

EC
ITB*

**Annual
Impact Report
2020/21**





This report was produced by Skyblue on behalf of the Engineering Construction Industry Training Board.

Cover image: ECITB Apprentice Welder Jack Beaty of Fenelon Tanks.

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About the ECITB

The Engineering Construction Industry Training Board (ECITB) is the skills, standards and qualifications body for the development of the engineering construction workforce of Great Britain. An arms-length body of the UK Government, the ECITB reports to the Department for Education.

The ECITB works with employers and training providers to attract, develop and qualify the engineering construction workforce in a wide range of craft, technical and professional disciplines. We invest about £25 million each year to support skills development within the industry.

The organisation was established to address a market failure within the industry to provide training to its workforce. The ECITB addresses this market failure through its levy and grant system, which is used to drive up skill levels and fund training that would otherwise not take place.

Acknowledgments

This impact report has been supported by Skyblue Research Ltd, independent impact measurement and evaluation specialists. This is the first report produced for the ECITB and is the culmination of two year's work with an enthusiastic steering group drawn from the ECITB's teams across different parts of the organisation. The initiative has received strong support from the ECITB Board and Senior Leadership Team, with all members of the ECITB being able to contribute throughout the process of data, information and evidence collection. Over time, the evidence base will grow and strengthen. Skyblue's lead author, Alan Graver, would particularly like to thank David Nash, Jenny Young, Tom Shipp and Franziska von Blumenthal of the ECITB and Nigel Spencer (consultant) who has provided review support for the ECITB's Covid-19 response package.

Foreword

2020 was a year of seismic change and monumental challenge for our industry. Like other aspects of the economy, engineering construction activity was significantly affected by the Covid-19 pandemic. Many parts of the industry, not least the oil and gas sector, experienced contraction, while activity on all engineering construction sites, from new build to repair and maintenance, and decommissioning, was affected by social distancing requirements.

Training levels were also affected by the lockdown restrictions. Remote learning and assessment emerged as a short-term necessity and now promises to fundamentally alter the way in which training is delivered in our industry. The number of young people joining industry fell, with apprenticeship starts down by 40% and graduates by 30% compared to 2019.

Against this backdrop, the ECITB launched its Covid-19 response package in May 2020. This £14m commitment over two years was designed to keep training going through the lockdown, support employers to retain and retrain early careers professionals and shore up the pipeline of new entrants coming into industry. In total, the ECITB spent over £22m on training in 2020; a major achievement given Covid's impact and proof of the value the engineering construction industry places on having a skilled workforce. Together our funding and skills programmes have supported thousands of learners - young and old, entry level and experienced, across all regions of Britain and internationally - during the toughest year in living memory.



This report, produced by external consultants, Skyblue Research Ltd, details the difference that the ECITB made as a training board last year. It focuses on the outcomes we achieved, as opposed to the activities themselves. It is the first in what will be a series of impact reports, drawing on a new framework that we have developed with Skyblue. Through objective and rigorous evaluation, we can not only better understand our impact, but also improve what we do and how we do it, to the benefit of our stakeholders. The findings from our recent ECITB Customer and Stakeholder Satisfaction Survey are directly relevant in this regard.

Many of our Covid-19 response measures, including Train to Retain and the ECITB Scholarship programme, will continue through 2021. With the end of the pandemic now hopefully in sight, our focus will shift towards helping the industry recover and accelerating the transition to net zero. Training and development are central to this journey and the ECITB's plans, as our recent strategy update sets out¹.

As a training board, the ECITB exists to support learners in industry acquire skills to progress in their careers, and to support employers of all sizes, by providing them with the means to build a highly skilled workforce.

The difference we make to learners and employers is what motivates me, our staff and the Board to do what we do and support our industry, and I hope this report helps to convey our impact.



Chris Claydon
Chief Executive, ECITB

¹ <https://www.ecitb.org.uk/blog/2021/01/07/ecitb-publishes-strategy-update-in-response-to-pandemic/>

The Year in Numbers



£22m

of grants issued to employers to support training and development.



Stemmed the decline in apprenticeship starts, by launching the ECITB scholarship programme - over

130

learners on programme in September.



Supported

1,682 apprentices,

400 graduates

and **212** ITECS in 2020



Kept training going by directly funding over

£500,000

worth of training for employers during the lockdown.



73%

of employers say ECITB support helped address skills shortages and gaps in the past 12 months*.



Supported the retention and development of over

430

apprentices, graduates and trainees through the Train to Retain programme.



Established the ECITB's Covid-19 crisis response package, worth

£14m

over two years.



23,000

CCNSG safety passports issued enabling site access for essential workers.

Significant outcomes in 2020



76%

of employers say that training would not have happened without the ECITB levy and grant system*.



75%

of employers say ECITB support has helped to increase workforce competence*.



83%

of stakeholders value the ECITB's labour market intelligence*.



88%

of employers are satisfied with the quality of training they receive through the ECITB*.



83%

of employers felt the ECITB's products had given their employees new knowledge and skills



64%

just under two thirds of employers said that the ECITB adds value to the learning and development aims of their business and leads skills strategy for the industry

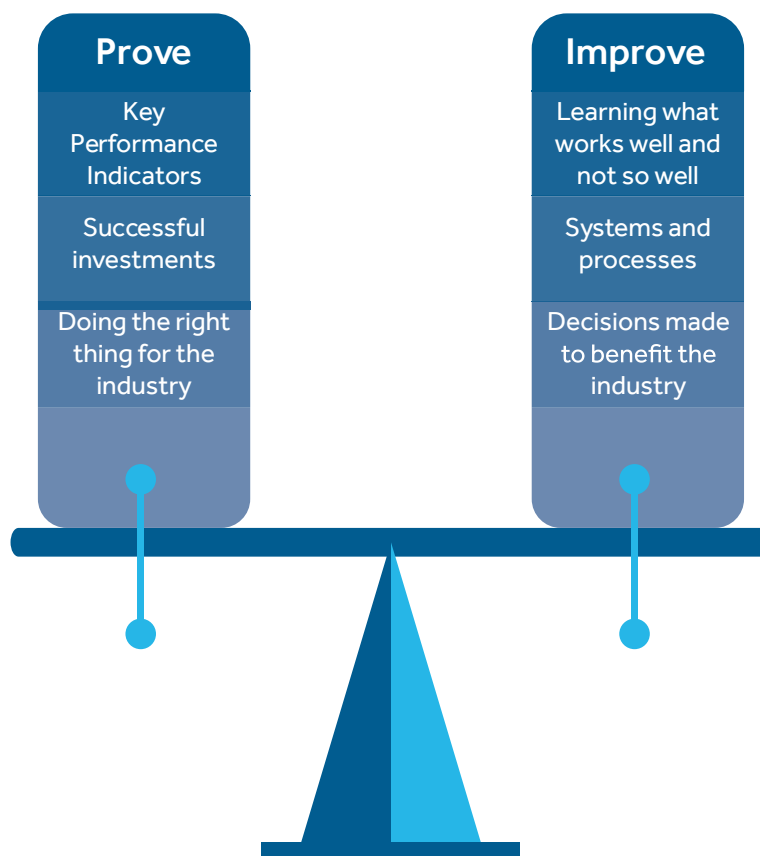


1 in 4

Companies said they could not have achieved the same outcomes in 2020 as quickly (25%), as extensively (23%) or to the same standard (27%) in the absence of the ECITB.

Introduction

This Impact Report is aimed at communicating the difference the ECITB is making. It is also a commitment to learn from stakeholder feedback and continually improve.



It is intended that the ECITB will produce an annual Impact Report. This first one is the culmination of efforts to devise a robust impact framework that will help the ECITB track the difference it makes to stakeholders, their workforce and the industry over time.

Each year the strength of evidence will grow stronger and the ECITB can use this asset to make more confident decisions with and for the benefit of engineering construction across the UK.

The ECITB's Mission to Make a Difference

The ECITB published its three-year strategy, **Leading Industry Learning**, in August 2019. The strategy was developed in close consultation with industry representatives and received overwhelming endorsement at the 2019 levy consultation.

Vision:

The ECITB's vision is to be the industry authority on engineering construction skills, working in partnership with business and government to deliver a diverse and highly skilled workforce, offering value by enabling industry to compete globally.

Mission:

Our mission is to lead the industry in training and developing a highly skilled workforce.



The strategy identifies four major challenges facing the industry:

1. The need to replace an ageing workforce
2. Growing competition for skills from other sectors
3. Technological change; and
4. The importance of maintaining a safe, skilled and productive workforce.

It sets out the ECITB's approach to addressing these challenges, centred on three strategic pillars:

1. Foundations
2. Meeting the current skills need
3. Preparing for the future

The strategy pledges to meet the industry's current skills needs by committing 70% of grant expenditure to support current training requirements over the three-year period.

In addition, up to 30% of grant funding is being made available to support skills the industry needs for tomorrow, including investing in technology and training innovation. In January 2020, the ECITB published an accompanying business plan to demonstrate how the ECITB will deliver the strategy.

In January 2021, the ECITB's Board reviewed its three-year Strategy, Leading Industry Learning, to ensure it remains fit for purpose. Whilst concluding that the drivers for change underpinning the strategy remain relevant, it was agreed that greater emphasis needs to be placed on Industry 4.0. An additional driver has also been identified: Preparing for net zero. Furthermore, in light of feedback from the ECITB's 2020 Customer Satisfaction and Stakeholder Survey, a number of changes of emphasis have been agreed to improve service to its stakeholders. To view the January 2021 update please visit:

<https://www.ecitb.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2021/01/Strategy-Update-2021.pdf>



“For the Department for Education, together with the ECITB, it is now more important than ever that we invest in skills and training to bring new talent up through the pipeline, to improve diversity and to retain existing knowledge.”

Gillian Keegan MP
Minister for Apprenticeships and Skills,
Department for Education



2020 Covid-19 Crisis Response Package

Supporting the industry by addressing market failures in training

In order to support the industry during 2020 a package of measures was designed that would help ensure companies and individuals could continue to train, learn and develop. A significant number of employers found themselves in difficult circumstances and inevitably training and development of staff took a lower priority, as did the ongoing recruitment of new staff. The stark reality is that, without these interventions, many employers would not have been able to afford or continue to carry out training. In the longer term this would have negative consequences as the skills needed when industry workloads and norms return may have diminished or not be available as a result of redundancies. The ECITB has sought to address market failures by investing up to £14 million in three targeted interventions that are referred to frequently in this Impact Report.

Train to Retain

Train to Retain is a grant scheme to support the learning and retention of graduates, apprenticeships and trainees in key ECI disciplines, up to a maximum of 120 days learning per person, in order to secure the skills needed by industry in the medium to the long-term. The scheme has been running since July 2020 and has so far supported over 400 individuals. It provides grants for professional development activities to support the continuation of learning and is carried out when individuals are not working on their normal 'billable' activities. It also supports the further training of recently qualified apprentices (within 6 months of completing) who may benefit from additional development. The ECITB is making up to £9m available for Train to Retain over two years.



Direct Funding of Training

In 2020, the ECITB purchased nearly £0.75m of online and virtual classroom learning programmes directly from suppliers (training providers) on behalf of the industry. This activity has supported in scope companies to access training during the lockdown when they had spending freezes enforced on non-essential costs including training, when cashflow prohibited additional spending or where companies' learning and development team were on furlough. It allowed the companies to keep their employees engaged whilst on furlough by providing, primarily management and professional training such as supervisory, project management and project control.

Scholarships

Launched in May 2020, the ECITB Scholarship is a £3m new entrant pipeline model designed to ensure young talent into industry is sustained. The Scholarship specifically aims to counter the reduction in the number of apprenticeship starts – down 40% in 2020 compared to 2019. The course is a 12-month programme in a technical or craft discipline which equips learners with a vocational qualification, CCSNG passport and valuable work experience. Upon completion, learners will be qualified to pursue a shorter apprenticeship at level 3 or progress directly into employment. The first 250 learners for the academic year 2020/21 started on their programmes of study in September 2020, with further cohorts to follow in 2021 and with the first being available for employment in June 2022.

