NASC

Scaffolding Insider

THE VOICE OF SCAFFOLDING AND ACCESS

OCTOBER 2026



SUPPORTING HISTORY

The unique challenge of heritage projects

MANAGING THE DIESEL CRISIS

What next for fuel costs?

THE FIRST BURNHAM BUDGET

Winners and losers explained


SCAFFEX27
MANCHESTER 9–10 SEPT
Layher
More Possibilities. The Scaffolding System.
THE SCAFFOLDING AND ACCESS WORLD UNDER ONE ROOF.
SCAFFEX27
MANCHESTER 9–10 SEPT
FREE
TO ATTEND
REGISTER NOW!
tinyurl.com/SCAFFEX27

FROM THE EDITOR

On page 8 of this issue of the magazine, Joanne Walker from the CWIC Academy, part of the University of Wales Trinity Saint David's Construction Wales Innovation Centre, talks about how she believes we should be attracting young people into the industry to address the all too familiar shortage. Wisely, she starts with meeting young people where they are and engaging them on their level – whether that's TikTok instead of LinkedIn or getting the scaffolding kit on instead of death by Powerpoint.

It occurred to me that she might like to show kids some of the photos that are part of our main feature this month. Who would fail to be astonished by some of these? We look in depth at three projects in the heritage sector where the scaffolding contractor had to use all of their expertise and more in order to meet incredibly demanding challenges - and the technical side is just as astonishing as the photos.

Go to pages 11-15 to read more about Lee Marley Group's work to deliver a 44-metre-high complex scaffolding access solution for the Gas Holder at Oval Village, a reinforced concrete curved structure within a retained Grade II listed historic frame overlooking the Kia Oval; Zenith's task of providing scaffolding for Glasgow Cathedral to enable repairs to the top of the spire and to replace windows; and SRT's project to design and install a complex internal birdcage scaffold within the grade II listed church of St Johns the Baptist, Harleston. Such remarkable creativity, innovation and engineering excellence.

However, delivering this kind of excellence looks to be only getting more and more expensive. On pages 17-18 we look at the current diesel cost crisis, which is hitting scaffolding contractors and related companies so badly. Regrettably, it doesn't appear set to change any time soon.

There's another potential additional cost sneaking up on the inside too, with the Carbon Border Adjustment Mechanism (CBAM) due to be implemented from 1 January 2027. NASC has surveyed supplier members about this, revealing considerable concern but also much uncertainty. NASC is calling on the Government to rethink whether this is a good time to add further costs to businesses already working on the tightest margins. Read more about the CBAM and its implications on page 4.

The broader implications of the Budget are discussed on page 9, while there is further news on pages 5-7 and 19.

I hope you enjoy the magazine.



Nick Campion
Editor

CONTENTS

From the Editor 3

NASC News 4

Industry News Round-up 7

Industry View: Joanne Walker 8

News Feature: The Budget 9

Feature: Supporting History 11

Feature: Managing the Diesel Crisis 17

Training & Education 19

Cover photo: Courtesy of Lee Marley Group

CONTACT DETAILS

editor@nasc.org.uk
020 7822 7400
07958 695778

National Access & Scaffolding Confederation
4th Floor, 12 Bridewell Place, London. EC4V 6AP

www.nasc.org.uk

Scaffolding Insider is published by National Access and Scaffolding Confederation Ltd (NASC). Content does not necessarily represent the views of NASC. NASC is not liable for any inaccuracy or claims of any type from editorial, advertising, or any content within the publication.

Not all images used are representative of the standards NASC upholds and may be supplied by third parties in support of content featured in the publication.

All rights are reserved. Scaffolding Insider is the trademark of NASC, and the NASC logo and brand are registered.

SCAFFOLDING SUPPLIERS BRACE FOR HIGHER COSTS

The UK's Carbon Border Adjustment Mechanism (CBAM) is set to introduce a new cost pressure for businesses importing steel and aluminium. With implementation approaching, a new NASC survey reveals widespread awareness among scaffolding suppliers, but also significant uncertainty over the financial implications. One message is already emerging: higher prices for the scaffolding industry appear increasingly likely.

The introduction of the UK CBAM is planned for January 2027 and represents another significant development for the scaffolding industry's supply chain, with the potential to increase the cost of imported steel and aluminium products.

Designed to address carbon emissions associated with imported goods, the mechanism will place a carbon price on certain products entering the UK, helping to ensure that imported materials face a comparable carbon cost to those manufactured domestically.

For the scaffolding sector, the implications could be considerable. According to the survey conducted by NASC among its supplier members, the industry is already anticipating substantial increases in its purchasing costs with many suppliers expecting to pass those increases directly to their customers.



High awareness but limited preparation

The survey, circulated to all NASC supplier members in October 2026, provides an early indication of how businesses across the scaffolding supply chain are preparing for CBAM. Encouragingly, 100% of respondents said they were aware of its introduction - but the level of preparation varies considerably.

Only 10% of respondents reported that they were both fully aware of CBAM and had already assessed its potential impact on their business, with a further 40% aware but currently assessing the implications. However, half acknowledged they were aware of CBAM but had not yet started assessing how it might affect their operations.

This suggests that although CBAM is firmly on the industry's radar, there remains considerable work to do before businesses fully understand their exposure to the new charges.

Steel and aluminium products in the spotlight

In the survey, respondents identified a range of product categories they expect to be affected including system scaffolding components, steel and aluminium tubes, beams, decks and fittings..

The responses reflect supplier expectations rather than confirmation that every product in these categories will fall within the scope of CBAM. The precise application of CBAM depends on the relevant commodity codes and the rules governing the mechanism.

Of particular concern is the proportion of suppliers' product ranges that could be exposed: 70% of suppliers expect at least half of their steel and aluminium product range will be affected by CBAM. The remaining 30% were uncertain about the proportion of their range that might fall within scope.

