

# Licensing to Crush the Cowboys

**Almost 80% of builders are calling for more regulation in the construction industry to end the tyranny of cowboy builders, according to the Federation of Master Builders (FMB).**

The FMB is calling on the Government to introduce a licensing scheme in construction as part of its new Agenda 'Raising the bar: A post-Grenfell agenda for quality and professionalism in construction'.

Brian Berry, Chief Executive of the FMB, said: "Until we introduce a licensing scheme in construction, cowboy builders will continue to run rampant in our industry. Licensing would ensure a minimum level of competence and professionalism and give consumers greater assurance when hiring a builder. Unlike in the US and Germany, anyone can be a builder in the UK. What this means is that we have allowed a significant minority of cowboy builders to give the whole construction industry a bad name. Our latest research shows that almost 80 per cent of our members are so fed up with rogue builders tarnishing their reputa-

tion, they are in favour of introducing a licensing scheme. Our research among consumers also shows that one third of home owners in the UK are so anxious about hiring a dodgy builder that they don't commission any building work whatsoever. What's more, the average home owner would spend around £40,000 on major home improvement projects over the next five years if they could be guaranteed a positive experience with their builder. It's time to release this pent up demand for building work through a licensing scheme consumers can trust."

Berry concluded: "Even more important than the economic benefits that would come from increasing quality and professionalism in the industry are the safety benefits. The Grenfell Tower tragedy reminded us of the price paid when things go wrong in the construction industry. Grenfell raised serious questions about standards, regulation and compliance within the construction sector and although we await the results of the Hackitt Review, we want to start a wider conversation about how we can drive up quality and professionalism in construction. As well as calling on the Government to introduce a licensing scheme for builders, the FMB's

new Agenda calls for mandatory warranties for building projects that require building control sign-off to protect consumers further. The FMB would also like to work with industry to develop a 'general builder' qualification which would seek to recognise the highest standards of professionalism in the industry."

Jason Ryan, a home owner living in West London, was a victim of a rogue building firm earlier this year. Ryan commented on the introduction of a licensing scheme in construction: "At the start of this year, builders were carrying out essential improvements to my home in West London. The whole process turned out to be an absolute nightmare. Our builder would often turn up late, or not at all, and communication was always poor. We would try to call him and often not hear back. The work they eventually carried out was sub-standard – for example, the grooves in the door frames were hacked into and were left uneven and messy. I think all builders should be required to have a licence to protect people like me from having these nightmarish experiences. It was very stressful and has put me off hiring a builder in the future unless I absolutely have to."

*(Source: FMB)*



# CEMEX GO

**Cemex is a global manufacturer of building materials like aggregates, cement, ready-mixed concrete and rail sleepers. Cemex UK has recently introduced the fully digital customer integration platform called Cemex Go.**

The latest digital technology for smartphones and desktops allow customers to place orders online, track deliveries, manage invoices and make payments for Cemex's building products including bagged and bulk cement, ready mixed concrete

and aggregates. Customers can access their account at any time and the information is delivered in real-time.

