

## RETENTION OF NEW ENTRANTS WITHIN CONSTRUCTION: THE BREAKFAST CLUB - FINAL REPORT

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### EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

**Project Code:** LL RNE-18-01

**Start Date:** 03/09/2018

**End Date:** 15/04/2020

**CITB Award:** £110,654

**Project Manager:** BeOnsite Ltd

**Partners:** Lloyds Bank, Lee Marley and Lyndon Scaffolding Plc

Developed in partnership with key contractors, the Breakfast Club was an initiative funded by CITB and managed by BeOnsite to promote retention of new entrants within the construction industry. The programme aimed to address the issue of high turnover in construction with the aid of targeted interventions combined with individual support to affect change in retention rates and reduce the exodus of talent from our industry. The programme used £182,000 funding including over £71,000 of matched contribution from the project's partners.

The Breakfast Club delivered eight bespoke interactive training and personal development sessions for 40 new industry entrants over a 15-month period, focusing on soft skills training. The programme addressed communication and relationship management in the workplace, financial literacy as well as mental health resilience. This allowed participants to learn skills that would be useful in all areas of live but critical for sustainment in this industry. Moreover, the programme exposed candidates to multiple trades so they could develop a clear understanding of the numerous career paths on offer and crucially understand how to navigate them. All interventions were designed to build up an entrant's sense of self-worth and understanding while providing them with the knowledge they need to communicate effectively with their peers and supervisors thereby mitigating the risk of impetuous resignations and firings.

Although the project was only small scale the results have had significant implications. The programme was run concurrently alongside the regular intake of BeOnsite employees and workers employed directly by contractors who were not participating in the programme, from which we formed two control groups of new entrants. Comparing against these groups, we found that participants were more than twice as likely to remain in the construction industry than new entrants who did not participate (averaged across the two control groups).

85% of those who completed the course were sustained in the industry six months after the end of the programme and more than 20 months after its start, compared to only 33% in the directly employed control group. In addition, dismissal rates were reduced to 17% among Breakfast Club attendees compared to BeOnsite's historic rate of 51%.

The programme was well received by contractors and participants alike. Participants thoroughly enjoyed the sessions and really valued the content; contractors benefited from improved performance and confidence on site among Breakfast Club candidates.

Necessarily, the size of the project means that these results aren't definitive on their own and therefore we would recommend extending the project and increasing the number of participants in order to reinforce our initial findings. Going forward we would promote a more blended approach including an element of more practical training alongside the core soft skills training. This would deepen candidates'

understanding of the industry as well as helping achieve invaluable 'buy-in' from their employers. From a practical perspective we believe that participants would profit from a more condensed schedule of interventions to ensure that individuals can benefit from the training in time to affect their retention in the industry. However, overall the project has indicated the power softs skills training can have in overcoming barriers for new entrants and ultimately tackling the issue of retention of workers within construction.

## BACKGROUND

The UK construction industry is one of the biggest in the world and plays a critical role within the UK, as one of the largest contributors to its economy and as a substantial employer. Previously the industry has been able to attract skilled workers in times of need and manage its workforce through sub-contracting and outsourcing to enable it to meet undulating demand. However, over the past decade the industry has undergone significant change in relation to technology, design, product innovation and procurement as well as an increased focus on health and safety. As construction has developed, the workforce has had to adapt to the sector's changing needs. In recent years though this has become more and more difficult and the industry has seen a skills gap emerge which threatens its ability to remain competitive in the long-term and keep up with future growth plans.

According to a recent CIOB report<sup>1</sup>, the construction industry had the second highest level of skill shortages as a percentage of total workforce vacancies in the UK at the beginning of the decade with fewer and fewer people looking to construction companies as their preferred employer. Increasingly over the last ten years the industry has tried to fill this skills gap by recruiting overseas workers, relying predominately on young men from lower wage economies within the EU. However, following the referendum in 2016, political uncertainty and increasing immigration issues have created instability for EU workers jeopardising this established source of labour moving forward. Further research by CITB<sup>2</sup> indicated that in 2016 the difficulty of finding suitably skilled staff had returned to near pre-recession levels even before the full effect of Brexit can be felt. As a result, there is growing concern around the future availability of workers within an industry already struggling to meet current skills shortages.

Consequently, there is now substantial pressure on the industry to find long term, suitably skilled workers to sustain its current pipeline and continue to grow. In addition, higher health and safety standards call for more experienced, trained employees rather than short-term workers which demands that the industry review its more traditional labour sources and recruitment methods. However, the issues that the sector is facing isn't simply in relation to recruitment, there are also serious problems affecting the retention of entrants within construction.

According to the UK Industry Performance Report 2017, staff loss in construction went up in 2016 to 8.5% from 6.3% in the previous year. However, this figure relates to direct staff only whereas construction employers tend to be heavily subsidised by contractors and sub-contractor workers, which, when included, points to a far more serious issue. Looking at statistics recorded at the current development in Elephant Park, only 54% of those workers who started on the project (which began in 2013 and is planned to continue until 2026) are still employed by their contractor, which reveals a much higher turnover of workers. Although it is not clear whether these individuals were retained in the industry as a whole, far more worryingly, of the 46% who left their role, the median employee only lasted 1.2 months<sup>3</sup>, showing that the vast majority of leavers were new entrants.

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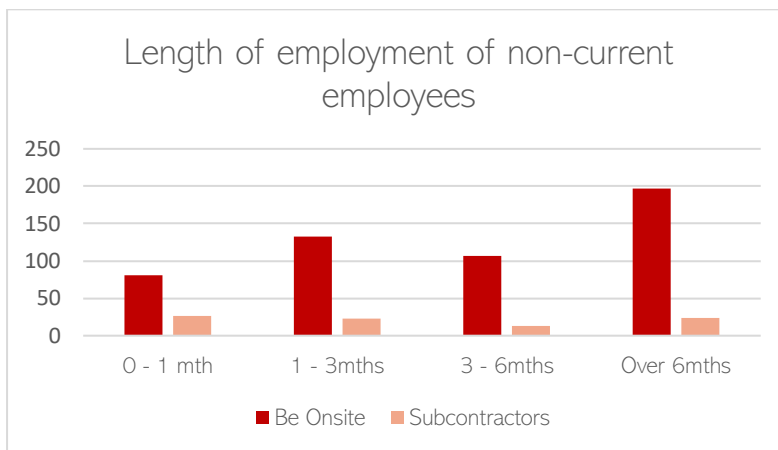
<sup>1</sup> 'The Changing Role of Women in the Construction Workforce', CIOB

<sup>2</sup> UK Industry Performance Report 2017

<sup>3</sup> Relating to local previously unemployed workers on site

A survey conducted across 200 construction employers found that 62% of employers agreed that early leavers was a problem for their business and 38% believed that the problem had increased in the last 2-3 years<sup>4</sup>.

BeOnsite is a not for profit that has been operating in the construction industry for over ten years and has directly employed more than 600 candidates. The graph below shows the length of employment for BeOnsite employees who are now no longer in their roles alongside the same figures for subcontractors' direct employees who have worked at Elephant Park<sup>5</sup> since its inception in 2013 who also since left their roles. The data from both sources demonstrates a clear pattern: the majority of people who leave the industry do not sustain six months of employment and the highest drop off point is within the first three months of employment.



Although it is proven that an individual employed through BeOnsite is more likely to sustain employment than those employed directly or engaged via a third party agency, almost half of those who start in a role, will leave within the first three months, indicating that these first few months are a critical point for retention. Including the data for those individuals who have remained in the industry, statistics show that a BeOnsite employee, who has sustained three months has almost 80% chance of sustaining six months within construction and more than 42% are retained for over a year. While these figures are good in comparison to other construction employers, they are poor when compared against those of other industries and still reflect the difficulties the sector faces in regard to retention of workers and particularly new entrants.

### WHY IS RETENTION A PROBLEM?

The ever-widening skills gap and labour shortage is a huge threat to the prosperity of the construction industry, which contributes an estimated tenth of Britain's GDP. If it is to keep up with future development and maintain high standards, the industry cannot afford to continue to lose such a large proportion of its workforce and sustain high turnover rates. In order to sustain the needs of the UK's construction industry, therefore, it is necessary not only to recruit appropriately but also to retain those employees. Current retention rates pose a risk not only to long-term business performance but affect productivity, putting increased workloads on other staff members and potentially having a detrimental

<sup>4</sup> The Construction Industry Early Leavers Survey conducted by IFF for CITB, April 2017

<sup>5</sup> These figures relate only to local employees who were previously unemployed

effect on workplace health and safety. In fact, productivity indicated a fall of 2.1% in 2017<sup>6</sup> in line with reduced profitability.

Low retention levels are costing the industry heavily. The large turnover of employees means that huge amounts of time and money is lost recruiting and training talent which does not remain in the industry. Employers estimate that they spend an average of £575 recruiting each individual apprentice or new entrant that they take on<sup>7</sup> although others estimate the figure to be much higher. This is considerable, particularly as it seems a large number of leavers are new entrants meaning there is less opportunity for companies to recover recruitment and training costs through the work of the individual. There is also concern that early leavers will make employers more reluctant to invest in training and development for the new starters they take on, which may worsen the crisis moving forward.

So, what exactly are the issues which are causing retention problems within the Construction Industry, why are they so much greater than those in other industries and can anything be done?

## CONSTRUCTION INDUSTRY

There are several factors related to the nature of the industry which makes the issue of retention more pronounced in construction than other industries.

The cyclical, stop-start nature of jobs, the variability of job location and job uncertainty mean sustaining a role can require considerable travel and often financial investment by the individual which not all candidates are capable of and which can make the industry less appealing to potential candidates. In addition, construction is an incredibly mentally and physically challenging environment and certainly isn't for everyone. When surveyed the most common reason cited spontaneously by individuals as to why they left was simply that they 'didn't like construction' or 'construction wasn't for them'<sup>8</sup>. In fact, according to the same survey only 23% of those who left had originally entered construction as their preferred choice of career.