This level of anticipated exposure raises important questions about future pricing, particularly for businesses supplying large volumes of scaffolding equipment to contractors and hire companies.

Significant cost increases

Half of respondents expect CBAM to increase the purchase or imported cost of affected steel and aluminium products by between 11% and 15%. A further 10% anticipate increases of between 6% and 10%, while 30% expect increases of between 2% and 5%. No respondents anticipated that CBAM would have no impact on their purchasing costs.

Although these figures represent supplier forecasts rather than confirmed price increases, they point towards a potentially significant change in the economics of scaffolding equipment supply. For businesses already operating on tight margins, even relatively modest increases in material costs can have substantial consequences.

For scaffolding contractors, perhaps the most important finding is how suppliers intend to manage the additional costs associated with CBAM. The survey indicates that passing those costs down the supply chain is overwhelmingly the preferred approach: in the survey, 90% of respondents expect to pass on some or all of the additional costs, with 70% of respondents expecting to do so during the first quarter of 2027. For contractors preparing tenders or agreeing longer-term supply arrangements, this creates an additional factor to consider when forecasting costs for 2027 and beyond.

NASC calls for clarity

Commenting on the survey findings, NASC Head of Technical, Mark Collinson, said: *"The results of this survey highlight the real concern among our supplier members about the potential financial impact of CBAM.*

"While we recognise the importance of reducing carbon emissions and supporting more sustainable manufacturing, there needs to be much greater clarity around exactly which products will be affected and what the financial implications will be for our industry.

"We do question whether this is the right time to introduce another cost burden on businesses. The scaffolding sector is already operating in a challenging economic environment, with higher oil and diesel prices adding to the cost of transport, manufacturing and day-to-day operations. Introducing further costs at this point risks putting even more pressure on businesses that are already working hard to remain competitive.

"What suppliers and contractors need now is clear, practical guidance and sufficient time to prepare, so they can make informed commercial decisions rather than being faced with unexpected price increases when the legislation comes into force."

Although awareness of CBAM is widespread, the survey highlights an important gap between knowing about the legislation and completing the work needed to prepare for it. When asked whether they had established which products fall within the scope of CBAM by checking the relevant commodity codes, only around 11% said they had done so for all relevant products.



Mark Collinson

This is significant because the application of CBAM will depend on the specific goods covered by the legislation, rather than simply whether a product contains steel or aluminium. Suppliers will need to examine their product classifications carefully before reaching firm conclusions about their potential liabilities.

Collinson suggests that while CBAM obligations will primarily concern the importation of goods within scope, the commercial consequences could extend much further. *"This will have an impact throughout the supply chain, as importers and suppliers adjust their pricing. For scaffolding contractors, maintaining close communication with equipment suppliers will be essential, particularly where significant purchases or longer-term supply agreements are being considered."*

NASC WELCOMES COMMON ASSESSMENT STANDARD CHANGES

Build UK has announced that Version 6 of the Common Assessment Standard (CAS) will come into effect on 1 November 2026 and will include important revisions to its Building Safety section (Section 7), reflecting the fact that scaffolding and temporary works no longer fall within the scope of the Building Safety Regulations, unless they form part of the completed structure.

The changes represent a positive development for the scaffolding and access sector, following NASC's efforts to address uncertainty surrounding the interpretation of Section 7 the application of Building Safety Regulations to temporary works. In March, NASC wrote to the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG) seeking clarification on this issue, which had been creating difficulties for scaffolding contractors wanting to complete the Common Assessment Standard.

The latest CAS revisions reflect this clarification and should help remove unnecessary barriers for scaffolding contractors seeking to demonstrate their organisational capability through the CAS process.

Under the revised Common Assessment Standard, companies will be required to actively 'opt out' of the Building Safety section where it does not apply to their activities, providing a statement confirming that they do not undertake work covered by the Building Regulations.

This change does not remove the requirement for scaffolding contractors to demonstrate competence or maintain appropriate safety and quality standards. Competence-based questions previously included within Section 7 have been moved into the quality section (Section 5), ensuring they are completed by all companies regardless of whether their activities fall within the scope of the Building Regulations.

Other requirements, including having a drugs and alcohol policy and fraud prevention procedures in place, will also become mandatory for all companies.

The changes will make it more straightforward for scaffolding and access businesses to complete the CAS, removing the need to answer questions that are not applicable to their operations.

The CAS is increasingly used by contractors and clients to assess the organisational capability of supply chains. Certification through a Recognised Assessment Body enables companies to demonstrate compliance with a consistent set of requirements.

NASC is in the process of applying to register a Recognised Assessment Body and members can visit **here** to record their interest and get a 50% discount on their first NASC+ audit.

Find further details about Version 6 of the CAS on the Build UK website at **https://builduk.org**.

NEW NASC GUIDANCE ON GAMBLING AT WORK

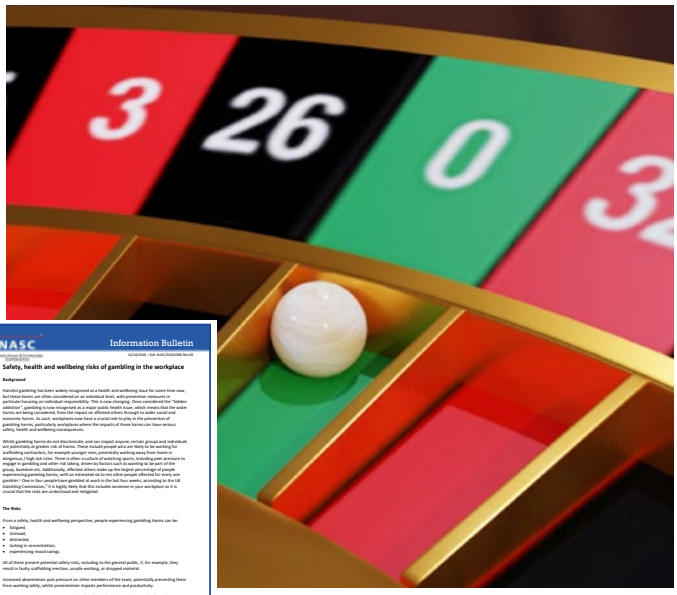
NASC has published a new information bulletin on the safety, health and wellbeing risks of gambling in the workplace, available to members on the NASC website.

