

Final Project Report

Homebuilding Access Training Programme

October 2025 – December 2025

Commissioned by:

Construction Industry Training Board (CITB)

Delivered by:

Chesterfield College – Construction Skills Hub

Report completed by:

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1. Project Summary

The Homebuilding Access Training programme was delivered at a Construction Skills Hub based on a live housing development, offering a unique training environment that closely reflects real working conditions within the homebuilding industry. The hub enabled learners to develop practical skills within an active development, embedding learning in a real-life construction context.

The programme focused primarily on developing brickwork skills and was designed to support both new entrants to construction and existing labourers seeking to progress into more skilled site roles. Over a four to six week period, learners completed practical, hands-on training aligned to industry standards, with a strong emphasis on quality, safe working practices and productivity.

A key enrichment element of the programme was regular, structured tours of the live housing site. These visits enabled learners to observe and understand the different stages of housebuilding, from groundworks through to structural and finishing elements. This approach helped learners connect their training directly to how homes are built in practice, reinforcing industry expectations and standards at each stage of the build process.

Delivering training within a live development strengthened employer engagement and helped learners build confidence in a working environment that mirrors employment. The programme has demonstrated the value of real-world learning delivered through Construction Skills Hubs and has provided CITB with valuable insights to inform future delivery of Homebuilding Access Training.

2. Introduction

The Homebuilding Access Training programme was developed to respond to ongoing skills shortages within the construction industry by supporting both new entrants and existing labourers to become employment-ready within a live site environment. The overall context of the project was to provide participants with the practical skills, knowledge and site behaviours required to secure and sustain employment in homebuilding, while addressing gaps that are difficult to replicate through traditional training models.

The programme was intentionally delivered as a non-accredited course, which allowed the curriculum to be designed directly around the skills, tasks and behaviours required on site, rather than being constrained by qualification criteria. This flexibility enabled training content to reflect real employer expectations, current site practices and productivity requirements, ensuring learners developed skills that were immediately relevant and transferable to live working environments.

For new entrants, the programme aimed to remove barriers to entry by offering a short, intensive and realistic route into construction, enabling learners to develop foundational brickwork skills within a live site environment. Training focused on the safe use of tools and materials, basic setting out, interpreting drawings, and the construction of cavity and solid walling, alongside an understanding of site standards, health and safety expectations and working practices before entering employment.

For existing labourers, the project provided an opportunity to upskill while in work, developing industry-standard groundwork skills aligned to progression into more skilled roles. Delivery focused on accurate site setting-out using basic measuring and levelling equipment, interpreting drawings and sub-structure specifications, preparing sub-base and compacted hardcore, installing concrete beam-and-block floors with insulation and DPC, and developing effective communication and teamwork skills under site conditions.

Chesterfield College, and in particular the Construction Skills Hub, was keen to participate in delivering the Homebuilding Access Training programme due to a strong commitment to supporting skills development within the construction industry. The hub is located on a live housing development with a planned build lifespan of approximately ten years, offering a unique opportunity for participants to train within an active and evolving site environment. This allowed learners to observe and understand the full lifecycle of housebuilding, including the differences between traditional construction methods and modern methods of construction such as timber frame housing.

The programme also enabled the employment of a dedicated Stakeholder Engagement Officer, responsible for learner recruitment and engagement with a range of employers, helping ensure the training remained closely aligned to local labour market demand and routes into employment.

3. Aims and objectives of the project

The primary aim of the Homebuilding Access Training programme was to support new entrants into construction and existing employed labourers to develop the practical skills, knowledge and behaviours required to secure and sustain employment within the homebuilding sector. A key objective was to test whether a short, non-accredited programme delivered within a live housing development could provide a more effective and realistic route into site-based employment than traditional training models.

Specifically, the project aimed to:

- Equip new entrants with the foundational brickwork skills, health and safety knowledge and site awareness needed to become site-ready.