Another commonly cited reason for leaving the industry was that their position was not well paid or that they were leaving for a position with better pay and with better prospects, despite 74% and 65%, respectively, initially choosing construction because of the perceived career growth opportunities and good pay. This may in part, be attributable to a lack of understanding about the salary possibilities or variety of roles available within construction and perhaps more needs to be done to make people aware of the longer term career and pay prospects within the industry. However, the reality is that within the industry many entrants are employed through agencies or umbrella companies who will charge them a percentage that will significantly impact their 'take home' pay.

Typically, construction is an industry with tight margins and short deadlines and therefore offers less time and money to put into employees and employee development. In the latest UK Industry Performance Report profitability has remained down against the long-term trend, with data indicating that average margins are stuck around 2%. Even several of the industry's largest contractors are booking losses, showing even the big players are struggling to support themselves, epitomised by the collapse of Carillion. Increased cost of materials and labour combined with weaker industry growth and the weakening of the pound have continued to be detrimental and inevitably impacts on investments such as training. Accordingly, we saw the average number of training days fall from 1.5 to 1.3 in 2016. Although often there are a multitude of reasons behind an individual's decision, a considerable proportion of

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<sup>6</sup> UK Industry Performance Report 2017

<sup>7</sup> The Construction Industry Early Leavers Survey conducted by IFF for CITB, April 2017

<sup>8</sup> The Construction Industry Early Leavers Survey conducted by IFF for CITB, April 2017

leavers (30%) also cited lack of support from the training provider and not feeling valued by their employer (25%) as reasons for leaving.

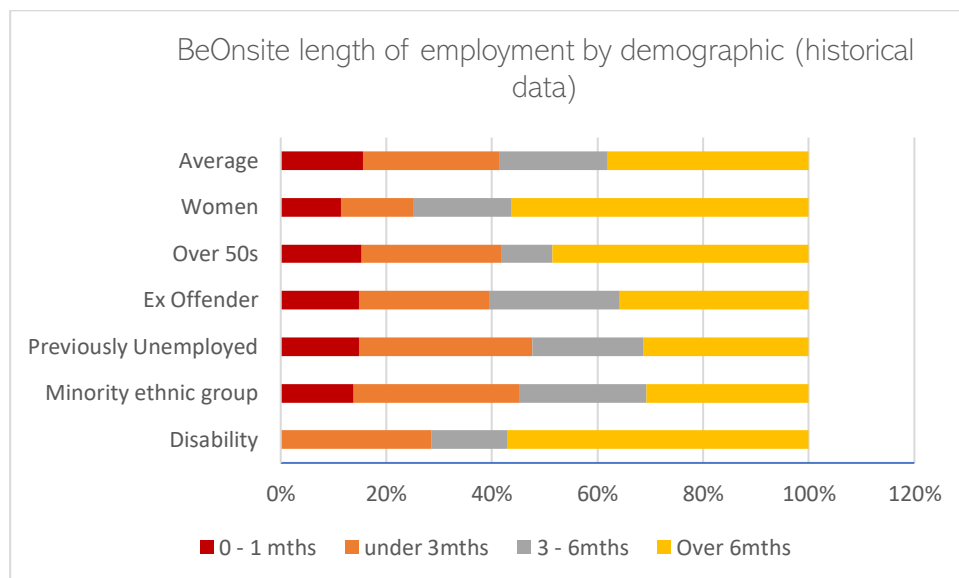
Perhaps more concerning is that over two-fifths (43%) of employers had taken no action to try to retain these specific recent early leavers, and most had not taken broader action to tackle leaving / improve retention in their organisation (62%) despite the fact that this could be costing them money. A skilled, fully staffed workforce is vital in creating a productive and profitable business. Failure to retain staff may cause greater costs due to inefficiencies as well as incurring additional recruitment and training costs.

## CONSTRUCTION WORKFORCE

It is well known that the construction industry is lagging when it comes to the inclusivity and diversity of many other industries and, as a much less diverse workforce, it is therefore more susceptible to skills and labour shortages. This is an issue that the industry is trying to address but which still has a long way to go. Black and minority ethnic accounted for only 4% of the industry's workforce in 2016, despite the fact that roughly 14% of the UK population is from an ethnic minority background<sup>9</sup> and that women account for only 12% of the UK construction employees<sup>10</sup> and according to UCATT, just 1% of workers on site. By recruiting staff from homogenous groups, employers are missing out on a huge proportion of the skilled workforce at a time when recruiting and retaining talent within the industry is at a critical point.

As discussed above the UK's traditional source of labour in construction has been young men from within the EU and has failed to include many individuals from more diverse demographics. Is that because the former group tend to be more successful in their roles or is it the case that the latter consistently underperform their peers?

Analysing the employment information we have within BeOnsite seems to show that that neither scenario is true.

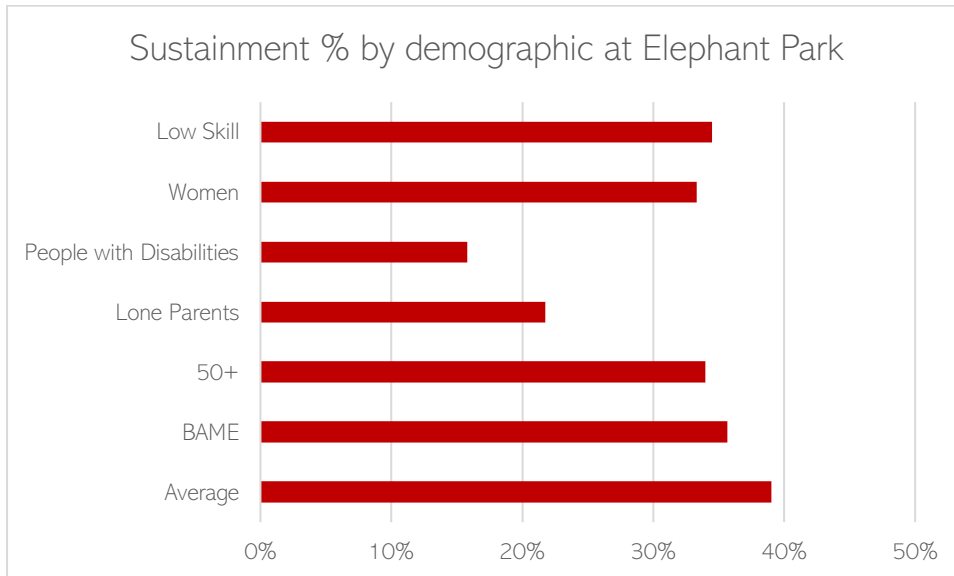


Looking at the different demographics employed by BeOnsite there is little to suggest that these minority groups (which are less traditional sources of labour for the industry) are less likely to sustain

<sup>9</sup> UK Industry Performance Report 2017

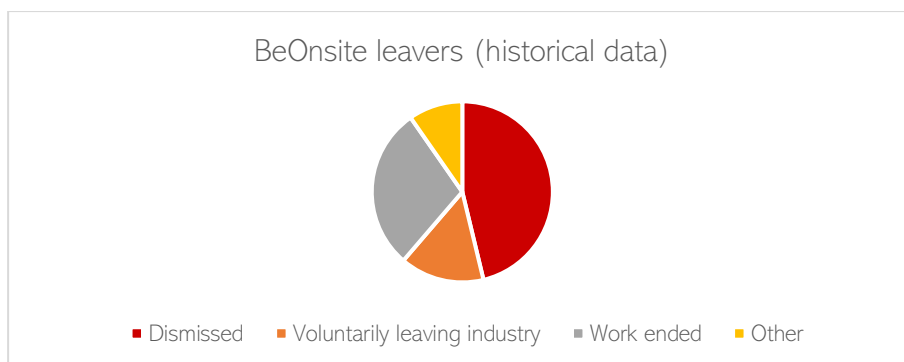
<sup>10</sup> ONS Labour Force Survey

employment over six months and in fact all the groups recorded are in line with the average retention rate.

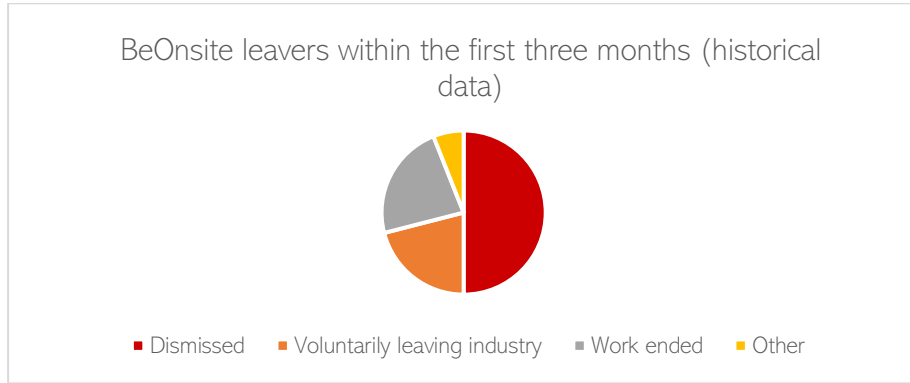


When comparing employees from all subcontractors on site, not just those within BeOnsite, it similarly shows little difference between the average worker's likelihood to sustain six months employment compared to 'low skill' individuals, women, over 50s and those from BAME groups. There is a more marked difference between the average worker and the groups of lone parents and people with disabilities. However, this is not the case when considering BeOnsite employees and whilst there are no comparatives for lone parents, it seems that individuals with disabilities are more likely than average to be retained beyond six months when employed through BeOnsite. This suggests that this group has the potential to succeed in the industry but may need slightly more support.

Therefore, is the fact that the industry is underutilising these demographics leading to the skills shortage? Potentially, yes, but while, undoubtedly this have a large effect on its workforce, they are not the only contributor to the struggling retention rates. According to BeOnsite data, while unavoidable factors inherent in the industry, such as work ending, do contribute highly to leaving rates (29%), the majority (61%) that have left BeOnsite over the last ten years, have done so either voluntarily or due to dismissal.