Problem gambling does not discriminate, but some groups are at greater risk, and the bulletin is direct about the overlap with our industry. Those at higher risk include younger men, potentially working away from home, in dangerous or high risk roles. There is often a culture of watching sports, including peer pressure to engage in gambling and other risk taking, driven by factors such as wanting to be part of the group, or boredom.

One in four people have gambled at work in the last four weeks, according to the UK Gambling Commission. It is important to understand what it may look like on site. People experiencing gambling harms can be tired, stressed, distracted, lacking in concentration, and experiencing mood swings.

All of those present potential safety risks, including to the general public, if they result in faulty scaffolding erection, unsafe working or dropped material. Increased absenteeism puts pressure on the rest of the team, while presenteeism affects performance and productivity. Incidents of theft and fraud at work as a result of gambling are also on the rise, carrying financial and reputational risk.

At the most serious end, Public Health England estimated in 2021 that there are 400 gambling-related suicides each year in England alone, and research indicates that people experiencing gambling harms are 15 times more likely to die by suicide.



PICTURE CREDIT: egaming Imagery

NASC
Information Bulletin
Safety, health and wellbeing risks of gambling in the workplace
Background

The bulletin sets out practical control measures for employers to put in place.

Safety, health and wellbeing risks of gambling in the workplace (NASC/2026/006) is available to members on the NASC website, and NASC has thanked Betknowmore UK for their assistance in producing this bulletin.

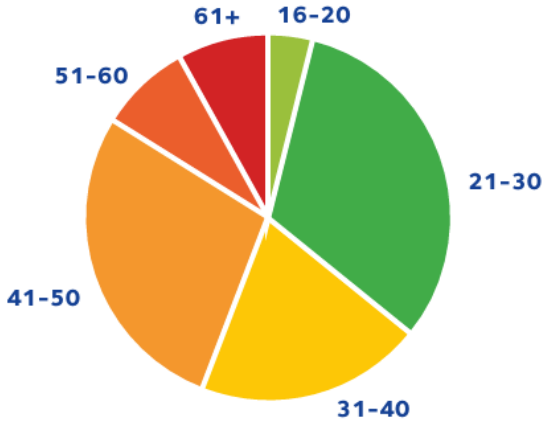
If you or someone you work with is affected by gambling, go to **https://www.betknowmoreuk.org** or the National Gambling Helpline is available via **https://www.gamcare.org.uk**

TOP FIVE – SG31 MANAGEMENT OF SLIPS & TRIPS

1. Slips & trips are one of the most common causes of RIDDOR injuries in NASC Safety Reports, alongside manual handling and falls from height.

2. Slips & trips can cause serious, life-changing injuries and their potential consequences should never be underestimated. In 2025, there were 25 RIDDOR slip & trip accidents out of 82 accidents reported by members.

Injuries resulting from slips and trips (age range)



3. The true cost of slip & trip accidents extends far beyond insurance claims, affecting productivity, morale, training costs, and causing pain and suffering to injured parties with accompanying lost time.


SG31:20
NASC
Management of Slips and Trips

4. While customers' poorly controlled ground conditions can create issues, it remains the responsibility of scaffolding contractors to ensure the safety of their operatives and others affected by their work. This reinforces the importance of robust planning, risk assessments, setting to work procedures and supervision.

5. All CISRS card holders and age groups are equally at risk from slips & trips. Every worker has a role in preventing incidents by maintaining good housekeeping standards, reporting hazards promptly, keeping access routes clear, and following site controls and procedures.

HSE CAMPAIGNS FOR NOISE AND VIBRATION PROTECTION

HSE has launched a new campaign to highlight how employers can prevent permanent hearing loss, tinnitus and hand-arm vibration syndrome through effective workplace action. The campaign promotes a simple three-step approach – Assess. Control. Protect. – to help employers prevent permanent, life-changing ill health.

Around 15,000 workers develop hearing problems caused or made worse by work every year, while an estimated one in five workers is exposed to harmful levels of noise at work. The effects can be permanent, with workers often unaware they are being harmed until symptoms begin to appear, by which time some damage may already be irreversible.

Chris Steel, Principal Specialist Inspector (Noise and Vibration), said: *"Noise and vibration-related ill health is preventable, but the consequences can last a lifetime. Workers may not realise they're being harmed until their hearing is affected, or they begin to experience pain, numbness or tingling in their hands and arms.*



"Employers shouldn't wait for symptoms to appear. They need to identify where workers are at risk, reduce exposure and make sure the right controls are in place. Employers have legal duties to assess and control workplace noise and vibration risks under the Control of Noise at Work Regulations 2005 and the Control of Vibration at Work Regulations 2005."

NASC produces guidance on these issues: SG11 Dust, Vibration & Noise, which can be found in the Members' Area.

MIXED NEWS FOR CONSTRUCTION

Glenigan's October 2026 Construction Review reveals that figures indicate the economy as a whole is growing, but construction output was the weak spot, recording a decline of 0.5%. Glenigan's data shows a sector experiencing considerable turbulence, with activity weakening across all three key indicators.

Detailed planning approvals fell 16% against the preceding three months, highlighting a sizeable reduction in the value of projects progressing to the start of the pipeline. Main contract awards dropped 19%, and project starts declined 26%, representing the steepest fall of the three indicators, with fewer schemes commencing on site.

