CIC BUILT ENVIRONMENT PROFESSIONS TOGETHER

IMPACT OF ASSESSMENT REFORM ON BUILT ENVIRONMENT TECHNICAL & PROFESSIONAL APPRENTICESHIPS

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TECHNICAL APPRENTICESHIP CONSORTIUM

Acknowledgements

The **Construction Industry Council** is the representative forum for professional bodies, research organisations and specialist business associations in the construction industry. CIC uses expertise to shape a built environment that delivers a better society and a better world, bringing built environment professionals together - sharing a collective interest in enhancing the industry for a greater positive impact and contribution to society.

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The **Built Environment Futures Assembly (BEFA)** is a powerful leadership forum for the built environment sector to build future-facing capacity, capability and competency through shared knowledge, learning and innovation. Supported by the University of the Built Environment, BEFA serves as a centre of excellence – a partnership focused on facilitating knowledge exchange, thought leadership, commissioning innovative projects and initiatives. It recognises and aggregates best practices for the built environment.

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Since 2010, TAC has supported the development and management of apprenticeship standards in England and Wales, which have enabled over 15,000 apprenticeship starts in the built environment sector.

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Foreword

This report addresses a question of real strategic importance for our sector: how apprenticeship assessment can be simplified without weakening the standards of competence on which quality, safety and public trust and confidence depend.

Although data collection methodologies can vary, and exact numbers can be difficult to determine, there is a consensus that the construction and built environment sector faces a significant challenge in replenishing and reskilling its workforce across both technical and professional cohorts. The capacity and capability of this part of the built environment workforce has a disproportionate impact on the overall outcomes of the sector. It encompasses those who lead and manage the clienting, design, planning, procurement, construction, delivery and maintenance of our country's built assets. Misalignments or shortfalls in competency in this group have the potential to cascade down into the construction industry supply chain and create a multiplier effect leading to defects, waste and rework, poor site productivity, value for money challenges and broader system inefficiency. As such, we believe there is much at stake.

As we start to see structural changes in the next generation's desire to pursue academic versus vocational learning pathways, this means that we need a fit for purpose skills system that works for professional and technical trainees across all routes into work, both classroom and workplace based and is ultimately underpinned by a consensus on professional standards.

Apprenticeships are an increasingly vital means of meeting this new entrant demand. They provide a substantial route into professional careers and one that employers, providers, professional bodies and apprentices have spent years building.

We absolutely support the intention behind assessment reform. A system that is less duplicative and easier to navigate should reduce unnecessary barriers to benefit apprentices, employers and providers alike, particularly where current arrangements impede successful apprenticeship completion. However, simplification cannot come at the expense of quality, as assessment is how apprentices demonstrate that they can operate safely, ethically and effectively in roles that shape homes, buildings, infrastructure and communities.

This is why the report's recommendations are so important. They call for the professional and regulatory bodies to collaborate and speak with a collective voice in shaping assessment reform, working with Government, Skills England, employers and awarding organisations, with the Construction Industry Council (CIC) acting as a key conduit for practical, sector-wide solutions. It emphasises the need for sufficient stability and time to test reforms properly, identify unintended consequences and avoid rushed changes that weaken outcomes.

Crucially, it stresses that changes to apprenticeship assessment, accreditation and professional qualifications must preserve clear, accessible routes to professional registration. Reforms should avoid unnecessary barriers or duplication while maintaining confidence in professional standards and competence. The report calls on professional institutions to engage employers, apprentices, trailblazer groups, peer review assessors and mentors, so that assessment reform is shaped by those who understand both professional standards and workplace competence.

If assessment reform were to break the link between apprenticeships and professional qualifications, it would risk creating additional barriers for apprentices, unnecessary duplication for employers and uncertainty for providers.

This report does not argue against reform. Rather, it argues for reform that works: changes that protect robust competence assessment, respect professional standards and assessment processes, whilst maintaining alignment with wider competence expectations, including those associated with the Building Safety Act. If we get this right, we can strengthen apprenticeships as reliable and rewarding routes into professional practice - helping to deliver the professional and technical capacity, capability and competency the sector urgently needs.

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Introduction

Across the four nations of the UK and Northern Ireland, skills policy is devolved. This leads to differences in the priorities, approaches and mechanisms related to skills, resulting in education and training programmes varying in design, development, delivery, funding and quality assurance.

The term 'skills' relates to a wide array of programmes, but most often includes apprenticeships, vocational qualifications, adult (or post age-19) training, and work-based learning.

This paper relates specifically to the apprenticeship system in England, where apprenticeship assessment is a distinct element of the apprenticeship programme, and marks the final assessment of competence against an occupational standard.

Reform of apprenticeships in England has been continual in recent decades, the biggest of which came from the Richard Review of Apprenticeships[1] in December 2012, through which:

- Employer leadership of apprenticeships and skills was implemented
- Occupational standards[2], defining the competence of apprentices at the end of the apprenticeship, were introduced
- End Point Assessment (EPA)[3] was brought in to ensure apprentices could fully demonstrate the occupational standard set out
- An apprenticeship levy[4] was placed on employers (whose payroll was above £3million per annum at a rate of 0.5%) to fund apprenticeship training and assessment, with this implemented from April 2017.

With these aims and aspirations, employers, working in tandem with government, could for the first time define and develop a far broader range of apprenticeships, with these available at levels 2 to 7, and in occupations where they had never existed before.

This has resulted in a major shift in the culture and perceptions of apprenticeships, with:

- Employers designing and developing apprenticeships, covering a vast array of traditional trades as well as technical and professional roles
- Employers using the apprenticeship model to attract, train and retain talent
- Apprenticeship outcomes aligned to industry and regulatory outcomes
- Apprenticeships supporting and enabling more dynamic routes to professional qualification (or registration); and
- The apprenticeship brand growing in stature and approaching near parity of esteem with long established academic pathways.

[1] richard-review-full.pdf
[2] Developing an occupational standard - GOV.UK
[3] Develop an end-point assessment plan - GOV.UK
[4] Pay Apprenticeship Levy - GOV.UK

However, skills policy is set to change once more with new approaches being introduced by the Labour Government through the implementation of the plans set out in the Post 16 Education and Skills White Paper, which was published in October 2025[5]. However, skills do not sit in isolation from education or the economy, with the Government's aim to 'deliver world-leading skills system' reliant on creating the opportunity and growth through the 'Get Britain Working'[6], 'Industrial Strategy'[7] and 'Plan for Change'[8] approaches.

The key challenges faced include:

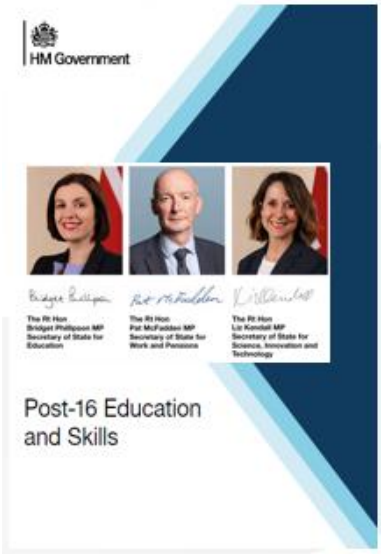
- Skills Shortages: 900,000 more skilled workers needed by 2030[9]
- NEETS rising to 1 in 7 young people[10]
- Financial Stability and employer investment falling by 20%
- 44% of HE providers forecast a deficit.

With the ambitions set being:

- Two thirds of young people participating in higher level training (level 4+) by age 25 (up from 50%)[11]
- 10% in higher technical / apprenticeships (L4/5) by 2040.

The post 16 skills white paper sets out the approach, considering these ambitions and key challenges, and is prioritising:

- A **youth guarantee scheme**[12] to offer funded work placements to unemployed youths (after 18 months in unemployment)
- Introduction of Vocational Level (V level) qualifications, to sit between A levels and T levels as an alternative for full time learners
- **Reform of the apprenticeship system**[13], with a focus on **apprenticeship assessment**[14] and 'faster' approval of apprenticeships[15]
- Introduction of some short courses (or apprenticeship units) in priority areas[16]
- Significant changes to the current apprenticeship levy to a 'Growth and Skills Levy' from April 2026[17], increasing 'flexibility' in the use of these funds for apprenticeships and short courses.



[5] https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/68f518ee06e6515f7914c7ce/Post-16_Education_and_Skills_white_paper_Accessible_Version.pdf
[6] https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/67448dd1ece939d55ce92fee/get-britain-working-white-paper.pdf
[7] https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/the-uks-modern-industrial-strategy-2025
[8] https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/6751af4719e0c816d18d1df3/Plan_for_Change.pdf
[9] Assessment of priority skills to 2030 - GOV.UK
[10] Participation in education, training and employment age 16 to 18, Calendar year 2024 - Explore education statistics - GOV.UK
[11] Prime Minister unveils reforms to transform further and higher education - GOV.UK
[12] Almost a million young people to benefit from expanded support, new training, and work experience opportunities - GOV.UK
[13] Understanding the apprenticeship assessment reforms and what they mean for you, by Gemma Marsh – Skills England
[14] Changes to apprenticeship assessment, 2025 to 2026 - GOV.UK
[15] Britain's growth sectors to get major skills boost from new 'fast track' apprenticeships reforms - GOV.UK
[16] Major employment drive to help unlock 200,000 new jobs and apprenticeships for next generation - GOV.UK
[17] Find training and employment schemes for your business - The Growth and Skills Levy

To financially support these priorities:

1. Employers will (from April 2026) only be able to access their levy funds for a period of 12 months rather than 24 months (releasing significant funds to pay for short courses and foundation apprenticeships, as well as apprenticeships)
2. Funding for level 7 apprenticeships for those over the age of 22 was removed on 1 January 2026, and
3. We are now seeing the initial stages of apprenticeship 'streamlining' which will reduce the number of available apprenticeship occupations through defunding[18,19].