This is even more pronounced in the cohort which leave in the first 3 months where 50% are dismissed and 21% resign.



These figures show that in actuality a large proportion of employees are not choosing to leave and instead points to further problems with retention related more to adjusting to construction or life on site and potential behaviour issues. Of those dismissed, the top five reasons for a candidate's dismissal were as follows:

1. Timekeeping
2. Attendance
3. Lack of drive (performance)
4. Attitude/behaviour
5. Drugs and alcohol (Cannabis)

Significantly the causes for a candidate's dismissal are predominately related to soft skills rather than lack of practical training or physical incompetence. This is supported by the data collected at the Elephant Park development which shows that 35% of those who entered the workforce with what was deemed 'low skill' (referring to trade or practical skills) sustained their roles compared with the 39% who sustained on average across the site. This seems to suggest that skills training is not a huge barrier to sustainment.

So whatever the demographic, it seems that some people are failing to adjust to life on site and meet professional standards. Why is this and how can it be tackled? Is construction attracting the wrong people? Or has it not attracted the right people?

We believe that both could be true. Maintaining a career in construction requires skills of a nature very different to the work typically associated with construction but nonetheless crucial for long term success in the industry. This means that often those the industry attracts are ill-prepared for or ill-suited for the employment they find themselves in which inevitably leads to high drop-out rates.

Impressions of construction typically reflect the physical demands of the industry. However, construction can be incredibly mentally challenging too. There are strict deadlines and often small margins. This can translate into long hours and pressure from the top-level filters down to the individual on site.

Construction suffers from extremely high suicide rates, greater than any other sector and any worker wanting to build a career here will inevitably face periods of intense stress.

The work undertaken in this sector is founded on teamwork and workers often change sites, supervisors, and roles during their career, and are constantly exposed to new people, environments and positions. The travel and equipment necessary requires some financial investment from any individual entering construction. Moreover, the cyclical nature of the work and self-employment element demand financial awareness and budgeting skills for anyone wanting to make construction their permanent home,

## THE BREAKFAST CLUB

With this in mind, BeOnsite developed a programme to focus on soft skills training for new entrants rather than practical, construction-specific training in order to address decreasing retention rates and ensure an individual's longevity in the industry.

Handling the pressure of a job and mental resilience should be at the centre of training any worker aspiring to a career in this business and we believe that network of support should continue from the bottom to the top. In addition, the programme was designed to address communication and relationship management in the workplace, financial literacy and how and where to look for help for mental health issues. This allowed participants to learn skills that would be useful in all areas of life but critical for sustainment in this industry. Due to the broad range of opportunities available within the sector, it was crucial to give people an understanding of the wider paths within construction, and the day-to-day activities of roles at different levels so that individuals understand where a long-term career could take them. Entry level roles in any industry are typically menial and can be uninspiring, but retention is all about potential and looking ahead. Therefore, we wanted to include an opportunity for individuals to understand more about the industry and cultivate ambitions for the long term while making them feel valued and excited about the future.

As a result, the Breakfast Club was created, in partnership with key contractors for the direct benefit of their own new entrants to develop a better understanding of barriers facing new entrants within the construction and to tackle some of the issues believed to be behind the low retention rates.

The aim of the 'Breakfast Club' was to make new entrants feel invested in and give them the skills, support and ambition to make construction their career.

We understand very well the challenges employees face in the industry, especially when starting a career in an entry level role. For many new entrants a job in construction is simply that, a job. It is our role to help and support employees to see their jobs as a first step in a long career in the industry. We believe that a combination of practical training along with tailored advice and guidance go a long way to mitigate the risks of an individual leaving a new job. Not all sessions were directly "construction" related at first glance. However, all interventions worked to build up an entrant's sense of self-worth and understanding, leading to a calmer approach to work, having gained the knowledge they need to communicate effectively with their peers and supervisors and thereby mitigating the risk of impetuous resignations and firings. The programme also exposed candidates to multiple trades helping them to develop a clear understanding of the numerous career paths on offer and crucially understanding how to navigate them.

Moreover, the programme, developed in collaboration with contractors, aimed to help construction employers see the benefits of investing in new entrants. All the contractors involved agreed to release their workers to participate in all the interventions on full pay. Our aim was for employers to grow in confidence secure in the knowledge that their new entrants are not going to down tools at the slightest hiccup and with increased collaboration between contractors and trainers, including contractors actively participating in interventions. Both participants and their supervisors were supported in engaging with each other and gained a better understanding of the challenges they each face creating greater empathy and leading to reduced workforce attrition.

The Breakfast Club delivered eight bespoke interactive training and personal development sessions for 40 new industry entrants (approximately 4 cohorts of 10) over a 15-month period. The participants comprised a combination of those directly employed by BeOnsite and those directly employed directly by the Lendlease supply chain.

New entrants are defined as individuals who have joined the industry in the last twelve months.



The programme sought to include workers from a range of different demographics so that we could continue to compare different groups as part of our analysis.

The courses ran on a Friday morning – with Breakfast provided!

## PROJECT MANAGER

BeOnsite, a UK Not for Profit subsidiary of Lendlease, has been working since 2007 to help individuals from vulnerable groups find and sustain work within the construction industry. Lendlease has always been passionate in its belief that in order to build the best places you have to have the best people. Retention of new entrants is an area of particular interest for our not-for-profit company BeOnsite as they work directly with multiple SMEs, assisting them with their recruitment and retention needs. It identifies jobs, provides tailored support, industry-led training and then, directly employs local people within Lendlease and its supply chain.

Over the past ten years BeOnsite has supported, screened and registered over 2200 candidates, trained almost 1000 people and directly employed over 700 of the hardest to reach people in the community including long-term unemployed, people with disabilities, NEETs, offenders and ex-offenders.

## PARTNERS

Lee Marley - Lee Marley is one the UK's leading integrated façade subcontractors specialising in brickwork, scaffolding, stonework and system façades.

Lyndon Scaffolding Plc - Lyndon is the largest specialist scaffolding contractor in the UK. In an effort to attract people to the sector and support them in building a career, Lyndon only uses fully trained direct employees.

Lloyds Bank - Lloyds Bank's purpose is to help Britain prosper. Part of their strategy in helping Britain prosper is investment in education and employability. Lloyds understand that the acquisition of work skills are key drivers of social mobility and prosperity in later life. By ensuring new entrants are supported when it comes to financial literacy their aim is not just to benefit them as individuals but to benefit the communities in which they live and the businesses that rely on recruiting local talent.

## THE PROGRAMME

### Courses

1. **Choices Plus:** A welcome and introduction to the industry for participants. This full day session focussed on soft skills and mental health resilience training to prepare new entrants for a career in construction, set expectations for behaviour in a professional environment and more specifically on site.
2. **Putting the Pieces Together:** Site supervisor led introduction to key trades operating on the wider site and feedback session to gain a better understanding of career paths available and an insight into why those at different levels chose the industry.
3. **Positive Conflict:** Developing communication skills to enable new entrants to build and manage relationships in the workplace.
4. **First Aid Course:** Provide candidates with practical first aid skills in the workplace and beyond.

5. **Financial Literacy:** Lloyds Bank partnered with us to educate candidates in basic financial and tax matters, as well as guiding them in budgeting in order to be able to manage their finances competently.
6. **Choices Plus Reflection:** Building on their very first intervention, this session supports participants to reflect on their training and careers so far within the industry and identifying areas of focus and interest going forward to build a clear career/progression path.
7. **Influencing Others:** Learning communication skills necessary to take the next steps in their career. It will enable new entrants to understand the needs and motives of others in order to influence them effectively.
8. **Consolidation & Celebration:** This final intervention recognised the progress achieved by candidates and celebrate their completion of the course.

In addition, each cohort also benefited from one hour per week of individual coaching from BeOnsite IAG trained coaches throughout their six months on the programme to support them.

\*A more detailed breakdown of the courses is included within the Appendices.

## KEY PERFORMANCE INDICATORS

### Retention Rates

The Breakfast Club programme was run concurrently alongside the regular intake of new BeOnsite employees and workers employed directly by contractors who were not participating in the programme, from which we formed two control groups to compare against the results of the project. The control groups were the same size and were monitored over the same period. The control groups were similarly made up of new entrants<sup>11</sup>. These groups would also be predominately made up of previously unemployed local workers as this is the cohort BeOnsite work with and the cohort which subcontractors are obliged to report on to the local borough, meaning that the information is more easily available and meaning we are comparing like with like across all groups. While this isn't necessarily representative of the population of current workers on site it is likely that this is the population that the industry will need to recruit from moving forwards to satisfy demand for labour.

When combined with the data provided by the ongoing monitoring of interventions, we are able to compare the retention rates of these groups with the actual retention achieved by programme participants to see if we have successfully increased retention rates among Breakfast Club attendees. In this way the project is able to deliver evidence-based comparisons as to the benefit of the bespoke additional interventions for new entrants. Our initial hypothesis posited that the Breakfast Club participants will have higher retention rates than both control groups and that the retention among BeOnsite individuals is higher than that among the direct employees since BeOnsite employees receive more support than those directly employed. We anticipated that rates would be higher than 54% which is average on site for previously unemployed local labour (among all labourers, not just new entrants) and 44% which is the BeOnsite historic rate of sustainment for the cohorts they generally work with.

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<sup>11</sup> Defined as having entered the industry within the last twelve months

### Reasons for leaving the industry

The project recorded the reasons why those individuals who were not retained by the industry left their roles: whether they were dismissed, voluntarily left or were made redundant due to work ending. In this way we can understand firstly factors effecting construction's high dropout rates but also see if we have successfully reduced the number of resignations, dismissals and redundancies for participating contractors compared to BeOnsite control group and historic rates. The causes behind individuals leaving construction will help us identify areas of weakness in the industry and the programme itself.