Year-on-year performance was generally subdued with detailed planning approvals 28% lower than a year earlier, and project starts fell 21% year-on-year, indicating weaker development activity across several sectors. Planning departments are still under strain from budget cuts and staff shortages.

However, main contract awards provide a sole bright spot amidst the gloom, bucking the downward trend with an impressive uptick of 25% year-on-year, supported by major project commitments and higher-value schemes entering the construction pipeline.

MoJ AWARDS £56,000 PRISON TRAINING CONTRACT



PICTURE CREDIT: Ichigo121212

Platinum Rail Services Limited has won a £56,000 Ministry of Justice contract to deliver practical scaffolding training at HMP Holme House and Low Newton in north-east England. Courses will begin in November and must connect prisoners with scaffolding employers offering paid vacancies, with the aim of helping participants find work in the trade after release.

Holme House is in Stockton-on-Tees, while Low Newton is in Brasside, near Durham. Awarded as a call-off under the Future Skills Programme, the contract requires Platinum Rail Services to develop practical courses aimed at preparing prisoners for employment with a scaffolding company after release.

GOVERNMENT TO MISS HOUSING TARGET



Gavin Smart

The Chartered Institute of Housing (CIH) UK Housing Review Autumn Briefing Paper stresses how unlikely it is that the Government's 1.5m homes target will be hit, with 1m being more likely to be successfully delivered. Previously, the CIH had predicted that the target would be missed by 25%, so the prediction has worsened to 33%.

CIH chief executive, Gavin Smart, said: *"These findings show that, while the Government's ambition is welcome, current delivery is not yet matching the scale of the challenge. If we are to build the homes the country needs, councils, housing associations and developers must have the certainty and investment necessary to increase supply. Social and affordable housing will be critical to achieving that goal."*

POLICE SPOT UNSECURED SCAFFOLDING EQUIPMENT





Sussex Police say unsecured scaffolding equipment was among the problems identified during September's Operation Rule checks, according to Scaffmag.

Of 136 commercial vehicles stopped nationally, 46.3% required enforcement action or advice. Other issues included loose pallets and building materials, overloading and excessive driver hours.

PC Barry Freeman, of Sussex Police's Commercial Vehicle Unit, acknowledged the small sample while welcoming the improvement. The figures cover vehicles stopped during the operation, rather than a representative survey of scaffolding transport.

Refer to NASC Guidance SG30 Road Transport for details of how to ensure all scaffolding is fully secured.

INDUSTRY VIEW

Joanne Walker, Scaffolding Manager at the CWIC Academy, part of the University of Wales Trinity Saint David's Construction Wales Innovation Centre (CWIC), is determined to help bring a new generation of scaffolders into the industry – and explains just how that might be done.



If we want to bring the next generation into scaffolding, we have to meet them where they are. We cannot keep talking about a skills shortage without considering the people we are not attracting into the industry and asking why.

People who come to the Academy now generally know they either want to work in scaffolding or are already in the industry and looking to develop their skills. But what about everyone else? As a governor at a local school, I see that pupils are familiar with trades such as bricklaying, but scaffolding barely registers. It is rarely considered a viable career option. That is where we need to start.

One of the advantages of being part of the University of Wales Trinity Saint David is being able to engage people in different ways, including using virtual reality, artificial intelligence and drones, which can all play a role in making learning more engaging and accessible.

Social media also has an important role to play. Young people are on TikTok, so that is where we need to be. The nation's 12 to 16-year-olds are not spending their time on LinkedIn, so there is little value in focusing our efforts there. When I started using TikTok, I was regularly achieving more than 10,000 views. It provides a direct route to raising awareness among audiences we might not otherwise reach.

We also need to think carefully about what we offer young people when we engage with them and how we present the industry. For school pupils and those with little knowledge of scaffolding, that means moving beyond endless presentations and creating something meaningful and memorable.

When pupils visit the Academy, we give them a practical insight into the industry. That does not mean climbing scaffolding, but it does mean putting on the equipment and experiencing the environment in a safe and immersive way. Many will take photographs, share them with family and friends, or post them on social media. Those experiences help build awareness and create advocates who share their positive impressions with others.

We have also developed miniature scaffolding models that allow participants to safely build structures, interpret drawings and develop teamwork and communication skills. Activities such as these demonstrate that scaffolding is not simply a manual trade; it requires technical knowledge, planning, problem-solving and collaboration.

I also try to explain that there is a whole world of opportunities beyond becoming a scaffolder. The industry requires inspectors, supervisors, trainers, managers and a range of other specialists. For many people, it can open the door to careers they may never have considered possible.

Above all, we need to engage with young people earlier. By Years 10 and 11, many key decisions have already been made. Even in Year 9, pupils are beginning to choose GCSE subjects that may influence future career pathways. Whether through school engagement, practical experiences or social media, we need to plant the seed before those decisions are made.

If we want to secure the future of our industry, we cannot wait until young people leave school to tell them about scaffolding. We need to raise awareness earlier, challenge misconceptions and showcase the breadth of opportunities available now.

BUDGET 2026 BRINGS BREATHING SPACE BUT COST PRESSURES REMAIN

Chancellor John Healey's first Budget has offered limited relief from rising operating costs and promised longer-term opportunities through construction and infrastructure investment. However, NASC has warned that businesses across the scaffolding and access sector continue to face significant financial pressures.

Healy said the Budget was designed to provide 'breathing space' for households and businesses, while supporting longer-term economic growth.

Measures on fuel duty, energy costs, infrastructure investment and skills are among the announcements most relevant to the scaffolding and access sector, although there was little immediate relief for businesses struggling with rising costs. However, Healey ruled out broad increases in headline taxation while promising greater investment in housing, infrastructure and British industry.

