

Tackling the construction skills shortage through bricklaying hubs

With the industry facing a construction skills shortage and in need of thousands of new workers in the next few years, NHBC is investing in a network of bricklaying training hubs to provide a flow of skilled apprentices to sites across the UK

In January 2023, the Construction Skills Network Industry Outlook highlighted the need for an additional 225,000 construction workers in the UK by 2027.

This equates to a requirement for 45,000 workers in the construction sector per year, a potentially demanding number against a backdrop of recruitment and training challenges.

Additionally, NHBC's own Careers in Construction Update from March 2023 shows that only 9% of young people are "definitely consider[ing]" working in construction despite the wide range of opportunities available.

In conjunction with the results from a Federation of Master Builders membership survey, which found that 45% of builders were currently struggling to recruit bricklayers, it becomes clear that the house-building industry must begin to look

at ways to attract more people of all ages and backgrounds to bricklaying.

So, to support the industry, continue to raise standards in house building and begin to tackle the construction skills shortage, NHBC is committed to investing in bricklaying hubs across the UK.

Boosting bricklaying for the house-building industry

One of the fundamental ways NHBC is working to help address the skills gap in bricklaying is by providing expert knowledge and direction to support apprentices at our training hubs. There are currently facilities in Tamworth, Newcastle and Cambridge, with another hub due to open in Hull later this year.

The NHBC bricklaying apprenticeship has specifically been developed with the house-building industry in mind and allows for reliable and regular recruitment throughout

the year. Up to 100 apprentices can be trained at each hub annually, enabling house builders to create a consistent flow of skills and talent to sites.

And by employing tutors to deliver the apprenticeship who have been bricklayers and had first-hand experience of working on sites themselves, students also benefit from years of expert advice and guidance preparing them go out to sites and contribute to build programmes.

NHBC bricklaying hubs provide skills for success

All NHBC bricklaying hubs are designed to prepare apprentices for being on-site and ensure they are productive as soon as they arrive. The first five weeks are practical sessions held at the training hubs with each day running from 8:00 to 16:30.

By week six, apprentices will return to sites able to carry out key tasks including

building cavity walls, building to line and to gauge, and joint walling. They will also be able to correctly position wall ties, work with damp proof coursing (DPCs), cavity trays and weep holes and know where to insert insulation and fire stopping.

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And the apprentice's understanding of working on a site is also aided by the way the layout of each training facility reflects a real site environment. The training hubs also meticulously apply the same health and safety standards as a real-life site and have outdoor working areas used throughout the year to help students acclimatise.

Building a career in construction

NHBC training hubs provide a great start for aspiring bricklayers. And with training block delivery all year round, students can complete an apprenticeship through this accelerated programme and be qualified bricklayers at Level 2 in just 18 months, fully prepared for a career in construction.

Darryl Stewart, head of commercial services at NHBC, said: "Our training hubs are a key part of tackling the skills shortage the construction industry faces. We've listened to house builders and worked hard to develop facilities that deliver the skills needed in a way that works for them and is aligned with the requirements of build programmes.

"I'm also proud that we are equipping brickwork apprentices with the skills and techniques to build high-quality new homes, as well as their own long and rewarding careers in construction."

To find out more visit: [Bricklaying Apprenticeship | NHBC](#)



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