### Participant feedback

There was ongoing monitoring and feedback from participants throughout the programme where data was gathered through a combination of questionnaires, one to one interviews and reflection sessions. In the final session, participants had the opportunity to share their feedback on the efficacy of each intervention so that we can build up a picture of where they feel the greatest value is to be found. This enabled us to collect information to learn how candidates reacted to each intervention and what elements they thought was particularly worthwhile.

We have also worked with Zsolt Kiss from ZK Analytics to put together a survey for Breakfast Club attendants to complete before and after undergoing the programme. This was meant to provide qualitative data to see if there is a noted difference in their perspective of construction and their ambitions within the industry following completion. Additionally, we will be able to better understand participants' opinions on the programme, areas for improvement and hoped to collect anecdotal evidence of the way these interventions have affected their career. Unfortunately, due to the pandemic and Zsolt being placed on furlough, ZK Analytics were unable to collect some of this additional data including the anecdotal evidence, beyond the qualitative surveys included in the analysis below.

In effect success should lead to a greater understanding of the industry and more confident, happy employees embarking on not just a job in construction, but a career.

### Contractor satisfaction

We monitored contractor perspective on the programme through surveys, in partnership with ZK Analytics, and ongoing feedback to record their satisfaction with the programme and how they feel it has impacted participants. A contractor discussion morning was organised to obtain more detailed feedback from contractors on their experiences of candidate performance and their views on the project as a whole.

The aim was that employers would see an improvement in the performance of their candidates and have new confidence in their new entrants. Contractors would see greater value in soft skills training and there will be increased collaboration between contractors and employees.

Our ultimate success criteria for this project is the accurate capture of the learning throughout the project's lifetime to help shape the debate around retaining new entrants at such a critical time for UK construction.



## RESULTS

### COMPLETION & ATTENDANCE

Over the four cohorts, there were 40 participants, employed across 17 different contractors either directly or indirectly through BeOnsite.

65% of participants completed the course (defined as those who attended at least five out of the eight sessions and who attended the final consolidation & completion session i.e. made it through to the end of the programme).

Breakfast Club session attendance on average was 69% over the course of the programme.

### RETENTION

As of 31/03/2020, five months following the completion of the final cohort, retention rates among participants and the control groups were as follows:

- 73% of those who started the programme have maintained employment in the construction industry
- 85% of those who completed the programme have maintained employment in the construction industry
- 50% of the BeOnsite control group have maintained employment in the construction industry
- 33% of the direct employee control group have maintained employment in the construction industry

These statistics indicate that the Breakfast Club had a significant impact on retention rates across the groups showing that participants were more than twice as likely to remain in the construction industry than new entrants who did not participate (averaged across the two control groups). Additionally, retention among BeOnsite individuals is higher than their directly employed counterparts which is as anticipated due to the extra support supplied to BeOnsite employees, not available to those employed directly through a contractor.

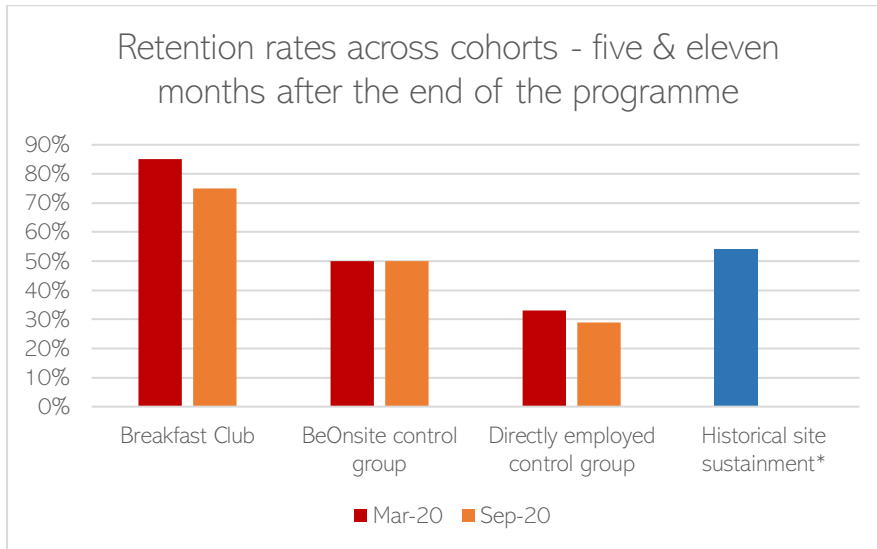
(We continued to monitor participants and the control groups throughout 2020. Unfortunately, the Covid-19 pandemic has had a significant impact on the construction industry including the site where participants were employed. As a result the site was closed for a number of weeks and resumed in the summer at greatly reduced capacity which inevitably has affected employer's ability to retain workers and many individuals have had to look outside the industry to support themselves. BeOnsite as an employer was able to furlough a number of individuals who would otherwise have faced redundancy, therefore the overall retention rate for BeOnsite didn't change from March to September.

As directly employed control group participants are self-employed they were unable to be furloughed by the contractor. However, by maintaining contact we were able to form some expectations around those individuals who had left the industry for unrelated reasons and those who were currently suffering the effects of Covid-19.

As of 30/09/2020, eleven months following the completion of the final cohort, retention rates among participants and the control groups were as follows:

- 68% of those who started the programme have maintained employment in the construction industry including those who are currently unemployed due to Covid-19 but who we expect to return to the industry when possible or 55% of those who started the programme have maintained employment in the construction industry excluding those who are currently unemployed due to Covid-19 but who we expect to return to the industry
- 77% of those who completed the programme have maintained employment in the construction industry including those who are currently unemployed due to Covid-19 but who we expect to return to the industry when possible or 65% of those who completed the programme have maintained employment in the construction industry excluding those who are currently unemployed due to Covid-19 but who we expect to return to the industry
- 50% of BeOnsite control group have maintained employment in the construction industry
- 29% of the direct employee control group have maintained employment in the construction industry including those who are currently unemployed due to Covid-19 and 23% of the direct employee control group have maintained employment in the construction industry excluding those who are currently unemployed due to Covid-19

However due to the impact of Covid-19, results after March 2020 may be less meaningful as a new unrelated but powerful factor is influencing employment and retention rates. Having said that the statistics recorded in September 2020 support the finding from six months earlier, i.e. that those included in the Breakfast Club had higher retention rates over the long term and the difference remains sizable.)



\*This statistic is based on all previously unemployed workers on the Elephant Park development site since 2013 and relates to workers still employed by the same contractor

At 73% in March, the retention rate for the Breakfast Club in isolation may appear disappointing, however it is clear when compared to the control groups that the interventions enacted by the programme are having a real effect in sustaining individuals within the industry. Moreover, there are additional variables that need to be analysed when considering the success of the programme.

One factor which may skew the figures is the attendance rates. Those who only attended a couple of sessions are unlikely to be impacted and many individuals who start the programme were unable to complete the full course meaning that it is difficult for them to benefit from the course, as it was designed. On average those participants who left the industry attended less than four of the eight sessions and 63% did not complete the course. More than half of these did not reach six months sustained employment.

However, looking at the statistics of those who completed the programme the retention rate jumps to 85%, and arguably a better reflection of impact of the project. This is even more significant when compared with the results from the control groups, especially those directly employed. This group better represents the industry, as broadly speaking construction workers will not have access to the support offered by BeOnsite, and over the same period they retained only 33% of new entrants.

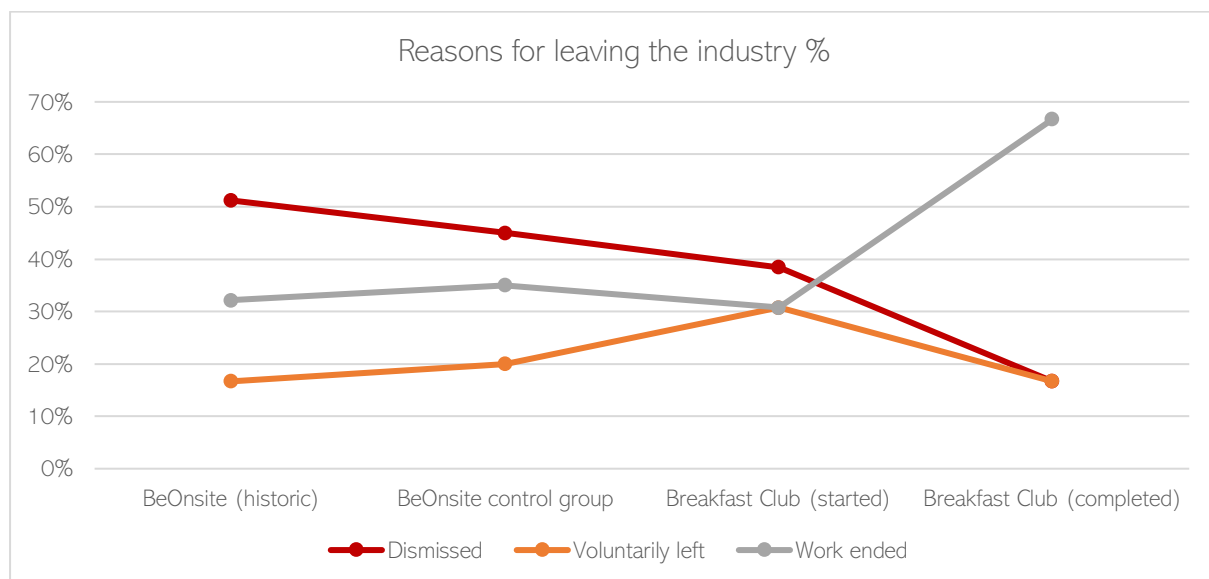
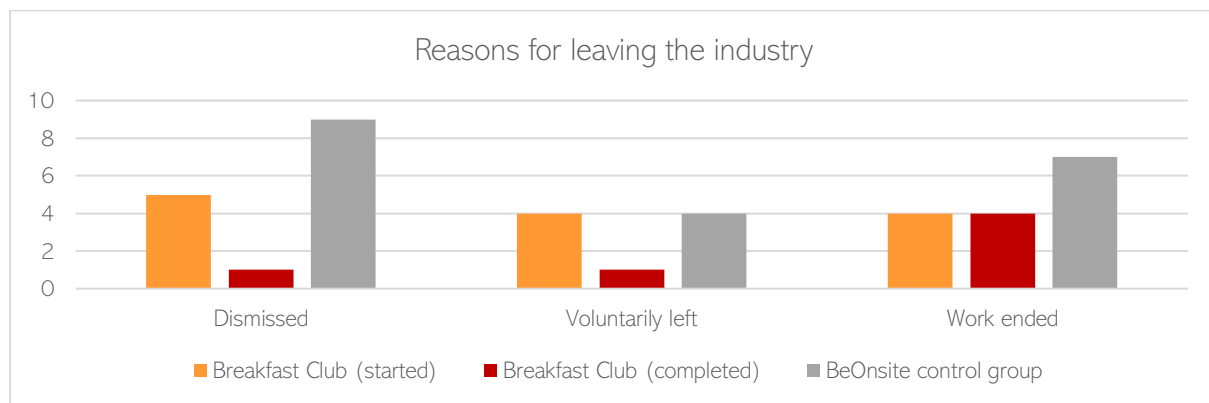
Historically, the statistics at Elephant Park imply a higher retention rate for industry workers: 54% of those workers who started on the project are still employed by their contractor, and probably a much higher percentage is retained by the industry in general. However these figures relate to all entrants not just new entrants who have already proved some level of lasting power. Moreover the BeOnsite control group, and the element of the Breakfast Club consisting of BeOnsite employees are made up of individuals from the hardest to reach in society. These people are typically struggling with disadvantages, which create further challenges to sustainment. The Index of Multiple Deprivation is the official measure of relative deprivation in England. BeOnsite tracks employees against each of the seven distinct domains of deprivation (including having a criminal record, barriers to housing and services, health deprivation or disability and caring responsibilities) with **86% of the people we support having at least one indicator of disadvantage.**