Clive Dickin, Group CEO of NASC and CISRS, welcomed some of the announcements but questioned whether they go far enough. *"For NASC members, this Budget offers relatively limited short-term relief alongside the prospect of longer-term opportunities," he said. "The real test will be how quickly Government investment translates into economic activity and, ultimately, work for our members. We also need to see whether the measures announced are sufficient to offset the inflationary pressures that continue to affect businesses across our sector."*

Perhaps the most immediately relevant announcement was the extension of the existing 5p-per-litre fuel duty reduction until 1 July 2027. The Government is also extending the Heavy Goods Vehicle road tax holiday.

The Treasury estimates its fuel duty decisions over this Parliament will save the average HGV driver nearly £4,000 compared with previous government plans. However, Dickin warned: *"These are savings against a proposed higher-tax future rather than actual reductions in today's fuel bills. The extension is welcome, but it does nothing to reverse the price rises we have already seen."*

The Budget also promised measures to reduce industrial electricity costs, including the British Industrial Competitiveness Scheme, which will provide eligible energy-intensive manufacturers with electricity discounts of 20–25% from April 2027, including retrospective support for 2026–27.

This could benefit qualifying UK manufacturers supplying the scaffolding and access industry, although eligibility will depend on the scheme's detailed criteria.

Clive Dickin said the Government's commitment to longer-term electricity market reform was encouraging, but more needed to be done to help manufacturers and suppliers.

The Chancellor confirmed there would be no increase in headline rates of income tax, National Insurance or VAT, while maintaining the commitments in the Government's existing corporation tax roadmap.

However, employment costs will continue to rise for some businesses. From April 2027, the National Living Wage will increase by 3.9% to £13.21 per hour, while minimum wage rates for younger workers and eligible apprentices will also rise by 3.9%. Dickin warned that the impact could extend beyond those directly affected by the increases.


John Healey

"While many skilled scaffolders earn considerably more than the statutory minimum, increases at the lower end of the pay scale can have a knock-on effect across a business," he said. *"They affect entry-level roles, apprenticeships and supporting occupations, and can create upward pressure on wider pay structures."*

He also noted that the Budget's business rates relief was primarily directed towards retail, hospitality and leisure businesses, leaving most scaffolding contractors and industrial suppliers outside its scope.

The longer-term outlook for scaffolding demand could be strengthened by the Government's commitment to infrastructure and housing investment. An updated National Infrastructure Pipeline, due before the end of 2026, will identify more than £750bn of planned investment over 10 years, with an estimated workforce requirement exceeding 650,000. Projects involving transport, energy, industrial facilities and public buildings could generate substantial opportunities for scaffolding and specialist access contractors.

The Budget also announced further measures to accelerate infrastructure delivery and simplify housebuilding. Clive Dickin welcomed the ambition but added: *"Announcing investment is one thing and getting projects started is another. What matters to our members is when that investment translates into tenders, contracts and work on site."*

The Budget included two announcements with potential implications for recruitment and training. First, the Government will require apprentices to account for at least 3% of the workforce on large government construction and infrastructure projects.

Second, £100m will be invested across 2027–28 and 2028–29 to expand mayoral apprenticeship brokerage services across England, supporting employers, particularly SMEs, in creating opportunities for young people. Dickin warned: *"It is essential that specialist trades such as scaffolding are properly represented in these programmes and procurement requirements."*

The British Business Bank will receive an additional £5bn of financial capacity, supporting an expanded Growth Guarantee Scheme and other business finance initiatives. This could improve access to funding for eligible scaffolding contractors and suppliers seeking to invest in equipment, vehicles, manufacturing capacity or business expansion. The Government also reiterated its commitment to reducing regulatory administrative burdens on businesses.

The scaffolding world in the palm of your hand.

Download the app today.



*Coming soon

Download on the App Store

GET IT ON Google Play

SUPPORTING HISTORY

An iconic gas holder, Glasgow Cathedral's spire and a fire-damaged church: three very different scaffolding challenges, each demanding inventive load management and bespoke access without compromising historic fabric. This is the first of two features looking at the unique challenges facing scaffolding contractors working in the heritage sector.





Lee Marley Group – Oval Gas Holder

Lee Marley Group was appointed by Berkeley Homes to deliver a 44-metre-high complex scaffolding access solution for the Gas Holder at Oval Village, a reinforced concrete curved structure within a retained Grade II listed historic frame overlooking the Kia Oval.

The project formed part of a high-profile urban development where buildability, programme certainty and protection of the existing structure were critical. The project ran over a programme of 62 weeks, with a contract value of £3.5 million.

From the outset, the project presented significant management challenges. The brief required a fully encapsulated scaffold for a reinforced concrete curved structure within a retained historic frame, and early design development identified structural constraints that required the concept to be fundamentally redesigned. Managing this process, coordinating multiple design iterations between Lee Marley Group, Berkeley Homes and the temporary works engineer while maintaining programme progress, was central to the project management challenge.

When the initial buttress concept was confirmed as structurally unviable, the response was managed as a coordinated design exercise with the revised solution developed and approved before programme impact could occur.

The project required 26 operatives at peak, managing a technically demanding installation within a constrained urban environment.

The final design solution removed the need for structural alterations to the existing grade II listed gas holder frame, protecting the client's budget position and reducing delivery





risk across the wider development. The project was delivered on programme and on budget.

The structure is a reinforced concrete curved building contained within a Grade II listed retained historic gas holder frame, reaching 44 metres in height, with an internal geometry that reduced across multiple levels to form terraces. The brief required a scaffold solution providing safe access across the full height and perimeter of the building while fully encapsulating the works envelope, within a constrained urban environment where protection of the existing structure was paramount.

The encapsulation requirement alone was substantial: 25,000m² of shrink-wrapping was installed to contain the works. Beyond this, the terrace geometry created by the reducing internal floor levels interrupted load paths and complicated continuity planning throughout the design, requiring each level to be considered individually within the overall structural approach.