- Enable employed labourers to upskill in brickwork and groundworks through structured, site-relevant training that supports progression into more skilled roles.
- Align training directly to current site practices, standards and employer expectations.
- Generate insight into learner demand, employer engagement and the feasibility of delivering role-specific homebuilding training at Construction Skills Hubs.

4. Summary of budget and funding sources

The project was funded by the Construction Industry Training Board (CITB) as part of the Homebuilding Access Training programme. Funding covered programme design, delivery, project management, learner recruitment, employer engagement and reporting requirements. The funding also enabled the appointment of a dedicated Stakeholder Engagement Officer to support learner recruitment and employer liaison, ensuring alignment with labour market demand.

5. Delivery approach

The programme was delivered as a non-accredited training course, allowing the curriculum to be designed specifically around the skills required on live homebuilding sites rather than qualification criteria. The main focus of delivery was brickwork/groundwork skills, aligned to Apprenticeship Standards, ensuring relevance to recognised occupational standards while retaining flexibility.

Two delivery models were implemented:

- A four-week intensive programme for unemployed learners and new entrants to construction.
- A six-week upskilling programme delivered one day per week for employed labourers, enabling progression without disrupting employment.

Training was delivered at the Construction Skills Hub and supported through regular structured site tours of the live housing development. These visits allowed learners to observe different stages of housebuilding and understand how brickwork and groundworks integrate with other trades and modern methods of construction, including timber frame housing.

Throughout delivery, data was collected on learner enrolment, attendance, completion and progression by cohort, including distinctions between new entrants and existing labourers. Of the new entrant cohort, 14 out of 15 learners successfully completed the programme, and the employed labourer enrolled on the programme also achieved, demonstrating positive outcomes across both cohorts. Average course attendance

across the programme was 89%, indicating strong learner commitment and engagement with the delivery model.

Learner feedback was gathered at the end of the programme to capture perceptions of training quality, relevance, confidence gained and readiness for site-based employment. Employer engagement activity was also monitored in detail, capturing both positive engagement and instances where employers chose not to participate in or progress engagement with the programme. Where employer engagement did not progress, feedback was formally captured through a structured feedback document, enabling reasons for non-engagement to be identified and analysed.

This information was shared with CITB to support wider learning from the programme, providing insight not only into employer appetite for the programme but also the barriers and constraints affecting engagement. Collectively, the learner data, employer feedback and engagement analysis have provided CITB with robust evidence on learner demand, delivery effectiveness and the practical considerations associated with delivering site-aligned, non-accredited training within a live housing development.

6. Review

Overall, the project was successful in meeting its core objectives, particularly in testing the feasibility of delivering Homebuilding Access Training within a live housing development and generating learning to inform future delivery.

Employer engagement emerged as a key learning point for the programme. Due to the short delivery timeframe (three months), employer engagement activity had limited opportunity to mature and translate into participation, particularly in relation to the Labourer Upskilling Programme. Despite targeted engagement activity, many employers reported difficulties in releasing existing labourers for training due to workload pressures, programme timing and the challenge of backfilling roles on live sites. Employers also raised concerns around the terminology of 'labourers' completing the course and being recognised as skilled operatives in groundwork or bricklaying. Upon reflection, flyers marketing the courses should have identified skills and avoided overarching role titles. As a result, employer participation in the Labourer Upskilling Programme was lower than anticipated, with only one employed labourer enrolling and completing the programme against an original target of 35.

While several employers engaged positively with the Construction Skills Hub during the programme period, this did not convert into direct participation in the Homebuilding Access Training delivery. However, those relationships have continued beyond the programme, with employers contributing to curriculum development for future provision and agreeing to interview learners who successfully complete bricklaying Skills Bootcamps. Without the Homebuilding Access Training programme, engagement with these employers would not have progressed at the pace achieved.

Learner progression outcomes further demonstrate the effectiveness of the programme. Seven learners who completed the Homebuilding Access Training have progressed onto a Skills Bootcamp programme, designed to support direct transition into employment with engaged employers. In addition, three learners have moved into employment, including one learner who has secured full-time employment as a Technician at the Construction Skills Hub, directly contributing to ongoing delivery and sustainability. One learner has progressed into a multi-skills role with a builder, and the final learner has become a self-employed labourer.