However, compared with BeOnsite's historic sustainment rate of 44% sustain employment over 6 months, the same result is clear - that a series of training courses focusing on soft skills and one on one support provided can be valuable in retaining talent within the industry.

## REASONS FOR LEAVING

In relation to reasons for leaving we do not have comparatives for the directly employed cohort as this data is often not recorded internally or is confidential. However, we did record reasons for leaving amongst participants and compared them against the BeOnsite control group as well as alongside BeOnsite's historical data, which are displayed below.

Firstly, it is important to note that with the Breakfast Club especially, the absolute number of leavers is small, for example only six Breakfast Club candidates have left their roles to date, which doesn't create a large pool of data in terms of reasons for leaving. In order to demonstrate that a graph with the absolute figures has been included as well as the percentages. This means that while the results aren't necessarily statistically significant in this area, they can be insightful.



Across all groups, almost 40% of leavers left due to the fact that their work was ending and anecdotally we understand this was a large factor within the direct employment control group too. The cyclical pattern of work within construction is clearly a huge barrier to new entrants in the industry and having a large impact on reduction rates. This characteristic of contract work is one of the key reasons that construction struggles with retention and has come into greater effect as a result of the pandemic. While this type of project can't change the nature of the work, one of the aims of the programme is to give

people the skills required to acquire new work and manage their time and finances in between construction jobs and that's why we believe these types of interventions are so important.

On the other hand, there was a clear reduction in the number of those dismissed among participants who completed the Breakfast Club programme and a less pronounced reduction among participants who started the programme. This is in line with the retention rates results overall whereby the more interventions achieved, the greater the effect on the objectives of the programme.

While the percentage of candidates dismissed has dropped compared to other groups there does not seem to have been a pronounced difference in the number of voluntary leavers - the comparative BeOnsite group 20% of leavers did so voluntarily, compared with 31% of those participants who started the Breakfast Club and 17% of those who completed the course. Although it's hard to draw conclusions from such small numbers this could be indicative of the fact that the industry as a whole is attracting the wrong people. Part of the goal was to increase awareness and understanding of a career in construction which will inevitably lead to leavers at early stages. 'Putting the pieces together' was the second session in the programme and was designed to give participants a better insight into the industry and therefore it isn't unexpected that those who did not like what the industry had to offer would leave at this point although the number of participants and overall leavers is so small it is impossible to determine if this is a true pattern there created by the programme. Therefore, the fact that there wasn't a large reduction in those who chose to leave doesn't necessarily mark a failure of the scheme itself. In fact, of those Breakfast Club participants who did leave the industry voluntarily a number went on to pursue higher education or alternate careers rather than returning to universal credit. Moreover, two of the participants have since gone on to gain higher qualifications in the industry, three are now in supervisor roles and two were winners at Lendlease's prestigious annual Excellence Awards, all within the last year. This is evidence that the programme does aid career development, even if it isn't always within construction.

Going forward, awareness needs to be grown by the industry as a whole at a recruitment level in order to prevent workers starting without knowledge of what a career in construction entails while simultaneously attracting candidates who are better suited for construction including some of the less well-known areas of the sector.

## LENGTH OF EMPLOYMENT

Conversely there is a real risk that suitable workers start a role but leave the industry before they are able to ascertain if this is the career for them, perhaps because they do not have the fundamental skills to hold down a job, especially a role in construction which can have a unique range of challenges to any new entrant. Therefore an important feature of the skills training the programme provides is giving candidates the tools they need to 'survive' the initial period and obtain the exposure to the work they need to make an informed decision.

Reviewing the employment lengths of those individuals who have left the industry since the start of the Elephant Park project it seems that it is within the first six months that an individual is most likely to leave. Historically in BeOnsite 41% leave within the first 3 months and on site, from those who left direct employment, the median employee only lasted 1.2 months<sup>12</sup>. However even those who were not retained on the Breakfast Club lasted on average 8.4 months, comparing favourably to the control groups: BeOnsite – 4.7 months, and those directly employed - 5.2 months.

As discussed above, the interventions of the Breakfast Club might not always lead to retaining an individual in the long term. However, it is encouraging that the length of employment increased for

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<sup>12</sup> Relating to local previously unemployed workers on site

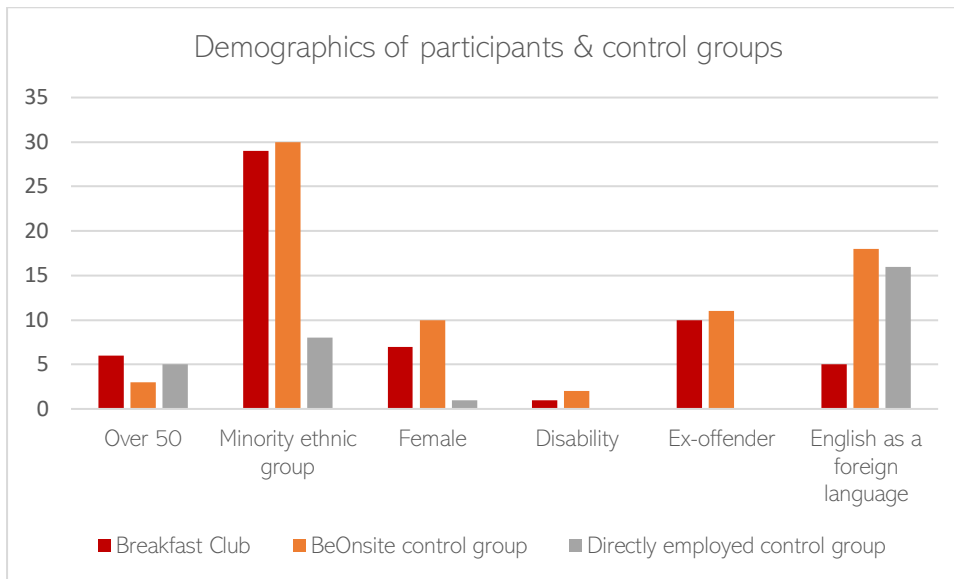


participants, partly to support the conclusion that the training is creating employable individuals capable of sustaining a role. But in addition, it allows the individual sufficient exposure to make good decisions about the construction industry and ultimately whether they are suited to it.

## DEMOGRAPHICS

As part of the programme we recorded a number of key demographics to include within our analysis and are proud to say that all groups reflected a wide diversity of individuals.