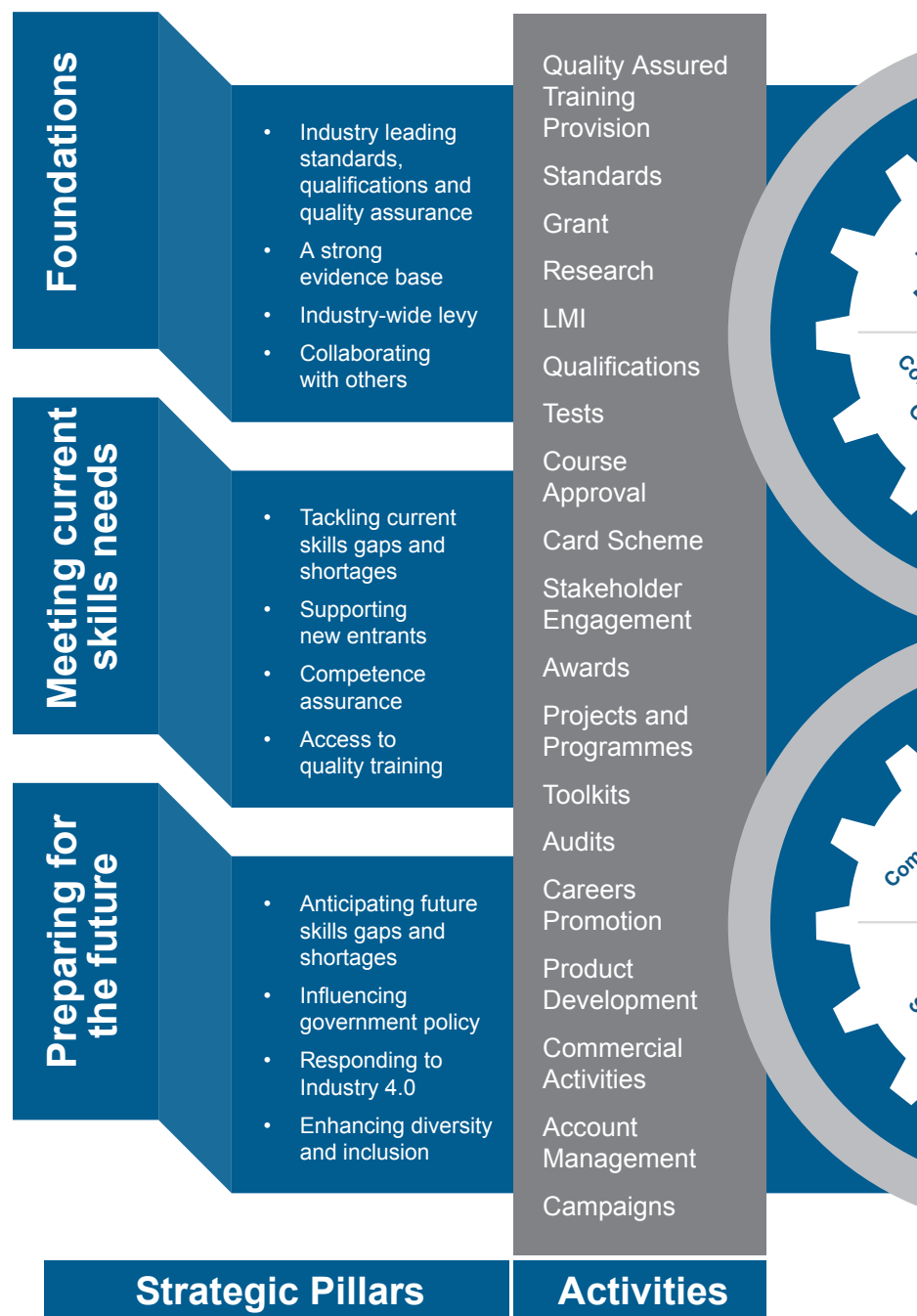
In addition to these schemes, the ECITB invested up to £1m on a range of other pandemic response activities targeting new entrants, including apprentice grants and allowances (as part of the Oil and Gas Technician Apprenticeship Programme) and a compressed (6 month) ITEC programme.

ECITB'S Wheels of Change

Theory of Change

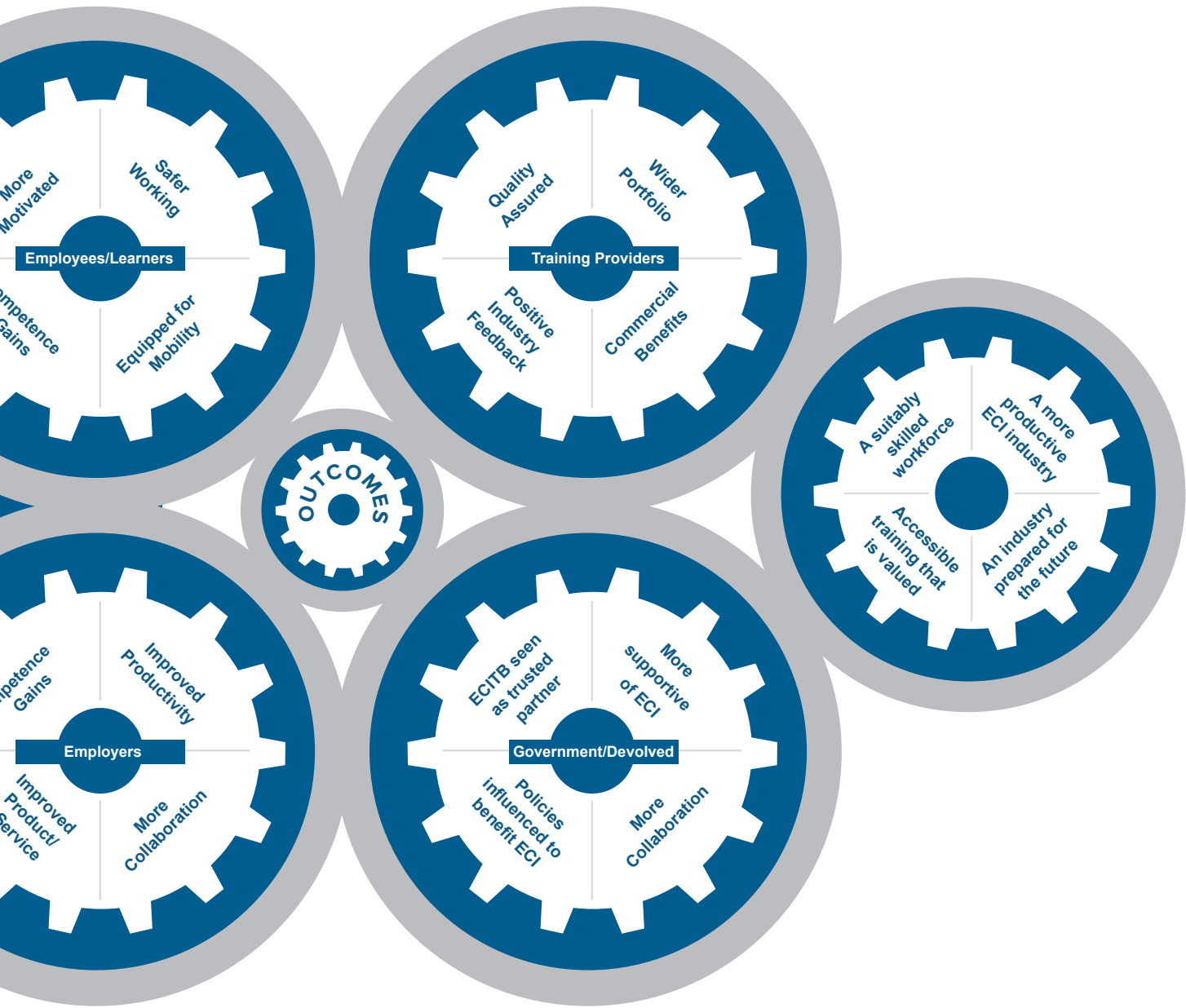
The ECITB's Strategy aims to contribute towards a thriving engineering construction industry. It does this by investing in a carefully considered mix of activities and interventions that together provide benefits to employers, employees, training providers and strategic stakeholders including the government and devolved organisations. The ECITB visualises the kind of differences it aims to make for each audience in its theory of change or 'Wheels of Change'.

Since the ECITB devised its 'Wheels of Change', Covid-19 has meant ECITB has had to respond rapidly to urgent needs and preferences expressed by its industry. However, the ambitions it has to support the industry to be as successful as it can be remain the same.



Demographic Change

Longer-term impacts contributing towards a thriving ECI



Key Evaluation Questions

Using ‘Wheels of Change’ as its bedrock, the ECITB has devised 6 key evaluation questions (KEQs) that will be addressed in each Impact Report. The ECITB’s evidence gathering activity is organised around these KEQs so that, over time, it can be more confident of the progress that it is making towards them.

1. Is the appropriate training accessible to meet industry needs?

2. What value has the ECITB delivered for its stakeholders?

3. To what extent has the ECITB helped employers to address skills gaps and skills shortages?

4. To what extent is the ECI workforce suitably skilled?

5. What benefits has the ECITB leveraged for its operating sectors?

6. How has the ECITB continually improved?

Evidence used in this Impact Report

Supporting each key evaluation question (KEQ) are process, output and outcome indicators which helps determine what data to collect and track. A key source of intelligence used in this report is the Customer and Stakeholder Satisfaction Survey conducted by IFF (published November 2020). Questions were specifically designed to align with the KEQs, Impact Framework and the ECITB’s Key Performance Indicators (KPIs). The research is credible and contemporary as it yielded 217 responses comprising 113 employers (39% response rate), 62 providers¹ (41% response rate) and 42 stakeholders² (30% response rate). Tables, charts and statistics in this report are from this source unless stated otherwise. There has also been a specific focus to collect early outcome information from in-scope employers benefiting from the ECITB’s Covid-19 crisis response package, as such, there are many examples of the effect this has had on companies.

¹ Approved Training Providers and Training Centres

² such as central and local government, trade associations / federations, business groups, and academics in the field

KEQ1: Is the appropriate training accessible to meet industry needs?

Why is this important?

The ECITB, industry and government believe that training is an essential ingredient to help the engineering construction sector perform at its best. Without the ECITB's investment and support the industry would not be able to train as much as it would like or needs, in the ways or places it prefers at a quality and price that enables meaningful participation.

Strategic objective rated by employers	Importance	The ECITB's Effectiveness
To improve access to quality and cost-effective training	4.5 out of 5	4 out of 5

What has the ECITB done in 2020?

The ECITB has invested additional resources to enable key training to continue, whilst maintaining quality, increasing accessibility and supporting its Approved Training Provider (ATP) network³. A continued focus on quality saw the ECITB review 9 suites of National Occupational Standards (NOS) resulting in 86 old individual NOS rationalised to 58. Moreover, diversity and inclusion and digital skills have been introduced in Common NOS. In order to ease accessibility of training the ECITB has increased the number and type of online and eLearning courses in 2020. There are now 14 in total: all 5 supervisor modules have been converted from classroom learning, alongside an Estimating course, the Certificate in Project Controls and 7 approved provider courses.

³ There are 39 approved vocational qualification providers as at 12th January 2021. 32% of ATPs received 2 or more audits in 2020 and 60% achieved audit grades 1 & 2 which are high quality grades.

What difference has the ECITB been making?

Key Performance Indicator (aim)	Performance Status October 2020 ⁴
Percentage of employers satisfied with the quality, accessibility, affordability of training and assessment to be >50% in 2020.	Significantly exceeded ambitions ✓ 88% satisfied with quality ✓ 80% satisfied with accessibility ✓ 79% satisfied with affordability ✓ 66% satisfied with all 3 aspects ✓ 95% satisfied with at least 1 aspect
Percentage of employers who use the ECITB's products say they meet their needs to be >75% in 2020	Achieved the 2020 KPI Between 75% and 97% of those employers that had used an ECITB product / service ⁵ in the past 12 months agreed that it had met their needs 86% average across all products

These positive results from employers have been hard-won in 2020 given the extra challenges that Covid-19 has brought. Of all the issues raised by employers this year, the greatest difficulty, for nearly 1 in 4 (23%), was their inability to access training due to the Covid-19 lockdown. Without specific intervention by the ECITB – for instance, the direct funding of training initiative and putting training online - one can only surmise that this percentage would have been far greater.

Direct Funding of Training

A key initiative launched by ECITB in response to the Covid-19 pandemic in 2020 was to directly purchase training on behalf of employers on a temporary basis.

“It enabled us to continue with Supervisory Management Training & Development training during a difficult time.”

Employer

“We would not have done any of these courses if this offer was not available. It would not have been a priority.”

Employer

⁴ Source: ECITB Customer and Stakeholder Research Report (2020), November 2020. Base: 113 employers.

⁵ ECITB vocational qualifications (97%); ECITB Technical training (91%); ECITB training grants (90%); ECITB cards (84%); ECITB Project Management products (83%); ECITB Supervisory programmes (83%); ECITB Project Controls training programmes (76%); and ECITB Technical Tests (75%). Base number of users per product / services ranged from 24 to 98 employers. Source: ibid.

Case study: New training that would not have happened otherwise

“When the Covid-19 lockdown hit in March 2020 things were already tough in our industry due to the fall in aluminium prices leading to our customers not being able to make a profit. Orders dropped off accordingly. The lockdown led to a collapse in our order book with turnover dropping to 25% of what it was. It should be noted that our clients are largely in aerospace, automotive and construction which have been devastated by Covid-19.

“Pressure was on all aspects of our budgets and there was no way we could afford to keep to our original training budget. At the same time we needed to increase staff training in safety and project management related qualifications in particular.

“The ECITB swiftly stepped in with the commitment to book and pay for training direct with suppliers. It is absolutely certain that without this support we would not have been able to fund the training essential to our future. With their support we more than maintained our training budgets. The increase in professionalism in our employees is already evident and will pay dividends in assisting our recovery.”

Andrew Riley
Chairman,
Mechatherm International Ltd

Benefits for employers

As stated above, the ECITB took the decision to purchase online and virtual classroom learning programmes directly from training provider suppliers on behalf of the industry. £500,000 of investment agreed by the end of March 2020 enabled:

- 76 in-scope companies⁶ to access training against a landscape of training spend freezes, cash flow restrictions and furloughed learning and development teams.
- An increase in smaller companies⁷ attending training. 55 (72%) of companies were smaller companies of which 16 are non-Levy payers.
- Training to be undertaken in certain areas by some small companies for the first time, such as supervisory and project management training.
- Training to be delivered to over 7,000 employees during lockdown across a range of disciplines including project management, supervisory, project control, process safety and auditing.
- A significant acceleration in the ECITB's strategic plans to convert courses from face to face to virtual delivery e.g. supervisory training was taught using virtual classrooms for the first time.
- Furloughed staff to feel involved in valued learning rather than abandoned⁸.

