

CITB Assessor Infrastructure Project

The Construction Industry Training Board (CITB) has announced that it will fund a new 600,000 GBP scheme to increase the number of qualified on-site training assessors available across Great Britain. This in turn will increase the number of construction workers holding nationally recognised qualifications.

Apprenticeship and NVQ qualifications are common and lead to increased standards in the industry. On-site training assessments are targeted at construction workers who have the skills, experi-

ence and training but no formal qualifications. Assessors visit construction sites to confirm workers' skills and test their ability in the workplace and, if successful, award them a National Vocational Qualification (NVQ) or Scottish Vocational Qualification (SVQ).

The new programme comes following the results of research undertaken by CITB last year in which small and micro-sized construction firms highlighted an increasing need for on-site training assessors.

Richard Miller, Assessment & Verification Manager at CITB, commented: "Small and micro-sized firms have told us they need on-site training assessors to help qualify more construction workers across the UK. The Assessor Infrastructure project will give workers with the right skills and experience the opportunity to become qualified and get the rec-

ognition they deserve without being away from the job. CITB is committed to ensuring the construction industry has a fully qualified workforce that's competent to build the homes and infrastructure Great Britain needs."

Graham Warren, Asbestos Control and Abatement Division (ACAD) Manager at the Thermal Insulation Contractors Association (TICA), commented: "By our estimates, over 6,500 asbestos operatives and supervisors will require a National Vocational Qualification in the next five years. This funding from CITB will not only provide a real boost to assessor numbers and NVQ achievements, it also shows CITB is committed to proactively supporting the asbestos sector, which is invaluable."

(Source: CITB)





Digital Cheques

The UK is going to adopt an image-based cheque clearing system and from 30 October 2017 bank cheques will be cleared within one day. The Cheque and Credit Clearing Company (C&CCC) has announced the launch of an industry-wide image-based cheque clearing system that will speed up cheque processing significantly for customers across the UK. The waiting for five to six working days to get money will be cut down to just one day. Banks and building societies will individually decide when to launch the digital cheques but the whole industry shall be able to offer the service by the second half of 2018.

For customers, the new system will mean that if they pay in a cheque on a weekday they will be able to withdraw the funds by midnight on the next weekday (excluding bank holidays) at the latest.

Customers will still write cheques as they do today, and give or post them to recipients in exactly the same way as they always have. Cheque recipients will still be able to pay in cheques in the normal variety of ways, such as at a bank or building society, by post or at an ATM. This continuation of regular customer practice is particularly important for charities, which receive many donations via this payment method.

However, cheque imaging is also about provid-

ing more choice, and it means that some banks and building societies may offer their customers the additional option of paying-in an image of the cheque - by using a secure mobile banking app on their smartphone or tablet - rather than having to go to a bank to pay it in. Although this is likely to be a more convenient method for some, customers will still have the option of paying in cheques in exactly the same way as they do today, so there is absolutely no requirement for customers to use a smartphone or tablet to pay-in a cheque if they don't want to.

Currently, some banks including Barclays and Lloyds, offer the option to pay in cheques via pic-

tures on their banking apps. However, this service is available only for cheques issued by customers of the same bank.

James Radford, Chief Executive Officer of the Cheque and Credit Clearing Company, said:

"These changes will put cheques firmly in the 21st century, delivering real and important benefits for the many individuals, charities and businesses that regularly use cheques. Not only will cheques clear faster but banks and building societies may offer their customers the option of paying in an image of a cheque rather than the paper cheque itself."

(Source: www.chequeandcredit.co.uk)

New Legislation:

Duty to Report on Payment Practices and Performance

Late payment is the fundamental problem for many businesses as it impacts the financial liquidity of the company what can adversely affect their ability to complete contracted projects, and in the worst scenarios lead to insolvency. Approximately 41.5bn payments are overdue to SMEs by large businesses.

