



**BUILDING
SKILLS
TOGETHER**

Guide to Supporting

Refugees into the Construction Sector

Introduction

There are an increasing number of refugees in the UK with excellent trades skills, including painting and decorating, stonework, plastering, bricklaying to name a few. With the exodus of many EU workers after Brexit, and the expansion of the house-building industry, there has never been a better time to match supply with demand.

To work on a construction site, all employees need a CSCS Health and Safety Card. An explanation of the card and the process for gaining it can be found here:

<https://docs.google.com/presentation/d/1bPBD2Xsf-G8LoH4srj1lehm4NRslmu4iliuMFYrJzfQ/edit?usp=sharing>

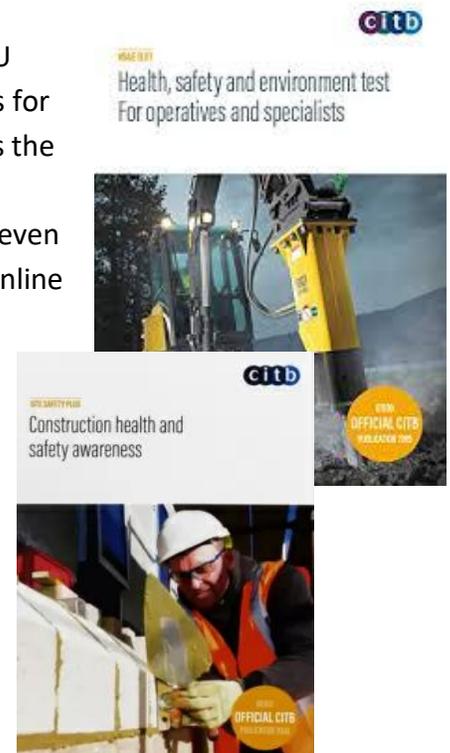
Building Skills for Construction was a New Scots Refugee Integration Delivery project led by Dundee City Council in partnership with Fife and Clackmannanshire Councils and WEA Scotland (the Workers Educational Association), which aimed to help skilled refugees gain the certification they need to work in the construction industry. Many of those resettled in Scotland through schemes set up in response to foreign conflicts are highly skilled individuals from a construction background, all of whom have the right to work in the UK, but not necessarily the correct qualifications, professional registrations or knowledge about how to enter the Scottish Construction Industry.

The partners received funding from the Scottish Government and the EU Asylum Migration and Integration Fund, to develop two training courses for beginner and intermediate students, aiming to give non-native speakers the language and knowledge they need to pass the CSCS operatives test. Delivered by English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) teachers, seven pilot projects were carried out in Dundee, Fife, Clackmannanshire and online to test out the materials with skilled refugees.

The resources are based on the CITB Health Safety and Environment Test for Operatives and Specialists Test book:

<https://shop.citb.co.uk/hs-e-test-for-operatives-specialists?GT100>
and the accompanying manual: <https://shop.citb.co.uk/site-safety-plus-ssp-publications/health-safety-awareness-ge707->

Both are available to order as hard copies or online downloads.





The refugee community and employability in the construction sector

There are several institutions and organisations that can help with the employability of refugees in the construction industry. The most important starting point is for potential employees to obtain a CSCS green card.

CSCS cards

The organisation responsible for the CSCS cards tests is CITB <https://www.citb.co.uk/>

They offer a range of test preparation and revision material in different formats

<https://www.citb.co.uk/standards-and-delivering-training/health-and-safety-publications-and-support-materials/>

The procedure for the green card is to obtain an approved Health and Safety awareness certificate from an approved provider such as IOSH or REHIS.

- IOSH <https://iosh.com/>
- REHIS <https://rehis.com/>

In Scotland such courses can be funded by an ITA (Individual Training Account) from Skills Development Scotland: <https://www.myworldofwork.co.uk/learn-and-train/sds-individual-training-accounts-ita>

Booking the test

Tests can be booked online via the CITB website. Prepaid vouchers are available if you are able to pay on behalf of learners: <https://www.citb.co.uk/courses-and-qualifications/health-safety-and-environment-hse-test-and-cards/book-a-test/>

If an interpreter is required, the candidate must fill in a special arrangements form at the end of the booking process. They will then get a phone call appointment via email to arrange a suitable date with an interpreter.

