drive, support and incentivise the supply chain to recruit and train.
- Engage the supply chain and help them recognise the advantages of having a fully skilled workforce – companies need to see how improved skills and knowledge can increase productivity, create loyalty within the workforce and importantly contribute to winning more work and increased margins.
- Help the supply chain claim CITB grant where applicable.

## What did the HBSP do?

A Supply Chain Collaboration Activity Group was formed comprising home builders and, when possible for them, different subcontractors representing various specialist trades essential to home building. The Group has been chaired by two senior individuals of large home builders between 2016 and 2019. It has:

- Sought to understand what pressures subcontractors face when trying to invest in their workforce and what practical support they would need to develop a more skilled workforce. This dialogue ultimately led to the development of a business case to CITB who invested in the 'Supply Chain Collaboration' project between 2017 and 2019 via their Flexible Fund. This Activity Group provided oversight for this pilot project.
- Explored the feasibility of establishing a supply chain / partner charter to encourage more embedded collaborative behaviours; but decided not to take this forward, instead embedding the principles of that research into one of the 5 HBSP Pledges.
- Contributed significantly to the co-design of skills frameworks for 8 of the 12 critical roles where collaborative working with trade federations has seen content agreed for 7 of these 8 roles bricklayer, carpenter, wall and floor tiler, dry liner, plasterer, roof slater / tiler and groundworks / plant operative. The plumber skills framework is due for completion in 2020.
- Ensured that subcontractor needs and performance challenges (through a dialogue with NHBC using their quality reviews and insights from Travis Perkins) have been considered in the design and delivery of errors and defects training that has been made available via the HBSP since 2017.
- Reconfigured its focus in 2019 through the establishment of an Internal Services Group which is looking at how to speed up build time and retain quality including consideration of multi-skilling; and a Groundworks Group focusing on how to attract and upskill ground workers.
- The Groundworks Group is linking with an existing consortium of groundworkers (the Solent Civil Engineering Employer Group) and Fareham College to share best practice, promote and grow training. A promotional film has been created to help explain and promote this model more widely in the industry.

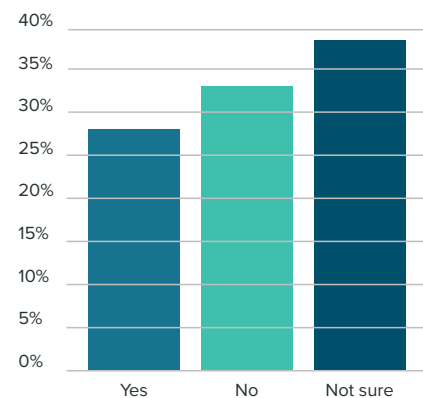
## What difference did the HBSP make?

### Modest changes in home builder mind-set and practices

Whilst the trend data collected between 2016 and 2019 suggests that the challenge of securing subcontractors to the volume / quality required has changed very little at a sector level (rated 3.56 out of 5 as a serious issue in 2016 compared to 3.51 out of 5 now), some home builders have reported changing the nature and type of support they have provided to subcontractors in this period.

Specifically, just under 3 in 10 (28%) home builders report they have done something different to support their subcontractors with the skills and training of their workforce. This is slightly improved from 2016 when research established a baseline of 20% of subcontractors reporting that they had received some workforce development support from home builders or other organisations, however, these changes are not directly attributable to the HBSP. 12 out of 19 home builders surveyed in late 2019 said that they had increased the amount

### Subcontractor investment



Comparing 2019 with 2018 has your company done anything new or different to support your subcontractors in the way that they train and develop the skills of their workforce? (n=18)

of activity to actively support their subcontractors to train recruits to industry standards, and 7 said they had changed their approach to support subcontractors. This is an indication that some home builders have activated their Pledge in relation to collaborating more with subcontractors than before.

**Sharing risk** – ‘the way in which home builders choose to share risk with their supply chain by helping them invest in their workforce through practical support, relationship building and funding to help them grow with their ambitions’

Of 16 outcomes tested in the evaluation, the impact described as ‘sharing risk’ with subcontractors was scored 15th lowest by home builders meaning that only a small proportion see a relationship between the changes they are making and the HBSP. Two highly engaged home builders report that the HBSP has made a positive contribution, whilst a further 11 report a minor contribution and 7 record no contribution at all.

Comparing the ways in which engaged home builders and non-engaged home builders have tried to overcome the challenge of securing subcontractors to the volume and quality required, we find little difference in approach – in fact most tactics continue to be transactional rather than developmental with only few exceptions. This suggests, overall, that the wicked problem persists. Something emphasised by Leadership Board members, who each, when interviewed, had a different view about how this challenge might best be addressed at scale.

### Changes in knowledge and sharing learning

Feedback from companies participating in the Internal Services Group, meantime, finds them to be motivated to learn from each other’s practices, develop their personal contact network and contribute to the discussion topics around build time and quality.

*“The breadth of roles we’ve discussed has been a surprise, which in turn has led to a better appreciation of why dead time on plots is so common.”*

Internal Services Group Member, December 2019

The Group feels that a shared agenda and agreed delivery plan is required now drawing on any available time and motion studies of typical plots that have been conducted in the sector to inform its focus and approach. Also important in any plan to address this issue will be skills including project management, logistics training for site management along with specific systems data analysis.

Those reporting greatest gains and changes participated in the HBSP Supply Chain Engagement and Training Pilot Project (June 2017 to March 2019).

*“Overall my feeling is that the HBSP is a very worthwhile group ... but the issue of skills development is unlikely to ever really be addressed for as long as contracts continue to be awarded largely based on price, with little regard to how much that subcontractor commits to the skills agenda. It does often seem as though there are weak lines of communication within individual housing developers and this undermines the potential for improvement. If decisions to award contracts continue to be largely based on price rather than quality and services it reduces the incentive for improvement.”*

Contractor, November 2019

## The Supply Chain Engagement and Training Pilot

*“The project has reinforced our belief in the importance of building long term partnerships with our supply chain.”*

### Home Builder collaborating in the Pilot

HBSP submitted a successful Flexible Fund Innovation bid to CITB in 2017 to promote collaboration between home builders and subcontractors. 10 home builders expressed interest in this pilot that would require a proactive dialogue between both parties about what training would most support growth and development. Home builders would then broker practical short duration off-the-job training shaped by their subcontractors. Instead of claiming grant from CITB directly, subcontractors left this to their home builder. A grant from CITB (30% of project investment) would enable the training to be for free or low cost (one home builder did charge £50 per learner for their provision). Additional incentives to do training was provided by the in-kind investment (70% of project total) of home builders who employed dedicated training and co-ordination support, engagement activity and relationship management – with a particular aim to engage 10% of firms defined by CITB as ‘hard to reach’, typically those firms that had not claimed grant.<sup>73</sup>

Ultimately, 3 home builders took part in the pilot - Story Homes, Morris Homes and Bovis Homes. They collaborated with 10 providers who then delivered 86 training courses and 1,052 training interventions to 782 individuals from 177 supply chain companies across 26 different trades in topics including SSSTS, HSE, site safety, IT, customer service, management development and mental health awareness. Participants comprised 363 operatives, 332 supervisors and 87 managers. The target of hard to reach firms engaged was exceeded.

The Pilot acted as a catalyst for home builders to train more people in their supply chain; increased confidence in subcontractor competence; and led to a maturing culture of collaboration. Subcontractors reported feeling more valued and listened to. Within 12 months, three fifths of participating subcontractors reported some or a significant positive change in technical competence of those trained; three quarters said that they collaborated more with their home builder on skills and training; and two thirds said there was a greater emphasis on ‘people’ than before.

*“Story Homes are the first company to ever offer to help us with our training needs and we have been working with builders for over 20 years. This is greatly appreciated and goes a long way to helping the smaller business. I feel we are included with the ongoing progress and have a relationship with them.”*

### Subcontractor collaborating in the Pilot

Following the independent evaluation, it was agreed that another home builder (Redrow) could develop and test delivery which continues in 2020.

## What did the HBSP learn?

- This workforce challenge remains the most difficult to address despite different models and pilots.
- The supply chain pilot was a successful model, but not enough home builders took part to create traction.
- The involvement of trade federations has been essential for skills framework co-design and collaboration.
- There is still a lack of sector wide strategy and concomitant resources for addressing this challenge at scale.

## Success factors

- Having an Activity Group to bring focus to the scale of challenge required to address this topic.
- A Pilot project to trial methods and incentives to engage supply chain companies in relevant training.
- The co-design approach required in the Pilot which moved relationships from transactional to developmental.

## What next?

- ‘Skills and supply chain engagement’ workstream to be established in 2020 recognising the synergies between the previous Skills and Development and Supply Chain Collaboration Activity Groups.
- Work with trade federations to actively market skills frameworks and corresponding trades training widely.
- Identify collaborative methods and models that can be adapted and promoted to improve quality and reduce build time e.g. transfer the Fareham College Groundworkers model to other trades and localities.

Please also refer to the HBSP Roadmap found later in this report.