92% of employers reported that the training courses met their expectations as a business^{*} and 75% of employers said the scheme had provided administrative savings for their company⁹.

⁶ Approximately 1 in 4 of all ECITB in-scope companies have benefited from the oil and gas (34), power generation (13), renewables (8), food and Drink (8), chemical (7), pharmaceutical (6), nuclear (5) and steel Production (5) operating sectors noting that some of these companies work in multiple sectors.

⁷ ECITB's definition is any company that pays less than £100,000 levy.

⁸ Amongst 17 of the participating companies a total of 161 furloughed staff were supported with this training.

⁹ Sampled feedback data from 12 employers assessing training received as follows: Supervisor training / modules, 2a & 2b Supervisor, IOSH, Process Safety, APM PFQ, PMQ, Commercial Awareness, Diversity and Inclusion / Unconscious Bias, Confined Space and Harness Awareness, Estimating.

Case study: Supporting skills and competence despite Covid-19

“The Direct Funding of Training grant support provided by the ECITB to Aquaterra Energy throughout a most challenging 2020 has been critical to the skills development and competence of our engineers, and most specifically those who are new to our industry.

“We were especially pleased at the speed at which the ECITB was able to adjust its own working model and arrange for a number of directly funded courses which supported our staff at a difficult time due to Covid-19. As a levy paying in-scope business, we see the ECITB as a valued training partner.”

Steve Way
Human Resources Director, Aquaterra Energy

Benefits for learners

Learners from over 30 occupational roles have benefited from the scheme in 2020.

Apprentice	Electrical and Mechanical Supervisor	Production Assurance Consultant
Receptionist	Bid Manager	Engineer
Production Assurance Manager	Senior Mechanical Engineer	Chemical Engineer
Graduate Engineer	Project Apprentice	Senior People and Organisation Manager
Civil/Structural Engineer	Group Manager	Project Coordinator
Senior Project Engineer	Contract Manager	H&S Manager
Project Engineer	Sheet metal workers	Design Engineer
HR Managers	Project Management Graduate	Supervisor
Design Office Manager	Maintenance Manager	Project/ Planning / Estimating Engineer
Systems Engineer	Director	Mechanical Engineer
Quantity Surveyor	Trainee Engineer	Document Controller

Bold text denotes that these occupations were more prevalent amongst the beneficiaries

Some employers and providers reported that for some courses, delegates were even more engaged with the online learning method meaning that they may persist with virtual classroom learning in future.

“Overall pleasantly surprised. Online worked out well. It meant content was focussed and targeted.”

Employer

“The APM PFQ + PMQ + IOSH training has really benefited the individuals’ roles and being put to use in the business.”

Employer

“The virtual classroom worked really well with the training provider, Provek, providing huge amounts of content online to help study and prepare.”

Alan Rowe
Project Director,
DPS Group

Benefits for training providers

The Approved Training Provider (ATP) network is critical to the ECITB as they are key delivery partners. The direct purchase of training has been a lifeline for many providers and has supported them to convert their face to face delivery into virtual delivery. Over twenty providers have benefited from the initiative.

“The ECITB’s direct funding of training scheme bought us valuable time to redevelop our remaining classroom-only courses into virtual classroom, e-learning and blended delivery models whilst being assured of a minimum level of revenues. It demonstrated what a partnership-based approach can deliver in a short period of time – enabling providers to keep their doors open and companies to access training when it might otherwise have been difficult to do so.”

Tony Marks
Chief Executive, 20/20 Project Management

Case study: Provider trains new and smaller companies with help from the ECITB

“Kingsfield has continued to provide regular ECITB training, mostly Foundations in Commercial Awareness, during the Covid-19 pandemic. The Direct Funding of Training project has benefited us. Clearly not having to independently procure training and then claim funding is a benefit to in-scope companies especially during a cash-flow focused period. The increased proactive approach by the ECITB regional teams voicing the ECITB direct funding of training scheme had an effect on client awareness of the training available. There was a noticeable increase in the ECITB’s social media communications regarding the scheme and available courses. This level of marketing is not in my opinion the norm.

“With companies forced to consolidate and take stock as operations ground to a halt the opportunity to place furloughed workers (and those who weren’t) onto training I imagine would have been greater. Under normal circumstances we find that the need to fulfil project hours often takes precedence over the desire to train. As a result of the scheme, we noticed an increase in ‘smaller’ companies attending and certainly the attendance of learners from companies that had not previously attended one of our training sessions. This could of course have been a result of the factors I’ve described. We also noticed a small increase in the number of learners either not attending or withdrawing at late notice. On the whole we trained roughly the same numbers of learners as in previous years, but in this year it was condensed into a 6-month period. I regard the ECITB’s interventions as largely successful and with the potential to make improvements and cost savings if (as) we move towards a greater partnering relationship.”

Carl Haynes,
Partner, Kingsfield Academy

Summary: Training that meets employer needs

The ECITB’s efforts have supported large and smaller companies as well as providers to continue to train through the crisis. Direct funding of training in particular has been a big benefit to companies, providing them with training free at the point of access and helping reduce their cash-flow burden. 2020 has arguably seen the ECITB both at its most responsive (to Covid-19); and proactive in the way account managers have supported in-scope employers.

KEQ2: What value has been delivered by the ECITB for its stakeholders?

Why is this important?

If the ECITB does not add value for its employers, training providers and wider stakeholders it ceases to be effective. Feedback from employers, providers and wider stakeholders has confirmed that they particularly value the ECITB's focus on four important training and recruitment objectives:

- Ensuring National Occupation Standards (NOS), qualifications and training standards reflect industry requirements
- Supporting the training and recruitment of new entrants into the industry
- Improving access to quality and cost-effective training (see previous chapter)
- Helping to address skills shortages and providing training solutions to tackle skills gaps (see next chapter).

Strategic objective rated by employers	Importance	The ECITB's Effectiveness
To support the training, recruitment of new entrants into the industry	4.6 out of 5	4 out of 5
To ensure NOS, qualifications and training standards reflect industry requirements	4.6 out of 5	3.9 out of 5

What has the ECITB done in 2020?

Through its account management approach, the ECITB works closely with stakeholders to anticipate and identify the skills and training issues they face and satisfy those through a portfolio of relationship support, products and services. 94% employers have used the ECITB's grants, products or services (51% have used a product or service). In addition, 1,682 apprentices have been supported by the ECITB's grant in 2020.

What difference has the ECITB been making?

76% of employers (rising to 81% of wider stakeholders¹⁰) said the ECITB's levy and grant system encourages training to take place that may otherwise not have happened.

10 This includes representatives from Government, devolved administrations and other industry organisations.

Support for skills and training issues

74% of employers felt the ECITB had provided a good or great level of support for their skills and training issues in the past 12 months in relation to funding, advice, helping with apprenticeships and graduates and the organisation and delivery of training.

The ECITB's Covid-19 initiatives have also delivered significant added value for employers, such as Train to Retain, while SME's have also benefited from the ECITB grant system.

Case study: Providing value to smaller companies

85% of employers feel that the ECITB's main strategic value to the industry is in ensuring smaller companies, who may otherwise struggle, can access training.

"EMI have found the ECITB to be fully supportive in these testing times, in relation to the 2020 ECITB Levy/Grant Model, in alignment to our company personnel development strategy. ECITB management have effectively communicated and developed their Levy/Grant Model approach through consultation, which has enhanced our working relationship and furthermore, allowed training to be undertaken as initially planned."

Kay Bingham,
HR & QHSE Administrator, East Midlands Instrument Company

"For most companies, it is a luxury to have an L&D team that supports technical learning across an organisation and for Apollo that is no different. We pride ourselves in having a robust mentoring scheme to enable our engineers to learn and progress towards Chartership, however, the Train to Retain scheme has enabled Apollo to go further than simply offering the ability to learn on the job.

"This funding has meant Apollo can divert valuable time and energy into developing rich internal learning content and formalise a graduate training programme delivered over 12 months. We now have a fantastic learning offering for each graduate intake which will continue to make us an employee of choice.

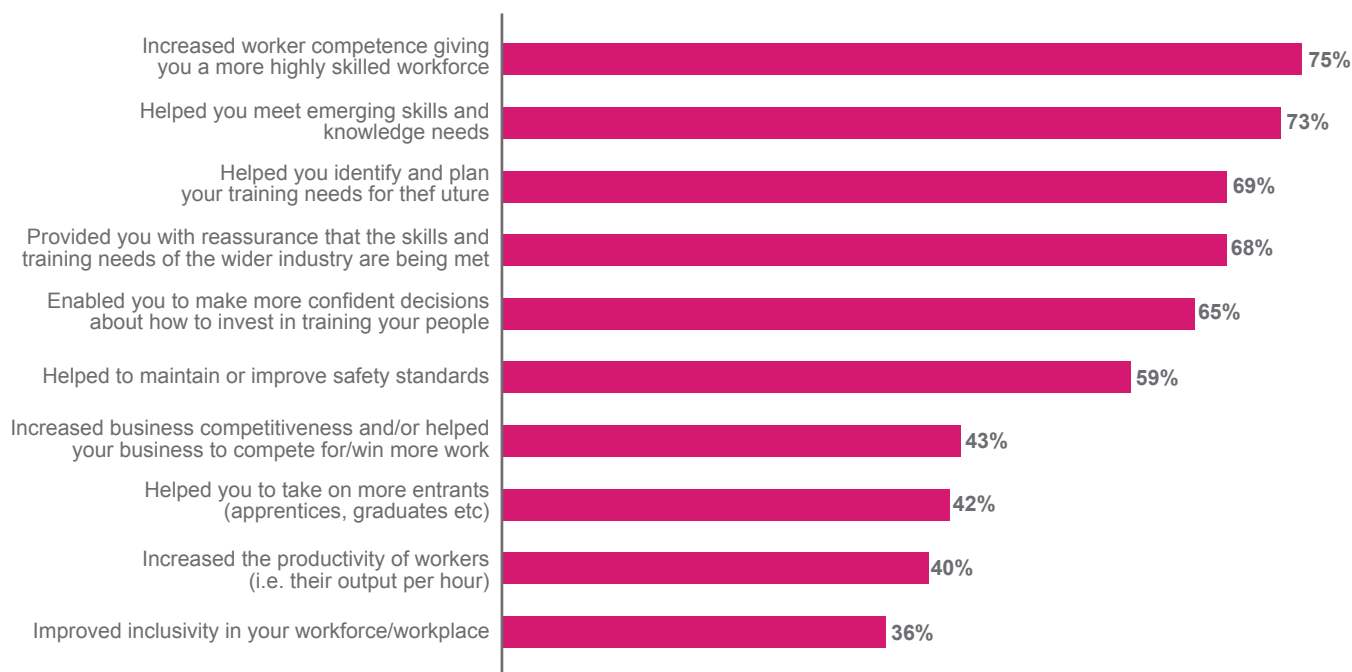
"I'm very pleased that this scheme has enabled Apollo to keep all our graduate engineers across three disciplines (process, structural and marine engineering), allowing them to build on their experiences and enhance the capabilities of Apollo to deliver wider work scopes in the future. The Train to Retain scheme has addressed both these aspects which is a win/win for our graduates and Apollo."

Richard Curtis
Human Resources Manager, Apollo

Employers value their relationship with the ECITB

During 2020, employers felt that their relationship with the ECITB has made a difference in many ways, especially improving the competence of their workforce (75%), meeting emerging skills needs (73%), and identifying and planning training needs (69%).

Proportion of employers who feel that their relationship with the ECITB had contributed to achieving the following outcomes



Base: All employers (113)

What would have happened in the absence of the relationship with the ECITB?

1 in 20 employers felt that they would not have been able to achieve any of the listed outcomes without the ECITB. Three quarters felt that they would have been able to achieve some of the outcomes, however, importantly:

- a quarter (23%) thought they would not have been able to impact as many workers
- a quarter (27%) thought they would not have achieved outcomes to the same standard
- a quarter (25%) thought that they would not have achieved outcomes as quickly

Training providers and wider stakeholders value the ECITB in different ways

The relationship between the ECITB and training providers is vital to the industry's future success if skills needs are to be met through an agile and responsive network. Providers felt their relationship with the ECITB had contributed in these ways:

- 58% of providers said they had improved the quality of their offer to the Engineering Construction Industry
- 52% have been able to increase the competence of their staff (i.e. their tutors and trainers)
- 50% have been able to attract more learners to their courses
- 48% have improved their reputation in the Engineering Construction Industry.

Wider stakeholders ascribe particular value to the way their relationship with the ECITB has contributed in these ways to their ambitions:

- 74% felt that the ECITB provided valuable information or intelligence that has informed their decision making
- 71% said the ECITB had helped them understand the skills needs of the Engineering Construction Industry
- 69% said that the relationship provided them with reassurance that the skills and training needs of the Engineering Construction Industry are being met
- 60% said the relationship helped their organisation achieve their objectives, and make decisions about how and where to best focus their efforts.

“That support (the result of the last levy consensus) is a testament to the value that the industry attaches to the ECITB and the recognition that there is a long-term skills challenge that can only be addressed through collective action.”