The demographics for the first cohort and the control groups at the beginning of the programme were as follows:



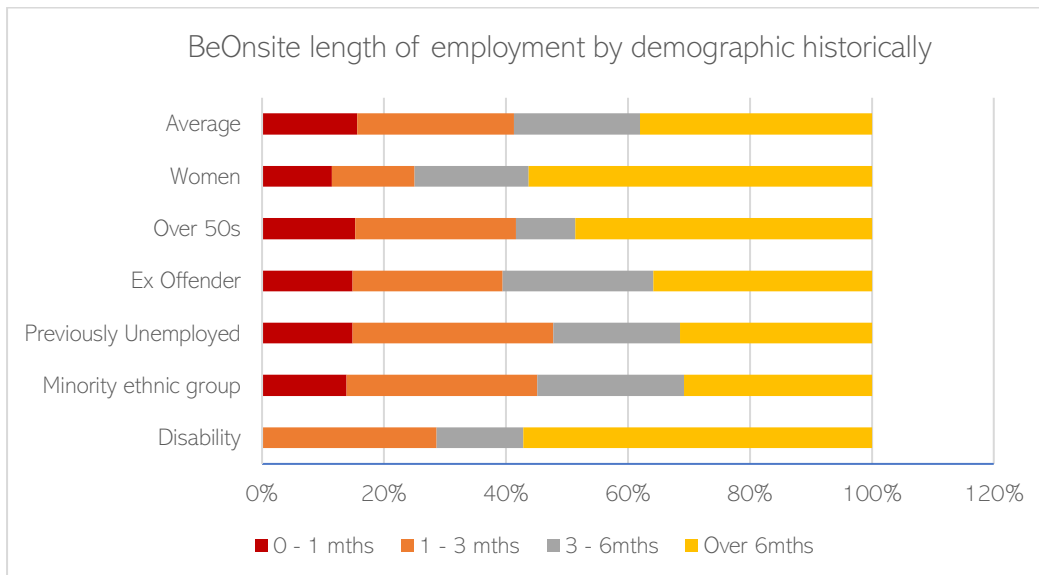
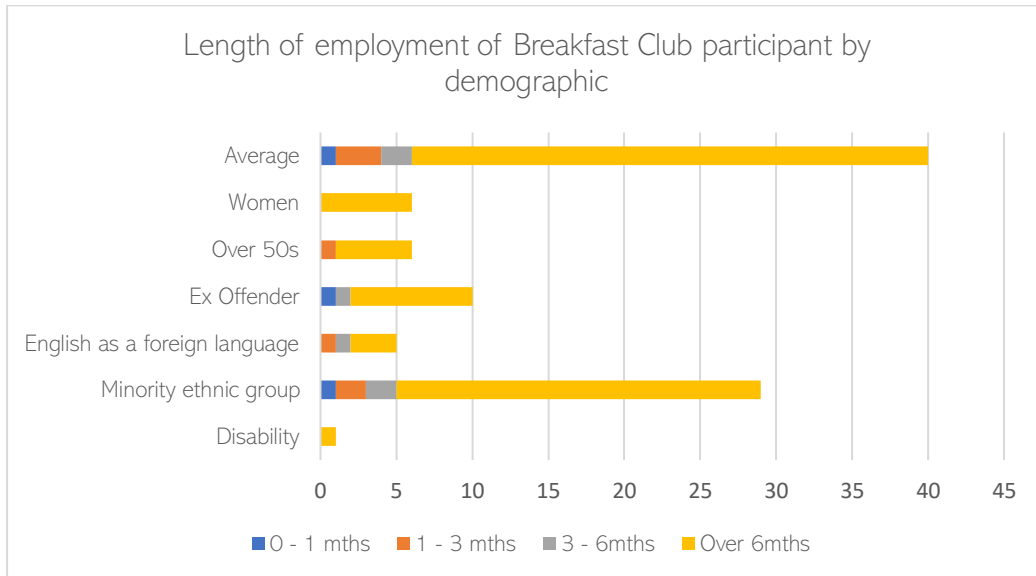
\*We do not have the data related to the % of Direct Employees who were ex-offenders

Looking at this graph it is clear that direct employees have a much smaller diversity of demographics (which is true of the wider industry in general) than those employed by BeOnsite and hence the Breakfast Club which is made up of a combination of BeOnsite employees and direct employees.

% RETAINED	Over 50	Minority ethnic group	Female	Disability	Ex-offender	English as a foreign language
Breakfast Club	83%	72%	86%	100%	60%	60%
Average	85%					

The table above reflects the retention rates of each of the different recorded demographics compared with the overall retention rate of 85% across the group. As a whole, it seems as if the demographics of those who retained are proportionately in line with those who started the programme. Ex-offenders and individuals with English as a foreign language do appear to be sustaining employment in the industry below the average participant, however ex-offenders and individuals with English as a foreign language actually only represent ten and five participants respectively so the numbers aren't enough to be conclusive.

However, we can say that the statistics imply there is little or no correlation between demographic groups and retention rates and this is echoed in the length of employment per demographic as displayed below.



BeOnsite historic statistics in relation to length of employment similarly reflect the fact that demographic group seems to have little impact on the length of time spent in the industry. When compared to the average employee, minority groups tend to achieve, in many cases, longer employment within construction or at least a length of employment in line with the average, both across the historical data and within the Breakfast Club group. This means that, as far as we can ascertain, being a member of a minority group doesn't statistically affect an individual's ability to be retained by the industry or go on to have a successful career in construction.

This is good news for the industry which will need to widen its recruitment pool in order to fulfil demand in the future. As an example, in the last census in 2011, 13% of the UK population identified as BAME (Black, Asian or minority ethnicity), yet ONS data found the percentage employed in UK construction is just over half that, at 7.4%. A report in *Open Access Government* cited that "The CITB found in a 2015 survey that this figure could potentially be as low as 4%. Only 14.5% of construction workers are female, and that drops to a shockingly low 2% amongst skilled manual trades. With 39% of manual workers across all industries female, the construction industry continues to lag behind – with figures

remaining stagnant since 2014.”<sup>13</sup> It is clear from the data that both of these groups are seriously underrepresented in the industry. And therefore, expanding its targeted pool of workers to include individuals in these groups presents a very real way forward in combating the resources crisis.

## CANDIDATE SATISFACTION

All four cohorts were asked to provide feedback after each session and surveys were introduced for cohorts 3 & 4 to complete before starting and after finishing the course to collect qualitative data on the programme. They gave participants the opportunity to share their experience on the course, and asked them to rank a number of statements on a scale of 1 - 5, depending on how strongly they agreed or disagreed with the statement,

The results across both cohorts was overwhelmingly positive with 100% of candidates surveyed rating the information provided through the course either “very effective” or “extremely effective”. Moreover 100% were either “satisfied” or “very satisfied” with the Breakfast Club.

On the whole the course material has been warmly received by its participants, who said that they “*really enjoyed the sessions*”, described our delivery partners as “*excellent*” and the content as “*useful*”. One individual claimed that the course helped with “*increased confidence on site and working with their supervisors*”.

The Lloyds team at the Halifax branch in Tottenham Court Road also recorded that a number of participants returned to the branch at a later date, to open accounts or seek further financial help following the Financial Literacy course provided, often booking appointments at the end of the session.

The statements ‘how effective was the project in providing you with new knowledge’ and ‘how useful is the information in your day to day life’ both scored just below 4 on the 1-5 scale, reinforcing the feedback recorded on the individual sessions that the content was valuable.

However, the results were less clear cut when it came to motivations to stay in the industry long term. While the statements ‘I have a clear understanding about my path in construction’ and ‘I have a clear understanding about the possibilities for promotion in construction’ both increased, the statement ‘I can see myself working here in a year’ decreased slightly. Similarly ‘how decided are you to continue working in the construction industry?’ and ‘I understand how working in construction will impact my life’ – both improved but ‘I want to build a career in construction’ slipped slightly from 3.75 out of 4 on average to 3.67. This reinforces the idea, discussed previously, that the programme might be helping some participants decide against the industry, although that may not necessarily be a bad thing.

Importantly the following statements all improved over the course: ‘I feel confident in managing my finances, I know how to talk to my team leader to get what I need’ and ‘I feel confident I can offer first aid if required’. This implies that while it might not make everyone keen on construction (you can’t force a round peg into a square hole, after all), it can give the skills and confidence to those that do want this.

## CONTRACTOR SATISFACTION

Participating contractors were asked to complete a questionnaire and attend a discussion group to offer their insights into the industry on the issue of retention and to share their opinions on the programme.

Over the course of the project contractors agreed to release their workers to participate in all the interventions on full pay, therefore they played a crucial role and their approval of the project would be vital if initiatives like this are to continue. Additionally they were able to provide a unique perspective on

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<sup>13</sup> <https://www.openaccessgovernment.org/encourage-girls-to-consider-a-career-in-construction/83498/>

the effectiveness of the programme as well as an insight into on the impact these interventions have had on candidates in the workplace.

One factor which was consistently raised by contractors in relation to retention was the work ethic of new entrants. While this can incapsulate many things it isn't trade specific, but speaks more to the ability of an individual to hold down a job full stop which was one of the concerns raised in the initial report when discussing reasons for dismissal or voluntarily leaving the industry.

Questioned initially, a manager from Instacoustic said the greatest challenge to recruitment and retention was *"finding people who realise that a working day will involve working over the required period of a day, then the next etc. The ethos of work does seem to faze some people"*. A manager from Careys concurred that candidates were often *"not willing to work"* and their *"time-keeping"* was another concern raised by multiple contractors. These were both behaviours the programme sought to change. Challenging a candidate's perception of work as an opportunity and how much control you have over your own success was the focus of the first session 'Choices' and the reflections session. Whereas the 'Putting the Pieces together' session would give participants greater exposure to the industry and to help build their understanding and aspirations in sector.

The impact of these was echoed by contractors in their questionnaires after the programme completed. Some of the benefits contractors saw in the Breakfast Club programme was a *"wider scope of understanding for candidates and a base for them to progress themselves"*. Another highlighted the *"reward and recognition"* element, to *"encourage the employee to have more interest in the work"*. A manager from H E Simm said that the *"programme gives a broader perspective on the world of work which will be beneficial to attendees in the long term"*. Additionally, they claimed they felt the course had *"given them motivation and improved knowledge"*.

Universally contractors said that they had seen positive changes in their employees after attending the Breakfast Club and reiterated that internal feedback from employees was that they found the course worthwhile and that they spoke favourably about all the sessions. Participants were also described by their employers as *"less daunted by issues"* and that they *"engaged more with the work and showed a better attitude to work and other people"*.

The feedback indicates that the programme is producing the effects it was designed to and that the changes it encourages are valued by employers. Although originally when we designed the course our partner contractors wanted a soft skills focus, they did comment subsequently that they thought retention rates would benefit from more practical training and the first aid course was widely the most popular among employers, demonstrating a residual inclination towards practical learning. Going forward they suggested incorporating more trade skills training to combat the high dropout rates alongside the soft skills element.

It is accepted that this type of practical training is important and key in underpinning the confidence individuals feel on site, feeding back into the soft skills element. It is also still lacking in many areas in the industry and undoubtedly would help improve retention rates further. In order to provide more trade specific training though, we would require even greater input from the contractors themselves. At the present though, the programme is really about getting candidates over the 'first hurdles' of employment for new entrants, while recognising that there are more hurdles to come and more skills to learn in achieving longevity in construction.