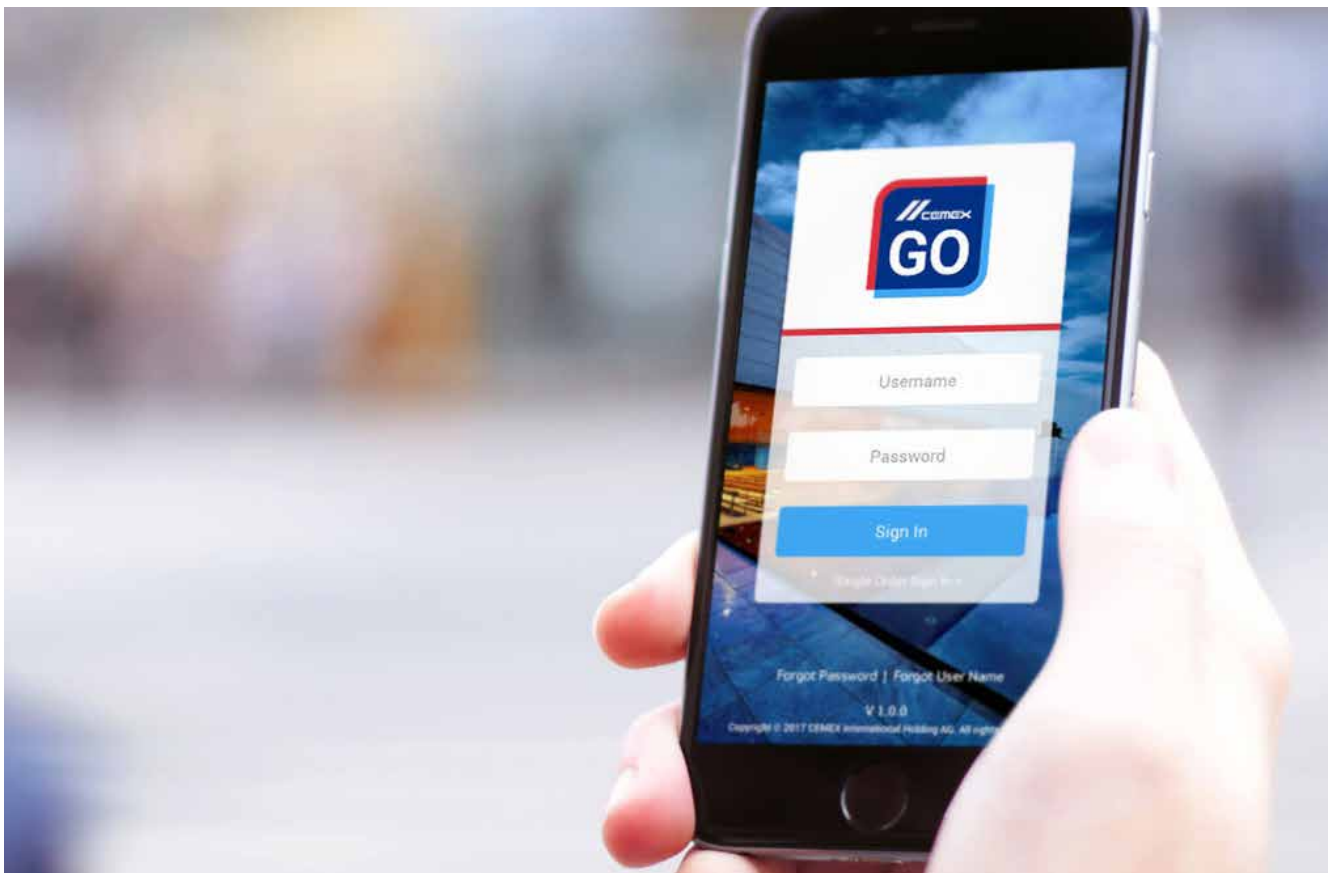
Michel Andre, Country President CEMEX UK comments "CEMEX Go is the first platform of its kind offered in our industry and creates an experience for our customers that is superior to anything that has been provided in the past. For our customers, doing business with CEMEX UK will be revitalized and will give real benefits in terms of time and efficiency."

One of the customers who will be using the new platform from today is Technic Concrete Floors. The company constructs concrete floors using traditional mesh reinforcement, steel and

polyfibres and has worked extremely closely with CEMEX UK, using their readymixed concrete. The floors are constructed in industrial settings throughout the UK. Darren Murgatroyd, Director comments "The introduction of CEMEX Go will undoubtedly bring massive benefits to our business."

We will be able to track the deliveries and look at efficiency levels/wastage, which in turn will support our environmental strategies and improved invoicing process. We are looking forward to working with CEMEX on this new digital platform."

*(Source: Cemex UK)*



# Apprenticeships at KIER's Latest Infrastructure Project In Luton

**Kier, working in joint venture (JV) with VolkerFitzpatrick delivering the Direct Air to Rail Transit (DART) system for the London Luton Airport is launching a skills academy in Luton to bolster local talent and provide training opportunities through the project that is set to return 200m in positive social impact over the next three years. The academy will provide apprenticeship opportunities and lifelong skills to hundreds of people in the local area and is being launched as the revolutionary DART system.**

As part of the academy the JV is offering 30 apprenticeships on the pioneering DART and will equip over 200 local residents with practical training courses to improve their skill set with courses

such as first aid. Working with the Learning Skills Partnership (LSP), an independent training provider, apprenticeship placements are now open to applications across a number of trades.

The JV will also engage with schools and colleges across Luton as it looks to inspire the next generation of talent to consider a role within the built environment, providing schoolchildren with training and skills in order to play a part in Luton's extensive pipeline of infrastructure projects.

Nigel Brook, Kier executive director, construction and infrastructure services, said: "We are committed to investing in the communities in which we work and addressing the skills shortage our industry faces. The development of this skills academy gives us a fantastic opportunity to not only engage with the next generation of local talent but also help with recruiting the 400,000 people a year the industry needs.

"We have exceptionally talented people working within our businesses who have helped deliver large infrastructure projects across the country, including the recently completed Mersey Gateway Bridge and current projects with HS2 and Crossrail, and its crucial we pass these skills down to those entering the industry. Our hope is that the iconic DART system

inspires many in the local area to rethink a career within the built environment."

The DART system is part of Luton's wider £1.5 billion transformation plan, and a pivotal infrastructure project for the local area, increasing capacity and speed to the fastest-growing major airport in the UK.