## 9.0

# Leverage

### Key Evaluation Question:

To what extent has the Skills Partnership leveraged investment nationally and locally to activate practical activities that lead to smarter recruitment and effective training across the sector?

### Success Measure:

Investment leveraged to sustain the HBSP to, and beyond, 2020

## Why did the HBSP wish to leverage investment to and beyond 2020?

The HBSP was started with the support of a grant from CITB of circa £2.7 million over a four year period. This was an “infrastructure” investment to establish and develop collaborative culture and initiatives. This funding would pay for a core infrastructure of HBSP personnel that could create, manage and maintain a Leadership Board and Activity Groups focused on key workforce challenges. The grant included a budget to deliver contextualised, industry relevant training in the industry, however, little by way of investment to deliver ‘Attract’ or ‘Supply Chain Collaboration’ activity. To develop any momentum in these other prioritised areas of focus would require the HBSP to learn how to leverage the assets of developers, subcontractors, CITB and other sources of investment between 2016 and 2020.

*“The Skills Partnership will leverage further funding and activity rather than itself acting as a funding pot for specific training undertaken by home builders. It should also leverage other investment in skills. It is currently estimated that £375 million is invested in employee training and development within home building sector”<sup>74</sup>*

HBSP, The Size of the Challenge Paper, 2017

## What did the HBSP want to achieve?

The HBSP set an objective in its Business Plan to create a long-term model for the Skills Partnership so that it can continue to support and develop the future workforce of the home building industry as skills needs evolve.

## What did the HBSP do?

The initial investment by CITB (both in terms of funding and officer support) was a catalyst to enable the Skills Partnership to employ a full-time Director, then a full-time Manager, and over time, specialist projects and contract management, communications and project co-ordination support. The HBSP relied heavily on the investment of time and expertise from early adopter home builders, who could populate the Board and Activity Groups with talented members of their workforce so that the challenges identified could be taken forward with an appropriate mix of technical and subject matter expertise. Since 2016, the Skills Partnership has:

- Created influencing research and insight papers to advocate for change in the industry informing Government reviews in the sector and delivering joint presentations to Ministers with CITB.
- Presented the HBSP at NHBC and BACH conferences as well as a series of Supply Chain Sustainability School breakfast briefings to build awareness and engagement opportunities in the wider sector.
- Developed bids, proposals and further investment cases for CITB when appropriate as their commissioning role matured between 2017 and 2019.
- Built relations with Government departments, devolved organisations, trade federations and of course the industry itself including Leadership Board member organisations with significant assets to help reach and support the wider industry e.g. NHBC, HBF and Homes for England.
- Navigated CITB reforms as well as the introduction of the Apprenticeship Levy, where possible engaging home builders in those conversations to minimise sector shocks or disadvantage from funding changes.
- Managed pilot projects that tested new approaches to supply chain training and fast tracking new entrants into the industry enabling home builders and subcontractors to invest in and experience for themselves.
- Leveraged the assets of industry (home builders, subcontractors and FE colleges) involved in a number of the HBSP’s pilot projects and activities.
- Brokered an unintended, yet positive, practical mental health training response for the industry in 2019.
- Encouraged collaboration – and therefore the use of different organisations’ assets – in all its approaches.

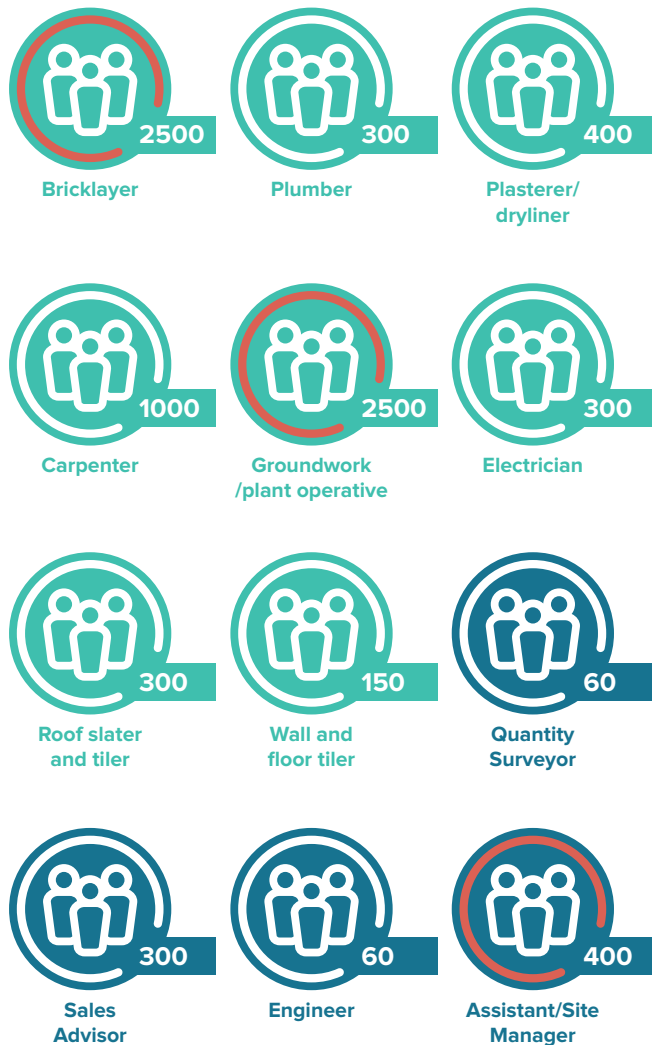
## What did the HBSP achieve?

**What is leverage?** – Leverage means providing financial and other incentives to mobilise stakeholder resources such as equipment, people and funding towards an agreed goal. It is part of a family of ingredients that together help assess whether an intervention is providing strategic added value.<sup>75</sup> The other ingredients are detailed next with HBSP examples.

**Strategic leadership and catalyst** – articulating and communicating sector needs, opportunities and solutions to stakeholders.

### The Size of the Skills Challenge

For every extra ten thousand houses we need approximately:



● Directly employed   
 ● Sub-contracted   
 ● Priority

Including these roles over 30,000 new recruits are needed for 10,000 extra homes

The HBSP completed research in order to produce simple, compelling communications about the size of the challenge to address workforce performance, including a particularly influential paper that contributed to the outcome of Sir Oliver Letwin's Independent review of build out: final report' (2018); and helping to initiate the concept of the CITB Bricklaying Academy.

**Strategic influence** – carrying out or stimulating activity that defines the distinctive roles of partners, gets them to commit to shared objectives and to behave and allocate their assets accordingly.

100% of engaged home builders surveyed in 2019 said that the HBSP had made either a significant (11%), positive (53%) or minor (37%) contribution to represent their business' needs to influence Government and other organisations to support its workforce needs (e.g. through access to funding, grant or other incentives).

Throughout the Skills Partnership's lifetime, the HBSP Team have sought to provide a stimulating agenda for the Leadership Board and Activity Groups to maintain momentum as they went through the stages of 'forming' and 'storming'. Roles differed depending on the nature of the task required whether strategic at Board level and / or operational at Activity Group and Task and Finish Group levels. Engaging diverse employees from home builder organisations was important to help ensure any task was approached with relevant subject matter expertise. The HBSP had to appeal to more than one lead contact in an organisation – instead influencing different people in roles such as marketing, communication, human resources, learning and development, construction, production and supply chain procurement and management to contribute their talents to the tasks in hand.

**Synergy** – using organisational capacity, knowledge and expertise to improve information exchange and knowledge transfer and coordination and / or integration of the design and delivery of interventions between stakeholders.

HBSP has encouraged the conditions whereby major competitors have shared information about their workforce development approaches and practices to tackle common problems. Further still, when developing proposals to respond to CITB commissioning opportunities, the HBSP has used this knowledge transfer to inform the design and delivery model for projects, some of which went on to full trial ('Fast Track', 'Supply Chain Collaboration' and Pathways to Construction'). Behaviours in 2015 were nothing like this. CITB reported at the time receiving multiple bids from individual home builders seeking to do the same thing without recourse to co-operate with one another, whereas now if there is a market opportunity, the HBSP uses the synergies amongst its network of stakeholders to co-ordinate proportionate, confident responses.

The HBSP Director described how the Attract social media campaigns included toolkits for home builders across the industry to use if they so wished and was pleased that the HBSP had found a way of working together that wasn't previously in evidence:

*“Now the sector is using the same images, promoting the same jobs at the same time.”*

She also described how the sector had self-organised with HBSP co-ordinating support to enable 1715 staff to be trained in the mental health sector, recognising the concomitant desire by the industry to do something and funders' ability to catalyse action in 2019 around this topic.

## Leverage

In the strategic case for investment in the HBSP developed by HBF in 2015, it was proposed that at least £20 million (5% of total workforce development) would be needed to create significant, enduring skills and training cultural and behavioural change in the sector. CITB's catalytic (£2.7m) grant would go towards that ambition, but clearly there would be a gap. This gap was partly

filled by the HBSP Team's ability to respond to CITB commissioning tenders which would always require some element of industry match or investment. In fact between 2016 and 2019 the HBSP successfully made the case for joint investment that will total over £10m by July 2022 that arguably may not have happened either at all or to the same extent in its absence.