The only potentially negative comment about the programme was that one contractor observed that not all their participants seemed to be taking it seriously and that a number of their candidates were boasting to their colleagues about having time off work and free bacon rolls. While at least this interpretation does reflect the idea that their employer is investing in them, we need participants to be engaged in the content beyond the free food to create valuable interventions. This contractor advised against holding the

sessions on a Friday or “*giving them too many biscuits*” as potentially that it could be seen as undermining the importance of the sessions. However, to make the sessions more serious it would have to be reinforced by contractors, making sure they attend without the inducement of breakfast and allowing participants time during potentially busier hours to attend, which based on current attendance rates might be difficult. Moreover, this feedback relates to only a small number of participants and it might not be fair to punish the ones who can see past the promise of free food!

However, it can be hard to see the value of the interventions conducted when you only have one or two individuals from your company participating, it is much easier to see from the statistics, at a higher level, the impact it can have. When we brought contractors together for the discussion groups and shared the wider results with them, it created a greater respect for the programme.

Overall, the project has received some excellent feedback from the contractors involved, who praised the programme.

A manager at Lee Marley said that “*The Breakfast Club is a great tool in that it allows targeted training to be delivered directly on site. This means that we can bring new entrants into construction and get them trained in key industrial skills much quicker than was previously available. It also brings together different subcontractors allowing cross pollination of knowledge and experience*”

Dan Clarkson at Lee Marley:

“*The Breakfast Club is a great tool in that it allows targeted training to be delivered directly on site. This means that we can bring new entrants into construction and get them trained in key industrial skills much quicker than was previously available. It also brings together different subcontractors allowing cross pollination of knowledge and experience*”

Eamon MacCarron, Clipfline:

“*Working with BeOnsite allows us to build strong relations with the local community as well as making a difference to the lives of people who might otherwise struggle to gain employment, by providing long term employment opportunities.*”

## CHALLENGES

One of the biggest challenges was participant and attendance levels. As identified in our initial report, the lack of suitable new entrant workforce and the difficulty in attracting candidates was an issue which meant that we were only able to recruit 40 candidates to join the programme overall despite targeting 48. However, it is important to remember that the Breakfast Club was designed as a deliberately small scale pilot programme. Lower candidate participation rates make trends in data harder to identify and patterns in results less meaningful.

Another problem, which exacerbated this, was achieving “buy-in” from the employers, as the course requires candidates to have paid leave to attend and therefore requires approval at the contractor level. There was a reluctance by employers to invest precious time and money in training and developing their employees when they themselves are pressed by tight deadlines and narrowing margins. As a result, contractors were hesitant to commit staff to the programme. In addition to participant levels, it meant that candidates were not always been released to attend the sessions which led to poor attendance rates and low completion rates. Although the employers that did participate have learned the value of the programme and its methods, the level of interaction during the programme will have impacted the effectiveness of the interventions as well as the validity of the results. This will undoubtedly continue to be an issue if we tried to widen the project to new contractors in the future.

Going forward we would need to make sure that there is more commitment upfront from contractors so there are no issues with candidates being pulled from the course.

Also achieving "buy-in" from the candidate themselves wasn't easy. There were a number of individuals who attended a couple of sessions but decided they weren't worthwhile and stopped. Most of these were the same cohort that subsequently left the industry soon after and therefore didn't complete the programme. But candidates who leave the programme after only a couple of sessions, don't have the same opportunity to be impacted. One potential solution would be if interventions could occur earlier and if sessions could be condensed into a shorter time frame, they would likely capture more of this cohort. Although we don't want to reduce or replace the practical exposure candidates have in construction but when the course is stretched over a number of months it can reduce the programme's ability to affect participant thinking and skill set in time to retain them.

Another challenge was that retention of candidates from all groups was affected heavily by work ending on site which is an issue caused by the nature of the industry. This factor is difficult to change or predict and ultimately affected the number of individuals involved and the population of the data collected. Moreover, extracting information on employees particularly from our directly employed control groups has been difficult and the less data we have the harder it is to draw definitive conclusions.

## CONCLUSION

As discussed, the size of the project does impact the validity of the findings and in the future the project may benefit from an extension which scaled up the size of the programme and the number of participants in order to reinforce our initial findings. However, the results of the Breakfast Club show the potential that targeted interventions can have in retaining talent within the industry and the benefits soft skills training can have on new entrants in sustaining a role.

Not everyone is going to be suited to a career in construction and not everyone will want one. The Breakfast Club may help candidates that are not suitable determine that out more swiftly, although ideally this would take place at an earlier stage (possibly as part of the recruitment process) to save on costs but ultimately to ensure individuals are informed on the industry before starting a role.

However, if this is the industry for you this type of training and support can give you the foundation to succeed and show you the direction of travel. Necessarily more practical, trade-specific training will be required to build a long career but for new entrants at the start of their journey, it is these basic skills that can really impact retention. The stop-start nature of the industry added to the element of self-employment can be difficult to handle and demands a high level of autonomy from its labour force. This requires significant resilience from its workers and substantial softs skills above and beyond trade qualifications.

Behavioural issues are often exacerbated by lack of training or employer engagement and increased awareness about their prospects and various roles within the industry will help keep workers engaged and ambitious. The ability to switch jobs and roles, manage their own finances, and take charge of their own career – all areas targeted in the programme – are crucial, which is why we think the Breakfast Club interventions have had such an impact. Giving participants additional life skills, enables new entrants to make better decisions for themselves in many aspects of their lives not just in the workplace and showing new entrants that the employer is investing in them will help grow their talent and assist in retention of their new workforce. Having said that, were we to expand the programme we would recommend promoting a more blended approach including an element of more practical training. This, we believe, would deepen candidates' insight into construction as well as helping achieve invaluable 'buy-in' from their employers. In addition, we feel participants would profit from a more condensed schedule

of interventions to ensure that individuals can benefit from the training in time to affect their retention in the industry.

The data collected doesn't point to a specific demographic outperforming another. This is important because while many industry factors impacting retention are hard to negate the industry could easily benefit from targeting previously underutilised demographics to fill the increased skills gap within construction. As a core industry that underpins all others, construction needs to access a wider pool of talent from a more diverse range of people in terms of age, gender, and ethnic origin in order to recruit and develop a high-quality workforce that is motivated and skilled to meet growing construction needs.

While greater issues related to pay and sub-contracting culture will be hard to change, it seems clear that a small investment into better training will prove profitable to an employer in the long run. An employer must ensure any candidate has both practical, trade-specific training as well as training in the soft skills required to maintain a job. Consequently, supporting this type of training and ensuring new entrants feel valued could be a crucial element in resolving the ongoing retention issues within construction and help face the skills gap crisis in the industry.

## APPENDICES

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### CASE STUDY 1

AD first approached BeOnsite in December 2014 after being unemployed for over 18 months. Originally from Jamaica where she had been a firefighter, AD has lived in Southwark for over 4 years. AD's work experience prior to unemployment in the UK had been in the Adult Health & Social Care sector as well as being a nursery school teacher for children under 5. When registering with BeOnsite AD showed a keen interest in the construction industry with a long-term view of specialising in health and safety. She was fully expecting and willing to work in a hands-on entry-level role from the outset as she was the first to acknowledge her lack of industry experience.

An opportunity as a general labourer for a logistics contractor became available in January 2018 and AD jumped at the chance. As is often common, a few weeks into her role, she faced some challenges. However, the joint support offered by BeOnsite and her line manager from Clipfine, the host contractor, saw these overcome positively. It should be noted that AD's own willingness and determination to succeed played no small part in this.

Over the last 10 months, AD has immersed herself into her new role and has demonstrated the highest level of attendance amongst new starters. Her solid performance and positive attitude has seen her progress from a general waste operative to that of a key holder. A trusted position to hold and one which she can be proud of. Nine months into her new role within Construction she was placed into the Breakfast Club, a programme funded by CITB and delivered by BeOnsite to provide additional interventions to new entrants into the industry aimed at increasing retention.

AD is a self-motivated individual, who is determined to learn and enhance her skills. She has completed a SSSTS training whilst in this role and was willing to invest in herself and personally fund the training. But thanks to the support of BeOnsite and Clipfine she was able to access the training for free at the Southwark Construction Skills Centre. Her supervisor said, *"AD has turned into an exemplary member of my team, punctual, polite and always looking for new ways to extend her knowledge of construction."*

AD said *"This job has impacted on the lives of myself and my family in a positive way and I am now better able to financially support them. I can now put pen to paper and make plans looking forward to better days with my children. This job has enabled me to gain qualifications as a fire marshal, a qualified first aider and Site Supervisor Safety Training (SSSTS) with the ability to aspire higher with no limitations to time. It has given me the opportunity to recognise the inner strength I possess in believing in myself more, believing I can do and be anything I want to do and become. Thanks to the entire staff of BeOnsite."*

Recently AD was nominated by her host contractor to be considered for Lendlease's prestigious annual Excellence Awards in the category of BeOnsite Employee of the Year. Her nomination, along with several other strong BeOnsite employees, was submitted to a Lendlease judging panel and AD along with two other shortlisted employees were invited to the celebratory event at a top London venue. BeOnsite were delighted when AD's name was called as the winner of the BeOnsite award. As part of this award and as a winner, AD and her partner were invited to attend a special award dinner with the Lendlease Regional Leadership Team later held at the Lanesborough Hotel where an overnight stay was included. The icing on the cake soon became clear when AD realised she had been upgraded to the Presidential Suite! After her stay, AD said *"I really enjoyed being awarded BeOnsite Employee of the Year and can't wait to share my lovely experience with the BeOnsite team. I enjoyed the steam room, sauna and the hydro pool a lot. I left feeling rather refreshed also. Thanks a lot for the opportunity to be where I am today."*



## CASE STUDY 2

KA registered with BeOnsite at 18 years old with no previous work experience but a lot of energy and ambition to join the world of construction. When he heard about an opportunity in scaffolding at the selection event, he was quick to put himself forward and BeOnsite enrolled him onto the COTs training course at Southwark Skills Centre. KA was punctual, enthusiastic and fully engaged during the course securing himself an interview with the scaffolding contractor upon successful completion. He made a great impression at the interview due his preparation which included a roleplay interview with BeOnsite and in-depth research into the scaffolding industry.