The project also faced delivery challenges. As the Construction Skills Hub is located on a live housing development, inclement weather had an impact on delivery and learner experience, particularly during periods of poor weather. Exposure to real site conditions affected attendance for some learners and, in a small number of cases, influenced motivation to continue working within the construction industry. While this presented challenges, it also provided valuable insight into the realities of site-based employment and reinforced the importance of preparing learners for the physical and environmental demands of construction work.

Recruitment of new entrants also presented challenges. Several individuals identified during the tendering phase moved into alternative provision or employment prior to programme start, potentially influenced by delays between tender submission and contract award. A mobilisation period was therefore required to support additional marketing and learner engagement activity ahead of delivery.

Support from CITB's New Entrant Support Team (NEST) was effective throughout the delivery of the Homebuilding Access Training programme. NEST worked closely with the team to support learner recruitment, share intelligence on potential candidate pipelines.

In addition, CITB actively supported the programme by promoting it across its employer networks, increasing awareness of the programme and its objectives within the homebuilding sector. This activity helped raise the profile of the Construction Skills Hub and supported engagement with employers who may not otherwise have been aware of the programme. While not all employers were able to engage directly within the programme timeframe, this wider promotion contributed to longer-term employer relationships and interest in future delivery, including Skills Bootcamp provision aligned to live site employment opportunities.

Key learning from the programme highlights the importance of longer lead-in times for employer engagement and recruitment, alongside the need to plan for seasonal and weather-related impacts when delivering training within live site environments.

7. Recommendations

Based on learning from the delivery of the Homebuilding Access Training programme, the following recommendations are made to strengthen future delivery of similar provision.

1. Strengthen early-stage employer engagement activity and expectation-setting.

The programme highlighted the importance of engaging employers early and clearly communicating delivery models, participation requirements and anticipated time commitments. Future delivery would benefit from a structured employer engagement phase prior to programme start, allowing employers to make informed decisions about participation and supporting more realistic planning for upskilling activity alongside live site operations.

2. Enhance targeted marketing and recruitment approaches for new entrants.

Recruitment outcomes demonstrated the need for clearer and more targeted marketing activity for new entrants, particularly where programmes are short in duration and delivered in live site environments. Future delivery should place greater emphasis on early learner engagement, clear messaging around site-based delivery, and close coordination with referral partners to maximise participation and retention.

3. Position Homebuilding Access Training more clearly within a wider progression pathway.

Learning from the programme indicates that Homebuilding Access Training is most effective when learners and employers have clear visibility of progression routes beyond initial delivery. Future programmes should continue to formalise links into follow-on provision and employment opportunities, strengthening outcomes and reinforcing the value of participation for all stakeholders.

4. Develop a dedicated Homebuilding Access Training Programme targeted at 18–19 year olds who have completed two years of construction training at further education level.

CITB research shows that only around 24% of learners who complete construction training in further education progress into employment in the construction industry within six months, with many moving into other sectors. In contrast, the Construction Skills Hub is currently achieving progression rates of 67% of 16–18-year-olds moving directly into industry, largely due to daily exposure to live construction sites. A **Homebuilding Access Training Programme** could bridge the gap between college-based learning and employment, supporting learners who have achieved qualifications but are not yet fully work-ready.

8. Acknowledgements

The delivery team would like to acknowledge the support and contribution of the Construction Industry Training Board (CITB) for funding and commissioning the Homebuilding Access Training programme, and for their guidance throughout the project lifecycle.

We also acknowledge the support of CITB's New Entrant Support Team (NEST), whose involvement supported learner recruitment, progression planning and alignment with wider industry pathways.

Acknowledgement is given to Chesterfield College and the Construction Skills Hub, whose commitment to live-site training and employer engagement enabled delivery of the programme within a real housing development environment.