Sector Intervention	CITB investment	Home building in-kind investment	Total joint investment
Home Building Skills Partnership	£2,722,353	£1,986,665 (£558,386 / 39% more than original contract)	£4,709,018
National roll out of (additional) Brickwork Master Classes	£336,000	£279,600	£615,600
Supply Chain Collaboration Pilot Project	£146,481	£481,769	£628,250
Fast Track for New Entrants Pilot Project	£113,091	£75,445	£188,536
Pathways to Construction	£1,970,037 (forecast)	£987,675 (forecast)	£2,957,712
Mental Health training	£41,850	£1,181,000 (including £335,000 cash)	£1,222,850
<b>Total</b>	<b>£5,329,812</b>	<b>£4,992,154</b>	<b>£10,321,966</b>

The in-kind investment by home builders has been significant to the Skills Partnership, especially by those 'founders' who have supported it from its pre-conception to current state of maturity. In fact, £558,386 more in-kind – equivalent to 39% investment was made by home builders to the HBSP infrastructure contract than originally profiled. They continue to support it because they feel it to be a valuable vehicle to both contribute to and benefit from. This is exemplified by two return on investment case studies presented opposite (anonymised for commercial reasons):



### Return on investment case study – home builder ‘A’

This medium sized home builder has engaged continuously since 2016 contributing to, and learning from its conversations and workstream activities. As well as realising value from the HBSP Team’s expertise saving money to buy in consultants, the practical activities to help develop some of their staff as industry house building careers ambassadors helped with their development and staff retention. Practical training for site managers and bricklayers has also brought not only a return on investment but a marked improvement in quality as a result.

Investment in:	Costs	Benefits	Estimates
<p>A total of 153 staff days and travel expenses comprising:-</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Ambassadors (40 days)</li> <li>Defects/snagging training (48 days)</li> <li>Brickwork masterclasses (40 days)</li> <li>Time at HBSP meetings and work in the business to embed HBSP learning, research, workforce surveys, armed forces engagement, W.I.C, skills framework, college/curriculum dialogue (25 days)</li> </ul>	<p><b>£37,436</b></p>	<p>Low estimate <b>£64,438</b></p> <p>172% return or £1.72 for every £1 invested</p> <p>Higher estimate <b>£88,438</b></p> <p>236% return or £2.36 for every £1 invested</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Increased staff retention / avoided rec-recruitment cost (£4,406)</li> <li>Avoided training cost (£4,000 market rate)</li> <li>Avoided cost of defects, errors and snagging (£32,032)<sup>76</sup></li> <li>Avoided rework / improved value added per employee (no estimates available)</li> <li>Avoided consultancy costs to achieve same level of outcome in same time achieved via HBSP (low estimate £24,000)<sup>77</sup></li> </ul>

### Return on investment case study – home builder ‘B’

This large home builder engaged fully with the Skills Partnership especially in respect of the Skills and Development Activity Group, skills framework development, piloting of training modules for A/SMs and in accessing brickwork masterclasses. The HBSP Team’s existence saved the lead senior individual the equivalent of 15% of their annual role and consultancy enabling them to spend valuable time on strategy that would not otherwise have been possible until 2020. Other benefits from brickwork masterclasses have not been included in the estimate so ROI may be higher.

Investment in:	Costs	Benefits	Estimates
<p>A total of 304 staff days</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Senior representative time invested in meetings and all work across teams in the business to support workstreams / embed learning (£28,380)</li> <li>Training (Building regulations; defects prevention; effective snagging; managing teams roles &amp; responsibilities; home build site management; home build handover; programme management (218 days / £32,700)</li> </ul>	<p><b>£61,080</b></p>	<p><b>£139,238</b></p> <p>227% return or £2.27 for every £1 invested</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>143 senior days salary saved and avoided consultancy costs (£72,190)</li> <li>Increased A/SM staff retention / avoided rec-recruitment cost for 5 people attributable to the HBSP as opposed to other factors and incentives (£15,000)</li> <li>Avoided training cost (£4,000 market rate)</li> <li>Avoided cost of defects, errors and snagging (£48,048 savings over 12 months from 33 trained delegates)</li> </ul>

## £ HBSP investment

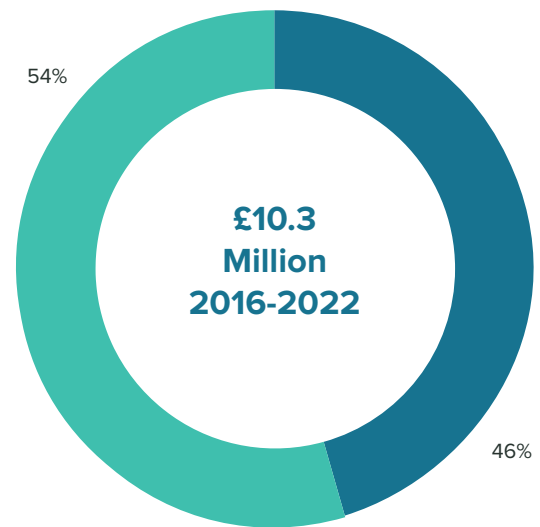


In total the Skills Partnership has engaged with 349 home builders and 473 supply chain companies across core and leveraged activity.

## Leverage

### Core and Leveraged HBSP Investment

- Core HBSP Joint Investment £4.7 million
- Leveraged HBSP Joint Investment £5.6 million



## Return on Investment

Sampled home builder case studies suggest a return on their investment in the core HBSP activity since 2016 within this estimated range.





## What did the HBSP learn?

- Large competitors are willing to collaborate if a commissioning opportunity aligns with their business' needs.
- The HBSP team has needed to boost its team in order to have time to co-ordinate and write bids and proposals.
- Home builders will routinely invest more in-kind (officer time) for projects that are successfully awarded.
- When bids have been unsuccessful or an initial idea evolves, the HBSP looks at ways to achieve the outcomes through an alternative approach e.g. a proposed £5m Centre of Excellence has evolved instead into an Apprenticeships Academy idea now being led by the NHBC which will focus on developing individuals in trade roles.
- The assets of Government and devolved organisations are yet to be realised by the HBSP, but some of these have an appetite to join up strategy with the HBSP and help achieve mutually beneficial outcomes.
- To achieve collaboration the HBSP has had to develop proposals across the whole home building footprint, not just those within CITB scope and / or HBF's membership scope.

## Success factors

- The willingness of home builders to provide more in-kind support than expected.
- The flexibility of CITB as a main funder to support the redeployment of resources.
- The commissioning opportunities that HBSP has been increasingly mature enough and ready to respond to.
- The ability of the HBSP to reach collectives of home builders to devise business cases and costed proposals.

## What next?

- The HBSP Director confirms that the HBSP's core team and infrastructure will continue to exist beyond the CITB grant. The Skills Partnership will be incorporated into HBF's corporate structure.
- A new chair has been agreed for the Leadership Board – to be called the HBSP Steering Group – supported by 3 Workstream Groups (Career Attraction and Skills and Supply Chain Engagement), supported in turn by 10 dynamic Activity Groups.
- 5 of the 10 Activity Groups will lead on tasks that are already considered to be 'Business as Usual' i.e. they are afforded through HBF's resources, whilst 5 will need to leverage assets from other stakeholders to pursue their activities as hoped. The largest, currently un-costed task relates to the development of the Home Building Skills Card.

Please also refer to the HBSP Roadmap found later in this report.

### Achievements

- The development of an infrastructure able to convene and co-ordinate effort on focused workforce topics for a sustained period.
- The Skills Partnership has enabled collaborative behaviour change amongst major competitors in ways previously never tried.
- The scale and nature of the workforce challenges in the industry have been brought into sharper focus creating the opportunity for better conversations about what solutions might be needed longer term to address them.
- The Skills Partnership's action-oriented approach and practical elements (training for site managers and bricklayers) have been valued by participants seeking short term tangible returns.
- The momentum that has been created around the attract campaigns, whilst modest in scale, has enabled some common messages, language, imagery and approaches to be formed where a more united 'sector careers' identity is starting to emerge.
- The prioritisation, and profile of 'skills' is higher amongst large home builders and there has been some effort by some home builders to change the way they support subcontractors.
- Arriving at a position in 2019 where the HBSP will continue and be intrinsic to HBF governance with 'skills' having parity with more mature agendas such as housing policy and planning.
- The contributions of non-homebuilder organisations within the HBSP has been valued and has more potential still.
- Sustaining a core HBSP Team and Leadership Board that has sought to increasingly own the 'Skills Partnership' enabling it to evolve from a single Fund Agreement with CITB to a more wide-ranging mechanism for developing and delivering industry solutions to agreed workforce challenges.
- The mix of structured, flexible and industry co-investment is at least £10m as a result of the Skills Partnership's existence and the ability to leverage in pilot projects has significantly increased the opportunity to reach more home builders, supply chain companies and individuals than would have been the case in the Skills Partnership's absence.