Gillian Keegan MP

Minister for Apprenticeships and Skills, Department for Education¹¹

Summary: The ECITB offers value in different ways to its stakeholders

Employers and wider stakeholder ratings of the ECITB's performance, effectiveness and value are high for many of its strategic objectives and the way in which it invests to help them meet their particular needs and expectations. The ECITB has more work to do to develop those same high ratings with its training providers, but overall the feedback provided suggests that relationships with the ECITB are valuable and they contribute to useful outcomes that would otherwise be unlikely to happen to the same extent, reach, quality or as quickly. The ECITB's role as a catalyst for skills and training outcomes is therefore an important role it plays, and will continue to play, to support the industry.

¹¹ Taken from hansard transcript of the House of Commons debate on the ECITB 2020 Levy Order, 8th September 2020
[https://hansard.parliament.uk/Commons/2020-09-08/debates/58883e48-5cb1-43cd-a2a9-ea04e3bafef7/DraftIndustrialTrainingLevy\(EngineeringConstructionIndustryTrainingBoard\)Order2020](https://hansard.parliament.uk/Commons/2020-09-08/debates/58883e48-5cb1-43cd-a2a9-ea04e3bafef7/DraftIndustrialTrainingLevy(EngineeringConstructionIndustryTrainingBoard)Order2020)

KEQ 3: To what extent has the ECITB helped employers to address skills gaps and shortages?

Why is this important?

The ECITB's role is to support the industry's existing, changing and future workforce. This means helping ensure training is available to fill gaps in worker proficiency to perform at their best, supporting industry recruitment and talent pipeline initiatives to address skills shortages and facilitating workforce transferability and mobility.

The Engineering Construction Industry (ECI) has a workforce comprising mechanical and electrical workers, technicians, engineers and many more. Due to the multi-sector footprint of the ECI, it is difficult to quantify the economic impact of the industry when using official datasets. Previous research commissioned by the ECITB in 2017 suggests the industry contributed over £100bn in Gross Value Added (GVA) to the UK economy and employed in the core industry nearly 190,000 people (0.6% of total UK employment)¹², although this is likely to be a conservative estimate. The wider supply chain is approximately as large as the core

industry. Medium and large companies (i.e. those employing more than 50 and 250 staff respectively) collectively represent about 90% of the workforce in the core industry.

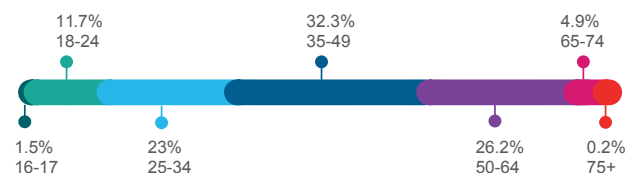
The ECITB's 2019 Labour Market Outlook research identified significant challenges to address and Brexit rather than Covid-19 was the topic of conversation. The ECITB's new strategy was forged during a context where one-third of employers (35%) expected to grow their workforce over the next three years, and only 5% expected it to reduce in size. Employers believed their skills gap would stay the same (43%) or get worse (44%) by 2022. More than half of employers (55%) saw the ageing and retiring workforce as the main reason for the skills gap. The research showed that 31% of employees are over 50, but only 12% are under 25. Just under a third of employers (29%) felt restrictions on freedom of movement after Brexit would make recruitment more difficult.

12 ECITB/CEBR, 2017, The economic footprint of engineering construction

Ageing workforce

55% of employers think the ageing workforce is the main reason for the skills gap

Age profile of the ECI (%)



Skills gaps & shortages

81% of employers cite applicants' lack of knowledge, skills or experience as the reason for failing to recruit for roles.



Recruitment and retention challenges

62%

of employers fear losing out to higher paying competitors

40%

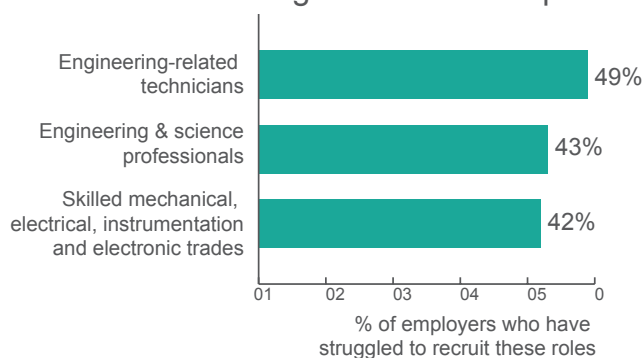
say there are not enough apprentices & graduates with the right qualifications

29%

fear restrictions on freedom of movement following Brexit

Hard to recruit roles

Due to skills shortages in the marketplace



Strategic objective rated by employers

Importance

The ECITB's Effectiveness

To address skills shortages / training solutions to tackle skills gaps

4.5 out of 5

3.9 out of 5

To help the industry develop more inclusive cultures and greater diversity

4.2 out of 5

3.5 out of 5

To enable companies to harness digital to improve skills and productivity

4.1 out of 5

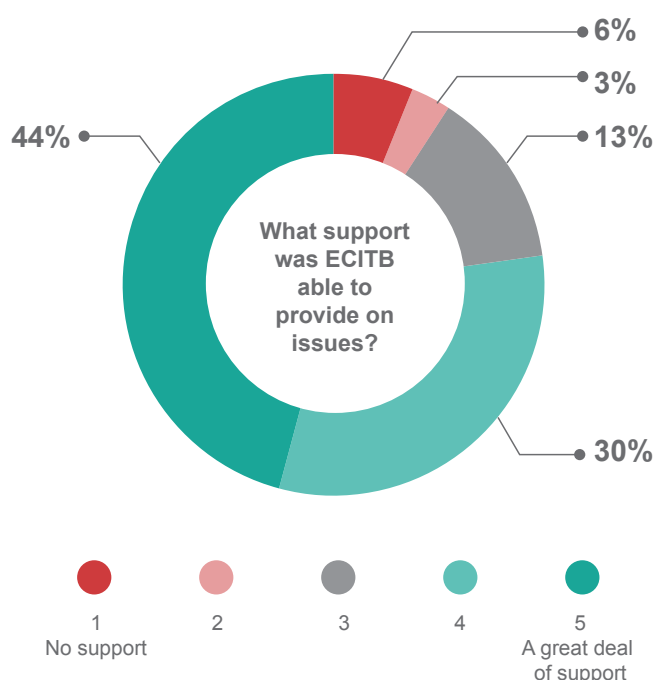
3.5 out of 5

What has the ECITB done in 2020?

The ECITB has responded rapidly to ameliorate the negative effects of Covid-19 on the industry's learning, development and training budgets and activity. It has offered a suite of products and services to support the industry's skills, training and recruitment objectives. £22m of grants were distributed in 2020, enabling companies to train their workforce, including critical occupations (e.g. project management, supervisor and project controller) in the skills they need. The most prevalent spend has been on training topics such as supervisory skills, commercial awareness and safety training. Support for new entrants has also been a key feature of the ECITB's interventions in 2020 with increased emphasis on encouraging diversity e.g. of 23% of apprentice starts and 21% completers were female¹³.

What difference has the ECITB been making?

Key Performance Indicator (aim)	Performance Status October 2020 ¹⁴
Percentage of employers reporting that the ECITB's support has helped address skills shortages and gaps: >50% in 2020.	Significantly exceeded ambitions ✓ 73%



Over two-thirds (68%) of employers had experienced skills or training issues in the past 12 months. Of these businesses:

- Nearly three quarters (74%) felt that the ECITB had supported them with these issues over the last 12 months, rising to 81% amongst smaller employers with less than 50 employees
- 71% of smaller employers, compared to 54% across all employers felt that the ECITB has been effective at addressing skills shortages and gaps
- 83% of employers felt the ECITB's products had given their employees new knowledge and skills
- 77% felt the ECITB's products had validated the skills and knowledge of their workforce
- 57% felt that the ECITB's products had helped them secure projects by demonstrating the competence and transferability of their workforce.

¹³ Women are hugely underrepresented in engineering construction, comprising just 12.5% of the workforce. The ECITB Labour Market Outlook (2019)

¹⁴ Source: ECITB Customer and Stakeholder Research Report (2020), November 2020. Base: 113 employers.

Addressing skills shortages through new entrant pipelines

As stated above, the ECITB's Scholarship programme was introduced last year to stem the decline in new entrant numbers as a result of the pandemic¹⁵.

The Scholarship funds learners to undertake some of the components of an apprenticeship standard/framework, off the job in an approved centre without having to register on an apprenticeship. As this is a full-time study programme the ECITB pays the learners a training allowance of £140 per week during term time.

This Scholarship aims to ensure that employers who are not currently, or for the foreseeable future, in a position to support an apprentice would still be able recruit one once the current crisis has abated. Programme graduates will be available for either registration on the apprenticeship against which their programme specification was designed to align with, or as a site ready direct hire in critical occupational areas.

Disciples supported by the scholarship include: design and draughting, mechanical installation, pipefitting, welding, electrical installation and instrumentation and controls.

Case Study: Developing the next generation of talent with ECITB scholarships

"It is a fantastic opportunity for local young people and fits with our strategy of delivering education and training for key local sectors."

Jill Cooper
DN Colleges Group

"We now have 14 young people undertaking a high-quality two-year programme, they are clear about their programme content, career opportunities, are developing the knowledge, skills, attitudes and behaviours required by employers, plus they are being financially rewarded for their performance. On completion of the programme employers will have the opportunity take them into their organisations, continue to train and develop them based on their company needs and will ultimately have an employee who has the pre-requisite practical skills, knowledge and behaviours required to safely do a wide range of tasks to recognised occupational standards of competency. I think the impact will be in ensuring that a supply of highly skilled labour to the sector is maintained, it will help build organisational capability within those organisations, help drive the UK's economy forward post Covid and Brexit and will provide much needed job and career opportunities to those that have successfully gone through the Scholarship."

Phil Blewitt,
Managing Director, NETA Training Group

¹⁵ The average annual apprentice numbers were between 600 and 800 whilst the ITEC programme averaged 100 learners prior to Covid-19.



The first 132 of a planned 250 learners started on their programmes of study (with 8 providers in September 2020 with the first being available employment in June 2022).

Here's what three of the first learners say about their early experiences of the ECITB Scholarship. They are all studying on the pipefitting pathway with an ECITB Approved Training Provider.

"I am finding the early experience of the programme hands on and enjoyable. I have particularly been enjoying tech certs and being able to use different machinery for a purpose in the workshop.

"In absence of the scholarship I would currently be at sixth form still in year 13.

"So far the programme has reinforced my knowledge of wanting to obtain a career in the engineering industry and I can confidently say that this is the industry I want to be working in, in the future."

Lucy

"I have enjoyed my time on this so far as I had previous experience at pipefitting last year.

"If I wasn't on this course I would be doing trade work with my Dad or at college doing plumbing or pipefitting.

"After doing more work on pipe fitting it has made me sure I want to pursue a career in it."

Ethan

"I am finding the course enjoyable and have learnt how to bend a fit copper and mild steel pipes and have really enjoyed doing this so far.

"In absence of the Scholarship programme I would be either doing sixth form or college.

"I have a great appetite to gain a job as a pipefitter from this course as I feel it is a good opportunity to achieve a job."

Jamie

Wider skills and training investment by the ECITB and the difference it makes

Awareness of the ECITB’s grants, products and services is high among employers, ranging from 97% aware of its training grants to 69% for its Technical Tests. Usage of each product was more varied.

- 94% of employers have used at least one of the ECITB’s grants, products or services in the last 12 months
- 87% of employers had used the ECITB’s Training Grants in the past 12 months
- 88% of employers have been satisfied with training and assessment accessed through the ECITB in the last 12 months
- Employers were generally positive about the quality of the products/services and how they met their needs (at least three quarters of users felt each had met their needs).