Kier is working with London Luton Airport Limited (LLAL) and Luton Borough Council to provide the DART system, a double-shuttle, fully automated and driverless system, approximately 2.1km in length to transport passengers between Luton Airport Parkway station and London Luton Airport in around five minutes, 24 hours a day. It will also significantly reduce the journey time from central London to the airport terminal to about 30 minutes, using the fastest train from St Pancras International.

The route will run between two purpose-built stations at Bartlett Square and the airport terminal, crossing a new landmark bridge over Airport Way. In peak time a service will leave each station every four minutes.

For more details on the apprenticeships available on the DART project, email [apprenticeships@kier.co.uk](mailto:apprenticeships@kier.co.uk).





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# Health, Safety and Environment Test

**The Construction Industry Training Board (CITB) has announced that its Health, safety and environment test will cost more from the 18th June. The increase is to 21.00. The test is required for application for a CSCS cards. It is an assessment of general knowledge to improve safety and productivity on site. CITB's comments about the "The increase will allow CITB to continue to reinvest in a product that meets the expanding health and safety requirements of construction, as well as keep up to date with developments in how best to assess the application of knowledge."**

The test has been recently updated and it includes new questions styles. For any tests taken after the 1 June 2018 applicants should revise from the new 2018 revision materials. Tests last for 45 minutes and have 50 questions. There are four types of the test:

- Operative test
- Labour test including L1 award
- Specialist test
- Managers and professional test

The price change only applies to the CITB Health, safety and environment test. The price of your CSCS card remains at £30.

CITB informs that "If you pre-book and pay for a test online or by phone before 18th June, but take your test after the 18th June, you will not be charged extra. Alternatively, if you buy test vouchers before the price increase, as the vouchers are valid for 12 months, you will not be charged extra."

*For more details about test visit the [www.citb.co.uk](http://www.citb.co.uk)*



# Recycling scheme for hard hats

**The construction companies are becoming more committed to minimising the impact of building works onto the environment. Most of the companies try to recycle as much waste as it is possible.**

The recent launch of the recycling scheme for hard hats was welcomed in the industry. Hard hats are mainly made of polypropylene. The life-span of a hard hat ranges from two to five years, depending on wear and tear. For the health and safety reasons the site managers should pay the attention for timely hat replacements. Plastic is toxic and it cannot be incinerated. Thousands of used hard hats are binned every month. If not recycled these items add to polluting waste.

There is new dedicated scheme introduced by the plastic recycling specialist Polymer Industries in cooperation with the waste management company Viridor. The site established hat recycling facilities allowed for collection of 150 hats in three months. These are shipped to the specialist factory where machinery crash hats, break them into components, shred into granules that are later used to make new products from plastic. The new products are of high quality recycled content.

Moreover, labourers benefit from the training and health and safety practice.

The Viridor company manager, Ian Poyser has said: "Hard hats aren't accepted for commercial recycling due to their complex plastic composition but we know our customers want us to identify a circular economy solution". A trial process was run with Babcock International Group which resulted in approximately 1,200 hats recycled.

Polymer Industries managing director Jason Goozée said: "We are working with Viridor in a way where I believe there has been no real commercial solution to date. Along with Viridor, we see that with the correct infrastructure and process capabilities in place, we can convert conventional waste into a reusable commodity.

"In the current climate where there is scrutiny over the use of plastics, we hope to show that it is not always necessary to design plastics out of our lives, but instead to design the best appropriate means of recovering and recycling them."

The new scheme is currently available in the South West with potential for further expansion for other companies looking to maximise sustainable waste management opportunities.

*(Source: Viridor)*



# Be Onsite

**Skills gap within the construction industry is affecting the performance of many businesses. The recruitment of labourers is essential for timely projects delivery. Last month, Lord Chancellor and justice secretary David Gauke has urged employers within construction industry to consider recruiting more ex-offenders. The not-for-profit project by LendLease called “Be Onsite” is promoting employment of ex-prisoners. This award-winning campaign is helping people from excluded groups to find the job and get back to normal life.**

The aim of Be Onsite is to decrease the skills shortages within the construction industry with the employment of the skilled ex prisoners. Unfortunately contractors often avoid employing people with criminal records due to worries about their honesty, reliability. In reality 60% of employers who decide to employ ex prisoners agree that they work even harder than other workers. Be Onsite provides the pre employment training and the onsite experience and ensures that regardless of the persons circumstances, they are committed to make a change in their lives and work hard to prove it.

Research done by Working Links shows that 55% will use the information of the applicant's conviction to reject candidate, while only approximately 22% of employers knowingly employ ex-offenders. Employers

According to the numbers given by Be Onsite, it costs society £35,000-£75,000 to keep the offender in prison for a year. Approximately 75% of

people with criminal records return to crime. Be Onsite says that 99% of their workers do not re-offend. Real training and opportunities change their life.