**In total the Skills Partnership has engaged with 349 home builders and 473 supply chain companies across core and leveraged activity.**

## Frustrations

- Over time the HBSP has relied on a small number of major home builders to sustain it and it has been a challenge to engage with medium and smaller sized developers.
- HBSP's ability to represent the needs of smaller developers is still limited and the loss of FMB was described as a blow by the Leadership Board.
- CITB reform and the training model has meant that support for some areas the sector values and would have liked has not been possible.
- The Fast Track and Supply Chain Engagement and Training pilots were an opportunity for more home builders to engage than actually did limiting the ability to demonstrate their proof of concept and sustained investment case.
- The very different expectations and requirements of individual home builders to engage with the Skills Partnership whether passive, active or proactive and the ability to deliver effective relational communications within and across each organisation / business unit.
- There has been some progress with the supply chain collaboration ambition but only in pockets and with a small number of motivated firms that genuinely wish to change their cultures and behaviours and share risks to invest in their workforces and joint growth ambitions.
- The Leadership Board feels that compared to its potential the Skills Partnership has not made much headway with modern methods, digital or 'future' skills elements, all seen as important drivers of change for the future.
- Despite attempts to identify synergies and opportunities there has been a lack of specific collaboration with housing associations that might have enabled a fuller exchange of learning and practice for the wider sector.
- The ability to activate the Skills Partnership locally through devolved organisations has yet to be realised. The Board and Team feel this might usefully have been positioned earlier in the HBSP's formation.
- A realisation that some of these wicked problems need much more time and investment to address at scale – e.g. supply chain collaboration; a fit for purpose curriculum; attraction campaigns at scale; encouraging radical change in approaches amongst the FE community.
- The industry's ability to collect and share data in a way to be able to describe workforce changes, and the impact of skills and training on quality and productivity outcomes are immature compared to other sectors. This limits the ability to demonstrate the impact of not only the Skills Partnership, but investment in skills more generally. Metrics to demonstrate the increased familiarity or favourability of the sector linked to collaborative effort is still weaker than it could be.



## Innovations

- The HBSP as a governance structure is regarded as an innovation for a sector that is seen as still quite embryonic in terms of people development and workforce planning cultures. Moreover, there is only one other similarly funded sector partnership within construction (RoofCERT) which has been inspired by and learned from HBSP's formation.
- Bricklaying masterclasses are described as a scalable model that could be transferred to the other critical occupations, with the advantage that this model also engages the supply chain in practical ways.
- Recently discovered models of working between ground workers and an FE college – with the means to agree principles of partnership working to avoid poaching of staff and wage inflation - are seen as offering potential.
- The inclusion of productivity thresholds in the skills frameworks were something brand new.
- Campaigns using new imagery and platforms previously not trialled in the sector are seen as a breakthrough.

## Development Phase

### Years 1-2

- It is worth taking longer to agree what sector challenges are needed to be addressed in order to build consensus, trust amongst and sense of ownership amongst competitors
- Catalytic funding (in this case from CITB) was vital to encourage the conditions for the Skills Partnership to form, it is unlikely to have happened in the absence of that funding. However, funding is only part of the equation – the co-investment (in-kind) of willing, motivated officers across early adopter home builders and partners was at least as vital in order to create enough momentum for the HBSP to sustain for its first year.
- Large home builders were willing to 'give the Skills Partnership a go' for a year before they expected to see it move towards a more overt delivery phase. This would be important because representatives supporting Activity Groups had enough authority to decide it was a good use of their time for the first year, but were expected to report to the most senior individuals in their companies after 12 months with a sense of whether it was valuable or not to continue.
- Technical work in year 1 such as developing skills frameworks for critical roles was very quickly seen to require a longer time frame. This meant that the original schedule of training delivery to follow the completion of frameworks in year 2 had to be delayed and reconfigured. CITB funder flexibility was a valuable trait at this time of formation for the Skills Partnership.
- Engaging home builders to get them committed to a Skills Partnership that, in year 1, had limited opportunities for them to participate other than via Activity Groups was a challenge and took longer than expected. Larger home builders came forward as they had the capacity to contribute and were keen to be seen to support the new structure. It was difficult to engage mid-sized or smaller developers at this stage of the HBSP's development.

## Delivery

### Years 2-4

- Aided by the continuity of industry-led Chairs, the Leadership Board and 3 Activity Groups developed focus for their workstreams as to begin with the challenges were seen as too broad and too 'wicked' to tackle in the context of a Skills Partnership receiving a grant equivalent to 0.72% of the sector's investment in workforce development.
- Whilst there was enabling resource for the skills and development activity to start to be rolled out, the Skills Partnership learned that to reach all 12 critical roles would likely dilute the impact that they could have compared to a focus on a smaller number of roles (site managers, sales advisors and bricklayers) instead. Again, CITB funder flexibility enabled this change of tact.

- There was however little by way of budget in the initial Fund Agreement for the 'Attract' and 'Supply Chain Collaboration' Groups to activate their ideas as the scale of challenges for these topics either too large and / or potentially duplicative of other industry efforts at this time. The Skills Partnership had to learn how to develop strategic added value very quickly, leverage other assets and make business cases to attract further investment and continue to redeploy internal resources in order that practical pilot projects and campaigns could be delivered. In an ideal situation, the Grant would have made a budget available for each workstream the same size as that for skills and development' confident in the knowledge that home builder in-kind investment would always achieve or at least exceed expected levels.
- The various attempts to enable a Training Needs Analysis tool to be created for the sector did not succeed, however, the HBSP feels that it went through a valuable discovery process that has ultimately led to the conception of a potentially better solution in the form of a family of virtual Skillscards that now form the focus for the HBSP in year 5 of its lifetime.
- The redeployment of resources from the TNA, and the narrower focus on 3 critical roles rather than 12 enabled the HBSP to activate much greater volumes of practical training into the sector, which had the concomitant positive effect of enabling it also to reach smaller supply chain companies that would not otherwise have been reached by 2019.

## Evolution

### Year 1-4 (continuous)

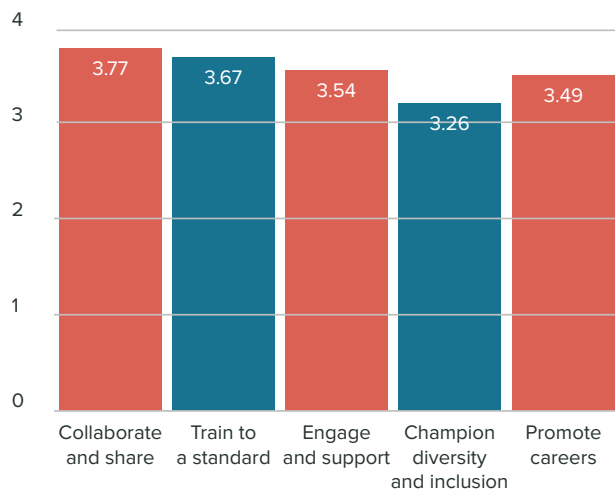
- To sustain a 4 year brand new Skills Partnership means continual change so having partners with the maturity and culture of being able to work in that environment is a prerequisite. Each partner has power, and at times, the Skills Partnership has revealed different behaviours that have delayed or hindered the progress of the HBSP's potential and yet it prevails despite the significant reforms, pressures and criticisms affecting home building since 2016. Having a dedicated, high-skilled team to anticipate as well as respond to that continual change has been essential to the HBSP's ability to reach 2020 in confident shape with a plan to sustain that core Team and at least 50% of the proposed activities beyond the CITB Funding Agreement.



# 11.0 Future of the Skills Partnership

Surveys with a mix of 57 engaged and non-engaged home builders in 2019 revealed that the 5 topics encapsulated by the Pledge are deemed to be a relevant continued focus for the Skills Partnership, and therefore it is expected that these ideals should persist within the HBSP's future governance and plans.

Looking to the future, for the next 2-3 years, please say how valuable any of the following would be for your business. (1 = not valuable at all and 5 = extremely valuable).  
Sample: 57 home builders, November 2019



Left to describe in their own words what they wanted the HBSP to help with in future, home builders and Leadership Board members identified these areas of value:

1. Getting more skilled people into the industry to build required volume and quality of houses.
2. Raising skills and capacity in traditional house building.
3. Preparing the workforce for the future.
4. Diversity and inclusion.
5. Building 'skills' relationships and partnerships with supply chains.
6. Quality and Productivity ('Performance').
7. HBSP sustainability and approach to mainstreaming solutions so they become business as usual.

Detailed insights for each of these 7 foci have been shared with the HBSP Team and Leadership Board to inform their planning of the Skills Partnership's transition to becoming an embedded structure within HBF's corporate governance.

# HBSP Groups and Workstreams 2020

Having considered the Skills Partnership’s proposed focus (see organogram) and all stakeholder views, the evaluators worked with the HBSP Director and HBF Director of External Relations in March 2020 to develop the following ‘2025 Roadmap’ which contains a mix of actions that have already been agreed and ambitions that the evaluators believe could help create the foundations for the Skills Partnership’s longer term strategy and planning.