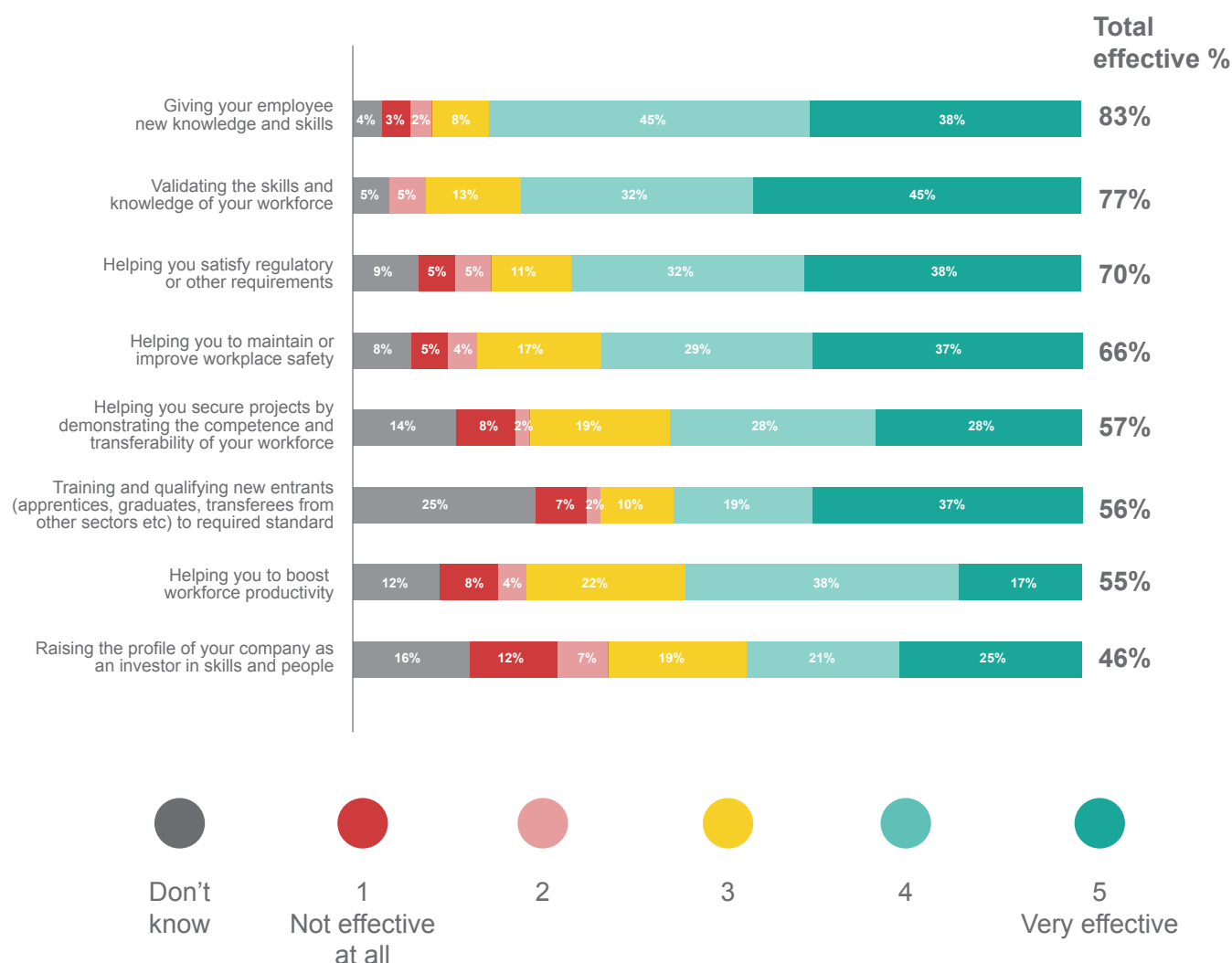
ECITB vocational qualifications	ECITB Technical Tests	ECITB Technical Training	ECITB Training Grants	ECITB Cards	ECITB Project Management Controls	ECITB Supervisory Programmes	ECITB Project Controls Training Programmes
Needs met rating from 1 (not at all met) to 5 (needs fully met)							
4.7	4.7	4.5	4.5	4.4	4.3	4.3	4.3

In 2020 the ECITB has provided training to meet a diverse set of needs to help the industry tackle skills gaps and shortages. The top ten grant areas by value of funding in 2020 are as follows:

- Apprenticeship grants
- Train to Retain
- Misc management & professional
- E-learning (various)
- Miscellaneous skills & technical
- Technical tests
- Emergency response
- Mobile elevated work platforms
- Direct funding of training
- Leadership & supervisory

The provision of grants, as well as other ECITB products and services have been designed to help address skills gaps, shortages and related outcomes. The evidence suggests that the ECITB’s support particularly reduces skills gaps by increasing employee knowledge and skills through its products, services and training interventions.

Employer view of the effectiveness of the ECITB's products in achieving outcomes



Supporting the industry by expanding its talent pool

A key way in which the ECI can tackle skills shortages is by opening itself up to a wider, more diverse range of talent. Evidence suggests that employers whose workplaces are diverse and inclusive tend to attract the best talent, as well as being more innovative and productive. Previous ECITB data suggests that nearly 9 in 10 (88%) of the ECI workforce is male, while BAME representation is also very low. In addition, 31% of the workforce is aged over 50, with 36% aged under 35¹⁶.

The ECITB has been determined to contribute to changing this workforce composition through a range of talent pipeline initiatives and it has specifically invested in training that can contribute to more inclusive workplaces. Achieving greater diversity will be challenging and while the industry has many strong advocates, it is worth noting that developing more inclusive cultures and greater diversity is seen as 7th most important of 11 strategic objectives tested in the Customer and Stakeholder Satisfaction Survey (November 2020).

Case study: Engineering a Winning Workforce – Engaging the Majority training

In 2020, the ECITB invested in equality, diversity and inclusion training that aims to be different to standard EDI training. Training was delivered virtually as a pilot to employers in the nuclear sector by EqualEngineers. As of 1st of December, 37 training sessions had been successfully delivered to 215 ECITB-funded learners with a further 84+ sessions for up to 1,000 learners planned in total.

Early learning from feedback and post-learning evaluation

Pilot work has identified that cultural challenges vary across the different sites that have received the training. Senior leaders report that the training has been suitably contextualised and that they are actively discussing how to embed it within their organisations:

“As we progress to a more forward-thinking business, where inclusion of differing genders, ethnicity and diversity become more commonplace, several focus groups and events have evolved to discuss such real life issues, as raised in the training. For example, Women in Nuclear, Equality Diversity Inclusion (EDI), Anti-bullying, International Men’s day, etc.”

The customised training will be used by some participants in their role at work to raise the profile of diversity where they have influence in their organisation:

“People’s ability to cope with change and diversity is much more in focus. The course, for me, is a good reminder of how important diversity is and in my workforce planning space. I absolutely do require people to be conscious of the impact a lack of diversity can have on the health of a project. I will be using some of the course content in my Workforce Planning presentation in order to highlight the importance of diversity going forward.”

Sampled evidence finds that some learners have applied their knowledge in practice too:

“Before I took part in the course I was part of our company’s Women’s Network, and I’ve moved forward with that, putting myself forward to help more to raise awareness of gender equality within the workplace, and I think the teachings regarding micro aggressions and unconscious bias have helped me take a more active role in the network.”

Further ongoing evaluation in 2021 will enable more evidence to be collected about the effectiveness of the pilot.



Key Performance Indicator (aim)

Performance Status October 2020¹⁷

Uptake of the ECITB's supported diversity and inclusion training interventions (>1,000 in 2020)

420 supported to date¹⁸ and >500 to be supported in 2021

Summary: Stakeholder feedback provides a strong mandate for the ECITB to continue to prioritise tackling skills gaps and shortages.

Employers view this as a key strategic priority for the ECITB and the vast majority think it does it effectively, leading to positive outcomes for their business and workforce. The ECITB's new entrant programmes and efforts to support industry diversify its talent pool are also viewed favourably and considered a strategic priority by the majority of employers, providers and other stakeholders.

¹⁷ ECITB Customer and Stakeholder Research Report (2020), November 2020. Base: 113 employers.

¹⁸ The ECITB's Strategy 2020-22 Year 1 review and update, January 2021. This was an estimated figure at time of publication

KEQ 4: To what extent has the ECITB contributed to a suitably skilled ECI workforce?

Why is this important?

A skilled workforce leads to benefits for individual learners, their employers and the wider industry's performance (defined as improvements in quality and productivity). In fact, by developing skills and knowledge, and then applying it in the workplace, employees can develop their confidence and capability, in turn driving value for their organisation. The ECITB seeks to ensure employees in the ECI are technically competent to benefit them at each stage of their career, equipping them for changes regardless of which part of the industry they work in now, come in from or transfer to.

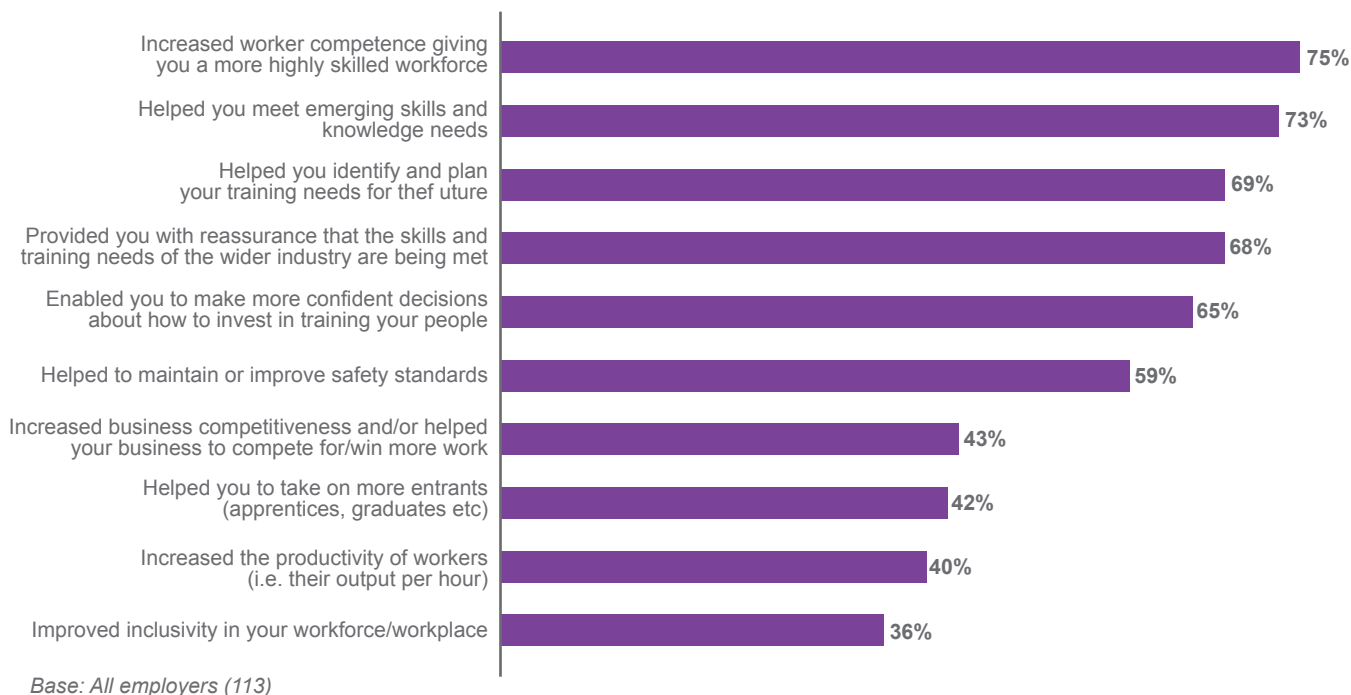
Strategic objective rated by employers	Importance	The ECITB's Effectiveness
To provide standardised assurance of the common competencies of the ECI workforce	4.3 out of 5	3.8 out of 5

What has the ECITB done in 2020?

The ECITB has supported a large number of employees in the ECI to develop their skills and demonstrate their competence in 2020. For example, 22,995 CCNSG cards were issued in the year; 6,434 technical tests were completed; 11,068 certifications were issued; 4,634 learners completed training (excluding CCNSG); and 608 learners registered on regulated qualifications were supported.

What difference has the ECITB been making?

Employers feel that their relationship with the ECITB has contributed significantly to improving the competence of their workforce (75%) as well as meeting emerging skills needs (73%) and identifying and planning training needs (69%). Some outcomes will take longer to materialise such as the impacts of training on productivity but there are encouraging signs as 40% of employers thought the relationship with the ECITB has increased productivity, rising to 55% who think the organisation's products and services have boosted their workforce productivity.



Case study: Competence development at the Hinkley Point C site

The ECITB supported a number of competency initiatives at Hinkley Point C in 2020.

The Welding Centre of Excellence (WCoE) has recently started to test candidates at Bridgwater College. All welding operatives on the Hinkley Point C site need to have their competency validated independently before they can access the site.

John Harris, Nuclear Product Development Manager at ECITB: “This will raise the bar in terms of competency and safety as the site enters the Mechanical, Electrical, HVAC (Heating, ventilation and air conditioning) phase of the build. The welding tests have been developed collaboratively between the ECITB, Doosan, Cavendish Nuclear and EDF. There are currently 4 tests being used with 5 additional tests in the pipeline. To date, approximately 60 candidates have attempted the tests with many more to follow.”

In addition, the ECITB has supported the project by developing the HSO (Hinkley Support Operative) scheme alongside the major contractors. This programme aims to train up semi-skilled workers across a range of occupations and will provide important local employment opportunities.

Raising the skills levels of young workers during the pandemic

The ECITB launched Train to Retain in June 2020. The aim of the scheme is to support the retention and development of early-career personnel working in the industry.

The scheme is targeted at apprentices, trainees and graduates in critical engineering construction disciplines who are unable to pursue their current recognised industry programmes at the present time. As entry-level workers, they are relatively inexperienced and as such are more vulnerable during times of economic instability. By targeting the retention of essential ECI skills, as opposed to generic skills, the scheme will help to ensure the industry retains the future talent it needs to grow and remain competitive.

Train to Retain provides grants for professional development activities to support the continuation of learning, carried out when individuals are not working on their normal activities. It also supports the further training of recently qualified apprentices (within 6 months of completing) who may benefit from additional development. The ECITB has allocated up to 12,324 days of support via Training to Retain, £9m to the scheme in total, with nearly £2m spent in 2020. This has supported 531 learners in 2020 (148 apprentices, 340 graduates and 43 trainees), with further funding committed into 2021.

Case Study: Train to Retain scheme helping to secure industry talent

“The Train to Retain initiative has been a lifesaver! For us, it came just in the nick of time. It has helped us to save the jobs of some, potentially, vulnerable individuals, who are just in the early years of their Engineering career. Not only has the scheme helped Nuvia to retain these valuable assets, but it has allowed the individuals to see that there is a great deal of support for them and their chosen careers, enabling them to feel their worth within an industry that greatly needs their skills both now and in years to come.