Despite his lack of industry related experience, the impression he made resulted in him being successful and he started his one-week placement shortly after. BeOnsite met him on the first day to escort him to the contractor's HQ to complete his induction. At the end of his first week KA moved into paid employment demonstrating his commitment to learning and settled into the role. Upon placement he was identified by BeOnsite and his host contractor as an ideal candidate for the Breakfast Club and began the programme a few months later. During the first six months he had 100% consistent positive feedback that earned him a nomination from his contractor for the BeOnsite employee excellence award at the quarterly Health & Safety stand-down. His supervisor said, "KA is hard working, punctual and is a great asset to the team".

BeOnsite maintained contact with KA during his employment and had regular 'catch ups' and performance reviews. KA's success was built on his excellent attendance and punctuality and with 99% attendance the contractor could see his potential as a future scaffolder. Therefore, willing to invest in KA, the contractor has now taken him on directly and preparing him for a scaffolding apprenticeship. During KA's exit interview thanked BeOnsite for looking beyond his lack of experience and providing him with an opportunity to begin a career in construction.

## THE BREAKFAST CLUB – COURSES OVERVIEW

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**COURSE:** Choices Plus

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**PROVIDER:** Safe Handling Limited

**AIMS:** The training is designed to help candidates understand the consequences of their choices, set themselves positive goals for their future and make them feel valued. Thinking about their career as well as their own strengths and weaknesses. We want to give candidates confidence and self-awareness at the start of their careers as well as preparing them for being in a professional environment and how to handle the challenges that may bring.

**CONTENT:**

A welcome and introduction to the industry for participants. This full day session will focus on soft skills and mental health resilience training to prepare new entrants to a career. Based on accelerated learning principles this session will use the mnemonic B.A.S.I.S. to get/keep individuals to engage.

B = BELONGING to something bigger than self

A = ASPIRATIONS something to work towards

S = SAFETY physical and emotional

I = IDENTITY a sense of how you can be an individual and contribute to the collective

S = SUCCESS to be able to celebrate even the smallest successes

The course gave participants a chance to look at their own personality traits and identify their own strengths and weaknesses as well as recognising other personalities and an understanding of how to interact with them at work and beyond. It also looks at the role that internal monologue can play in relation to mental health but also external success.

**PROJECT MANAGER COMMENTS:** It was a very energising session which helped candidates start to think about their ambitions and aspirations and to make sure they are looking for what they can get out of the programme as well as their future careers. The course provider was described by attendees as “excellent”. He was motivational and friendly and encouraged open discussion. Speaking to candidates the course, they found it thought provoking and interactive and people left enthused and empowered. Participants said that they were motivated to “be more focused with their goals”. Going forward participants said they had learned “how to ‘control the chimp’ “(knee-jerk reactions to situations) and “open up and speak more”.



**COURSE:** Putting the pieces together

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**PROVIDER:** Construction Partners

**AIMS:** Site supervisor led introduction to key trades operating on the wider site and feedback session to gain a better understanding of career paths available.

**CONTENT:**

This session will be part classroom based and part site based with an opportunity for participants to discuss, in a facilitated session, their assumptions about trades, jobs and careers before walking round site for a myth debunking, practical learning session. This will be followed up by a reflection and Q&A session in the classroom.



**PM COMMENTS:** Participants enjoyed interacting directly with those working higher up in the industry, occasionally even from their own organisation. All the speakers were excellent and spoke about many different elements of the industry and their career and were extremely honest with participants. Although at first the cohorts were a little reticent, by the end of the session they were confidently asking direct questions about the industry and the speakers personal experiences. It was great to get participants around the different site areas but it wasn't always easy to see the type of work going on and so in the future it might be good to include more emphasis in the classroom on the different types of work that take place within construction to ensure participants are aware of all the different labour going on.

**COURSE:** Positive Conflict

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**PROVIDER :** DPA Consulting

**AIMS:** Developing communication skills to enable new entrants to build and manage relationships in the workplace. To enable you to understand the different types of conflict, the benefits of professionally handled conflict and the cost of avoiding conflict. We worked with the external providers to ensure the courses were tailored to the cohort's need including construction based examples.

**CONTENT:**

- Define and discuss workplace conflict
- Understanding and managing your own "fight or flight" response when in a stressful situation so delegates can remain calm and professional at work

- Position Thomas Kilmann Model and debate the use of different approaches to conflict
- Discuss scenarios and how to make good choices under pressure
- Subtle workplace conflict and discomfort and understanding non-verbal communication

**PM COMMENTS:** The session was a great balance of learning and interactive teaching. At this stage in the programme candidates were more comfortable with their training group which made working in groups easier and enabled more lively discussion which fitted well with the training topic. Instructors were extremely experienced and helped promote this activity amongst participants. The tailored elements really helped underpin the training as it focused on real-life situations that might be expected to occur on site and participants were vocal in offering additional examples to the instructors and working through solutions. This was a really valuable session as it was an area for improvement identified in initial discussions with contractors and historically an issue leading to dismissal.

**COURSE:** First Aid

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**PROVIDER :** Nuco Training

**AIMS:** Provide candidates with practical first aid skills in the workplace and beyond. Give candidates confidence on site so they are less daunted by issues.

**CONTENT:**

- Responsibilities and reporting
- Assessment of the situation
- Dealing with an unresponsive casualty
- Basic hygiene in First Aid
- Burns
- Epilepsy
- Resuscitation
- Anatomy
- Minor injuries
- Bleeding control
- Choking
- Shock

**PM COMMENTS:** The course was very practical, and the candidates responded really well and said that they really enjoyed it. It covered all the basics as well as scenarios that might be expected to occur on site. The fact that this course would give participants a qualification of value in any profession made them appreciate it all the more. Additionally it was the session which contractors felt was most beneficial for candidates and they said it created a noticeable increased confidence on site.

**COURSE:** Financial Literacy

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**PROVIDER :** Lloyds Bank

**AIMS:** Lloyds Bank will partner with us to educate candidates in basic financial and tax matters, as well as guiding them in budgeting in order to be able to manage their finances competently.

**CONTENT:**

- Money-saving tips and advice including credit ratings
- Understanding your payslip & tax
- Details of Banks with Basic Accounts & savings accounts
- Loan Awareness & Mortgages
- Understanding Self Employment
- Pensions and Compound Interests
- Taking Control of Our Financial Future & Budgeting exercise
- Avoiding Financial Scams
- Where to find financial help & information



**PM COMMENTS:** This session was a favourite with participants. Lloyds did a fantastic job of working through the basics of finances as well as addressing subjects which were likely to be of most help to the groups. This session drew the most questions, by far, perhaps because it was outside the candidates normal subject area. In an industry which is heavily reliant on self-employed contractors and often means inconsistent employment these type of financial skills are vital and the feedback from candidates reflected this. Participants praised the speakers: we had a 'very helpful and knowledgeable host' and the 'very informative event'. Others stated that they 'enjoyed the environment' and even 'wished I had this information earlier in life and could have been more confident with money'. Moreover, the speakers went

on to book in a large number appointments with participants to return to the bank on their own time and talk about further financial issues including savings and mortgages. BeOnsite has even chosen to offer some of the training courses to all their employees going forward including the Financial Literacy course, supported by Lloyds Bank.

*"We are delighted to be able to partner with Lendlease in this initiative to improve financial literacy. Financial literacy being the possession of the set of skills and knowledge that allows an individual to make informed and effective decisions with all of their financial resources. We will tailor a bespoke scheme utilising a suite of financial literacy resources to deliver money management sessions, with a view to covering saving, preparing a budget, providing an overview of a pension and a mortgage."*  
Wendy Whewell, Relationship Director, Mid Markets, London & South, Lloyds Bank

**COURSE:** Influencing Others

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**PROVIDER :** DPA Consulting

**AIMS:** Learning communication skills necessary to take the next steps in their career. It will enable new entrants to understand the needs and motives of others in order to influence them effectively. We worked with the external providers to ensure the courses were tailored to the cohort's need.

**CONTENT:**

- Think strategically about their influencing priorities and objectives
- Define their own opportunities to persuade and influence
- Create their own influencing communications plan
- The challenge of communication
- How are people influenced?
- Planning to build credibility and connection
- Focussing on what you can influence
- Flexing your influencing style
- Increasing your workplace influence



**PM COMMENTS:** This session was critical in building communication skills and providing candidates with the proficiency to not only to survive and sustain employment but the ability to progress in the industry and rise through the ranks. Expertly delivered by DPA trainers, the course drew on current events and

public figures and consequently was very engaging to participants. The course gave participants a more proactive focus and put the onus on the individual for their personal development, which is vital for success in construction.

**COURSE:** Reflections and Consolidation & Celebration

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**PROVIDER :** BeOnsite

**AIMS:** Building on their very first intervention, this session supports participants to reflect on their training and careers so far within the industry and identifying areas of focus and interest going forward to build a clear career/progression path. This final intervention will recognise the progress achieved by candidates and celebrate their completion of the course. It will consolidate learning to date and set future targets for each participant.

**CONTENT:**

- Reflecting on training & sessions
- Feedback & surveys on the course
- Contractors have the opportunity to speak directly to the participants from their organisation and reflect on their progress
- Contractors award their candidates with completion certificates



**PM COMMENTS:** Taking the time to reflect on the course and make plans for future development was a really useful exercise. Completing the questionnaire also helped focus participants reflections as well as providing useful information to the programme. It was important to have a final session to acknowledge each individual's achievement and all the more meaningful to have the contractors attending as this