## Steering Group

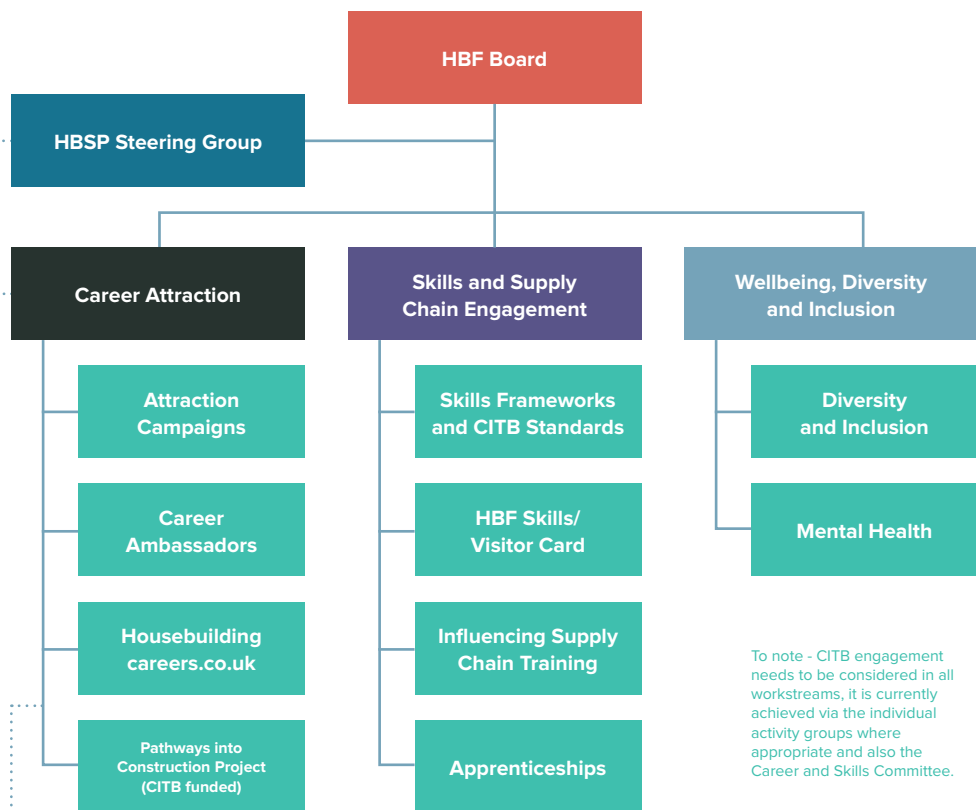
- Meet 3 times a year
- External and HB members based on contribution not HBF membership
- Workstream chairs are automatic members
- Focus on ensuring priorities are in the interest of industry and align with the skills pledge
- Guidance on promotion and marketing of HBSP products and services into the industry
- Oversee any external funding projects
- Audit / scrutiny role

## Workstream Groups

- Industry experts / practitioners working collaboratively on identified industry priorities
- Meets 3 times a year

## Activity Groups

- These are active task and finish groups that will respond to specific industry issues / requirements.
- Membership is usually drawn from the workstream groups with external members added as & when specialist input is required
- Meets as necessary, often by conference call



To note - CITB engagement needs to be considered in all workstreams, it is currently achieved via the individual activity groups where appropriate and also the Career and Skills Committee.





## Roadmap to 2025

HBSP focus 2016-2019	Next actions agreed	Ambition by July 2022	Ambition by July 2025
<p>Common set of forward-looking training standards (skills frameworks) for critical roles to improve quality of workmanship</p>	<p>Proactive promotion of the skills frameworks to industry and education</p> <p>Development of a costed business case for development of home building virtual skills card(s) supported by trade federations</p> <p>Incremental review and improvement process for updating and future proofing the frameworks clearly in place</p>	<p>Awareness of skills frameworks high in the education marketplace</p> <p>Virtual card introduced for 5-6 roles and trade federations actively supporting these</p> <p>New topics incorporated e.g. MMC, new technology, digital, multi-skills and environmental driven by Futures Homes Standards</p>	<p>Standards used by colleges, universities and private providers embedded in their curriculum for training aided by trade federations and combined authorities</p> <p>Virtual cards available for 12 roles with their use demonstrating added value to industry and individuals. The cards / frameworks become synonymous with quality and productivity gains.</p>
<p>Training and development that helps reduce skills gaps in home building</p>	<p>Successfully deliver the nationwide bricklaying masterclasses in 2020 with increased penetration of relevant supply chain companies</p> <p>Explore how this model of site training and college tutor CPD might be transferred to other critical roles identified as being persistently deficient via NHBC Construction Quality Reviews (CQRs)</p>	<p>The link between defect reporting, quality, productivity gains and prioritised training is proven and embedded</p> <p>Masterclasses and CPD introduced to at least 2 further critical trade roles, funded through a mix of NHBC, home builder and CITB grant investment</p> <p>Increased use of training modules in the skills frameworks</p>	<p>Increased use of skills framework training modules including routine access of those that are on CITB's Training Directory (i.e. eligible for grant)</p> <p>CPD is a more established and recognised process for the 8 critical trade roles</p> <p>Culture of training to skills framework standards becoming the norm in the sector</p>
<p>More collaboration between home builders and their supply chain on training and development challenges</p>	<p>Trade federations increasingly proactive in promoting HBSP frameworks and training modules to members</p> <p>Promote good practice models of collaboration e.g. Fareham College and Groundworkers</p>	<p>Having hosted a Round Table to build greater traction around this challenge, identify an appropriate set of partners, models and approaches to encourage more routine collaborative practices between home builders and supply chain firms. Revisit the potential of the Supply Chain Engagement and Training Model as necessary.</p>	<p>Virtual cards have been embedded across the sector reaching all critical roles by 2025</p> <p>More supply chain companies training to the skills frameworks standards appropriately incentivised by home builders via their procurement approach</p>
<p>Encourage a change in the traditional recruitment behaviours of home builders</p>	<p>Successfully deliver the Pathways to Construction Project leading to 895 new recruits from under-represented groups to be retained in the sector</p> <p>Explore the potential of young people attracted to the Future Talent Conference</p>	<p>Home builders expect to be able to access a greater % of college leavers but may not risk investing. Learning from the Fast Track pilot and mainstreaming that is an option</p> <p>Identify what levers and incentives (if any) could affect culture and behaviour change in relation to the use of agencies, poaching of staff and wage inflation</p>	<p>Learn lessons from the Pathways Projects and seek to sustain and mainstream accordingly</p> <p>Continue to identify talent pipelines that the sector has little experience of recruiting from but does have an appetite to trial through joint project or risk taking facilitated by the HBSP</p> <p>Skills frameworks used by employers as recruitment criterion to help improve retention rates</p>

# Roadmap to 2025

HBSP focus 2016-2019	Next actions agreed	Ambition by July 2022	Ambition by July 2025
<p>Help reposition the image of home building as a career choice promoting it as a positive place to work</p>	<p>Continued recruitment and training of house building careers ambassadors to excite young people, service leavers, women and others as prioritised</p> <p>Make the case for investing in research to identify a sector baseline for familiarity, favourability and diversity</p> <p>Agree and deliver next 'Attract' campaigns to further encourage home builder collaboration</p>	<p>'Push' led strategy should seek to engage more with Technical Colleges and school leavers to encourage them to transition into FE options; building the sector's attractiveness and pipeline earlier in people's lives</p> <p>Systems for tracking the conversion rates of Attract campaigns to applicants to jobs improve amongst participants</p>	<p>Familiarity, favourability and diversity scores improve compared to the baselines especially amongst target populations</p> <p>The opportunities presented by T Levels and home builders offering high quality workplace / site encounters help to build its reputation amongst an increasingly diverse pipeline of talent</p>
<p>Leverage investment nationally and locally to activate practical activities that lead to smarter recruitment and effective training across the sector</p>	<p>Continued work with CITB to embed skills framework training standards in their Training Directory</p> <p>Effective collaborative working with the GLA and other devolved authority programmes to leverage their assets, specifically to help promote the skills frameworks / virtual cards amongst provider and employer networks</p>	<p>Through hosting of a strategic partner / investor round table event the HBSP could galvanise a range of assets towards the purpose of addressing skills, training and recruitment challenges in the sector that could lead to the evolution of a 5-year 'sector strategy'. This would identify how the HBSP can contribute to and align with other pre-existing strategies e.g. Homes England, Department for Education, Department for Work and Pensions and Metro Mayors and combined authorities</p>	<p>The 5-year strategy would have identified or amplified the HBSP workstreams and identified specific localities where projects and initiatives can be focused thus helping to activate the HBSP in more localities and aligning with anticipated devolution dynamics</p> <p>Relevant Ministerial support is secured</p> <p>HBSP is seen as the go to body for local government in relation to skills and careers initiatives for home building</p>
<p>HBSP demonstrates its ability to continually improve its effectiveness</p>	<p>Embed the new governance structure, workstream and Activity Groups with a continued focus on learning, collaboration and improvement</p> <p>Learn from the ongoing evaluation of bricklaying masterclasses and the Pathways Programme and consider boosting monitoring approaches for all HBSP initiatives</p>	<p>Each workstream will report on progress and learning to the Leadership Board (Steering Group) leading to:</p> <p>Innovation e.g. the evolution and development of the virtual card family</p> <p>Collaboration e.g. further insights and new ideas on means to encourage training collaboration with the supply chain via the proposed Round Table</p>	<p>A wider commitment to celebrating HBSP success, marketing (as opposed to just communication) and 'taking the HBSP out on the road' should lead to more customer insight that can continually help the HBSP evolve its service and offer to the sector. Product development in the form of toolkits, how to guides and accessible collateral is expected to emerge too.</p>

## 12.0

# Conclusions and recommendations

The Home Building Skills Partnership has been one of the top five largest Structured Fund investments by CITB since 2016 and has been an atypical model within the construction sector. The HBSP has challenged different organisations in the private and public sector to co-ordinate their assets and agendas which did not always easily align. It has had to navigate a negative climate of sector criticism and significant reform for the funding of construction skills and training not always working to the sector's benefit.

