

PRESS RELEASE

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Built environment professions welcome Fair Access Panel report

The Construction Industry Council (CIC), Royal Institute of British Architects (RIBA), Royal Town Planning Institute (RTPI) and Chartered Institute of Building (CIOB) unanimously welcome the findings of the Fair Access to the Profession Panel's paper published yesterday.

Highlighting the current challenges facing young people wishing to pursue a professional career in a number of industries (including architecture and surveying), the report outlined a series of recommendations to encourage a wider pool of talented people from different backgrounds into the professional body. This would be established as part of a longer term plan not only to improve the economy's prospects, but to also for the built environment profession itself.

The following suggestions were of key interest to the profession:

- Effective early career mentoring before young people make their GCSE or A-Level choices
- Taster schemes for students including work observation, pre-application advice and interviews, shadowing undergraduates and information sessions for parents
- Professional internships for students as an access point to top universities
- Promotion of a long-term programme designed to encourage and increase connections between design and construction industry professionals, forming a knowledge community centred on areas of expertise, such as sustainability
- Cross-organisational approaches to improving access to the profession.

Keith Clarke, Chairman at the Construction Industry Council (CIC) and CEO of Atkins said: "Alan Milburn and his team are to be congratulated on an excellent report on the UK professions. It is sad to say that we have not made material progress in sexual, racial or class equality in the major professions in the UK but it is an agenda that a number of us are expending considerable effort upon improving."

RIBA President and contributor to the report, Sunand Prasad said: "This is an excellent and thorough report, and I am pleased to have had the opportunity to contribute on the panel. In collaboration with our partners in the built environment, we will examine the recommendations

to be actioned by the professions - that way we will have the most traction in terms of career progression. RIBA will work with CIC to organise a conference of members bodies to begin to address the challenge set by Unleashing Aspiration. There are already a number of areas of best practice in the built environment professions and construction industry, and we will examine how they can be harnessed to help achieve the step change that the report calls for.”

Sue Percy, Director of Professional Service at the Royal Town Planning Institute said:
“The RTPI welcomes the Panel’s report, which supports our view that in order to plan effectively for sustainable communities, the profession needs to be representative of the communities it serves. We are looking at what we can do to promote the profession to people of all backgrounds, including the important role played by vocational qualifications, apprenticeships, and the new 14-19 diploma. We look forward to working with other professions within the Construction Industry Council to respond to the important challenges laid down by the Panel’s report.”

Michael Brown, Deputy Chief Executive of the CIOB commented: “The CIOB is a good example of how a professional body has successfully extended access to professions through widening the scope of its intake. This has been achieved without lowering the standards of entry, but by addressing the barriers that exist to obtaining the required qualifications. We believe our experience could be applied to other industries.”

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Notes to editors

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