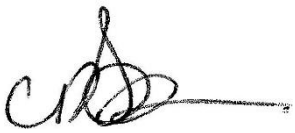
In carrying out these actions, existing apprenticeship levy funds will be turned into 'growth and skills' funds, with the Government placing and positioning funding focus on the delivery of short courses, a focus on entry routes to employment for those aged 19-24, and far less attention on technical and professional areas, especially where upskilling and progression could be undertaken through directly employer funded activity.

Whilst an initial list of defunded apprenticeships has been published[20], which includes the facilities management supervisor[21] in the construction and built environment sector, the need to reduce spending against the apprenticeship levy to cover alternative skills products is set to continue. Decisions on the continued funding of apprenticeships will consider the 'public value of apprenticeships', and with that further apprenticeships across all sectors will likely be defunded where the following, amongst other, considerations might apply:

1. Low levels of apprenticeship starts and retention rates
2. Low qualification (apprenticeship) achievement rates (QAR)
3. The typical age of the apprentice on the apprenticeships:
   i. the Government may seek to implement age caps on some apprenticeships, as indicated in the recent announcement for level 2 business administrator to those under the age of 25[22] or
   ii. remove funding altogether (as it has done at level 7[23])
4. If an apprenticeship is perceived to be replacing previously directly funded 'on the job training', such as that which was previously available as a short course.

These considerations may place a number of the technical and professional apprenticeships in the construction and built environment at risk, and it is likely that we will see some of these routes defunded in the coming months.

However, in this paper, we will focus on the reform of apprenticeship assessment and the impact this may have on the technical and professional apprenticeships in the construction and built environment sector.



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[18] Employer fears spread over apprenticeship 'streamlining'
[19] Major employment drive to help unlock 200,000 new jobs and apprenticeships for next generation - GOV.UK
[20] Major employment drive to help unlock 200,000 new jobs and apprenticeships for next generation - GOV.UK
[21] Facilities management supervisor / Skills England
[22] New level 2 admin apprenticeship limited to under-25s
[23] Apprenticeship funding rules 2025 to 2026

Apprenticeships in the Built Environment Sector

Within the '**construction and built environment'** sector, there are 120 individual occupational standards now available for employers to employ and train apprentices, with 94 actively available for funded starts[24]. Throughout this report, the term 'built environment' is largely used to encompass construction.

These occupations can be split into levels, with the following apprenticeships approved, of which a number link directly to professional qualification/registration outcomes, or state the requirement for professionally accredited qualifications within these:

Level	Approval Status				Professional qualification/registration and/or accreditation required?
	Approved for delivery (live starts)	**Paused for starts**	**In development**	**Retired**	
2	40	2 (1 with no EPAO / 1 with delivery issue)	0	5	0
3	31	0	1	3	8
4	9	1 (no EPAO)		1	7
5	0	1 (no EPAO)	1	0	1
6	12	0	0	2	14
7	2	1 (no EPAO)	0	0	3
TOTAL	**94**	**5**	**2**	**11**	**30**

There are now three further 'foundation apprenticeships' available, introduced in 2025 in building services engineering, finishing trades and onsite trades[25] – the aim being to provide an additional level 2 entry route to employment and training[26]. As of March 2026, three further apprenticeship units were also approved, with these being: 'Solar PV installation and maintenance' and 'Electrical vehicle (EV) charging point installation and maintenance' at level 3, and 'Permanent modular building assembly' at level 2[27].

These apprenticeships are mostly based on existing occupations in the trades and professions, and cover the skills needs for housing, infrastructure, repair and maintenance, and increasingly retrofit. Many occupations offer entry routes to trade occupations, such as carpentry and joinery, plumbing and heating, bricklaying, and domestic electricians, whilst others open routes into and through the professions, with apprenticeships in civil engineering, building services engineering, surveying, town or transport planning, which enable a number of entry points and progression options, right through to chartership.

Newer, inter- or multi-disciplinary occupations are not yet defined in the form of an occupational standard, which means apprentices cannot yet be recruited into new skills areas, such as Artificial Intelligence.

A good number of sector occupational standards have, however, been updated to reflect new skills demands, and now include competences such as those related to digital and information management, sustainable practice, and reference new industry and regulatory requirements, such as the Building Safety Act, but updating has been sporadic and where capacity in the system exists, resulting in a number of occupations in need of revision to reflect current and (short-term) future skills demands.

[24] Apprenticeship search / Skills England (accurate as of 18th March 2026)
[25] Apprenticeship search / Skills England (accurate as of 18th March 2026)
[26] An introduction to foundation apprenticeships, by Jonathan Mitchell – Skills England (accurate as of 18th March 2026)
[27] Apprenticeship search / Skills England (accurate as of 18th March 2026)

Other essential and supporting occupations are often hidden within other Skills England defined 'routes'[28], for example:

- Environmental practitioners and sustainability professionals are found in the 'agriculture, environment and animal care' and 'business and administration' routes respectively
- Electro-mechanical engineer, engineering design technician, geotechnical engineer, engineering surveyor and tunnel engineer are found in the 'engineering and manufacturing' route
- Project management and information management are both found in the 'business and administration' route
- Digitally focused occupations are found in the 'digital' route.

The current 'sector routing' presentation of apprenticeship occupations, including within the occupational maps, makes it difficult to fully appreciate the breadth and diversity of apprenticeship opportunities across the built environment. As a result, these options can be challenging to navigate and contextualise. However, the technical and professional competences delivered by these apprenticeships are equally critical to delivering construction and built environment projects. They support driving forward productivity, efficiency and innovation; enabling routes for businesses to respond to the requirements under the Building Safety Act, such as effectively utilising and managing 'golden thread' data and information.

Whilst sector employers actively utilise these occupations, at present we cannot extract from Government data sources apprenticeship starts, completions and achievements for these supporting apprenticeships. These occupations also need to ensure that they continue to deliver for sector employers reflecting future-facing needs. Consideration of employer requirements needs to be voiced regardless of the apprenticeship format or policy approach.

Employers and apprentices need to determine which apprenticeship is needed from the outset, as any move (without completing) between apprenticeships as business and personal needs change is very difficult to navigate – with training providers often penalised financially and in terms of apprenticeship accountability framework, funding agency and Ofsted reporting metrics (which have significant focus on apprentice retention and achievement). This can be problematic on apprenticeship programmes which are highly technical and/or take longer to achieve, such as those in the discipline specific professional space, and where 'stepping stone' apprenticeship pathways may not have been used to full effect.

What has been achieved?

We have now reached a decade of apprenticeship delivery in the 'Richard Review' format – which has resulted in far more occupations being open to employers, who, prior to these changes, could not recruit new talent and train apprentices in the skills demanded by their businesses, nor could many employers progress, upskill or reskill existing employees through the apprenticeship pathway. This, when combined with the introduction of the apprenticeship levy in 2017, further focused investment on apprenticeships.

If we consider the 30 technical and professional occupations - those solely linked to professional qualification (registration) or with specific requirements for professionally accredited programmes within apprenticeships - at levels 3 to 7 in the built environment sector, we have seen (since August 2020), over 41,000 starts on these programmes, with numbers rapidly rising in the years 2017 to 2020 as occupational standards became available, and we are now seeing **a steady intake of around 6,500 apprentice starts each year**[29]. Further information on starts and achievements can be found in Annex A.

[28] Occupational Maps: Skills England

[29] GOV.UK, DfE Data provided via Explore Education Statistics (accessed 13/04/2026): https://explore-education-statistics.service.gov.uk/data-tables/permalink/b152bb85-1ccb-46e5-e7c7-08de72e09202

This is a significant achievement and investment for this sector, with:

- Each apprentice requiring a salary, which often rises throughout the duration of the apprenticeship, with apprentices often offered additional payments on completion and on professional qualification
- Employers providing (paid) time to learn 'off the job' as a minimum (often known as the 20% rule[30]) – with the training funded either through levy funds or Government co-investment
- Employers proactively providing the opportunity for apprentices to develop their competence through additional learning in the workplace, work shadowing, professional development and in many cases, additional on the job training, to enable the apprentice to demonstrate competence by the end of their apprenticeship and in a timely manner, and
- Many employers supporting apprentices with mentors and professional development programmes (in addition to line management).

Where this approach is taken, there is true partnership and co-investment which works well between the employer, training partner and apprentice, and results in apprentices being supported, trained and put forward for end point assessment in a timely manner, and achievement recorded.