The high turnover of Ministers in the period meant it could never quite achieve that continuity of traction nor support to reach the wider industry – including smaller developers - at scale. However, through a flexible relationship with CITB and agreed contract variations to the delivery plan it has successfully engaged at least 530 home builder and supply chain companies and nearly 7,000 individuals in training<sup>1</sup> whilst also reaching many thousands of potential future recruits through sector attractiveness campaigns.

### Collaboration has been the single most important outcome of the Skills Partnership

Importantly, the Skills Partnership has encouraged positive practical and repeatable collaboration amongst major competitors through its Leadership Board and Activity group structure. This cultural shift should not be under-estimated as prior to the HBSP's birth whilst large home builders did have dialogue with one another, this was rarely resourced sufficiently to act, take joint risks or explore new ways of addressing common challenges.

There have been a range of benefits of this new form of collaboration including:

- **Innovation** e.g. productivity thresholds were introduced into the skills frameworks
- **Better problem solving** e.g. reviewing the Training Needs Analysis output and instead deciding that it would not lead to the desired industry-wide outcome so the HBSP has had the courage to evolve their plan
- **Operational efficiencies** e.g. emerging evidence from the bricklaying masterclasses and ROI case studies suggest there have been some productivity gains
- **Employee satisfaction** e.g. the return on investment case studies with home builders suggests higher retention rates partly as a result of them accessing HBSP training and / or Ambassador opportunities
- **Better supply chain relationships** e.g. for the three home builders taking part in the Supply Chain Engagement and Training Pilot, where relationships were significantly more mature and trusting.

<sup>1</sup> Not including the 1,715 individuals trained in mental health first aid and awareness since March 2019 and the 830 individuals trained as part of the Fast Track and Supply Chain Engagement and Training Projects via separately leveraged initiatives.

## Maturity

Amongst those home builders that have engaged with the Skills Partnership since 2016, a range of skills and attributes for collaboration have matured albeit at a different pace:

Skills or attribute	Maturity over time	Examples
Trust	Participants increasingly understood each other's styles of working and thinking	Home builders taking part in the Supply Chain Engagement and Training Pilot sharing their models, approaches and subcontractor consultation survey findings with one another
Sharing information	Participants increasingly shared more commercially valuable insights over time	Home builders sharing personal contacts and recommendations to suppliers of training on diversity and inclusion at the 2018 HBSP Annual Conference
Giving early warning	Participants increasingly declared their intentions if it was workstream-related	Whether they would adopt the skills frameworks or not; whether they intended to commit to an HBSP-led joint project or not
Joint decision making	Participants increasingly felt able to make decisions together that would broadly achieve consensus and / or compromise	Deciding that of all talent pipelines most resource and effort at industry level should be focused on school and colleges as this is where they felt biggest difference could be made
Sharing resources	Participants increasingly felt empathy with one another realising they faced common workforce challenges and could choose to act in a more collegiate fashion	The 'What Career Live event demonstrated how a small group of home builders worked together to promote the sector with a unified message; they took and advocated each other's promotional literature at the event when on the stand



Assessment of progress towards the intended outcomes as framed by the key evaluation questions.

	KEQ	Assessment
Skills and Development	Training standards	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The HBSP has designed a set of 'skills frameworks' for 11 of the 12 critical roles and these were launched in May 2019 via the HBSP website and HBF email distribution.</li> <li>The co-design process with trade federations was a vital ingredient, and partly explains why this process took longer to complete than anticipated.</li> <li>Parts of the frameworks contain training modules deemed accredited because they are on CITB's Training Directory, but the frameworks are not wholly accredited yet.</li> <li>Awareness of the skills frameworks is moderate amongst HBF members and BACHs research and trade federations have not yet promoted these more widely to their members. Those who have used the skills frameworks – especially for site management – describe them as useful for recruitment and training practices and those most engaged with this work report embedding them into wider mainstreamed HR processes.</li> <li>The skills frameworks are viewed as an important legacy of the HBSP and will sit behind a family of virtual home building skills cards should the business case be made.</li> </ul>
	Relevant training	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The HBSP set out to deliver training across all 12 critical roles but pragmatism led to the focus of training delivery on site management, sales advisor and bricklaying training. Sampled follow up research confirms positive gains in confidence, commitment, technical competence, attitudes and behaviours on sites.</li> <li>Brickwork CPD delivered to FE College tutors has also been appreciated and stimulated an appetite for similar CPD for other critical roles amongst BACHs.</li> <li>Training has also been successfully delivered to other audiences via separately leveraged Pilot projects to new entrants (Fast Track) and occupations across 26 specialist trade roles in the home building supply chain (Supply Chain Pilot). The HBSP also self-organised to develop mental health training with CITB support.</li> <li>Sampled return on investment case studies with two willing home builders found their staff retention rates to improve owing to participation in site management training and / or the Ambassadors training initiative.</li> <li>The subsidised low-cost training, once in place and promoted, has proven to be popular amongst a diverse set of developers and supply chain companies.</li> </ul>
Attract	Repositioning sector image	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>From a starting point of having very little budget to activate the wide-ranging ambitions of the 'Attract' theme of the Skills Partnership, the Activity Group has leveraged resources to enable a range of focused, practical campaigns to be implemented on a rolling basis. Monitoring data for these campaigns suggest a decent reach but evidence of outcomes is unknown owing to limitations within individual home builder tracking systems.</li> <li>Those that have taken part report benefits, in respect of the learning process and collaboration.</li> <li>Two thirds of engaged home builders (67%) consider that the Skills Partnership has made a positive contribution to the way in which they are able to make their business more appealing for people to choose them. Engaged home builders report 'attraction' to be a less serious issue now than non-engaged home builders.</li> </ul>
	Changing recruitment behaviours	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>This topic did not command its own task and finish group, because it needed to a) find a focus for the recruitment challenge and b) develop a proposal for a joint project and leverage funding towards what became the 'Fast Track' Pilot. Home builders and supply chain companies that participated in the Pilot reported benefits and the learning from it is informing a wider construction sector 'bootcamp' approach for new entrants as well as galvanising partners to advocate for a more practical curriculum.</li> <li>Since the launch of the HBSP Pledge, two thirds of (23 surveyed) home builders report undertaking more activity by 2019 to champion diversity and inclusion (for example through recruiting a more diverse workforce) and one third have changed their approach. Three quarters have collaborated more to share best practice about skills, recruitment and sector attraction.</li> <li>The extent to which home builders have significantly changed the way they recruit is, however, questionable as there is still an apparent reliance on recruiting experienced workers from within the sector (75% of hires in 2016; 73% in 2019) explaining why there continues to be challenges around wage inflation for critical occupations and poaching of staff. 75% of (23) home builders that have not engaged with the HBSP report that since 2016 their ability to attract and recruit has worsened compared to HBSP-engaged home builders who have seen this issue de-escalate. Strategies and tactics differ markedly between those who have and have not engaged with the HBSP.</li> </ul>

