

PRESS RELEASE

For Immediate Release

CONSTRUCT CALLS FOR COORDINATED MEASURES TO SUPPORT CONSTRUCTION WORKFORCE

CONSTRUCT Concrete Structures Group has written to card schemes, awarding organisations and CITB calling for a flexible, coordinated approach to ensure the construction industry's workforce can continue to operate in the midst of the COVID-19 pandemic.

These measures include accepting expired cards on sites for a temporary period, extensions to qualification deadlines and measures to ease cash flow through grants and levy reduction.

With construction sites using card schemes including CSCS, CPCS and NPORS to permit access for only qualified and trained operatives onsite, the pandemic poses a number of issues for the application and renewal of cards, completion of qualifications and cash flow relating to levies and grants.

CONSTRUCT has welcomed statements from the card schemes in response to the pandemic, but in most cases, these do not go far enough to support industry.

CONSTRUCT has called for all card schemes to coordinate their advice, with clear guidance issued to main contractors to ensure construction workers can continue to access site where they have been unable to renew expiring cards.

The Health Safety & Environment (HS&E) Test - which underpins card schemes with their occupation qualification – CONSTRUCT wants administered remotely while test centres are closed.

CONSTRUCT wants Awarding Organisations such as NOCN and City & Guilds – who award qualifications such as NVQs and provide End-Point Assessments for apprenticeships – to look at flexibility in extending deadlines to ensure operatives can complete their studies.

CITB have been asked to process grant claims quickly and work with Government to look at temporary levy payment holidays and deferral options, with the latter similar to tax payment deferrals announced by the Chancellor.

Neil Marney, CONSTRUCT Chairman said:

“This pandemic is an unprecedented and unknown threat to CONSTRUCT members' workforce and our businesses survival.

“Our primary focus is always to ensure that the workforce is healthy and safe, but where they can continue work, CSCS and all affiliated schemes need to offer a single and coordinated message to the primary contractors.

“Our employees must be able to gain access to site and continue to work, even if the assessment and renewal systems cannot work as normal, with the temporary measures applied in a consistent way across the construction industry.

Steve Hammond, Chairman of CONSTRUCT's Concrete Frame Training Forum, said:

“Training is grinding to a halt as providers cancel provision, and since the Prime Minister's announcement on tougher measures, we will see a total shut down of the system.

“Where our teams are able to keep building, we must provide flexibility in the system so we do not lock out skilled operatives and we retain our investment in the workforce of the future – our apprentices”.

Dave Campbell, CONSTRUCT Trade Association Manager, said:

“Margins are tight at good times in construction, so every agency and organisation that can help construction keep building, must take the necessary measures to do so.

“CITB has an opportunity to ensure our members are given the support they need for training that has already taken place, and to support the retention of apprentices by bringing forward grant.

“But crucially, CITB needs to help keep our members’ cash flow as healthy as possible by not collecting levy in the short-term and deferring payments in the medium to long-term.

“Companies can only pay grant if they stay trading – our survival is CITB’s survival.”

~ENDS~

Notes to editors

1. The full details of CONSTRUCT’s requests can be downloaded here:
 - [Letter to CSCS](#)
 - [Letter to NOCN/CPCS](#)
 - [Letter to NPORS](#)
 - [Letter to CITB](#)
 - [Letter to City & Guilds](#)
2. [CONSTRUCT Concrete Structures Group \(CONSTRUCT\)](#) is the leading representative body for the concrete structures industry. Formed in 1993, CONSTRUCT members undertake approximately 80% of all concrete frames built nationwide. We act as an interface between member contractors, clients and suppliers, and between other elements of the construction industry, with all its stakeholders. CONSTRUCT’s priorities focus on promoting concrete as the material of choice in construction, health & safety excellence, facilitating industry leading training for the sector, and being the voice of the specialist concrete industry.
3. The Concrete Frame Training Forum (CFTF) is the training and skills arms of CONSTRUCT. It provides information, advice and guidance to members on industry specific training and funding issues; develops and delivers training specific to the concrete structures industry; and promotes careers in the sector.