We also thank the employers who engaged with the programme, providing insight into workforce needs and supporting learner progression into further training and employment opportunities.

Finally, acknowledgement is given to the delivery team and Stakeholder Engagement Officer, whose work in learner recruitment, employer engagement and programme delivery was essential to the successful implementation of the programme.

9. Sustainability

The Homebuilding Access Training programme has created sustainable benefits that extend beyond the life of the commissioned delivery. A key outcome has been the establishment of a dedicated Stakeholder Engagement Officer role, originally supported through the programme, which will continue beyond its completion. This role will remain central to learner recruitment, employer engagement and progression planning, ensuring that the relationships and learning developed through the Homebuilding Access Training programme are sustained and built upon.

The programme has also directly contributed to the creation of a full-time Technician role at the Construction Skills Hub, filled by a participant who completed the Homebuilding Access Training programme. This appointment provides a tangible example of progression into sustained employment and strengthens the ongoing delivery capacity of the hub. The Technician role will support future training programmes, maintain site-based learning environments and contribute to the long-term sustainability of the Construction Skills Hub.

The Homebuilding Access Training programme has informed the design and delivery of subsequent provision at the Construction Skills Hub, particularly the development of Skills Bootcamp delivery in bricklaying. Building on employer relationships and learner demand generated through the programme, the initial plan is to deliver bricklaying Skills

Bootcamp provision to 36 learners, primarily new entrants to the construction industry, with a target of progressing at least 20 learners into sustained employment within the sector.

Sustainability is further supported through continued employer engagement established during the programme. Employers engaged through the Homebuilding Access Training programme are now supporting progression routes into Skills Bootcamps and employment, creating a clear pipeline from initial training through to work. The Construction Skills Hub will continue to provide a live site environment, ensuring that future delivery remains aligned to industry standards and employer expectations.

Finally, learning from the programme — including insights into recruitment, employer engagement and delivery within live site conditions — will be embedded into future programme design. This ensures that the impact of the Homebuilding Access Training programme continues to shape and improve construction skills delivery beyond the initial commissioning period.

Learner Case Study – Brandon

Brandon joined the Homebuilding Access Training programme as a new entrant to the construction industry, looking to develop practical skills and gain a clearer understanding of what working on a live building site involved. Delivered at the Construction Skills Hub, the programme provided Brandon with hands-on bricklaying training alongside regular exposure to a live housing development, allowing him to apply learning in a realistic site environment.

Throughout the programme, Brandon demonstrated strong engagement and commitment, developing both his technical bricklaying skills and his confidence working on site. The practical focus of the training, combined with exposure to industry standards and expectations, supported his progression and readiness for employment.

Following successful completion of the programme, Brandon was offered a **full-time** Technician role at the Construction Skills Hub, where he now supports tutors with delivery, preparation of training areas and learner support. His progression into employment has not only provided a positive outcome for him personally but has also strengthened the delivery capacity and sustainability of the hub.

Reflecting on his experience, Brandon said:

“I really enjoyed the bricklaying on the programme. Working in a real site environment gave me the confidence I needed, and it helped me realise that this is what I want to do. The training prepared me for the role I’m in now.”



Learner Case Study – Luke

Luke joined the Homebuilding Access Training programme as a new entrant to the construction industry, looking to get into homebuilding. Luke is from a family of 3 generations of unemployment due to medical conditions and initially found the course challenging due to caring responsibilities. In order to ensure his attendance on the course, the delivery team provided intense support and encouragement in the first few days. This mentoring had a great impact on Luke and we are delighted to report that Luke attended 100% of the new entrant course.

The course initiated core values of timekeeping, productivity and good communication, alongside trade-specific skills. This combination really worked for Luke, with the team commenting on the huge distance travelled in his ability across the course.

After completing the 4-week new entrant course, Luke progressed to a further 4-week skills bootcamp at the Construction Skills Hub and we are delighted to inform you that he has just secured employment with Rykneld Homes as a home improvement operative.