KEQ	Assessment
Supply Chain Collaboration	<p data-bbox="209 562 339 689"><b>More collaboration on training and development</b></p> <ul data-bbox="395 387 1378 869" style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• This workforce challenge remains the most difficult to address despite different attempts to create a focus for the Activity Group and pre-existing research. That said, between 400 and 500 supply chain companies across England, Scotland and Wales have accessed defects and errors training as a result of HBSP training and a further 177 accessed training via the Pilot since 2016.</li> <li>• The Supply Chain Engagement and Training Pilot was a successful model to demonstrate how large volumes of (26) specialist trades can be incentivised to train via their home builder and to create maturity in relationships that were more developmental than transactional over a prolonged period, but not enough home builders took part to create traction for scaling it sector-wide</li> <li>• The Activity Group’s approach to co-designing the 8 ‘trade’ based skills frameworks with trade federations will be a legacy of the 2016-2019 period that can lead to more collaboration to 2025.</li> <li>• Recent restructuring of the Activity Group is leading to the identification of partners such as the Supply Chain Sustainability School, manufacturers and merchants and models of working that could help create good practice toolkits and guides to share more widely in the sector from 2020.</li> <li>• 3 in 10 home builders say they do more to support their subcontractors than prior to them committing to the HBSP Pledge, but overall, there is still a lack of sector wide strategy and resources for addressing this challenge at scale.</li> </ul>
Leverage	<p data-bbox="209 1211 300 1256"><b>National and local</b></p> <ul data-bbox="395 1115 1369 1355" style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Skills Partnership has successfully created the conditions to continue beyond the CITB Structured Fund period with the core Team and infrastructure in place – a significant success.</li> <li>• During the lifetime of the HBSP, it has leveraged £10.3 million of industry and partner assets to benefit the sector that may not otherwise have happened in the same co-ordinated fashion.</li> <li>• The potential of wider strategic partners and the Government’s mandate to strengthen the Skills Partnership between CITB, HBF, Homes England, the FMB, housing associations and small and medium-sized developers offers opportunity to increase the potential impact of HBSP; especially if taken forward with devolved organisations and education stakeholders at the same time.</li> </ul>
Learning Lessons	<p data-bbox="209 1783 339 1827"><b>Continuous improvement</b></p> <ul data-bbox="395 1682 1378 1928" style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The HBSP’s governance structure, the use of independent evaluators to report at each Leadership Board every 3 months since March 2016, annual conferences and bespoke learning lessons and sustainability workshops means that the HBSP Team has continually sought to improve its relevance to those it has engaged. 4 out of 10 home builders believe it has provided a return on investment in line with expectations whilst 4 in 10 feel it has yet to deliver to their expectations.</li> <li>• As it transitions into a new structure with a new chair and absence of a main funder to contract manage performance, the HBSP will need to use what it has learnt in the past years to develop an appropriate success measurement and impact framework for itself; and commit to defined, quantifiable targets for the activities it has planned out for the future.</li> </ul>

## Recommendations

The evaluators make three key recommendations to the Home Building Skills Partnership.

### 1: Transition Plan April 2020 to July 2022

The HBSP should develop and agree a transition plan for its activities until July 2022.

This plan should include defined output and outcome measures for all HBSP activities across the workstreams not just those that are performance managed by external funders.

This plan should include a revenue and income plan for delivering the 50% of activities that are not yet considered 'business as usual' i.e. they rely on further funding or resources to activate in the next 18 months e.g. virtual card development.

### 2: Consolidate delivery, embed legacy products and celebrate success

The HBSP should focus on consolidating its reputation as a solid co-ordinator of sector training initiatives by delivering the brickwork masterclasses nationwide and Pathways Project (subject to their continued funding).

At the same time, it should seek to complete the technical work relating to the skills frameworks, build their profile industry and education-wide, nationally and locally in order to realise a legacy from the foundation work completed since 2016.

The success of workstreams should be more actively celebrated and marketed to stakeholders beyond the confines of a communications plan. The valorisation of HBSP's successes, its intellectual property and growing reputation for being able to galvanise collaborative approaches needs to be more formally recognised if it is to provide a platform for industry wide change.

### 3: Sector Strategy 2022-2027

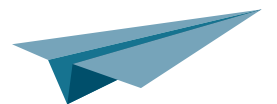
The Government wishes to see the industry develop the skills it needs to meet its ambition to build 300,000 homes a year by the mid-2020s. Taking advantage of its new governance positioning the HBSP should galvanise existing and new partners to support the development of a 5 year home building sector workforce strategy that can contribute to this ambition and leverage each other's assets to achieve agreed, measurable outcomes in the 2022-2027 period linked to longer term challenges to improve quality and productivity.

These recommendations will need to be considered of course in light of the ongoing effects of COVID-19 on the industry and wider economy. HBSP should also look at the opportunities that the new ways of working and engaging subcontractors in the post-COVID-19 world may provide for promoting better as well as safe outcomes.

- <sup>1</sup> <https://www.hbf.co.uk/policy/home-building-skills-partnership/our-aims/>
- <sup>2</sup> HBSP Business Plan 2019.
- <sup>3</sup> This comprises 6,688 individuals receiving training targeted at site managers, bricklayers and sales advisors; a further 114 trainers from FE colleges had received brickwork CPD; and 156 home builder employees had been trained to be home building careers ambassadors.
- <sup>4</sup> <https://www.hbf.co.uk/policy/home-building-skills-partnership/skills-and-training-frameworks/> The critical roles most visited was site manager 1,304 visits or 34% of all visits); followed by sales (382 page views / 6%); then bricklayer (305 / 5%); groundworker (278 / 4.5%); and surveyor (248 / 4%). Data correct as at 3rd March 2020.
- <sup>5</sup> Letter from Michelle Donelan Parliamentary Under Secretary of State for Children and Families to the chair of (CITB) confirming the Government's priorities for 2019 to 2020.
- <sup>6</sup> Ministry of Housing, Communities & Local Government: Housing Supply: net additional dwellings data, England only.
- <sup>7</sup> The Economic Footprint of House Building in England and Wales, July 2018.
- <sup>8</sup> This report published in July 2018 was commissioned by the Home Builders Federation and carried out by Lichfields.
- <sup>9</sup> Construction Statistics Annual 2018.
- <sup>10</sup> The Economic Footprint of House Building in England and Wales, July 2018.
- <sup>11</sup> Oliver Colvile MP. Chair of the APPG for Excellence in the Built Environment.
- <sup>12</sup> Down from 2.98 out of 5 (serious issue) in 2016 to 2.44 in 2019. This is a reduction of 0.54 equivalent to a 18.1% de-escalation in seriousness as an issue across the sample, 2016 to 2019.
- <sup>13</sup> Down from 3.47 out of 5 (serious issue) to 3.18. This is a reduction of 0.29 equivalent to 8.4% de-escalation in seriousness as an issue across the sample of participating homebuilders.
- <sup>14</sup> Up from 2.67 in 2016 to 2.76 in 2019 (a 3.8% increase in seriousness as an issue).
- <sup>15</sup> Up from 2.67 in 2016 to 2.86 in 2019 (0.19 increase in seriousness equivalent to 7.1% increase in it as an issue).
- <sup>16</sup> Bricklayers; building envelope specialists; construction trades supervisors; floorers; painters and decorators; plasterers and dry liners; plumbing and HVAC trades; roofers; specialist building operatives not elsewhere classified; wood trades and interior fit-out.
- <sup>17</sup> <https://www.citb.co.uk/levy-grants-and-funding/grants-funding/collaborative-innovation-training-fund/previously-funded-projects/training-and-development/home-building-skills-partnership/#>
- <sup>18</sup> The workforce coverage of each survey varied from 72,000 (lowest year) to 165,000 employees (highest year).
- <sup>19</sup> A small sample of these companies were supply chain companies but the majority were developers.
- <sup>20</sup> Correct as at 7th February 2020.
- <sup>21</sup> Correct as at 7th February 2020.
- <sup>22</sup> Association of Brickwork Contractors, CECA, CPA, BWF, NFRC, Tiling Association, FMB, BuildUK and FIS.
- <sup>23</sup> Pathway CTM, Women into Construction, Futures for You, DWP, Fortis Recruitment, CITB and NHBC.
- <sup>24</sup> <https://www.hbf.co.uk/policy/home-building-skills-partnership/skills-and-training-frameworks/>
- <sup>25</sup> <https://www.architectsjournal.co.uk/news/housing-minister-targets-1-million-new-homes-by-2020/8689157.article> (c300,000 homes per year).
- <sup>26</sup> HBSP 'The Size of the Challenge – Where are we Now?' (2016).
- <sup>27</sup> Skills frameworks are role specific. They contain the agreed training modules across the home building sector for each critical role, linked where appropriate to CITB's Training Directory and further course content and objectives. The frameworks also contain 'minimum productivity requirements'; agreed by home builders. This links competencies to performance, specifically the pace of work expected of workers on a home building site. The addition of productivity thresholds moved the original concept of minimum standards, towards a more rounded definition of competence.
- <sup>28</sup> Liaising with DfE for bricklaying standards; and ensuring that HBSP are at the forefront of conversations regarding CITB grants for home builders.
- <sup>29</sup> Particularly the planned withdrawal in 2021 of the experienced worker route (blue card). <https://glasstimes.co.uk/featured-articles/accreditation-as-opposed-to-qualifications-for-housebuilders/>
- <sup>30</sup> A new website [www.homebuildskillscard.co.uk](http://www.homebuildskillscard.co.uk) was built.
- <sup>31</sup> CECA for example has produced groundworker standards for working on infrastructure projects <https://www.ceca.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2019/06/CECA-Training-Specification-Groundworker-Employer-Occupational-Brief-Training-Specification-May-2019.pdf>
- <sup>32</sup> The seriousness of this workforce challenge has reduced from 2.98 in 2016 (out of 5 with 5 the most serious) to 2.44 in 2019. An 18% de-escalation.
- <sup>33</sup> The Occupational Working Group, led by an external subject matter expert with home builders, created momentum for the HBSP whilst the infrastructure was developed in 2016. The transition of OWG members to other Activity Groups, especially the Skills and Development Group was critical, as it guaranteed a certain level of continuity and transition.
- <sup>34</sup> Engaging with federations also opened doors to additional opportunities for engagement with the wider work of the Skills Partnership; for example with FIS ("Finishing & Interiors") and the Association of Brickwork Contractors.
- <sup>35</sup> HBSP 'The Size of the Challenge – Where are we Now?' (2016).
- <sup>36</sup> Training to this cohort covered the following topics: Building Regs and Control for Residential Homes, Defect Prevention, Develop and Maintain a Home Build Programme, Interpreting Plans and Drawings, Defect Prevention Introduction, Effective Snagging and Pre-Handover Checks, Hazards & Controls Associated with the Home Building Sector, Home Build Site Management – People Management and Home Build Handover.
- <sup>37</sup> Source: HBSP. E.g. 526 delegates attended a 3 day errors and defects course, and 78 a 2 day LOLER course (rig lifting equipment safety). These cohorts account for 30% of all trainees.
- <sup>38</sup> Correct as at 7th February 2020.
- <sup>39</sup> [https://maps.esp.tl/maps/\\_NHBC-HBSP--01-01-2017--20-02-20/pages/map.jsp?geoMapId=830605&TENANT\\_ID=170013](https://maps.esp.tl/maps/_NHBC-HBSP--01-01-2017--20-02-20/pages/map.jsp?geoMapId=830605&TENANT_ID=170013)
- <sup>40</sup> Based on a sample of 29 follow up evaluation surveys. To give an example: one employee saw gains in self-rated competence in five of the six intended learning areas; a +4 (out of 10) uplift in the regulatory environment and +3 uplift in supply chain management.
- <sup>41</sup> [https://maps.esp.tl/maps/\\_Brickwork-Masterclass--20-02-19-to-20-02-2020/pages/map.jsp?geoMapId=830581&TENANT\\_ID=170013](https://maps.esp.tl/maps/_Brickwork-Masterclass--20-02-19-to-20-02-2020/pages/map.jsp?geoMapId=830581&TENANT_ID=170013)
- <sup>42</sup> Sampled data from 102 individuals. Results representative to plus or minus 9.5%, so, care should be taken when drawing wider conclusions.