“Already, the scheme has had a great impact on our business. Just before it was launched, there were several jobs that were put at risk of redundancy. The scheme has allowed our senior management to look at saving some of these roles, and as a result many of the positions are no longer at risk. Until we see the full cycle of the scheme, it is difficult to see if anything could be improved. At the moment we are really happy with how the scheme is progressing, we get feedback quickly, and advice when needed. The scheme has adapted since it was first launched, which shows that the ECITB is listening to what is needed by the employers which is extremely reassuring.”

Kate Blackie
L&D Advisor, NUVIA



Occupations supported include:

Apprentices	Graduates
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Electrical (Engineering Maintenance) • Project Controls Technician • Mechanical (Advanced Level Apprenticeship in Engineering) • Manufacture (Engineering Technical Support) • Pipefitter • Erector/Rigger 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Electrical Engineering • Marine Engineering • Structural Engineering • Mechanical Engineering • Pipeline Engineering • Estimator • Chemical Engineering

“The Train to Retain Scheme has allowed a number of our graduates to further explore their strengths and career aspirations during challenging times. It has acted as another way to support their personal wellbeing, further demonstrate their value and help equip them for a successful future.”

Elsbeth Marsh
Talent Manager, KBR (EMEA)

Developing common competency standards and assurance across the ECI workforce

The ECITB's Connected Competence programme is helping equip the ECI workforce with transferable engineering skills that are in demand across industry sectors. For employees, Connected Competence standardises competence and training requirements. In turn, this reduces duplication of training and assessment. For employers, it makes proof of competence, training and qualifications easily transferable across the workforce. This ensures that all workers operate to the same high standards.

Connected Competence aims to improve efficiency and productivity for employers by making sites safer, eliminating unnecessary training and creating a workforce with transferable engineering skills that can move between companies and sectors. A range of companies have now adopted Connected Competence: Aker Solutions, WorleyParsons, Bilfinger Salamis UK, Petrofac, Stork and Wood currently use the Connected Competence framework. Trades involved in the initial phase of Connected Competence include electrical installation, electrical maintenance, instrument and control maintenance, mechanical maintenance, painter / blaster, pipefitter, plater and thermal insulation.

In response to employer feedback and in light of the pandemic, the ECITB delivered a pilot programme to evaluate the feasibility of onsite digital technical assessment. This was conducted at both offshore and onshore sites for construction and maintenance trades. Procurement of online invigilated knowledge tests allowing workers to undertake assessments from home and scheduled from as little as 15 minutes notice. Worker identity was verified through artificial intelligence technology and a live proctor ensures the test validity was authentic and robust. In 2021, the ECITB will extend remote delivery of Connected Competence and introduce new worker profiles and accreditations through an online platform.

Summary

Three quarters of employers say their relationship with the ECITB supports workforce competence and there is growing evidence that without the ECITB's support, skills deemed important in the industry could have already been lost.

Sampled evidence from learners that experience training report positive cognitive, affective and behavioural gains that enable them to feel more valued and confident in their role. More evidence however needs to be collected from a greater volume of learners after their training in future as this will help the ECITB and its Approved Provider Network learn more about whether and how that learning is applied in practice, and the wider effects on both the individual learner and their employer.

KEQ 5: What benefits has the ECITB leveraged for its operating sectors?

Why is this important?

The Engineering Construction Industry contributes around £100bn in Gross Value Added (GVA) to the UK economy. The industry is inherently a contractor community which operates across multiple sectors¹⁹ and the ECITB seeks to add value to each sector. The ECITB aims to provide strategic leadership on skills and added value to the industry through its assessment of labour market intelligence, networking and influencing activity. By having a strong voice in government, the ECITB seeks to ensure policy reflects the needs of the ECI and facilitates ECITB efforts to support the industry attract and develop a skilled workforce.

Some, but not all, employers have been telling the ECITB in its relationship management work that they do not have the resource to assess long-term trends, technologies and other factors that will impact their business in the future as they focus on challenges in the here and now. Neither can they routinely consider collaborating with other ECI organisations, providers or stakeholders on industry-wide or sector-wide initiatives that could reduce investment costs in training, without the ECITB being the catalyst.

Strategic objective rated by employers	Importance	The ECITB's Effectiveness
To work with Governments to shape policies to meet industry needs	4.4 out of 5	3.7 out of 5
To provide high-quality intelligence on labour market skills and workforce trends	4 out of 5	3.7 out of 5
To support delivery of the Industrial Strategy and help industry prepare for net zero	4.1 out of 5	3.3. out of 5

¹⁹ Nuclear; Oil and gas – downstream; Oil and gas – upstream; Power generation; Renewables; Chemicals; Pharmaceuticals; Food and drink; Water treatment; and others including steel, cement, glass, paper and brewing)



What has the ECITB done in 2020?

The ECITB has completed 4 major research projects in 2020 providing an authoritative situational analysis of the challenges and opportunities for the ECI in respect of net zero, apprenticeship reforms, skills transferability and the impact of Covid-19. It has continued to collect labour market intelligence that has informed the ECITB's 'Leading Industry Learning' Strategy and has ensured that stakeholders valuing this kind of intelligence have received it to inform their own decision-making processes. 83% of stakeholders said they valued the ECITB's labour market intelligence in 2020.

As an employed-led, arms-length body, the ECITB is uniquely positioned to act as a bridge between industry and government. It does this by communicating industry priorities to government and parliamentarians through dialogue with ministers and officials and in submissions to consultations and parliamentary enquiries. In 2020, the ECITB responded to 12 government consultations on post-16 qualifications, apprenticeships, T levels, strategic occupations for migration, energy transition and the Nuclear Decommissioning Authority's strategy. It also submitted evidence to 4 select committee/all party parliamentary group enquiries, raising the profile of the ECITB with parliamentarians. In addition to regular meetings with DfE Ministers, the chair met with Scotland's Minister for Business, Fair Work and Skills, Jamie Hepburn to discuss the ECITB's response to Covid-19 and provided input into the development of the Scottish Government's Climate Emergency Action Plan, developed by Skills Development Scotland.

The UK Government communicates its priorities for the ECITB through, among other documents, the publication of the annual priorities letter²⁰ from the Minister for Skills. The latest letter states the importance of the industry and the ECITB in powering the economy, delivering critical national infrastructure and achieving net zero carbon emissions. Preparing the industry for net zero has grown in focus for the ECITB in 2020. In February 2021, the ECITB published its roadmap for helping industry acquire the relevant skills required for the transition to net zero emissions by 2050 (2045 in Scotland) and embarked on a major programme of work to identify and address net zero skills needs.

The ECITB is responsive to the needs of the Engineering Construction Industry. During lockdown, it swiftly introduced a package of support measures including a scheme to retain apprentices and graduates and a new scholarship to support new entrants... This order will enable the ECITB to continue to carry out its vital training responsibilities. As the country responds to the Covid-19 pandemic, this is now more important than ever.”

Baroness Berridge
Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State,
Department for Education²¹

“We welcome this fine example of a trade body (sic) being willing to invest in the skills of the future. Its recognition of their value is far-sighted and reflects well on the industry... particularly given the financial pressures that have been brought to bear on the sector”

Toby Perkins
MP, Shadow Minister for Apprenticeships and
Life Long learning²²

“There remains a serious and distinct market failure in the development of skills in the construction industry as a whole, something that stems in part from the fact that trading conditions, incentives and culture do not, it seems, lead to a sufficient level of investment in skills by employers. That is not by any means a failing restricted to the [engineering] construction sector, but the ECITB also has a vital role in providing support in reskilling and upskilling, a factor that will increase in importance after the break with the European Union.

Lord Watson of
Invergowrie²³

20 <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/ecitb-annual-priorities-letter-2019-to-2020>

21 Taken from hansard transcript of Lords Grand Committee debate on ECITB's 2020 levy order, 2nd September 2020
[https://hansard.parliament.uk/lords/2020-09-02/debates/F5927514-42E6-4B4E-9404-AC43D36740E1/IndustrialTrainingLevy\(EngineeringConstructionIndustryTrainingBoard\)Order2020](https://hansard.parliament.uk/lords/2020-09-02/debates/F5927514-42E6-4B4E-9404-AC43D36740E1/IndustrialTrainingLevy(EngineeringConstructionIndustryTrainingBoard)Order2020)

22 Taken from the Commons Committee debate, see footnote 1

23 Taken from the Lords Grand Committee debate, see footnote 21

Key Performance Indicator (aim)	Performance Status October 2020
Percentage of stakeholders who say they value the ECITB's labour market intelligence to be more than 60% in 2020	Significantly exceeded ambitions ✓ 83% ²⁴
Percentage of stakeholders who believe the ECITB is contributing positively towards industry preparedness for net zero and the Industrial Strategy to be more than 60% by 2020	Achieved the 2020 KPI ✓ 69%: Industrial Strategy ²⁵ ✓ 60%: 'net zero' ²⁶
Percentage of stakeholders who say the ECITB is positively influencing skills policy to be more than 60% by 2020	Achieved the 2020 KPI ✓ 64% ²⁷

In addition to enabling employers and other stakeholders to understand the skills picture in industry and respond appropriately, the ECITB's labour market intelligence in 2020 has been used in numerous ways:

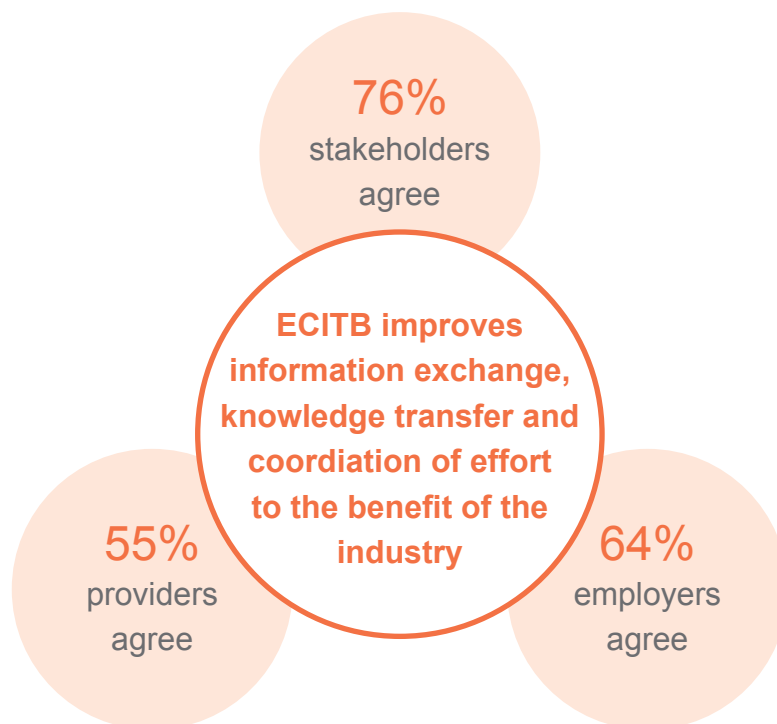
- The ECITB's Covid-19 intelligence briefings in 2020 identified the likelihood of a prolonged decline in the number of new apprentice starts. This intelligence led, amongst other factors, to the establishment of the scholarship programme.
- 'Igniting the Spark', the ECITB's report on apprenticeships, provided the evidence base for engagement with DfE during its review of the apprenticeship programme in 2020. The Government expressed particular interest in the report's recommendation for better recognition of prior learning to aid progression into shorter or 'fast-track' level 3 apprenticeships. The Chancellor announced a range sectoral flexibility in the 2020 Autumn Statement and the joint DfE/BEIS Construction Skills Delivery Group, of which ECITB is a member, is developing the concept of a fast-track apprenticeship further.
- The Skills Transferability report received a wide range of industry and trade press coverage. It was used to inform the development of the NSSG's skills transferability programme theme. The evidence presented in the report has helped to shed light on the barriers and opportunities for mobilising skilled workers, including those at risk of redundancy in carbon intensive sectors, to deliver net zero projects.
- The ECITB's report into the implications of the net zero transition for the Engineering Construction Industry, commissioned from Element Energy, has enabled positive engagement with the UK and devolved governments, the Committee on Climate Change, the Industrial Decarbonisation Research and Innovation Centre (IDRIC) and the industrial clusters as well as helping to secure ECITB representation on the Green Jobs Taskforce.

²⁴ Source: ECITB Customer and Stakeholder Research Report (November 2020) Base: 42 stakeholders. 34% of (62) providers agree. Employers were not asked about the value they ascribed to LMI.

²⁵ 50% of (113) employers agree. Only 2% disagreed, whilst the balance either didn't agree either way or didn't know. Ibid.

²⁶ 48% of (113) employers agree. Only 6% disagreed, whilst the balance either didn't agree either way or didn't know. Ibid.

²⁷ 64% of (113) employers and 48% of (62) training providers also agree. Ibid.



Sector Spotlights

The ECITB's work benefits stakeholders operating across the ECI sectors, as illustrated by the following examples:

Strategic skills support for the nuclear sector

As well as providing training grants and skills advice to 15 employers operating across 27 nuclear sites, the ECITB provides strategic skills support to the sector through its participation in the Nuclear Skills Strategy Group (NSSG). The ECITB was central to the formulation of the nuclear skills delivery plan, with a focus on skills transferability and participates in the Nuclear Developers Group to identify skills pipeline requirements. It has also developed training standards for the Welding Centre of Excellence at Bridgewater and Taunton College and Hinkley Point C support operative programmes. The latter is designed to provide training pathways for new entrants initially for the HPC project. 7 learners on the pilot bronze programme in 2020. In addition, the ECITB has grant supported EDF's coal to nuclear transfer programme and provided curriculum support for the National College for Nuclear.