However, starts are only one aspect of the English apprenticeship system. Achievements, recorded when apprentices successfully complete training and pass the end point assessment, are hugely important.

In the case of the 30 technical and professional occupations in the built environment sector, we have recorded **nearly 8000 achievements since the 2017/18 academic year**, with the numbers achieving in a typical year now reaching **around 2500 per annum** – a vast improvement in recent years.

This may appear low compared to apprentice starts, but these achievements have come from apprentices who are typically on longer duration programmes, of between three and six years, so achievements will only be recorded in future years.

The reporting period for these achievements has also been affected by Covid-19; where apprentices were employed and trained during the pandemic and have faced significant challenges in accessing and finding the right variety of work to complete their apprenticeship in these years, as well as a huge shift in working patterns.

Where apprentices have sat their end point assessment (EPA), there is on **average a 93% pass rate** – showing that apprentices are being well prepared for this element of independent assessment and the demonstration of competence through the apprenticeship programme.

What are the challenges?

That said, too many apprentices are recording 'non-achievement of the End Point Assessment' element of the apprenticeship, with the **'Qualification Achievement Rate (QAR)[31]' being on average 60% in the 2024/25 academic year**. However, these rates vary vastly between individual occupations and between training providers. Whilst many occupations are seeing rises at a national level, some occupations remain stubbornly low, and some report achievement rates as low as 37%[32]. Again, there are a range of factors for this including:

- Employer, apprentice and training provider understanding, preparation and readiness for final assessment (especially where professional qualification is embedded)

[30] Apprenticeships: off-the-job training - GOV.UK
[31] Qualification achievement rates 2024 to 2025 - GOV.UK
[32] Achievement and retention rates in the construction and built environment sector: https://explore-education-statistics.service.gov.uk/data-tables/permalink/f071552a-83dc-425a-ba9e-08de72dfeafa (data accessed 13/04/2026)

- Time, support and/or facilities provided to apprentices to complete the EPA
- Training provider access to, and availability of, industry experienced and competent professionals throughout the training programme, to support teaching and learning, progress reviews, mentoring and support, and now also in final assessment (particularly for integrated degree apprenticeships)
- Apprentice applications for EPA not being checked or completed at EPA gateway application and during final assessment submission
- Line managers and/or mentors taking considerable time to 'sign off' apprentices as ready for the built environment for EPA (and often professional review), even though the training plan should mean a concurrent focus on exposure to competences in a sensible timeframe
- Availability of application and assessment dates from end point assessment organisations (EPAO)
- Availability of appropriately qualified and trained assessors to carry out EPA
- Partial completion of EPA.

Similarly, we are also seeing an **average retention rate of 60%,** which also shows that too many apprentices in the technical and professional apprenticeships are either:

- dropping out of the programme early (for a wide variety of reasons), or
- not being put forward for, or are not willing to sit, the final assessment if they reach the EPA gateway point.

However, anecdotal evidence from employers tells us that those apprentices who do reach EPA gateway, but do not sit the EPA itself, often have achieved the underpinning academic award (such as HNC, HND, degree) and remain in the business as active members of the technical and professional team.

It is evident that more must be done to inform[33], support and prepare[34] apprentices for final assessment, with the roles and responsibilities[35] of each stakeholder, to which all parties commit[36] to at the outset of the apprenticeship, communicated and enforced. This is particularly important for micro and small businesses that may struggle in terms of availability of resource to continually support, guide and monitor the changing requirements for apprenticeship delivery, assessment and monitoring.

The recent changes to degree apprenticeships, where the final assessment of competence has been embedded (or integrated) into the degree qualification, have yet to demonstrate whether the 'backlog' and intended improvements to outcomes, especially to the QAR metrics, will truly be achieved. To date, only a small number of the degree apprenticeships in the built environment sector have been modified, approved by government and are operational, with apprentices on programme only expected to come to final assessment in the next few years[37].

Many of these initial integrated degree apprentice cohorts will have embarked on non-integrated apprenticeships before being transferred to the new model: this has already proven to confuse and challenge employers, training providers and apprentices, with many professional institutions moderating their approaches to professional qualification so as not to disadvantage them.

We will need to heed the lessons learned from these recent changes to apprenticeships in order to truly understand and act on their implications, to support and mitigate risks arising from apprenticeship assessment reform, and determine whether any improvements are realised in response to the challenges faced.

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[33] Understanding end-point assessments (EPA)
[34] Preparing for an end-point assessment (EPA)
[35] Roles and responsibilities
[36] Commitment Statement
[37] Response to Government consultation... | Construction Industry Council

The value of integrating professional standards and assessment processes within apprenticeships

Occupational standards, when they are designed and developed, should meet the requirements of the professional, regulatory or statutory body (PSRB) for the occupation, with Skills England seeking this evidence and confirmation from these bodies at approval stage[38].

In aligning the occupational standard with the PSRB requirements, apprentices should follow a training programme designed to meet these competence requirements, as well as the underpinning qualifications where these are required. In doing so, the gap between the apprenticeship and professional qualification should be minimal. Where there is 'partial coverage', apprentices, employers and providers should be made aware of the gaps, and the route to achieving these through the professional institutions made available.

In the case of the technical and professional apprenticeships in the built environment sector, the professional and regulatory requirements for qualification have been built into the Knowledge, Skills and Behaviour statements, as well as the end point assessment (EPA) process.

Professional and regulatory bodies are an integral part of the apprenticeship, offering:

- Accreditation and approval of underpinning qualifications, as well as the apprenticeship
- Access to apprenticeship membership
- Access to professional development platforms, activities, events, CPD and mentoring
- Provision of EPA itself through moderated independent peer review processes (adapted and moderated to meet a range of policy requirements)
- Streamlining of apprenticeship assessment through to professional qualification
- Guidance and support for a wide range of stakeholders, to engage and advise
- Celebratory awards for apprentices to showcase apprentice and employer achievement.

However, it is the link to apprenticeship assessment and independent peer review by the profession itself that makes achievement of the apprenticeship valuable, offering significant additional benefits.

For the apprentice, achievement of the apprenticeship means they are truly independently peer reviewed, and for many of these apprenticeships, **successful achievement also results in apprentices being fast-tracked or achieving professional qualification;** this comes alongside the achievement of a professionally accredited qualification and an apprenticeship completion certificate.

In becoming professionally qualified, the successful apprentice can also demonstrate to others their competence through the achievement of post-nominals, such as EngTech, IEng, MRICS, MRTPI, ARB/RIBA.

These post-nominals are often recognised internationally, meaning successful apprentices can more readily demonstrate their competence to apply for, and work on, international projects that their employers might have been awarded.

However, in some instances, professional review relies on access to voluntary peer review assessors who, in the case of apprenticeship assessment, also need to be trained and satisfy the requirements of the assessment plan and its assessment methods (which may differ from the norm). This can create a backlog for apprentice assessment, but many professional institutions have invested in new apprenticeship assessment resources, digital platforms, and are growing their pool of peer reviewer trained apprentices assessors to mitigate these challenges.

[38] Developing an occupational standard - GOV.UK

Where **skills cards** are also required, for example to access site-based activities, successfully completed apprentices will also be able to apply for professional cards, where the professional standard and qualification is often a pre-requisite[39].

Apprentices are also committed to carrying out continuing professional development (CPD), an essential element of remaining competent in the built environment sector, as well as ensuring they are working ethically, using sustainable practices and supporting others.

Aligning apprenticeships and assessment with professional requirements also benefits employers, as the apprenticeship has:

- Formed a streamlined and cost-effective route to professional qualification, with no additional training time or costs, or duplication of assessment
- Often enabled business to tender for public contracts, as they can demonstrate compliance with 'Section 106' requirements[40]
- Often enabled business to increase charge out rates for those in their workforce who are professionally qualified
- Resulted in businesses being able to readily demonstrate the competence of their workforce (for example, in ISO 9001/17025 certification)
- Prepared for a future where the forthcoming Building Safety Act regulatory environment has individual and organisational competence requirements, with apprentices well prepared to demonstrate their occupational and professional competence as specified by the Construction Leadership Council (CLC) Industry Competence Steering Group (ICSG)[41].

Apprenticeship Assessment Reform

During 2024, the Department for Education reviewed apprenticeships and apprenticeship assessment, through which feedback from a range of stakeholders identified that '*while apprenticeships continue to deliver strong outcomes, the apprenticeship assessment process can be overly complex, burdensome, and time-consuming*'.

However, this could also be interpreted to mean that the current end point assessment process is thorough, robust and isn't an easy route. Whilst we agree in the most part with the assessment guiding principles, perhaps the solution could be an evolution rather than a revolution in reform, where all stakeholders work collectively to help find a more workable balance between rigour and efficiency of the assessment.

