

## HBSP needs to continue: independent report

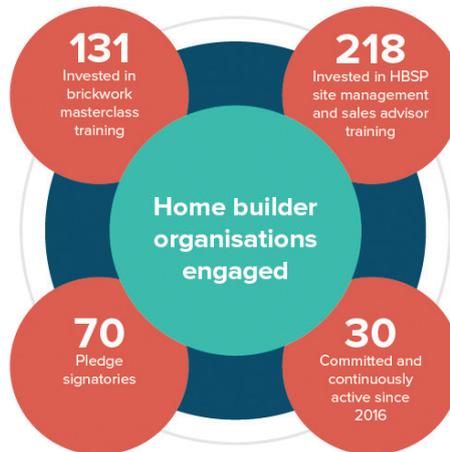
An independent evaluation into the Home Building Skills Partnership has found that home builders feel it is very important the initiative continues its work.

Consultancy Sky Blue looked at how effectively the Skills Partnership had used the four-year £2.7m of CITB funding to deliver its key objectives. Sky Blue concluded that the funded project has delivered significant staff training and development benefits and made the industry more appealing for people to choose as a career.

It noted that home builders who had worked with the Skills Partnership reported that 'training' and 'attraction' challenges for their firms had decreased, while the non-engaged home builders found they had increased.

Sky Blue noted that over the four-year period – from the launch of the funded project in April 2016 to the end of the CITB funding in December 2019 – the Home Building Skills Partnership had provided:

- Nearly 7,000 individuals with job related skills training, particularly site management;



- 4,600 individuals from home building and supply chain companies have taken part in brickwork masterclasses; and
- Nearly 500 subcontractor organisations actively took part in training.

Jenny Herdman, Director of the Home Building Skills Partnership, said: "We welcome the report and the positive feedback that many home builders have provided about

the valuable role the programme has played in driving forward some of the key strategic needs of the industry. But we recognise that we need to reach more home builders and their supply chain so they can improve the skills of their employees."

To find out more and read the report go to [www.hbf.co.uk/policy/home-building-skills-partnership/](http://www.hbf.co.uk/policy/home-building-skills-partnership/)

## Pathway rises to the digital challenge

With the current lockdown restrictions likely to be eased slowly, the Pathway into Home Building programme has risen to the challenge and is delivering key parts of the learning online.

### Women receive ongoing support from Employer Mentors

Thirty-three women completed the first two Home Building pathway training programmes, in north London and Birmingham respectively. Many have been successful in being employed, or receiving job offers, while others are in talks about job offers or have been accepted onto apprenticeship programmes.

But as the restrictions have led to employment and apprenticeships being put on hold, all the women are continuing to receive ongoing support through a remote mentoring programme, connections with potential employers, and advice and guidance to help them succeed on their chosen career path.

For further information about the different support schemes available online, and how you can support their work, please contact

WiC project manager Anna Walterskotter at [anna.walterskotter@women-into-construction.org](mailto:anna.walterskotter@women-into-construction.org)

### Learning webinars for FE students

Training provider Pathways CTM has enlisted the support of 12 major home builders and industry experts to deliver a series of learning webinars focusing on employability training, employer insights, and online courses to 161 students on the pathway programme from 14 colleges in south east England.

Employers have also put together a virtual tour of home building sites and are bringing subcontractors and apprentices into webinars to answer questions about what it is like to work in the industry, while the creation of online hubs are being used to carry out to provide students with virtual interview experience.

For further information about the different online training being offered, and how employers can provide support, please get in touch with chief operating officer Tracey Wright at [tracey@pathwayctm.com](mailto:tracey@pathwayctm.com)

# Critical time for mental health support

With the coronavirus lockdown threatening to exacerbate the mental health challenges faced by some construction workers, it has never been more important to know that support within the industry is available.

It's been a year since HBF launched its Mental Health Awareness Campaign to increase understanding of poor mental health and help break down the stigma in the home building industry. Twelve months on the industry is in a better position to help deal with mental health issues as:

- More than 50 developers are now part of HBF's Mental Health Awareness Campaign;
- The industry has raised over £120,000 for the Lighthouse Construction Industry Charity, and a further £110,000 for the charity's national family crisis fund appeal; and
- Over 1,000 staff have been trained in mental health awareness.

The importance of raising extra funding for Lighthouse has been illustrated by the unprecedented number of calls the charity's helpline has received during the lockdown period – an increase of 55% compared to last year.

The Lighthouse Construction Industry Charity helpline is available in the UK on

**0345 605 1956**  
or **ROI 1800 939 122.**



A **third** of Mental Health First Aiders are based on site. The home building industry has trained over **700** Mental Health First Aiders.



**Health concerns** was the most commonly cited reason for poor mental health among the home building workforce. This was followed closely by **relationship issues, financial issues and drug and alcohol problems.**

## Staff urged to ensure visitor cards are valid

Non-construction staff, who may need to visit building sites as they reopen, should consider upgrading to the new virtual Home Builders Visitor Card before their current card runs out.

It is important that visitor cards are valid as the Construction Skills Certification Scheme (CSCS) stopped issuing their visitor cards in February this year, and all



visitor cards issued by CSCS from September 2018 will expire at the end of August this year.

The need to ensure visitors have a valid card is supported by both the NHBC and home builders, and comes as CITB Health, Safety and Environment (HS&E) test centres start to reopen.

Simon Mantle, Group Health and Safety Manager at NHBC, said:

"I would encourage anyone who works in the home building industry and needs a visitor card to apply for one. The application process is very straightforward and, as with the CSCS card it replaces, you only need to be able to show that you have passed the CITB HS&E test in the last two years."

Persimmon Homes, Group Training Manager Paul Curry said the Home Builders Visitor Card "filled the void left by CSCS's withdrawal of the visitors card" and provides that "easy check at the point of access to the site".

## Out & About ...

### Hill launches prototype home for the homeless

Hill has launched the prototype for Foundation 200, its initiative to build and donate 200 homes to the homeless.

Hill said the launch, delivered virtually, demonstrated to local authorities, housing associations, homeless charities and other interested parties, the property specification and design the construction details and

how portable they are. It hopes to complete the first sites in the summer. The prototype, craned in place in 30 minutes, is based temporarily at Hill's new community, Marleigh on the edge of Cambridge. But the Foundation 200 sites can be located anywhere within the company's area of operation, and the home builder is currently speaking to 15 councils about potential locations for the properties.

The 200 modular homes will be completed and inhabited within five years. Each home is designed to house only one person and be ready to move into immediately.

## GET IN TOUCH

During the coronavirus pandemic, the Home Building Skills Partnership has continued to work on developing positive change with industry. We have been working with home builders, sub-contractors and our delivery partners, to equip on site staff and potential recruits with the skills they need to work in the sector and

collaboratively sharing best practice through online training.

If you would like to find out more about our work and how to get involved, visit: [www.hbf.co.uk/policy/home-building-skills-partnership/](http://www.hbf.co.uk/policy/home-building-skills-partnership/) If you also have any interesting stories or projects do get in touch at [skillspartnership@hbf.co.uk](mailto:skillspartnership@hbf.co.uk), we would love to hear your news!



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