The initial concept was based on a substantial internal buttress structure. Load assessments conducted during early design development confirmed that the Level 4 slab could not safely accommodate the imposed loads from this arrangement. Rather than seeking to modify the initial concept incrementally, the team undertook a full redesign, working from first principles to identify an alternative structural approach.

The solution incorporated a bespoke load transfer arrangement that redistributed loads through the building's existing concrete columns using strategically positioned beams and back propping. This avoided intrusive intervention to the retained historic frame, protected the integrity of the existing structure and maintained programme certainty by resolving the structural challenge through the scaffold design itself rather than through alterations to the building fabric.

The buttress structure comprised approximately 28,000 components, including 20,000 linear metres of tube and over 24,000 swivel and double couplers, installed within the full height of the curved structure with precision and control throughout. The curved profile of the building demanded careful planning at every stage to maintain accuracy and structural consistency across all levels.



Zenith S.A.S. – Glasgow Cathedral

Zenith are a framework contractor with Historic Environment Scotland and were approached to provide external scaffolding for Glasgow Cathedral to enable repairs to the top of the spire and to replace bottom level windows. The spire scaffold was designed to enable both jobs to be carried out simultaneously, also allowing the client's contractor to remove and replace internal steelwork. During the works it was found that steel cross tree members were so heavily corroded that vast repairs were required to the internal structure and a full internal scaffolding was required. The scaffolding then enabled full access to the spire for masonry and line works.

The design phase incorporated a detailed site survey alongside a review of historical drawings and calculations. Through early collaboration with the client and site management, an innovative methodology was developed to improve safe movement for operatives, inspectors and the client's team and to enable transfer of materials to the workfaces, ensuring there was sufficient space for masonry, steelworks and masonry activities to occur.

A detailed and coordinated programme of works was developed to align with the client's shutdown schedule and operational constraints. Activities were sequenced along the duct length to maintain continuous workflow and minimise delays. The elimination of crane usage significantly reduced plant, labour and logistical costs.

The works were delivered by a team of 12 scaffolders, many multi-skilled in rope access.

The Glasgow Cathedral scaffold was designed with a strong emphasis on practical buildability, efficient sequencing, and operational usability within a constrained and live heritage environment.

Erection was completed over three months, following a clearly defined engineered sequence. The external scaffold was constructed first, commencing at the tower wall head where initial materials were craned into position to establish the base working platform. A cantilevered loading bay was installed at an early stage, transforming logistics strategy by enabling all subsequent materials to be lifted directly to the working level. This allowed the scaffold to be erected continuously without reliance on internal access routes, maintaining full segregation from the operational cathedral below.

To enhance constructability, the design incorporated pre-planned tube schedules, with members cut to precise lengths at ground level prior to installation. This significantly improved efficiency, reduced manual handling at height, and ensured a high degree of dimensional accuracy as the scaffold followed the tapering geometry of the spire. The use of lightweight aluminium tube further enhanced buildability, allowing faster handling, reduced operative fatigue, and improved safety throughout the build process.

The scaffold's stepped geometry presented a key technical challenge. The structure reduced in plan at four levels to follow the spire profile, requiring a carefully sequenced approach to maintain stability and access. Internal standards were progressed ahead of external lifts in stages of three to four lifts, with structural beams introduced at Levels 3, 6, and 10 to support ongoing erection and load transfer. This ensured that each stage of the build remained stable, accessible, and aligned with design requirements.

Operational usability for the client was a primary design driver. A cantilevered external staircase replaced traditional ladder access, significantly improving safe movement for operatives, inspectors and the client's team. A goods hoist and monorail system were integrated into the design, enabling efficient vertical and horizontal transfer of materials directly to active workfaces.

Wide working platforms were provided throughout, ensuring sufficient space for masonry, steelwork, and conservation activities to be carried out safely and efficiently. The combination of clear access routes, integrated lifting systems, and stable working platforms resulted in a highly functional scaffold that supported the client's complex and evolving programme.

The cathedral remained open throughout the works, hosting visitors, services, and events. To mitigate this, a fully segregated logistics strategy was implemented. All materials were craned directly onto a purpose-designed cantilevered loading bay from a controlled rear compound, eliminating the need to transport materials through public or internal areas. This significantly reduced interface risk between operatives and the public.

The scaffold incorporated a range of enhanced safety features, including advanced guardrail systems, ladder access gates, debris netting, and a cantilevered external staircase to improve safe access and egress. Stability was engineered through non-invasive restraint methods, ensuring safety without compromising the historic fabric.

The most significant challenge emerged following detailed inspections of the spire, which identified extensive corrosion within the internal steelwork, far beyond initial expectations. This fundamentally altered the scope of works, necessitating the rapid design and installation of a full-height internal scaffold to support structural replacement works within a highly constrained environment. Zenith responded with a complete redesign and revised material schedule within two weeks, allowing the client's programme to continue without delay.

A key structural risk involved potential overloading of the existing building fabric. The base of the spire is supported on timber construction and could not accommodate significant imposed loads. To mitigate this, the internal scaffold was engineered to transfer loads across four discrete levels using beam arrangements positioned at existing window openings. This approach eliminated excessive point loading at low level while maintaining a fully independent support system.

Externally, the absence of intrusive ties presented a critical constraint due to the cathedral's status as a scheduled monument preventing the use of conventional anchorage methods. Stability was achieved through a combination of continuous plan bracing, butt tube arrangements, and non-invasive window and box ties where available. This ensured global stability without compromising the integrity of the historic stonework.

The spire's geometry introduced further complexity, requiring the scaffold to follow a continuously tapering profile incorporating offsets, decorative stone courses, buttresses, and pinnacles. The structure stepped in at four levels, requiring careful management of load paths through reverse pick-up arrangements to ensure forces were effectively distributed between inner and outer standards as the scaffold footprint reduced. Wind loading was also a critical design consideration given the scaffold's elevation of approximately 68m.