In February 2025, the Government announced the reforms to apprenticeship assessment alongside a new set of assessment guiding principles[42], stating that these would offer:

- ✓ simpler and shorter assessment plans, based on occupational standards that are agreed by employers
- ✓ removal of unnecessary duplication, such as retesting of knowledge, skills and behaviours
- ✓ making sure that assessment organisations work with employers when designing assessments, to ensure that employer needs are met
- ✓ allowing assessment during the apprenticeship where appropriate, rather than requiring all assessment to be undertaken towards the end, enabling timely and efficient assessment

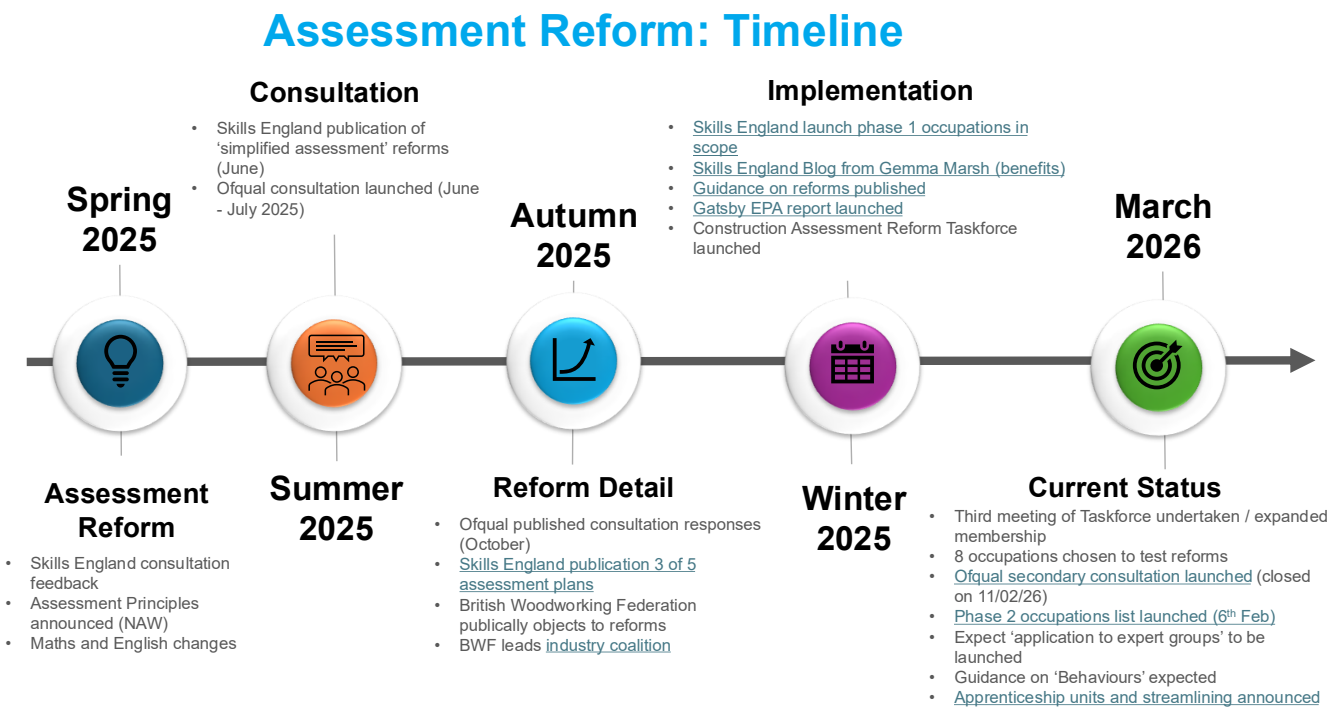
[39] Professionally Qualified Person card | Official CSCS Website / ECS Card Types | Electrotechnical Certification Scheme
[40] Town and Country Planning Act 1990
[41] Industry Competence Steering Group – Construction Leadership Council
[42] Apprenticeship Assessment Principles – Apprenticeship Service Support

- ✓ improving the apprentice experience by enabling assessment at the right time and place whilst ensuring apprentices achieve full occupational competence
- ✓ providers delivering and marking certain elements of the assessment where the assessment plan allows
- ✓ implementing innovation and flexibility in assessment design by considering the best use of technology and digital tools when setting assessment methods.

It was only in June 2025 that a greater level of detail became available, with the publication of the guidance on 'Changes to apprenticeship assessment, 2025 to 2026'[43] which marked the significant change in the way apprenticeship assessments are presented, designed and delivered.

At the same time, Ofqual also launched its first of two consultations into assessment[44], the results of which were published in October 2025[45]; this was followed by a second consultation[46] in December, which closed on 11th February 2026.

The past six months have also seen the first three of five assessment plans published, with two others remaining on pause – one of which relates the level 2 carpentry and joinery apprenticeship, which the British Woodworking Federation raised major concerns with regarding the rushed approach and lack of engagement with industry, the use of sampling within competence based assessment, the lack of consideration of the requirements to access and achieve industry skills cards, and by far the most important, the risks to health and safety and compliance with the requirements to demonstrate competence within the Building Safety Act 2022[47].



[43] changes to apprenticeship assessment
[44] Regulatory framework for apprenticeship assessment - GOV.UK
[45] Decisions: Regulatory framework for apprenticeship assessment - GOV.UK
[46] Regulatory framework for apprenticeship assessment - technical - Ofqual Citizen Space - Citizen Space
[47] Construction-Coalition-Letter-Apprenticeship-Reforms_Letter-to-the-Government_Final_20_10_2025-1.pdf

These concerns have been echoed by a growing number of stakeholders across the construction and built environment industry, and resulted in the formation of the construction coalition[48] which has successfully lobbied for a pause to further reforms to assessment plans in the sector – and the establishment of the Skills England Construction Assessment Reform Task group, where the Construction Industry Council is a representative member.

What are the key changes related to assessment reform?

Firstly, there are changes to the terminology used in the revised assessment, with the key changes being:

- **Apprenticeship assessment** has replaced end-point assessment
- **Assessment organisation (AO)** has replaced the end-point assessment organisation (EPAO)
- **Gateway to completion** has replaced gateway
- **'Assessment' refers to an assessment which can take place at any stage of the apprenticeship**, not just at the end, and contributes towards the final grade.

The new format of the assessment plans will also change dramatically, with the contents containing the following mandatory elements (in the case where a mandatory qualification replaces apprenticeship assessment in full):

SECTION	DESCRIPTION
Introduction	Explains the assessment plan's purpose, status and relationship to other documents.
Assessment Outcomes	Summarises the content of the occupational standard into assessment outcomes and explains which knowledge and skills statements map to each outcome. Where there is an additional qualification mandated, these outcomes describe the content (if any) that is not assessed by the qualification. This section also sets out the mandatory knowledge and skills statements that must be assessed in every version of the assessment that is made available. Knowledge and skills statements which offer opportunities to develop functional English and maths are identified with an asterisk.
Assessment Requirements	Outlines the mandatory assessment method that must be used in every version of the assessment that is made available, together with optional, additional assessment methods as appropriate. Outlines any additional requirements regarding the setting, marking or timing of assessments.
Performance Descriptors	Describes the characteristics of a 'pass' and 'distinction'. These are standardised generic statements produced by Ofqual and retrospectively applied to the occupation.

[48] The BWF leads a coalition of organisations across the construction sector to protect the future of apprenticeships - British Woodworking Federation

Assessment will come in the form of one of three models:

	ASSESSMENT PLAN MODEL	TYPE OF ASSESSMENT PLAN REQUIRED
1	**Where a mandatory qualification or required regulatory assessment sufficiently covers the assessment outcomes**	• There will be a generic, brief assessment plan that will describe that the apprenticeship will be assessed by completion of the mandatory qualification or regulatory assessment
2	**Standard low-prescription apprenticeship assessment**	• Minimal level of prescription required to meet DfE/DWP assessment principles alongside generic 'rules' (e.g. Ofqual, SE general requirements) • AOs develop specifications and assessments that follow the approach laid out: each AO should work with employers at the design stage to ensure outcomes are relevant and appropriate, and AOs must have 'due regard' for external documentation such as professional standards • SE expects most assessment plans to follow this model
3	**Risk based additional prescription apprenticeship assessment**	• Where medium or high-risk occupations are identified, additional prescription may be added (e.g. for safety, regulatory compliance, etc) • AOs develop specifications and assessments that follow the approach laid out: each AO should work with employers at the design stage to ensure outcomes are relevant and appropriate, and AOs must have 'due regard' for external documentation such as professional standards • AOs will need to have due regard for safety critical and high-risk roles and take into account the requirements of these roles and the experience needed to perform these in industry.

Awarding organisations will then use the assessment plan to design and deliver assessment, where they will be responsible for:

- Designing and producing assessment materials, and detailing where sampling might be appropriate
- Quality assuring on programme assessment, through centre-based recognition
- Ensuring the outcomes of assessment ensure occupational competence.

What will the reforms mean?

In a major shift away from independent assessment and the lengthy and detailed end point assessment plans mandated by the former Government via the Institution of Apprenticeships and Technical Education, we are now moving to a system where Skills England will convene stakeholders, or Groups of Persons[49], to reform assessment plans against the policy requirements set out by the Department for Education, and now the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP), following the transition of skills policy and Skills England oversight to the DWP.

Through this process, Skills England will enable awarding organisations to design the assessments from a high-level assessment plan, whereby parts of the assessment may be delivered at any time during the apprenticeship, either by the awarding organisation, employer or training provider. It also sees other changes, such as the introduction of assessment outcomes and sampling, the responsibility for the

[49] Group of Persons (Trailblazer groups) - GOV.UK

verification of behaviours passing to the employer, and the requirement for AOs to consult users of apprenticeship assessments when designing and developing the assessment.