- <sup>43</sup> <https://www.questionpro.com/blog/nps-considered-good-net-promoter-score/>
- <sup>44</sup> These average figures mask significant variation. Care is required when interpreting skills gap data. One firm included almost all their staff as having a skills gap to reflect the investment in their company-wide digital transformation programme.
- <sup>45</sup> The propensity for home builders to take forward the training modules linked to the skills frameworks without CITB funding is unknown.
- <sup>46</sup> A round table with employers and representatives from BACH presented the finding that instead of expected 3-6 month settling in period on site it is closer to 6 -18 months due to a range of reasons including a lack of understanding by students of up to date site practices. In response, colleges were able to explain their constraints, and highlighted that if home builders were able only articulate their needs, and also pay for the training required, a solution could be found. Source: HBSP 'Bricklaying Diploma Students – Employer Expectations' and evaluation interviews with BACH colleges. Independent evaluation of CITB's Brickwork Academies (Harlow Consulting) makes a similar point. "Yet feedback from Further Education (FE) colleges - strongly echoed by employers - reveals bricklaying learners do not typically exit the course "work ready".
- <sup>47</sup> Interviews with 16 early adopter Skills Partnership members in late 2016 found that 100% strongly / agreed that careers in home building were poorly understood by career practitioners and parents; and only 25% agreed that the industry sold itself well to potential new entrants. Independent evaluation, October 2016.
- <sup>48</sup> Commissioned to a professional agency '33' to provide essential capacity and expertise.
- <sup>49</sup> Especially parents and teachers, building on insight from the Careers Enterprise Company.
- <sup>50</sup> The HBSP devised a process to recruit and train home building ambassadors from small to big developers.
- <sup>51</sup> Sent weekly to c300 homebuilders and on social media. It is observed that tweets on @housebuildcareer were retweeted by both majors and stakeholders including Job Centre Plus. This built on an appetite expressed by home builders at the 2018 HBSP conference for an 'annual social content calendar' that would enable partners to support campaigns via their own social channels.
- <sup>52</sup> Campaign 1: 10 million views of 140 social media banners, Campaign 2: 1.7 million people, Campaign 3: 122,000 views.
- <sup>53</sup> In December 2019, The Home Building Careers website added 20 new case studies from a wide range of home builders and jobs including Architectural Technician and Planning Assistant and this has been the most popular area of the website with 634 visits.
- <sup>54</sup> More hits were recorded while the 3 campaigns were live. For example, during campaign 1 (April-July 2018, the most intensive), the number of website users increased by over 800% to 32,600 and page views rose by over 400% to over 70,000.
- <sup>55</sup> Demographic information was not gathered; however, a review of job roles suggests that c30% were at managerial level or above, with representation from technical, planning, commercial, communications and sales and administration staff.
- <sup>56</sup> 11 events in 2018 and 23 in 2019.
- <sup>57</sup> The number of event attendees was captured as a range e.g. 10-49, 50-100. To take a prudent approach, the evaluators have used the lowest integer i.e. 10 and 50 in these examples.
- <sup>58</sup> Representing 25%, 21% and 12% of all enquiries. N=84.
- <sup>59</sup> From 3.47 in 2016 (out of 5) to 3.18 in 2019. This is an 8.4% de-escalation in seriousness this sample.
- <sup>60</sup> Source: HBSP Annual Industry Workforce Survey 2019: 91% (20 of 22) said their workforce grew in past 12 months
- <sup>61</sup> This is based on a sample of 57 home builders: engaged (22), non-engaged (22) (Autumn 2019). Engaged homebuilders placed attract as 3rd priority (3.49 out of 5), while non-engaged put it joint 1st place (3.6 out of 5), alongside building partnerships with subcontractors and federations.
- <sup>62</sup> The HBF Experienced Workers pilot project sought to recruit and refresh the skills of experienced workers who were unemployed provided. Very few were recruited primarily because home builders wanted individuals who were 'oven ready'.
- <sup>63</sup> The Strategic Case for Investment in Home Building, Evidence Compendium June 2015: base = 24 large home builders.
- <sup>64</sup> The Case for Collaboration in the Home Building Supply Chain, June 2016 found that 3 in 5 subcontractors belonging to home builder supply chains intended to recruit more direct employees in the next 12 months and that 1 in 2 of these subcontractors reported difficulties recruiting direct employees. Base=204 subcontractors across 16 specialist trades.
- <sup>65</sup> HBSP independent evaluation, October 2016, sample 14 out of 16 home builders reported difficulties.
- <sup>66</sup> The cost of recruitment was reported to vary up to £30,000 for some roles. 2016 evaluation data: 21 of 38 responding home builders (48%) said they spent more than £1,600 in direct cost per recruitment hire. More contemporary estimates provided by willing home builders in 2019 suggesting an average of £7,500 per new entrant.
- <sup>67</sup> In 2019, Apprentices represented 14% of all hires in 2018/19, suggestive of a slowing from the 26% reported in 2017/18 and 21% in 2017. The baseline was 9% in 2016.
- <sup>68</sup> Two of the five pledges (launched in October 2017) were linked to recruitment and attraction: 'Champion diversity and inclusion' and 'Promote careers'.
- <sup>69</sup> Independent evaluation of engaged home builders, final survey November 2019.
- <sup>70</sup> Based on follow up interviews with 10 young people (with 19 providing baseline data).
- <sup>71</sup> CITB Destinations of Construction Learners in Further Education (2017).
- <sup>72</sup> <https://www.havering-college.ac.uk/college/news/4739-college-links-up-with-measom-drylining-to-develop-students%E2%80%9999-talent-and-boost-employability>
- <sup>73</sup> Hard to reach firms exhibit any of these characteristics: not claimed in 2+ years, 3+ years, never claimed or as described as 'new registrations' by CITB.
- <sup>74</sup> Proxy estimate only: £2.5bn is spent on employee training and development in 'construction' (UKESS 2015, CITB Synopsis). Home building is c 15% of construction output (£20bn/£133bn as at June 2016 using CSN and CPA Forecasts at that time).
- <sup>75</sup> <https://webarchive.nationalarchives.gov.uk/20090609014007/http://www.berr.gov.uk/files/file21900.pdf>
- <sup>76</sup> Model: assumes that each trained delegate prevents 1 defect / snag per week valued at £28 per average defect / snag. Each delegate would save the business £1,456 in the 12 months after training. If there were 22 delegates for the training this would mean £32,032 could be saved that might not have happened in the absence of the training.
- <sup>77</sup> 2 days pcm for a year at £1,000 per day = £24,000. If this were for 2 years a higher value would be £48,000.



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