High quality training delivery for offshore wind

With many in-scope companies looking to expand into offshore renewables, the ECITB has positioned its skills and standards to support this vital sector. Through the ECITB's renewables sector working group, it holds regular dialogue with offshore wind representatives and companies on the strategic skills interventions that will be needed to support a growing workforce. Most recently, it has been working with major operators including Scottish Power Renewables and Vattenfall, as well as contractors such as Stowen to develop new training standards in the area of turbine lift inspection and maintenance, which will be launched in early 2021.

Enabling competence assurance and project management excellence in oil and gas

The upstream oil and gas industry remains the largest sector in which in-scope companies operate. ECITB's interventions in the area of Connected Competence have been vital in providing standardised competence of technical workers, helping to increase worker mobility and eliminate unnecessary and costly retraining. The programme is supported by a number of major service companies, including Wood, Petrofac, Worley and Aker Solutions. Project Management remains a key area of focus for ECITB's oil and gas operations and support is delivered through a range of collaborative programmes, including the Active Cup, Project Management Mentoring Programme and the Project Collaboration Toolkit. As a sector particularly hard hit during the crisis, oil and gas contractors have also been prime beneficiaries of Train to Retain.

Partnering with the industrial clusters to support decarbonisation

The industrial clusters are areas of the country with high density of carbon-intensive sites, including refining, petrochemical works, steel and gas power generation. The 6 largest sites in the UK are responsible for 40 million tonnes of CO² each year, roughly 1/3 of all industrial and business emissions, and all will need to achieve net zero emissions by 2050. The ECITB is working closely with IDRIC, which is funded by UKRI, with a view to supporting and partnering with each of the clusters to map the engineering construction skills requirements for decarbonisation. This will enable the ECITB to identify, plan and deliver appropriate skills solutions for both the engineering design and construction phases of the various cluster projects.

Training would not take place in the absence of the ECITB and its levy and grant system

Encouragingly, common to all stakeholder formal survey feedback collected in 2020, the ECITB ensures that training takes place that may not otherwise have happened. The ECITB does this by operating a collective and redistributive levy and grant system which enables this training additionality to happen. Excluding those who were unable to comment on the way it does this:

- ✓ 91% of stakeholders agree
- ✓ 80% of employers agree
- ✓ 52% of providers agree

“[In engineering construction] there are few incentives for individual employers to train, since the work is often short-term and the labour force highly mobile. This means that long-term skills needs get overlooked, and these are vital, in engineering especially. The board is right to claim that it helps to make the labour market in engineering construction more efficient and more effective”²⁸.

Lord Hain

²⁸ Taken from Lords Grand Committee debate, see footnote 21.



This strong support from the ECITB's stakeholders has been an essential feature that has informed the ECITB's new strategy and its levy and grant system reforms for the future.

Summary

Stakeholders value the labour market intelligence and influencing work that the ECITB undertakes more than employers and training providers, who are less aware of this kind of activity. 83% of stakeholders feel that the ECITB produces valuable LMI, and over three fifths agree that the ECITB is positively influencing the Government's skills policy (64%), is contributing to the delivery of the Industrial Strategy (60%) and helping raise awareness of net zero (60%). Bringing greater visibility of the ECITB's endeavours on behalf of the ECI may lead to even higher value ratings by employers and providers in future. Importantly, the ECITB's activity is working across sectors and nations to influence policy and investment where it will benefit the ECI now and in future, and as a consequence, this is helping catalyse and sustain training that might not otherwise happen.

KEQ6: How has the ECITB continually improved?

Why is this important?

The industry expects a high-quality service. The ECITB must deliver excellent customer service and continually improve processes for its customers e.g. through digitalisation/ automation.

What has the ECITB done in 2020?

The ECITB has sought to be both responsive and adaptive throughout 2020.

Owing to the pandemic, a range of intended activities and targets had to be modified in response to the evolving situation.

- With the initial lockdown putting a halt to much training activity during the spring, and with large headcount reductions reported in certain operating sectors (notably oil and gas), the ECITB was facing the prospect of significantly lower grant expenditure on training. In reality, grant expenditure, which totalled £22m at the end of the year was in line with what the ECITB forecast at the start of 2020. This was testament to the way in which the ECITB proactively encouraged and enabled training, by directly purchasing training from providers, adapting training to online delivery and proactive support by ECITB account managers to support employers and learners; as well as the industry's positive attitude towards training and development.
- So much training has had to be virtual and online, and yet some employers, as has been reported in this document, have found this to have a range of unexpected benefits. The need to support employers' continued training and development ambitions has clearly accelerated and amplified the ECITB's ability to enable these modes of learning in 2020 which may have enduring benefits for the industry. In 2021, the ECITB will develop a Blended Learning Strategy that will detail our ambitions and plans in this area.
- Online delivery of training and assessment, whilst not always able to replicate the face-to-face learning experience, has provided efficiency benefits for employers. For example, the Connected Competence digital pilot has facilitated easier access to assessment for employers, who can assess their workforce on the job, rather than in a classroom or test centre setting, yielding both time and cost savings for employers.

- Learning uptake numbers for the ECITB's industry 4.0 products and programmes and diversity and inclusion training interventions have been below 2020 targets set the year before, however, training has continued in these important topics so that the industry has still been able to improve capability despite largely being focused on shorter term Covid-19 response activity.
- Establishment reviews were only 25% of the intended target in 2020 due to the impact of Covid-19 restrictions, however >£1m of levy was secured from in-scope establishments newly brought onto the register. This is a vital strategic objective for the ECITB to ensure all companies required to pay the levy do so.
- The number of new entrants supported by the ECITB decreased by 47% against a +15% target set before the effects on the industry could possibly have been known; and yet, the ECITB's Covid-19 crisis response package has protected this decrease from being even greater had there been no intervention.

Customer feedback gathered not just through the annual survey, but throughout its day-to-day operational activity has allowed the ECITB to modify approaches with confidence and without any observed impact on quality.

Examples of improvements in response to stakeholder feedback

“After the first round of applications for Train to Retain the ECITB received feedback on the eligibility criteria. Several firms requested the inclusion of trainees, while others suggested additional occupations should be added to the list of eligible occupations. This feedback was closely considered by the team and the Board and the majority of amendments were agreed and communicated promptly. Prompt action by the ECITB gave the companies in question enough time to apply for funding for more staff through the scheme who would otherwise have been at risk of redundancy. The expansion of eligible occupations was also appreciated.”

Susan Smart

Head of Oil and Gas and Train to Retain Programme Manager, ECITB

“These (Covid-19) conditions demanded real action and the ECITB stepped up to provide exactly that. The [direct purchase of training] scheme gave businesses confidence to continue to support essential training, in the knowledge that their already limited cash flow wouldn't be compromised further. The ECITB's decisions in unprecedented conditions helped us get through very difficult times and laid solid foundations going forward.”

Mark Rushton

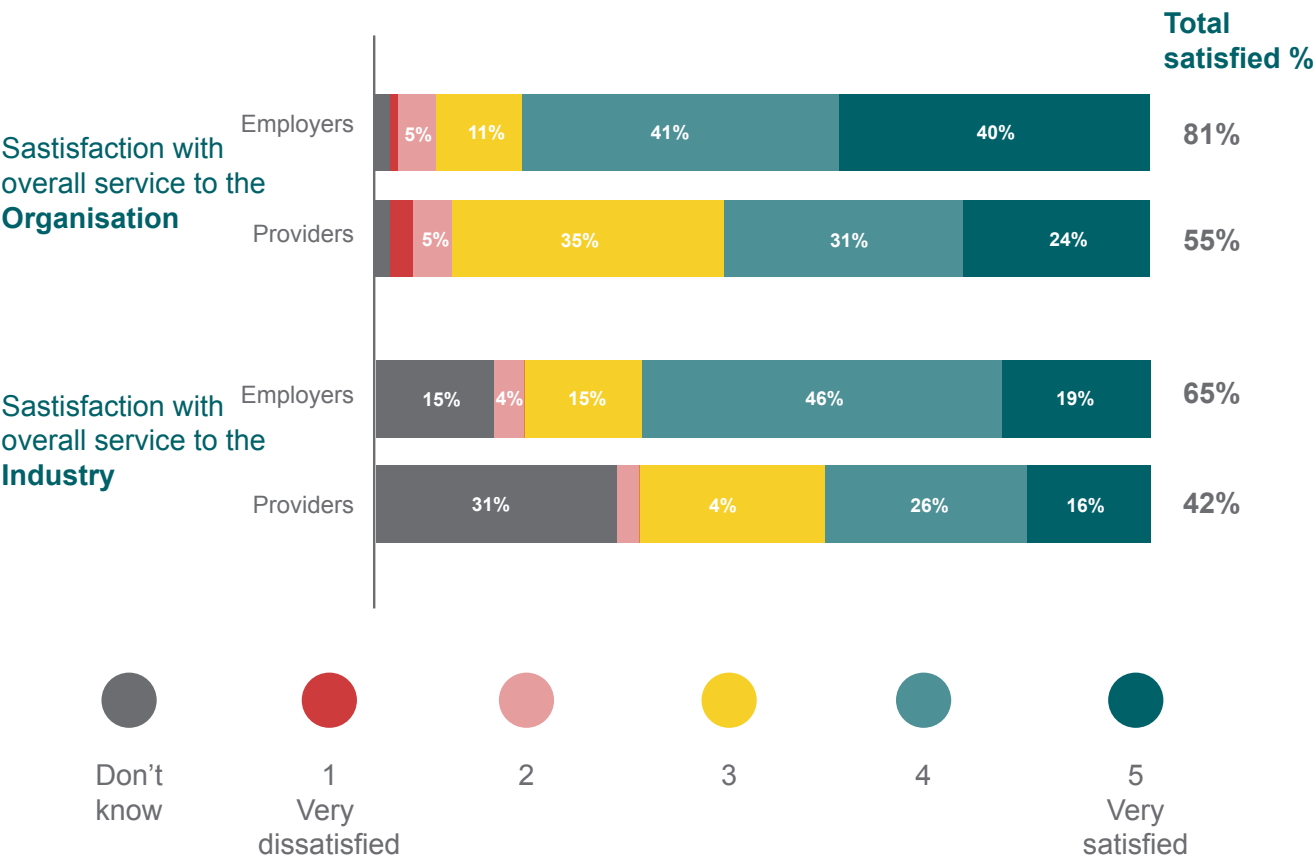
Managing Director of STC Global

What difference has the ECITB been making?

Employers and providers were asked to rate from 1-5 how satisfied they were with ECITB’s services to their own organisation and to the industry as a whole²⁹.

81% of employers are satisfied with the service the ECITB provides to them

Satisfaction with the ECITB’s service to organisations and the ECI industry as a whole



There were some notable significant differences for employers by size, region and engineering sector³⁰ which the ECITB will learn from for the future.

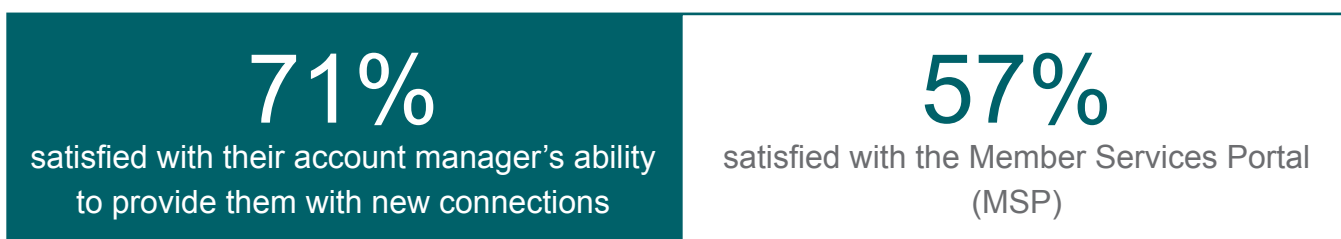
²⁹ Source: ECITB Customer and Stakeholder Research Report (November 2020).

³⁰ Medium-sized employers were more dissatisfied at the service provided to the industry overall (12% dissatisfied) than small employers (none were dissatisfied) and large employers (4% dissatisfied). Employers in the North of England were less satisfied with the service the ECITB provided to their organisation compared with the average of all employers (69% satisfied, compared with 81%). Those working in the Power Generation (93% satisfied) and Renewables (88% satisfied) industries were more satisfied with the service provided to their organisation than the average of all employers (81% satisfied).