Whilst this undoubtedly reduces the initial complexities associated with designing and complying with assessment plans, and offers flexibility and opportunity, the approach as yet leaves a wide ranging set of questions still to be considered and thought through, not least where independent assessment and alignment with industry regulations, such as those in high-risk environments, enables the assurance of competence outcomes for all apprentices.

Assessment reform must also reflect on and be delivered within the context of strict rules and regulations, such as those within the apprenticeship funding rules[50], the regulatory environment for Ofqual and OfS, being inspected through Ofsted, where it has published its Apprenticeship Assessment Qualification Level Conditions[51] and associated guidance[52].

In the case of the built environment, the routes to the recognition of education and training, and the assessment associated with professional qualification, will also need significant additional consideration.

This paper is intended to highlight some of the key considerations for the built environment sector as changes to technical and professional apprenticeships are brought forward, whilst acknowledging that further guidance is expected over the coming months.

An article titled, '*Training provider preparation for the new system of apprenticeship assessments*' by Jacqui Molkenthin was published in February 2026, providing a summary for training providers[53].

What are the opportunities and risks?

If we return to the nine apprenticeship assessment principles set out by the Department for Education, there are a number of opportunities and risks that can be explored. However, these need to be contextualised to the sector, the risk profile of the occupation and the broader expectations of stakeholders, including professional, statutory and regulatory bodies as well as employers and apprentices themselves.

We must also note that both the apprenticeship funding rules and Ofqual specify additional requirements for apprenticeship assessment and synoptic assessment, which state the following:

Apprenticeship Funding Rules in relation to apprenticeship assessment[54]	350. An apprentice can only undertake their **final apprenticeship assessment** after: 1. 350.1. They have met the minimum duration of the apprenticeship practical period (see paragraph 73) 2. 350.2. They have satisfied the requirements set out in the assessment plan and reached gateway to completion (including any specific duration criteria); and 3. 350.3. Their employer (in consultation with the main provider) is content they have attained sufficient skills, knowledge and behaviours to successfully complete the apprenticeship.

[50] funding rules
[51] Conditions
[52] guidance
[53] FE News | Training Provider Preparation for the new system of Apprenticeship Assessment
[54] https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/6936acd76a167b6884b7360e/Funding_Rules_2025_to_2026.pdf

Ofqual consultation and definition of synoptic assessment requirements	Ofqual conditions require synoptic assessment, which by its very nature demonstrates occupational competence. Ofqual defines synoptic assessment as the requirement to: 1. Use, in an integrated way, an appropriate and substantial proportion of knowledge and skills from the Occupational Standard so that the Learner has the opportunity to demonstrate occupational competence at the appropriate level. They go on to state that: 2. Approximately half of each apprenticeship assessment should be synoptic. While some variation is likely to be appropriate in a range of circumstances, a proportion significantly less than half should be regarded as exceptional. There are three important elements embedded in this definition: 1. 'Integration Knowledge' and skills must be used together, not simply evidenced separately. 2. Inclusion of synoptic assessment should not be a small capstone 'bolt-on'. It should form a significant part of the overall assessment. 3. Opportunity to demonstrate occupational competence. The assessment must resemble real occupational performance, not a checklist of discrete elements. Synoptic assessment is therefore about how assessment tasks are designed, not how results are collated afterwards. An article titled, 'What Ofqual Mean by Synoptic Assessment in Apprenticeship Assessments' by Sarah Sutcliffe was published in December 2025, providing a summary of this aspect of apprenticeship assessment[55].

Here we attempt to offer a balance of opportunities and risks for technical and professional apprenticeships in the built environment:

[55] What Ofqual Mean by Synoptic Assessment in Apprenticeship Assessments | LinkedIn

Opportunities and risks for technical and professional apprenticeships in the built environment

ASSESSMENT PRINCIPLE	OPPORTUNITIES	RISKS
Shorter plans with a minimal level of prescription	• A welcome reform of long EPA plan templates, with a focus on what matters for apprenticeship assessment • Regard for external documentation is welcomed	• Too little information and prescription could mean assessment of competence outcomes are not met reliably or consistently • Competence of assessors is omitted • Is the process for AOs to have 'due regard for external documentation' and use of employer input into assessment design strong enough? This is essential when dealing with regulated and safety critical occupations, as well as those occupations that lead to professional qualification
Proportionate	• Assessment does not overwhelm apprentices and employers • Time and resource can be released • Better use of PSRB assessment mechanisms could be achieved	• If a mandatory qualification (often knowledge based within technical and professional apprenticeships) is used as the assessment method, there is little or no assessment of competence, leading to additional work and costs for all • There are concerns over what 'sufficiency of coverage' is in terms of mapped mandatory qualifications and who defines this. What is the process of raising and addressing concerns? • Sampling will not offer apprentices and employers reliable assessment of competence, nor will it provide a route to professional qualification: direct assessment of full competence outcomes is essential • Sampling within apprenticeship assessment will cause issues with eligibility for competence and skill cards, as well as recognition of competence in relation to the Building Safety Act; again, direct assessment of full competence outcomes is essential
No unnecessary duplication	• Use of mandatory qualifications as part of apprenticeship assessment is welcome, as this retains the ability for an apprentice to achieve a recognised and/or professionally accredited qualification • If apprenticeship assessment can be routinely linked to professional qualification, through peer review assessment, when apprentices are ready, this would ease the burden on apprentices	• If a mandatory qualification (often knowledge based within technical and professional apprenticeships) is used as the assessment method, there is little to no assessment of competence, or for that assessment to be recognised by industry or the professions • Training may be focused on meeting assessment outcomes required for mandatory K and S statements, rather than occupational competence (full set of KSBs) • Where non-PSRB bodies are the Assessment Organisation, problems linking professional qualification to apprenticeship outcomes will occur and additional training and assessment will be required • For those seeking professional qualification, assessment will need to repeat elements within apprenticeship assessment; this will also mean additional assessment in relation to skills cards and to demonstrate compliance with the Building Safety Act

Minimum number of assessment methods	• A welcomed reform of complex EPA plans, with a focus on what truly forms a viable assessment method	• Training may be focused on meeting assessment outcomes required for mandatory K and S statements, rather than occupational competence (full set of KSBs) • If SE/DfE/DWP insist on only 1 form of mandated assessment, problems may arise with the viability and reliability of assessment outcomes • Furthermore, where there are multiple assessment organisations, they may utilise different types of assessment to meet employer needs and affordability, but this can reduce the level of consistency in the process which an apprentice will have gone through • For professional qualification, it is typical that two (or more) forms of assessment are required – for example, written evidence, portfolios and a peer review interview are often used – this approach may not be allowed due to policy restrictions • By removing the requirement of assessing competence and focusing on academic qualifications, it also sends the signal that being competent in a job is not as important as having the skills and knowledge to do the job, which are two very different things
Assessment at the right time, and in the right place	• Some level of on programme assessment is welcome, if this is where it is appropriate, such as in the ongoing assessment of academic abilities	• Capacity and capability of the training provider assessor pool will be limited, especially in technical and professional occupations • Assessment of competence needs to be carried out by competent persons (which is not defined in the assessment plan) • Issues with the availability of competent persons to carry out assessments will remain a problem as it is now
Allow on-programme assessment, where appropriate	• Formative assessment during the programme is welcomed, but must be carried out by industry / professionally verified competent persons • Apprenticeship funding rules state there must be an assessment at the end of the apprenticeship (paragraph 350)[56] • Synoptic assessment remains essential (Ofqual requirement[57]) in apprenticeship delivery, and will	• Training may be focused on meeting assessment outcomes required for mandatory K and S statements, rather than occupational competence (full set of KSBs) • Capacity and capability of the training provider assessor pool will be limited, especially in technical and professional occupations • Assessment of competence needs to be carried out by competent persons (which is not defined in the assessment plan) • Issues with the availability of competent persons to carry out assessments will remain a problem as it is now • Professional accreditation processes may be placed under stress with demand for recognition • Demonstrating competence is unlikely to be delivered early on in the programme, and synoptic assessment remains essential in apprenticeship delivery

[56] https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/6936acd76a167b6884b7360e/Funding_Rules_2025_to_2026.pdf
[57] Synoptic assessment

	likely fall to the end of the apprenticeship period • If training is linked to professional accreditation processes, this can be beneficial	• Conflicts of interest are likely to rise – there is often very limited capacity and capability to ensure this is avoided, with limited teaching staff with appropriate levels of demonstrated and recognised competence • Recruiting staff with the appropriate competence will be costly for providers and AOs
Allow centre-based assessment, where appropriate	• Formative assessment during the programme is welcomed, but must be carried out by industry /professionally verified competent persons • AOs need robust quality assurance mechanisms in place, and should work with professional institutions to achieve this • Centres cannot deliver all assessments	• AOs may find it resource and cost intensive to operate a centre-based assessment model as well as carrying out final assessment • Capacity and capability of assessor pool will be limited, especially in technical and professional occupations • Assessment of competence needs to be carried out by competent persons (which is not defined in the assessment plan) • Recruiting staff with the appropriate competence will be costly for providers and AOs • AOs are not always PSRBs, leading to problems with professional qualification and ultimately duplication of assessment
Make best use of technology	• A welcome approach, but this is already in operation in EPA provision	• Assessment must be robust and assess individuals on a one-to-one basis to ensure competence outcomes
Employer verified behaviours	• Employer verification of apprentice behaviours already happens in the current delivery and assessment mechanism	• Employer verification of behaviours will be requested by the training provider, leading to concerns over validity • By removing the independence and responsibility for the assessment of behaviours to the employer; this would suggest that this is not deemed a critical element. CABE would argue the opposite in that we need individuals to see behaving ethically and professionally as important as having the right skills and knowledge to do the job. • Behaviours will need to be re-assessed for professional qualification • Employer verification may become a tick box exercise aimed at releasing final payment • Behaviours will be assessed differently between employers, and risks a race to the bottom • There is no guidance yet available on this approach.