SRT Scaffolding Services – St John's, Harleston

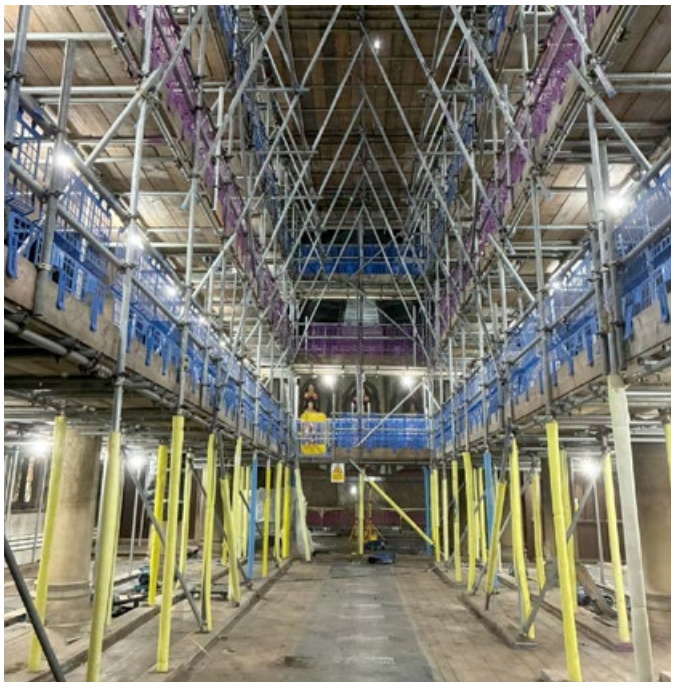
The successful delivery of the internal birdcage scaffold at St Johns the Baptist church, Harleston, was achieved through careful planning, effective project management and close collaboration between SRT Scaffolding, the client and the scaffold designer.

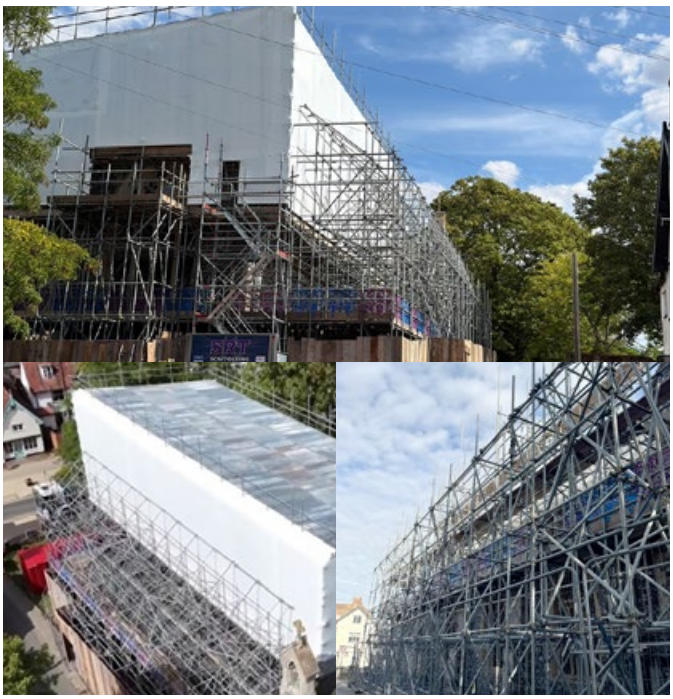
Following the initial site assessment, a bespoke scaffold design was commissioned to provide full access to the internal work area. Particular consideration was given to floor loading, protection of the church interior and the sequencing of erection works. Programme management was critical due to the need to coordinate works within an operational heritage environment.

The project involved the design and installation of a complex internal birdcage scaffold within the grade II listed church of St Johns the Baptist, Harleston, following significant fire damage affecting the kitchen area, sections of the roof structure and associated internal finishes. The principal objective was to provide safe, unrestricted access for a range of restoration specialists whilst protecting the historic fabric of the building and accommodating known structural weaknesses resulting from the fire.

The scaffold was designed as a large independent birdcage structure extending to approximately 8 metres in height, providing a fully boarded working platform across the affected areas of the church. The design brief required a solution capable of supporting multiple trades simultaneously, including roofing contractors, conservation specialists, surveyors and restoration teams, whilst maintaining safe access throughout the duration of the project.

One of the most significant engineering challenges was the listed status of the church. As a protected heritage asset, it was not permissible to install ties or anchorages into the building fabric. Working closely with the scaffold designer, a fully independent structure was developed incorporating engineered buttressing arrangements and





carefully calculated load paths to provide stability without reliance on the building itself. The design incorporated sole boards beneath standards throughout the scaffold footprint to ensure loads were distributed safely and evenly across the existing floor structure.

A further challenge arose from the fire damage itself. Areas of flooring and structural elements had been compromised, particularly around the kitchen section of the building where the fire broke out.

Prior to finalising the design, damaged and potentially weakened areas were identified and assessed. The scaffold layout was developed around those constraints, ensuring loads were transferred away from vulnerable areas wherever possible. The church also contained a mixture of floor constructions, requiring careful consideration of bearing pressures and load distribution to avoid overloading any individual section.

The scaffold was designed to accommodate a working platform loading of 1.50KN/M^2 together with general access loading requirements associated with restoration activities. Particular consideration was given to the movement of materials and operatives within the birdcage structure to ensure the imposed loads remained within the design parameters. Due to the nature of the restoration works, loading conditions were not uniform throughout the structure, requiring careful planning to ensure safe use across all work areas.

The erection sequence was critical to the success of the project. The scaffold was progressively installed from ground level, with standards erected onto sole boards before the systematic installation of ledgers, transoms and bracing. Stability was maintained throughout the erection process through the phased installation of bracing and buttressing in accordance with the design.