In April 2017 the new legislation came into force that requires large companies to report on their payment practices, policies and performance every six months. Compliance is mandatory, and the payment-related information will be available publicly for the first time. Anyone will be able to access the latest data on:

- standard payment terms
- average time taken for a business to pay an invoice from the date of receipt

- percentage of invoices paid in 30 days or fewer
- the proportion of invoices which were not paid within agreed terms
- the proportion of invoices paid in 30 days or less; paid between 31 to 60 days; and paid beyond 60 days.
- the amount of late payment interest owned and paid
- dispute resolution methods
- the availability of e-invoicing
- membership of a Prompt Payment Code

Section 3 of the Small Business, Enterprise and Employment Act 2015 (and, for limited liability partnerships (LLPs), the Limited Liability Partnerships Act 2000), introduce a duty on the UK's largest companies and LLPs to report on a half-yearly basis on their payment practices, policies and performance for financial years beginning on or after 6 April 2017.

This new requirement will increase the transparency. The information must be published through an online government's service and will be available to all interested parties, especially small businesses

so informed decision can be made who to trade with, negotiate better trade terms and challenge late payments.

The current size criteria for the reporting requirements relate to turnover, balance sheet total and an average number of employees:

- £36 million annual turnover
- £18 million balance sheet total
- 250 employees

The new legislation will reduce the fear of non- or late- payment for SMES, as the requirement to comply with reporting will put pressure on companies to avoid the long-term reputational damage. The Government also strengthen the importance of the Prompt Payment Code (more details in IBB Builder, March 2017 issue). Companies that have an excellent payment performance will benefit from this legislation as they could turn it into the marketing tool comparing themselves to poorly-performing competitors.

More details can be found here https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/587465/payment-practices-performance-reporting-requirements.pdf





Win More Work

There are numerous accreditation schemes available for the construction businesses and the need to obtain various accreditations can be costly and time consuming. By becoming assessed by Safety Schemes in Procurement (SSIP), the business satisfies the criteria for other SSIP members' schemes.

Safety Schemes in Procurement (SSIP) is an umbrella body recognised by the large numbers of buyers as it successfully assesses the contractors based on CDM 2015 Regulation and SSIP core criteria which are aligned to the Government-backed construction pre-qualification document PAS 91, what ensures consistency. It is easier for the contractor to obtain one accreditation rather than take part in several schemes, but at the same time, it gives freedom of choice regarding scheme supplier. SSIP is reducing the health and safety assessment costs and duplication while enabling cross-recognition between member schemes.

"SSIP assessments are all based on core criteria approved by the Health & Safety Executive (HSE). These core criteria describe what is required for a construction business to comply with basic health and safety law. The Core Criteria were originally published by HSE in Appendix 4 of the CDM 2007 Approved Code of Practice, and the SSIP Forum has adopted the Core Criteria, with our agreement, to become part of the SSIP Terms of Reference.

HSE's message for Clients, those who are procuring the services of suppliers to do construction work, is simple. HSE encourages Clients to accept a valid certification, based on an assessment by any of the SSIP Forum Member Schemes* as having met the Core Criteria, and Clients should not then require any further evidence at the prequalification stage."

Through an annual independent third-party audit, all SSIP accepted members' schemes demonstrate quality and standards. For instance, schemes approved by SSIP include amongst others:

- Constructionline
- Alcumus SafeContractor
- Contractors Health and Safety Assessment Scheme CHAS
- Exor H&S Qualified

- National House-Building Council (NHBC)-Safemark
- Safety Management Advisory Services
- Altius VA CDM Comply
- The Health & Safety Assessment Scheme
- British Standards Institution BSI
- NQA
- DNV Certification
- Build UK Group
- Health and Safety Executive HSE
- Construction Industry Council
- Electrical Contractors' Association

***For full list of accepted schemes visit
<http://SSIP.org.uk>***

If you are registered with one of the SSIP accepted schemes, then you can use this accreditation to gain membership with other SSIP member schemes without having to undergo duplicate applications. Alternatively, if you have been registered compliant with another SSIP member you can obtain registration with another scheme without any additional assessment via the Deem To Satisfy application.

(Source: SSIP)