Potential implications for technical and professional apprenticeships and routes to professional qualification

If we overlay the assessment principles and models onto a technical or professional apprenticeship, such as those found in civil engineering or building services engineering, we can start to visualise the potential impacts assessment reform might have on these apprenticeships:

ASSESSMENT PLAN MODEL	POSITIVES	NEGATIVES
Model 1: **Mandatory qualification becomes the assessment method**	✓ All apprentices will achieve a recognised qualification ✓ Approved or accredited qualification remains (where available) ✓ No additional assessment for apprentice ✓ Apprentices can progress to higher levels readily	× Only underpinning knowledge is assessed × Very limited skills assessment × Employer verification of behaviours very limited × Apprentices not assessed by ICE or CIBSE × Apprentices and employers will need to top up training to meet EngTech/IEng outcomes × Additional mentoring and costs for employers × Link to ICSG / Building Safety Act (BSA) requirements lost
Model 2: **Low prescription assessment plan**	✓ All apprentices will achieve a recognised qualification ✓ Approved or accredited qualification remains (where available) ✓ Some additional assessment to meet (partial/full) EngTech/IEng ✓ Potential to secure ICE / CIBSE as AOs at levels 3 & 4 with assessment through trusted and independent assessors (Professional Review process) ✓ Employer verification = sign off by registered engineers ✓ Apprentices can progress to higher levels readily	× Only some K & S statements are assessed × Apprentices might not be assessed by ICE or CIBSE if other AOs enter the market (provider choice) × Apprentices and employers will need to top up training to meet remaining full EngTech/IEng outcomes × Additional mentoring and costs for employers × Link to ICSG / BSA requirements remain lacking
Model 3: Risk based prescription assessment plan	✓ All apprentices will achieve a recognised qualification ✓ Approved or accredited qualification remains (where available) ✓ EngTech/IEng could remain in place ✓ ICE / CIBSE may be the only assessment organisations – trusted independent assessors used (Professional Review process enacted) ✓ Employer verification = sign off by professionally registered engineers ✓ Apprentices can progress to higher levels ✓ Link to ICSG / BS Act requirements is better placed	× Will all knowledge and skills statements be assessed? × Is it possible to secure ICE / CIBSE AO status alone? × Potential that apprentices and employers will need to top up training to meet EngTech/IEng outcomes × Additional mentoring and costs for employers × Potential for a small gap to ICSG / BSA requirements

We can see several benefits and limitations quite clearly for the apprentice and employer on the journey to professional qualification. However, no single model is ideal or meets all stakeholder preferences. While Skills England will make decisions, as a sector we need to demonstrate the importance of supporting the best fit with industry need, apprentice expectations, the role being undertaken, and the likely competence outcomes achievable within sensible timescales and funding levels.

Through the Technical Apprenticeship Consortium (TAC), employer members have been presented with the challenges faced with assessment reform, and additional consultation with employers in the trailblazer group and through the ICE's civil engineering employer training group (CEETG) has been carried out. The responses as to which model suits best remain mixed at this very early stage.

However, we are expecting to see the level 4 building services engineering senior technician apprenticeship as part of the Skills England Construction Assessment Reform test cases from March 2026 onwards. It will be here where the detail and process will start to take shape, and the true test of apprenticeship assessment reform, with the required flexibility in assessment principles and policy tested to maintain professional outcomes, to retain the vital links to industry skills cards for those based onsite, and to ensure the mechanisms for apprentices to demonstrate competence against the Building Safety Act are retained.

In the discussions carried out to date, there is no current widespread understanding and communication of the detail, opportunities and risks associated with apprenticeship assessment reform – but this is not surprising given the complexity of the reforms, and the need for 'experts from all stakeholders' to navigate the changes and impacts this will have.

Skills England colleagues have found, and will continue to find, it difficult to comprehend the variety of professional occupations and routes to professional qualification offered across the built environment sector. This challenge is compounded by the ongoing consultation around the Building Safety Regulator role, and the concurrent development of industry competence standards via the CLC Industry Competence Steering Group (ICSG).

This creates a perfect storm – risking hard fought for apprenticeship outcomes that align with professional qualification and most likely future regulatory requirements.

Over the past decade, training providers, including colleges, independent training providers and universities have built up expertise and experience in delivering training to professional competence outcomes. This has often involved mandatory qualifications approved and accredited by the professional institutions, alongside industry training programmes and initial professional development frameworks. This approach combines academic outcomes with those recognised and rewarded through end point assessment, which also offers professional qualification and access to professional skills cards for site-based occupations.

This approach will also be the route forward for demonstrating that skills training and the outcomes comply with the requirements of the Building Safety Act. However, training providers will be faced with reviewing and revising their training programmes to meet assessment organisation methods, and with additional layers of 'centre approval' and associated costs (in the case of some occupations) to move forward with these assessment reforms. Furthermore, for integrated degree apprenticeships, many of which have recently been validated, approved and re-accredited by the professional institutions, will also now have to be changed to meet new assessment reform requirements.

For assessment organisations and training providers, this will have major implications for their resource and financial modelling, as assessment reform will be driven forward on very short timescales. This approach will also impact employers and the professional institutions, as they too will have limited resource and capacity to keep pace with yet more reform: they will now need to deal directly with (often multiple) assessment organisations, and a wide variety of training providers right across England, at a range of levels, and in various disciplines to ensure there are consistent approaches and outcomes to apprenticeships.

Furthermore, if we step into the shoes of an apprentice, they are facing a future where they start an apprenticeship thinking they understand the outcomes and routes to professionalism, and this can be rapidly changed whilst they are on programme, uncertain of how, when and what they will be assessed on, and how this then affects their route to achieve and become an active and recognised member of their chosen built environment profession.

We have recently seen apprentices pushed to transfer from non-integrated to integrated degree apprenticeship programmes. Many apprentices and their employers have not been fully informed of the changes made and the implications these have on them and their future outcomes. Undertaking any transition from one mode of delivery and assessment requires significant combined efforts to ensure there is clarity of message, communication of that message to employers, apprentices, line managers and mentors, as well as efforts to ensure training providers also understand and support a smooth transition. The timescales for assessment reform risk confusion and do not yet fully appreciate the implications to outcomes, especially those for professional approval & accreditation, nor for professional qualification.

What must we do?

With half of the estimated 100,000 new entrants needed annually by 2030 in the built environment being in technical and professional occupations, high quality apprenticeships are essential not only in attracting and developing the talent, but in delivering a capable and competent workforce[58].

The quality and competency of those completing an apprenticeship in the built environment must be equivalent to, or of a higher standard than, those completing existing apprenticeships. This must be our litmus test for any proposed changes; quality cannot be 'less than' given the nature of the work and sector in which they operate.

Whilst there are many positives relating to the planned apprenticeship assessment reforms, such as the inclusion of new digital and information management skills, reference to the new industry and regulatory requirements and having assessment take place throughout the apprenticeship (where appropriate), there remain concerns around the detail required to ensure the reforms being made will truly improve outcomes.

Apprenticeship assessment reform should not come at the expense of reducing quality. It must not remove competence outcomes as defined by industry, skills cards and the Building Safety Act; divorcing the links between apprenticeship assessment and access to professional qualification; diminish the perception of, and attractiveness of apprenticeships that support employers to recruit and upskill talent (especially young entrants); or increase the complexity for training providers delivering the training needed across the sector.

The CIC must work collectively to collaborate and communicate with clear, well-articulated arguments that:

- Support industry and the apprentice pursuing a professional career, by providing clear and accessible guidance to help them transition to the new format of apprenticeship assessment
- Support training providers to maintain a strong focus on delivering high quality, professionally accredited programmes that deliver competence and professional qualification outcomes, alongside underpinning educational attainment
- Work with the employers and sector bodies, including the CLC and Construction Skills Mission Board (CSMB), to raise concerns about likely barriers to entry, achievement and progression, as well as considering emerging resource and financial constraints
- Challenge Skills England, the Department for Education and the Department for Work and Pensions, to find better solutions, where policy and practice create barriers to competence outcomes, achievement and progression to professional qualification.