Skills Funding Agency figures for years 2013-2014 shows that there were over 30,000 offender learning enrolments on construction courses in the English prison education system.

Be Onsite create skilled workers by searching for individuals with criminal record who are willing to make a change in their lives and sustain a career. The organisation provides the industry-specific training to up-skill the future labourers. The applicant is given the on site experience, counselling and practical support. The prolonged support allows such workers to stay on track and do not re-offend.

Be Onsite can provide skilled workers for most of construction projects.

Visit their website [www.beonsite.org.uk](http://www.beonsite.org.uk) and learn more on how to recruit trained labourers.



# Huge fines for height safety failings

**During work at height special precautions have to be taken to avoid risk of workers falling down and causing injury. Risks connected with working at height include fall from an edge, through an opening or fragile surface, fall from ground level into an opening in a floor or a hole in the ground. Work at height does not include a slip or a trip on the level, as a fall from height has to involve a fall from one level to a lower level. Also it does not include walking up and down a permanent staircase in a building.**

There are huge fines for construction companies who fail to ensure the safety of workers working at heights. The purpose of The Work at Height Regulations 2005 is to prevent death and injury caused

by a fall from height. Employers and managers who control work at height are required to follow the regulations. They must make sure work is properly planned, supervised and carried out by competent people. This includes using the right type of equipment for working at height.

The Regulations apply to all work at height and implies duties on employers, those who control any work at height activity like construction or building managers. The Work at Height Regulations 2005 requires builders to ensure:

- all work at height is properly planned and organised
- those involved in work at height are competent
- the risks from work at height are assessed, and appropriate work equipment is selected and used
- the risks of working on or near fragile surfaces are properly managed
- the equipment used for work at height is properly inspected and maintained

Glasgow Sheriff Court heard on 22nd October 2015, how a self-employed joiner was working on a construction site at Claremont Terrace in Glasgow

when he fell 3.6 metres onto a pile of timber cut-offs, fracturing his ribs and spine. An investigation by the Health & Safety Executive (HSE) found that although Fleming Buildings had a risk assessment in place, there were inadequate measures in place to prevent falls through a void in the roof of the building.

Fleming Buildings Limited of Auchinloch Road, Lenzie, pleaded guilty to breaching Regulation 6(3) of the Work at Height Regulations 2005, and Section 33(1)(c) of the Health and Safety at Work etc. Act 1974. It was fined £9,335.

HSE inspector Graham Mitchell said after the hearing: "Falls from height remain one of the most common causes of work related fatalities in this country and the risks associated with working at height are well known. This incident might have been prevented if suitable and sufficient measures had been in place such as a crash desk or safety net."

Regulations set rules for ladders, working platforms, guard rails, scaffolding and all other fall prevention measures.

***Comprehensive guidance is available at [www.hse.gov.uk](http://www.hse.gov.uk)***







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# Pay rise for construction workers from June 2018

**The construction industry joint council (CIJC) agreement was reached last month and will ensure the price and allowance rise for construction industry workers working within the CIJC scheme including bricklayers, carpenters and painters. The agreement sets the minimum payment rate for craft workers for £12.31 an hour. This will apply from Monday the 25th June. Another increase is set for June 2019 at the level of 2.9%. In addition to this, the travel allowance will be raised. The tax free allowance will increase in line with inflation, however lodging allowances will increase by nearly eight (7.8) per cent to £40 a night in 2018.**

Moreover, the industry sick pay is to be increased and extended. It will rise to £130 per week (paid in addition to statutory sick pay) an increase of 6.1 per cent and it will now be paid for 13 weeks, an increase on the 10 weeks it is currently paid for. The industry death benefit, paid via the B&CE, will increase from £32,000 to £40,000. If a worker is killed at work or travelling to and from work their family receives dou-

ble that amount. There has also been a significant increase of 6.5 per cent in the payment for first year apprentices who will receive £5.50 an hour. The increases in the workers and apprentices pay and benefits will attract new entrants into the industry.

Jerry Swain, the Unite national officer for construction commented: "This deal is a strong step in the right direction and will give construction work-

ers a well-deserved pay increase. The increases in allowances and other benefits, underline the value of working under an industrial agreement and being part of collective bargaining arrangements.

He added: "Construction workers need to remain vigilant that employers actually pay the agreed pay rates. Too often in construction employers try to boost their profits by failing to pay agreed increases."

GMB national officer Ross Murdoch said: "Given the current climate in the wider construction industry and overall economic climate, this deal is both a recognition of a hard-working, highly-skilled workforce and a demonstration of real commitment to maintaining meaningful joint national industrial agreement."

"As further significant construction projects emerge over the next few years, this deal offers genuine hope of retaining the much needed skills for the industry, as well as attracting new apprentices, with the percentage uplift for apprentice rates further reinforcing the importance of this latter point."