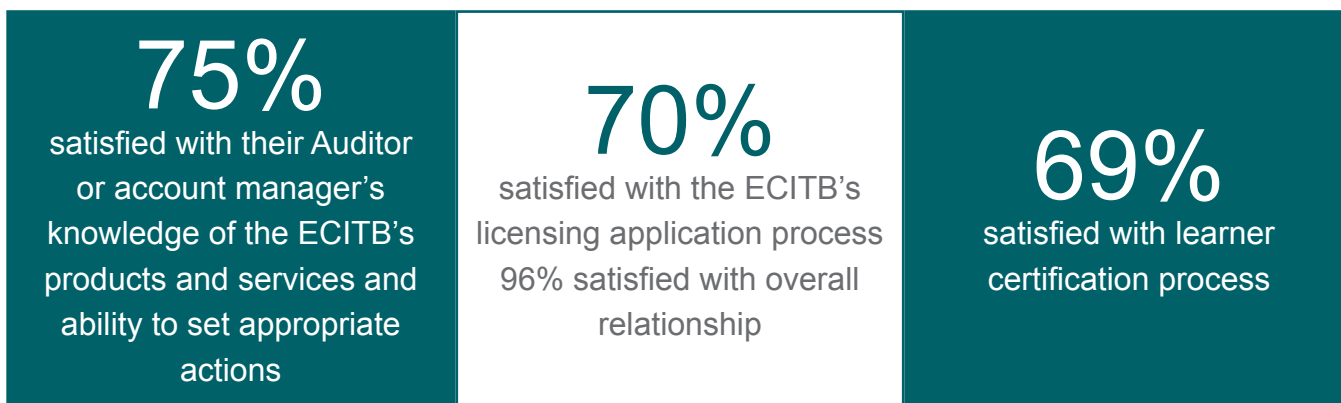
Employer satisfaction



Less satisfactory but still positive overall



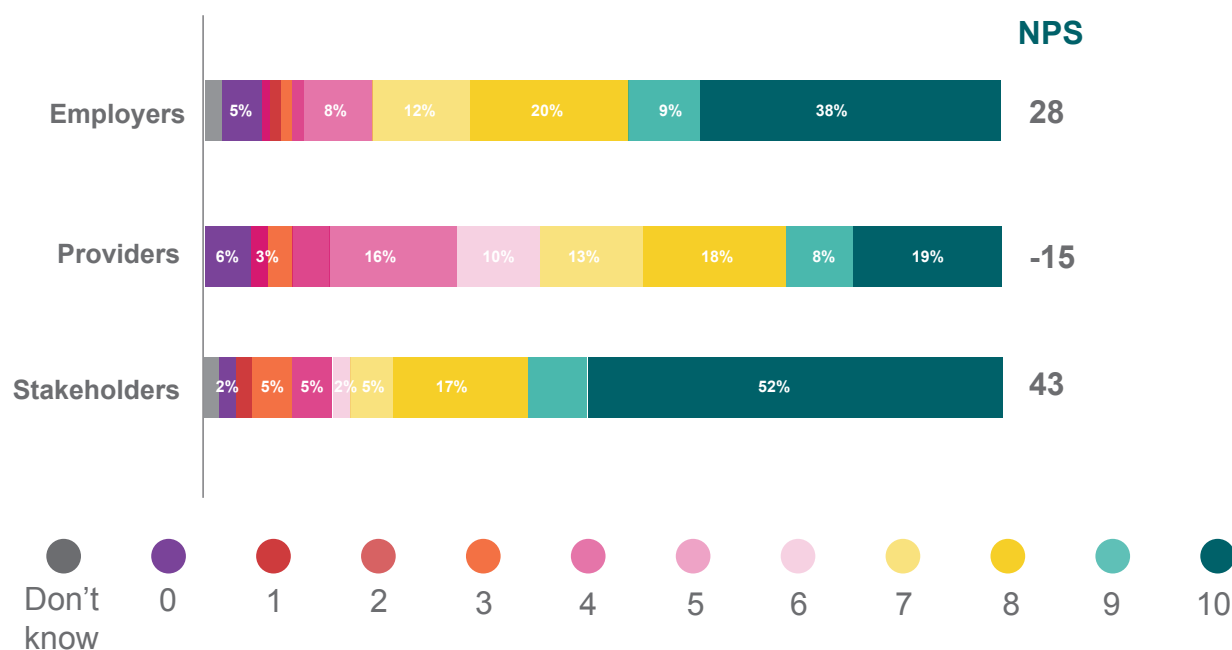
Approved Training Provider satisfaction



Less satisfactory with improvement needed



Likelihood to recommend the ECITB to others (Net Promoter Score³¹)



Stakeholders were the most likely audience to recommend the ECITB to others, with an NPS of +43. Six in ten were promoters (over half, 52%, rated ten), while fewer than one in five (17%) were detractors. Almost half (47%) of employers were promoters (38% scored 10), while only one in five (19%) were detractors, meaning an overall NPS of +28. Those employers working in renewables were more likely than other sectors to be promoters (56% compared with 47% on average). Providers were significantly less likely to recommend the ECITB than both employers and stakeholders. 27% were promoters while over four in ten (42%) were detractors, resulting in an NPS of -15. Again the ECITB will learn from these opinions for the future.

In terms of suggestions for improvement, the most common suggestions from employers were concerning better availability of training opportunities (mentioned by 17%) and more funding or more flexibility in how they could use their funding (12%). Providers and stakeholders would like to see improvements in the way the ECITB interacts with them: 13% of providers would like to see improved communication and more consultation with them about industry needs, and 24% of stakeholders would like to see improved communication, alongside a more collaborative or joined up approach (19%).

31 As part of the ECITB's 2020 Customer and Stakeholder Research survey respondents were asked to rate the extent to which they were likely to recommend the ECITB to others on a scale of 0-10, where 0 was not at all likely and 10 extremely likely. Those who rated this nine or ten have been described as 'promoters', those rating it seven or eight have been described as 'neutral', and those scoring between zero and six have been labelled 'detractors'. For each audience, the proportion of detractors is subtracted from the promoters to calculate a Net Promoter Score (NPS). A higher NPS indicates a higher likelihood to recommend the ECITB to others.

A note from the author about the ECITB's impact practice



Taken together, the ECITB has committed significant effort, time and investment of energy to improve its impact practice since 2018 seeking to both ‘prove’ and ‘improve’ the difference it makes as an organisation. Feedback has identified a range of improvements that the ECITB can make to add further value to the relationships it enjoys with its employers, providers and stakeholders. The 2020 Customer Satisfaction and Stakeholder Survey in of itself is a tangible commitment to improving practice at the ECITB, and encouragingly, the important insights revealed in that work has significantly informed the Year 1 review of the ECITB’s Leading Industry Learning Strategy 2020-2022. Changes have also been made to the business plan to reflect feedback received, notably a commitment to enhance data collection and evaluation methods in order to drive continuous improvement.

In future, it will be beneficial to grow the evidence of what works well across all significant funded programmes and how the ECITB’s products, services and functions lead to outcomes by doing more evaluation after interventions occur e.g. with learners after their training. Having more data about the diversity of learners could be helpful too, along with increasingly sophisticated methods of evaluation that help demonstrate that there is correlation between the ECITB’s interventions and their effects..

The Future

This first ever Impact Report has enabled the ECITB to consider customer and stakeholder feedback through a fresh lens and has stimulated the organisation's efforts to gather evidence about the outcomes that are emerging as a result of its investment. It is early days, however, the evidence collected so far suggests that the ECITB's strategic objectives resonate with the industry and that its services, functions and activities are largely appreciated by those who engage with them.

The ECITB understands that employers, providers and stakeholders sometimes value different things; and that it has to work hard to satisfy those diverse expectations – some needing immediate, responsive, practical funding support and advice; others needing certainty about market conditions to be able to offer industry relevant training; others needing the long-term forecasts for the industry in order to plan across the industry and to bring sector initiatives together.

Looking to the future, the way ECITB responds must be agile in order to recognise the effects of Covid-19 and different workforce dynamics that the industry is managing compared to those being reported 18 months ago – the scale and nature of the skills challenge has shifted significantly. Whilst still important, employers feel that the ECITB can become even more effective in helping prepare the ECI workforce for the future in areas currently not valued as highly as they might e.g. harnessing digital skills and inclusive cultures and greater diversity to increase productivity.

As a learning organisation, the ECITB will commit to using evidence, insight, customer opinions and intelligence to increase its impact for stakeholders and the industry, whilst being fully attuned to the realities of needing to continue to support companies through the pandemic.



5 things this Impact Report has helped discover

1. Validation for the ECITB's objectives and strategic goals

Feedback gathered in 2020 revealed that the most important objectives for the ECITB's customers and stakeholders were those that concerned:

- Training and recruitment within the industry;
- Ensuring National Occupation Standards (NOS), Qualifications and Training Standards reflect industry requirements;
- Supporting the training and recruitment of new entrants into the industry;
- Improving access to quality and cost-effective training;
- Helping to address skills shortages and;
- Providing training solutions to tackle skills gaps.

Perceptions of the ECITB's effectiveness at achieving these objectives varied slightly by audience, with employers and stakeholders more positive than providers so this feedback should be used to confidently invest in these areas of agreed importance.

2. Investing to protect the ECI against future market failures (short-termism)

At the same time though, the ECITB needs to be proactive in raising awareness of and investing in areas that are becoming increasingly important for the industry in future, but which have a less immediate, short-term impact on employer' operations. These are areas that the industry will not necessarily address for itself either in time, or sufficiently, without specific intervention by the ECITB. This is where the ECITB can add further value.

- Helping the industry to develop more diverse cultures and greater inclusivity;
- Enabling companies to harness technology to improve skills and increase productivity;
- Supporting the delivery of the industrial strategy;
- Helping the industry prepare for 'net zero', and;
- Producing high-quality labour market intelligence (LMI).

As the ECITB advocates for these important agendas, it must also lead by example by working to become a carbon neutral organisation and maximising the opportunities afforded by the IDEA taskforce³².

32 The Inclusion, Diversity and Equality Action taskforce was established by the ECITB in 2020 to drive improvements in diversity and inclusion across the industry. The taskforce is working to ensure diversity and inclusion awareness is embedded in ECITB training standards, raise awareness and showcase diversity in action and promote the industry as an appealing career choice for individuals regardless of gender and ethnicity. For more detail, see <https://www.ecitb.org.uk/diversity-inclusion/>

3. Listening and responding quickly has been essential to cope with Covid-19

The pandemic has required the ECITB to develop a thoughtful and rapid response to meet the needs of the Engineering Construction Industry in order that essential training could continue and that skills could be retained not only for 2020, but for the future when otherwise this outcome may not have been guaranteed. Continuous dialogue with employers, the Approved Training Provider network and stakeholders in government and the regions has enabled the ECITB to provide a comprehensive package of targeted and appropriately resourced measures that have benefited at least 1 in 4 of the ECI directly, with likely spill-over effects into their supply chains. For some companies, the ECITB's response has been "a lifesaver", for others, it has mitigated a situation where training and development activity may have stopped or decreased significantly. Instead, there is a wider portfolio of virtual learning and practical support in place that can endure in the short- to medium-term within the ECI.

4. Areas for continuous improvement

Whilst the Customer Satisfaction and Stakeholder Survey (2020) confirmed that the ECITB is achieving, if not exceeding, its Key Performance Indicators, there is a range of activities yet to achieve their full potential. One of the striking results from the survey is that across each audience (employers, providers and stakeholders) there was a high proportion of respondents unaware about how effective ECITB had been at achieving certain objectives. This suggests the visibility of ECITB's actions around these objectives could be improved. This was evidenced in the high proportion of 'don't know' responses. The following bullets show the objectives with particularly high proportions of 'don't know' answers for effectiveness, given by those who considered each objective important.

- Helping the industry to develop more inclusive cultures and greater diversity: employers 24%, providers 33% and stakeholders 26%.
- Enabling ECI companies to harness new technologies to improve productivity by having the right skills: employers 22%, providers 25%, and stakeholders 38%.
- Support the delivery of the Industrial Strategy and help industry prepare for the transition to a net zero carbon economy: employers 37% and providers 45%.
- Produce high-quality intelligence on labour market, skills and workforce trends: employers 26% and providers 36%.
- Work with UK and devolved Governments to shape education and skills policies to meet industry needs: employers 24% and providers 32%.

In some of these areas, lower levels of awareness can be explained by the fact that the ECITB's activity is relatively nascent. Nevertheless, the learning lesson for the ECITB is to bring more visibility to these activities undertaken on behalf of, and to the benefit, of the ECI. This goes beyond the need for 'more communication', rather a sophisticated suite of relationship management and engagement techniques where each audience feels more invested in these topics and has a sense of power to influence and shape solutions with the ECITB in future. By engendering a sense of ownership in the industry for these activities, their impact will likely be greater.

The ECITB's commitment to grow its evidence base to fill gaps in knowledge about what works and what outcomes are achieved for employers, learners, providers and stakeholders will support its ethos as a learning organisation.

5. Training for critical occupations

2020 has been an exceptional year in the way that Covid response and lockdown restrictions have impacted industry and training. This has been reflected in the way that the ECITB's grant funding has been disbursed. Areas of high expenditure include supporting industry investment in early careers through Train 2 Retain, e-learning to ensure continued delivery of training through online means particularly for furloughed staff, and delivery of training through direct funding. Direct funding saw particularly high usage in critical areas such as project management, project controls, commercial awareness and supervisory training. Covid restrictions have placed huge limitations on the ability of the ECITB's provider network to deliver workshop-based training, reflected in the fact that skills and technical areas of training are less strongly used. The ECITB expects strong demand in these areas once operating conditions allow workshop training to resume later in 2021.

Feedback

If you would like to provide any feedback on this Impact Report, please contact:



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Want to tell your own story of change and impact?

If you would like to be more involved in helping the ECITB collect evidence about the impact of our work on your organisation in future, and our desire to help you collect evidence of this nature, please contact the ECITB.

For the next Impact Report the ECITB would like to feature evidence-based case studies about the benefits for employees that receive training and the wider impact this has on your organisation.

The ECITB may be able to support your organisation to collect and track this kind of information over time so that it is beneficial to both parties.



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