[58] Construction Launches Skills Mission – Construction Leadership Council

Considering the proposed Building Safety Regulator becoming a single body and providing a framework for the built environment[59], we must ensure that individuals, and therefore apprenticeships, focus on individuals doing the right thing, rather than doing the easiest thing. The potential removal of the current holistic approach to apprenticeship assessment puts this ethos at risk.

By working collectively, we can support and improve apprenticeships, raise investment in, and secure clear pathways into and through the profession, leading to reliable and rewarding careers.

In doing so, we will provide employers with the confidence to invest and employ new talent and train those already in the workplace, through high quality, professionally recognised pathways that are supported by a wide range of training providers with funding that works.

Ultimately, we can use assessment reform to challenge and make the changes needed to improve the apprenticeship system for all, and build the capacity, capability and competence of the built environment sector.

Recommendations

1. The built environment professions (including regulatory bodies) should collaborate and communicate collectively with one voice, and support in finding solutions to assessment reform in partnership with Government, employers and Awarding Organisations

2. Skills England should work with CIC to ensure proposed solutions deliver sensible and workable outcomes, and to challenge policy changes where negative impacts are identified

3. A call for stability and sufficient time to explore solutions in greater detail and to work through any unintended consequences

4. The professions must actively engage employer and individual members, especially those in trailblazer groups (or Groups of Persons), as well as peer review assessors and mentors, to gather input and shape assessment reform

5. The professions must consider the impact that apprenticeship delivery and assessment will have on accreditation, including continued access and availability of professional development programmes, to retain clear links to professional qualification

6. The professions should consider revisions to professional qualifications ensuring that changes do not add extra barriers for apprentices seeking routes to professional registration.

[59] BSR becomes standalone body in landmark step towards single construction regulator - GOV.UK

Annex A: Apprenticeship Start, Achievement and QAR Data[60]

Apprenticeship Starts by Occupation by Year

			STARTS BY YEAR									
Level	**Code**	**Title**	**2017/18**	**2018/19**	**2019/20**	**2020/21**	**2021/22**	**2022/23**	**2023/24**	**2024/25**	**2025/26 *(to date)***	**TOTAL**
3	ST0741	Landscape Technician	no data	no data	no data	10	10	10	low	low	*low*	**30**
3	ST0091	Civil Engineering Technician	80	240	220	300	350	430	440	380	*310*	**2750**
3	ST0266	Digital Engineering Technician	40	90	80	70	80	80	40	40	*20*	**540**
3	ST0063	Building Services Engineering Technician	40	30	60	70	100	110	160	150	*110*	**830**
3	ST0336	Transport Planning Technician	40	40	30	20	30	30	20	20	*30*	**260**
3	ST0332	Surveying Technician	170	180	150	160	190	180	140	220	*150*	**1540**
												0
4	ST0936	Town Planning Assistant	no data	no data	no data	no data	20	10	20	10	*10*	**70**
4	ST0043	Construction Design and Build Technician	no data	no data	10	90	200	160	170	190	*180*	**1000**
4	ST0613	Acoustics Technician (retired)	no data	no data	no data	no data	no data	10	low	low	*0*	**10**
4	ST0041	Building Services Engineering Senior Technician	no data	50	90	150	170	220	230	240	*220*	**1370**
4	ST0484	Facilities Manager	10	170	220	230	200	160	210	240	*170*	**1610**
4	ST0046	Civil Engineering Senior Technician	10	130	160	240	350	300	310	350	*330*	**2180**
4	ST0049	Construction Quantity Surveying Technician	no data	no data	60	250	450	550	610	670	*730*	**3320**
4	ST0629	BEMS (Building Energy Management Systems) Controls Engineer	no data	no data	no data	10	100	60	100	100	*90*	**460**

[60] GOV.UK, DfE Data provided via Explore Education Statistics (accessed 13/04/2026): https://explore-education-statistics.service.gov.uk/data-tables/permalink/b152bb85-1ccb-46e5-e7c7-08de72e09202

6	ST0859	Fire Safety Engineer (Degree)	no data	no data	no data	no data	10	20	40	20	*40*	**130**
6	ST0044	Design and Construction Management (Degree)	no data	no data	no data	no data	30	20	40	40	*30*	**160**
6	ST0698	Transport Planner (Integrated Degree)	no data	no data	20	20	20	30	20	10	*30*	**150**
6	ST0652	Building Control Surveyor (Integrated Degree)	no data	no data	110	70	50	60	70	90	*30*	**480**
6	ST0534	Architectural Assistant (Integrated Degree)	no data	10	30	20	40	30	40	30	*40*	**240**
6	ST0372	Building Services Engineer (Degree)	60	160	190	130	150	120	200	240	*260*	**1510**
6	ST0040	Building Services Engineering Site Management (Degree) (merged and retired)	no data	low	10	10	10	10	10	20	*10*	**80**
6	ST0417	Civil Engineer (Degree)	160	620	680	540	630	630	720	600	*660*	**5240**
6	ST0042	Civil Engineering Site Management (Degree) (merged and retired)	no data	10	10	30	20	60	40	40	*10*	**220**
6	ST0410	Senior and Head of Facilities Management (Integrated Degree)	low	low	low	low	20	10	40	20	*40*	**130**
6	ST0492	Geospatial Mapping and Science Specialist (Degree)	no data	low	10	low	20	10	10	10	*10*	**70**
6	ST0331	Chartered Surveyor (Degree)	820	1190	1320	1010	1300	1460	1,550	1,700	*1,460*	**11810**
6	ST0045	Construction Quantity Surveyor (Degree)	no data	low	50	80	140	190	210	320	*310*	**1300**
6	ST0047	Construction Site Management (Degree)	no data	low	20	90	140	90	200	230	*200*	**970**
7	ST0533	Architect (Integrated Degree)	no data	60	110	120	150	200	250	270	*240*	**1400**
7	ST0536	Chartered Town Planner (Degree)	no data	low	180	160	170	230	250	300	*290*	**1580**
7	ST0742	Chartered Landscape Professional	no data	no data	no data	no data	no data	no data	no data	no data	*no data*	**0**
		TOTAL	**1,430**	**2,980**	**3,820**	**3,880**	**5,150**	**5,480**	**6,140**	**6,550**	***6,010***	**41,440**

Apprenticeship Achievements by Occupation by Year

			ACHIEVEMENTS BY YEAR									
Level	**Code**	**Title**	**2017/18**	**2018/19**	**2019/20**	**2020/21**	**2021/22**	**2022/23**	**2023/24**	**2024/25**	**2025/26** ***(to date)***	**TOTAL**
3	ST0741	Landscape Technician	no data	no data	no data	low	low	low	10	low	*low*	**10**
3	ST0091	Civil Engineering Technician	low	low	30	60	110	140	150	280	*80*	**850**
3	ST0266	Digital Engineering Technician	low	low	low	10	20	30	50	50	*10*	**170**
3	ST0063	Building Services Engineering Technician	low	low	20	10	10	30	40	50	*40*	**200**
3	ST0336	Transport Planning Technician	low	low	30	30	20	20	20	40	*10*	**170**
3	ST0332	Surveying Technician	40	80	80	70	60	40	50	70	*20*	**510**
												0
4	ST0936	Town Planning Assistant	no data	no data	no data	no data	low	low	10	10	*low*	**20**
4	ST0043	Construction Design and Build Technician	no data	no data	low	low	10	60	110	120	*40*	**340**
4	ST0613	Acoustics Technician (retired)	no data	no data	no data	no data	no data	low	10	low	*0*	**10**
4	ST0041	Building Services Engineering Senior Technician	no data	low	low	20	40	60	100	130	*80*	**430**
4	ST0484	Facilities Manager	low	low	low	10	30	40	60	80	*40*	**260**
4	ST0046	Civil Engineering Senior Technician	low	low	10	50	80	110	160	200	*30*	**640**
4	ST0049	Construction Quantity Surveying Technician	no data	no data	low	low	40	130	260	400	*260*	**1090**
4	ST0629	BEMS (Building Energy Management Systems) Controls Engineer	no data	no data	no data	low	low	10	low	20	*30*	**60**
												0
6	ST0859	Fire Safety Engineer (Degree)	no data	no data	no data	no data	low	low	low	low	*low*	**0**
6	ST0044	Design and Construction Management (Degree)	no data	no data	no data	no data	low	low	low	low	*low*	**0**
6	ST0698	Transport Planner (Integrated Degree)	no data	low	low	low	low	low	10	low	*10*	**20**

