

Building the learner's journey in the construction trade

■ John McLaughlin Harvie,
National Coordinator for Key Skills,
Carillion Construction Training

‘The Skills for Life Improvement Programme has been of real benefit to Carillion Construction Training.’

Carillion has been training apprentices in construction skills for over 35 years. With a network of 18 training centres throughout the country, the company is well known for setting high standards and providing vocational training. Carillion offers apprenticeships in the six main construction trades, along with many other training programmes designed to prepare learners for employment in the construction industry. It currently has more than 2,500 apprentices on programme nationally.

The Skills for Life Improvement Programme consultant, Gené Bekker, assisted the management team in reviewing the assessment process, making recommendations and implementing changes through in-house staff training.

Skills check tool

The Skills for Life Assessment activity has helped the company to develop a positive assessment experience for the learners and prepare them for their ‘Lifelong Learning Journey’. The ‘Smart Move’ skills checks play an important part in the assessment cycle from the first contact to the end of the programme. This skills check tool contains questions that are focused on situations and activities that are likely to be experienced at work but are not specific to any particular employment sector.

Communications review

Gené also presented a workshop on skills checks at the company’s annual conference in March. She also facilitated continuing professional development sessions for the management and staff directly involved in the company’s recruitment and assessment procedures.

The company has undertaken a complete review of how it communicates with potential learners; one particular benefit of the project has been an increased emphasis on Information, Advice and Guidance (IAG), including clearer progression information for learners. We have revised all the written correspondence that we send to our applicants to reflect this change.

The Skills for Life Improvement Programme has been of real benefit to Carillion Construction Training. It has enabled us to take a fresh look at the learner who is being reviewed and to create a strategy to improve our whole organisation approach to assessment. The skills checks are effective precursors to the formal assessment process. Learners have been less daunted and consequently more confident in the assessment procedures that follow.

Increased pass rate

As a result of this strategy, there has been an increase in the number of candidates passing the Construction Industry Training Board (CITB) Structured Learning Exercise (SLE) and progressing through to the interview stage of the recruitment process. The company is planning to continue using the ‘Smart Move’ skills checks to screen learners before the initial assessment stage. We plan to use an online version for candidates on the Train to Gain programmes, both on site and in our training centres.



More learners pass the CITB Structured Learning Exercise