

PRESS RELEASE

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London's Build Academy welcomes Minister for Industry

The initiative, funded by CITB in partnership with FMB and London's Shooters Hill Sixth Form College, gives the next generation the practical skills and experience they need for a career in construction

Today, the Construction Industry Training Board (CITB), the Federation of Master Builders (FMB) and Shooters Hill Sixth Form College, in London, welcomed Chris McDonald, Minister for Industry in the Department for Business and Trade (DBT) to the Build Academy. The Build Academy is a unique pilot scheme put together to address the skills shortages in the repair, maintenance and improvement (RMI) construction sector, which includes green skills and retrofit.

The initiative, which is a departure from traditional apprenticeship schemes, connects learners from all walks of life with real SME building firms, offering hands-on experience and helping them become site-ready from day one. It gives local young people the chance to gain hands-on experience, health and safety know-how, business knowledge and confidence to step onto a live site and get stuck in.

The project works with 20 students at a time and sustains that number as individuals gain employment through the initiative's network of employers. The aim of the project is to place them into full-time employment with SMEs by June 2026.

The Build Academy pilot is aimed at students between the ages of 16 to 19 who are new to construction. They can be new entrants to the college or progressing from the college's core programmes. Tom, a current student at The Build Academy, said "it is the right place to be for practical skills." Tijan, who is also a student gaining experience through the initiative described The Build Academy as "a place to push past your limits."

The initiative forms part of the domestic retrofit area of the industry led [Repair, Maintenance and Improvement \(RMI\) Sector Skills Plan](#), which is supported by CITB. Sector Skills Plans are action plans designed to address the specific needs of different sectors within the construction industry and are owned and shaped by construction industry stakeholders. These initiatives aim to align workforce supply with industry demand, improve training quality, and support the delivery of national priorities.

The availability of fully trained apprentices is becoming a significant issue for the construction industry across the UK. CITB's Construction Workforce Outlook forecasts over 47,000 extra construction workers are needed in the UK each year by 2029. In London in particular, the forecast shows that recruitment would have to increase by 8,460 workers per year by 2029 to meet current demands.

Chris McDonald, Minister for Industry, said:

"Britain needs more construction workers, and that's why I was pleased to visit the Build Academy today to see the pivotal role places like this are playing in bringing the next generation into this highly skilled profession.

"This Government is fully behind these efforts, in partnership with industry. That's why we're investing £625 million into construction skills training, and promoting the great work opportunities in this sector is a top priority of mine as Co-Chair of the Construction Leadership Council."

Tim Balcon, Chief Executive, CITB said:

"The Build Academy shows what can be achieved when industry and education work together with real ambition. By giving young people hands-on experience with employers, we're helping them become site-ready from day one and supporting SMEs that urgently need new talent. We're proud to work with FMB and Shooters Hill College to build a more inclusive, skilled and future-focused construction workforce."

Brian Berry, FMB Chief Executive and RMI (Domestic Retrofit) Sector Skills Plan Chair said:

"The Build Academy training initiative is a new employer-led approach to workforce development in the building industry. Led primarily by FMB members, who are small, local builders that often struggle to hire apprentices due to risk, cost and administrative issues. It is not a traditional apprenticeship scheme; it's a brand-new initiative that creates employment pathways for young people from disadvantaged backgrounds who might otherwise not have the opportunity. Crucially, this is not training for its own sake – it is designed to lead to real jobs and long-term careers at a time when our industry is grappling with well-documented skills shortages."

Geoff Osborne, Principal of Shooters Hill Sixth Form College said: *"Today is about more than just a ministerial visit; it is a testament to the fact that our construction learners are part of something bigger. At the Build Academy we are transforming lives by preparing our learners for the next steps in a career within the construction industry that offers skills for lifelong learning. Seeing the Minister engage with our learners reinforces that they are the heartbeat of an industry that builds our future."*

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For more information, please contact press.office@citb.co.uk

About the Construction Industry Training Board

The Construction Industry Training Board (CITB) is the designated industry training board for the construction sector in England, Scotland, and Wales. Its remit is to assist the construction industry in attracting talent and to champion skills development, with the overarching goal of building a better Britain, and its purpose is to support the construction industry in sustaining a workforce that is skilled, competent, and inclusive, both for the present and the future.

CITB is committed to ensuring that the construction industry remains at the forefront of skill development and innovation, fostering a robust and diverse workforce that is equipped to meet the evolving needs of the sector.

For more information, visit www.citb.co.uk

About the Federation of Master Builders

The Federation of Master Builders (FMB) is the largest trade association in the UK construction industry representing thousands of firms in England, Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland. Established in 1941 to protect the interests of small and medium-sized (SME) construction firms, the FMB is independent and non-profit making, lobbying for members' interests at both the national and local level.

The FMB is a source of knowledge, professional advice and support for its members, providing a range of modern and relevant business building services to help them succeed. The FMB is committed to raising quality in the construction industry and offers a free [Find a Builder](#) service to consumers.