6	ST0652	Building Control Surveyor (Integrated Degree)	no data	no data	low	10	low	50	40	30	*20*	**150**
6	ST0534	Architectural Assistant (Integrated Degree)	no data	low	low	low	low	10	20	10	*30*	**70**
6	ST0372	Building Services Engineer (Degree)	low	low	10	20	30	30	90	90	*60*	**330**
6	ST0040	Building Services Engineering Site Management (Degree) (merged and retired)	no data	low	low	low	low	low	10	low	*low*	**10**
6	ST0417	Civil Engineer (Degree)	low	low	low	10	20	40	160	200	*90*	**520**
6	ST0042	Civil Engineering Site Management (Degree) (merged and retired)	no data	low	low	low	low	low	10	10	*10*	**30**
6	ST0410	Senior and Head of Facilities Management (Integrated Degree)	low	low	low	low	low	low	low	10	*low*	**10**
6	ST0492	Geospatial Mapping and Science Specialist (Degree)	no data	low	low	low	low	low	low	low	*low*	**0**
6	ST0331	Chartered Surveyor (Degree)	low	low	low	50	70	190	260	330	*150*	**1050**
6	ST0045	Construction Quantity Surveyor (Degree)	no data	low	low	low	low	20	30	60	*60*	**170**
6	ST0047	Construction Site Management (Degree)	no data	low	low	low	low	10	30	60	*30*	**130**
												0
7	ST0533	Architect (Integrated Degree)	no data	low	low	low	10	40	90	90	*50*	**280**
7	ST0536	Chartered Town Planner (Degree)	no data	low	low	low	low	30	80	90	*60*	**260**
7	ST0742	Chartered Landscape Professional	no data	no data	no data	no data	no data	no data	no data	no data	*no data*	**0**
		TOTAL	**40**	**80**	**180**	**350**	**550**	**1090**	**1860**	**2430**	***1210***	**7790**

Apprenticeship Qualification Achievement Rates by Occupation by Year (where available)

			2021/22			2022/23			2023/24			2024/25		
Level	**Code**	**Title**	**RETENTION RATE (%)**	**PASS RATE (%)**	**ACHIEVEMENT RATE (%)**	**RETENTION RATE (%)**	**PASS RATE (%)**	**ACHIEVEMENT RATE (%)**	**RETENTION RATE (%)**	**PASS RATE (%)**	**ACHIEVEMENT RATE (%)**	**RETENTION RATE (%)**	**PASS RATE (%)**	**ACHIEVEMENT RATE (%)**
3	ST0741	Landscape Technician	no data	no data	**no data**	x	x	**x**	66.7	87.5	**58.3**	no data	no data	**no data**
3	ST0091	Civil Engineering Technician	65.5	87.9	**57.6**	59.1	94.4	**55.8**	50.4	96.1	**48.4**	71.7	92.5	**66.3**
3	ST0266	Digital Engineering Technician	25.8	100	**25.8**	31.1	100	**31.1**	57.5	100	**57.5**	53.3	98	**52.2**
3	ST0063	Building Services Engineering Technician	55.6	80	**44.4**	50.8	90.9	**46.2**	52.9	97.3	**51.4**	54	78.7	**42.2**
3	ST0336	Transport Planning Technician	76.9	90	**69.2**	75	100	**75**	72.7	100	**72.7**	85.7	100	**85.7**
3	ST0332	Surveying Technician	59.3	78.6	**46.6**	48	72.1	**34.6**	51.5	58.8	**30.3**	57.4	73	**41.9**
4	ST0936	Town Planning Assistant	no data	no data	**no data**	no data	no data	**no data**	60	100	**60**	75	100	**75**
4	ST0043	Construction Design and Build Technician	73.3	100	**73.3**	73.5	93.4	**68.7**	64.4	97.3	**62.6**	73.6	98.3	**72.4**
4	ST0041	Building Services Engineering Senior Technician	62	84.1	**52.1**	56	92.3	**51.7**	60.5	93.5	**56.6**	66.8	89.9	**60.1**

4	ST0484	Facilities Manager	25.3	100	**25.3**	33.8	95.7	**32.4**	44.1	98.4	**43.4**	52.1	96.5	**50.3**
4	ST0046	Civil Engineering Senior Technician	51.3	94.8	**48.7**	54.1	98.2	**53.1**	68.1	95.7	**65.1**	67.2	91.2	**61.3**
4	ST0049	Construction Quantity Surveying Technician	63.6	97.1	**61.8**	65.6	98.4	**64.6**	66.1	98.8	**65.3**	70.6	98.7	**69.6**
4	ST0629	BEMS (Building Energy Management Systems) Controls Engineer	no data	no data	**no data**	37.5	100	**37.5**	37.5	100	37.5	52.9	100	**52.9**
6	ST0859	Fire Safety Engineer (Degree)	no data	no data	**no data**	no data	no data	**no data**	no data	no data	**no data**	no data	no data	**no data**
6	ST0044	Design and Construction Management (Degree)	no data	no data	**no data**	no data	no data	**no data**	no data	no data	**no data**	no data	no data	**no data**
6	ST0698	Transport Planner (Integrated Degree)	no data	no data	**no data**	no data	no data	**no data**	84.6	100	**84.6**	no data	no data	**no data**
6	ST0652	Building Control Surveyor (Integrated Degree)	90.9	100	**90.9**	81.3	100	**81.3**	77.5	100	**77.5**	67.8	100	**67.8**
6	ST0534	Architectural Assistant	x	x	**x**	75	100	**75**	74.2	100	**74.2**	80	100	**80**

		(Integrated Degree)												
6	ST0372	Building Services Engineer (Degree)	65	84.6	**55**	51.6	87.9	**45.3**	66.4	75.9	**50.4**	72.1	87.9	**63.4**
6	ST0040	Building Services Engineering Site Management (Degree) (merged and retired)	x	x	**x**	x	x	**x**	57.1	75	**42.9**	90	77.8	**70**
6	ST0417	Civil Engineer (Degree)	19.4	75	**14.6**	19.6	87.5	**17.1**	36.50%	89.6	**32.7**	41.6	91	**37.9**
6	ST0042	Civil Engineering Site Management (Degree) (merged and retired)	x	x	**x**	53.3	x	**x**	no data	no data	**no data**	65	92.3	**60**
6	ST0410	Senior and Head of Facilities Management (Integrated Degree)	no data	no data	**no data**	no data	no data	**no data**	no data	no data	**no data**	60.9	100	**60.9**
6	ST0492	Geospatial Mapping and Science Specialist (Degree)	no data	no data	**no data**	no data	no data	**no data**	x	x	**x**	no data	no data	**no data**

6	ST0331	Chartered Surveyor (Degree)	18.1	84.1	**15.2**	28.2	77.1	**21.7**	32	73.1	**23.4**	37.6	75.1	**28.2**
6	ST0045	Construction Quantity Surveyor (Degree)	x	x	**x**	65	80.8	**52.5**	56.9	89.2	**50.8**	60.7	93.8	**57**
6	ST0047	Construction Site Management (Degree)	x	x	**x**	40	83.3	**33.3**	42.6	100	**42.6**	52.7	94.8	**50**
7	ST0533	Architect (Integrated Degree)	x	x	**x**	66.3	98.1	**65**	73.2	100	**73.2**	75.2	98.9	**74.4**
7	ST0536	Chartered Town Planner (Degree)	x	x	**x**	40.9	100	**40.9**	72.4	97.6	**70.7**	62.3	97.7	**60.9**
7	ST0742	Chartered Landscape Professional	no data	no data	**no data**	no data	no data	**no data**	no data	no data	**no data**	no data	no data	**no data**
			53.7	**89.7**	**48.6**	**52.7**	**92.5**	**49.1**	**57.9**	**92.7**	**55.5**	**64.4**	**92.8**	**60.0**

Annex B: Task and Finish Group Membership

Members of the Construction Industry Council Education and Future Skills: Apprenticeship Assessment Reform Task and Finish Group (and wider institutional consultees):

NAME	ROLE	ORGANISATION
Aled Williams	Chair, Education & Future Skills Committee Pro VC / Executive Director, BEFA	Construction Industry Council (CIC) / University of the Built Environment (UBE)
Dr Caroline Sudworth	Director	Technical Apprenticeship Consortium (TAC)
Cindy Gilleeney (Kirsten Lockwood)	Senior Learning & Development Consultant (Head of Professional Development)	Local Authorities Building Control (LABC)
Dedre Ackerman Toni Lewis	End Point Assessment Executive Senior End Point Assessment Manager	Chartered Institution of Building Services Engineers (CIBSE)
Richard Davis	Apprenticeship Manager / Membership Recruitment	Institution of Civil Engineers (ICE)
Jenny Thomas Andrew Gladstone-Heighton	Director of External Affairs, Insight & Impact Head of Policy and Research	Institute of Workplace & Facilities Management (IWFM)
Trish Murphy	Apprenticeships Manager	Royal Town Planning Institute (RTPI)
Michele Philips (Catherine Elliott)	Education and Skills Senior Executive (Education and Skills Manager)	Engineering Council (EngC)
Caroline Hamilton	Chief Executive	The Safety Assessment Federation (SAFed)
Dr Jenny Russell	Director of Education & Learning	Royal Institute of British Architects (RIBA)
Dr Noora Kokkarinen	Head of Education	Chartered Institute of Architectural Technologists (CIAT)
Mike Cox	Education and Accreditation Manager	Royal Institution of Chartered Surveyors (RICS)
Cat Goumal	Head of Education	Chartered Institution of Highways & Transportation (CIHT)
Sharon Spice (Dr Hywel Davies OBE)	Membership Director (Head of Technical Insight)	Chartered Association of Building Engineers (CABE)
Jill Nicholls	Director of Competence & Compliance	Building Engineering Services Association (BESA)
Gill Hancock	Head of Technical Content	Association for Project Management (APM)

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