Voiceovers are available in the 15 languages

<https://www.citb.co.uk/courses-and-qualifications/health-safety-and-environment-hse-test-and-cards/about-the-health-safety-and-environment-hse-test/#special-assistance>



Some candidates don't have a signature on the type of ID card they have so will need to complete a waiver form: <https://www.citb.co.uk/media/h4mnaxcn/identification-waiver-form-and-letter.pdf>

Recognition of qualifications

<https://www.ecctis.com/>

This organisation provides an Industry Skills Statement (ISS) for construction, plumbing and electrical skills. <https://www.ecctis.com/Qualifications/ISS/Default.aspx>

There is also a statement of comparability service which benchmarks qualifications against UK frameworks. <https://www.enic.org.uk/Qualifications/SOC/Default.aspx>

Training organisations

There are several companies which offer short specialist construction skills courses e.g. forklift driving, signaller training. Most of these require no previous experience and some of the cost can be met with an ITA.

Here are some organisations we found, although many others are available:

Sibbald Training in Blackridge <https://www.sibbaldtraining.com/>

Ritchies Training in Glasgow <http://www.ritchiestraining.co.uk/>

The Ridge Foundation

The Ridge is a traditional construction skills training centre/social enterprise which offers fully funded places for short courses in traditional skills such as pointing, dry stone walling, sash and case windows etc. These skills are much in demand <https://the-ridge.org.uk/the-ridge-foundations/>

Scottish Electrical Trades Council (SELECT) offers training, although English language level requirements are high for this: <https://select.imiscloud.com//SELECT/Website/Training/Training-Landing-Page.aspx>

Apprenticeships

Apprenticeships are available via Apprenticeships.scot

<https://www.apprenticeships.scot/become-an-apprentice/modern-apprenticeships/>

CITB offers training courses and apprenticeships, and can provide grants to employers to upskill their workforce: <https://www.citb.co.uk/courses-and-qualifications/>



The CITB National Construction Colleges offer apprenticeships in roofing, roadworks, dry lining and groundworks. (There are also plant machinery apprenticeships in England and Wales). The Scottish NCC is in Inchinnan near Glasgow: <https://www.citb.co.uk/national-construction-college/apprenticeship-courses/>

Historic Scotland offers stonemasonry apprenticeships in partnership with Forth Valley College and Inverness College: <https://www.historicenvironment.scot/learn/skills-and-training/skills-training-centres/>

Scotland and Northern Ireland Plumbing Employers' Federation (SNIPEF) offers plumbing apprenticeships: <https://snipef.org/apprenticeships/>

Site visits

Site visits give learners an insight into the workings of a modern construction site. Most of the major construction companies have widening participation/community engagement officers who can arrange these.

Work placements

Some unions have widening participation officers who should be able to organise short work placements by liaising with the major construction companies.

Fair Start Scotland has distributed substantial grants to support disadvantaged groups in the workplace. The recipient organisations can help people into supported work placements and employment. <https://www.gov.scot/policies/employment-support/fair-start-scotland-employment-support-service/>

Skills Development Scotland refugee support

Skills Development Scotland has a service specifically targeted towards refugees and those fleeing persecution and war. <https://www.skillsdevelopmentscotland.co.uk/sds-support-for-refugees/>

They will also advise on job opportunities and help with CV writing.



Funding

The Robertson Trust funds those affected by poverty and trauma, awarding grants to small charities. They include refugees and asylum seekers in their target groups and have a track record of helping them (e.g. Friends of Scottish Settlers - Falkirk) <https://www.therobertsontrust.org.uk/>

Scottish Government reporting on fair work in the construction industry

The Fair Work Convention's report of April 2022 highlights inequalities in the construction industry and concludes that there is still a long way to go in achieving equality of opportunity.

<https://www.fairworkconvention.scot/building-fair-work-into-the-construction-industry>



**Clackmannanshire
Council**

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