The scaffold was erected within the planned seven day programme and delivered within the agreed budget, ensuring restoration works could commence on schedule following the fire.



SETTING THE STANDARD IN SCAFFOLDING TRAINING FOR OVER 50 YEARS.

CISRS
CONSTRUCTION INDUSTRY SCAFFOLDERS RECORD SCHEME

CISRS.ORG.UK

MANAGING THE DIESEL CRISIS

For an industry built on mobility, logistics and tight margins, the rising price of diesel is a fundamental problem for scaffolding contractors.

Recent years have seen unprecedented volatility in fuel markets. Geopolitical tensions, global supply disruptions, Government policy decisions and economic uncertainty have combined to push diesel prices to levels few contractors would have imagined even a few years ago. For scaffolding firms already operating in a highly competitive environment, the consequences have been significant.

Global problem, local consequences

The diesel price story begins far beyond the UK's construction sites. Since the Covid-19 pandemic, fuel markets have been influenced by a succession of global events. Supply chain disruptions, refinery capacity constraints and fluctuating demand created an unstable market.

The situation intensified following Russia's invasion of Ukraine in 2022, which sent energy prices soaring across Europe. More recently, instability in the Middle East and concerns over global oil supply routes have continued to place upward pressure on crude oil and refined fuel prices. According to RAC data, UK diesel prices have reached record levels in 2026, surpassing the previous highs recorded in 2022.

For construction businesses, these events may seem distant, but the impact is immediate. Diesel remains the dominant fuel for commercial vehicles, and scaffolding contractors are among the most transport-intensive businesses in the sector.

Scaffolding companies cannot simply reduce travel or transport requirements - materials must be delivered to site and returned at project end. Depending on the business model, deliveries can be made across wide geographical areas, sometimes visiting multiple projects in a single day, while supervisors and inspectors also carry out frequent site visits.

A recent NASC survey highlighted the scale of the challenge. Nearly half (49.2%) of respondents reported fuel cost increases exceeding 20%, while a further 44% experienced rises between 11% and 20%. Respondents rated the impact on their businesses at an average of 7.2 out of 10, with almost 94% identifying transport and vehicle costs as the area most affected.

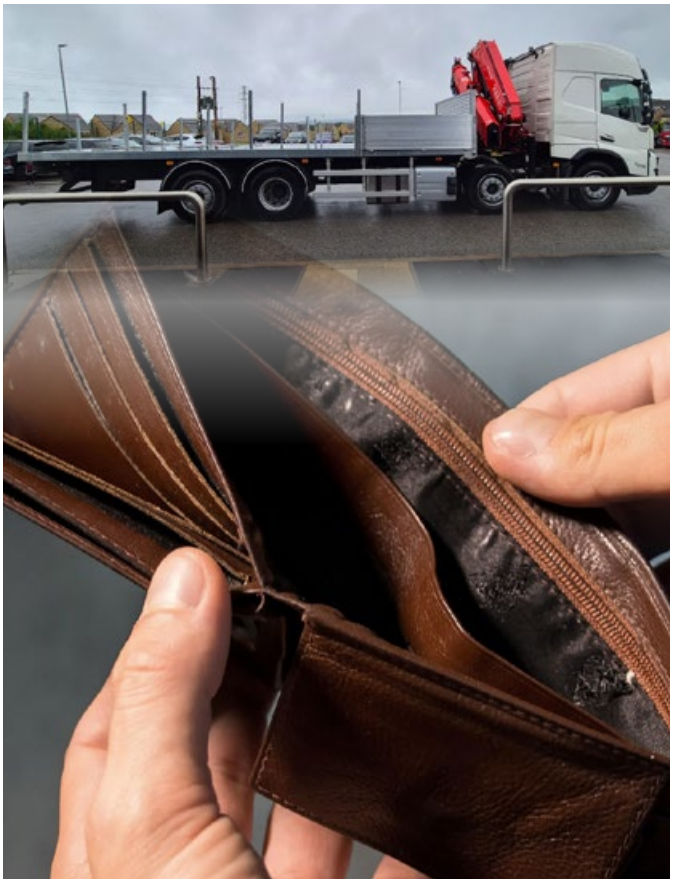
The Real Cost Impact

The financial impact extends well beyond the fuel pump. Consider a medium-sized scaffolding contractor operating:

- Five HGVs
- Ten commercial vans
- Multiple site supervisors conducting daily visits

Even a 20p per litre increase in diesel can add tens of thousands of pounds annually to fleet operating costs.

For example, an HGV consuming 40,000 litres of diesel each year would incur an additional £8,000 annually from a 20p per litre rise alone. Multiply that across a fleet and the numbers become significant very quickly.



PICTURE CREDIT: Macs Trucks

PICTURE CREDIT: Chrono Marchie

The challenge is magnified by the nature of scaffolding contracts. Many projects are tendered months in advance on fixed-price terms. Fuel cost increases occurring after contract award can rapidly erode already narrow margins. According to NASC's survey, 57.1% of businesses reported absorbing fuel cost increases entirely, while only 1.6% said they had successfully passed the full cost on to clients.

The Knock-On Effects

Fuel inflation does not occur in isolation. Rising diesel costs create secondary impacts throughout the construction ecosystem:

- **Reduced profitability** as higher fuel expenditure directly erodes margins, leaving less available for investment in staff, training, equipment and innovation.
- **More difficult tendering and forecasting**, with estimating teams forced to predict future fuel costs and balance competitiveness against the risk of under-pricing projects.
- **Higher project costs**, as subcontractors seek to recover rising operating expenses, contributing to wider construction inflation across the sector.
- **Increased insolvency risk**, with rising operating costs, intense competition and limited opportunities to recover additional expenditure creating serious financial pressures for contractors.



PICTURE CREDIT: Daimler_Truck



PICTURE CREDIT: Em Kanice

Clive Dickin, NASC CEO, commented: *"We are seeing a worrying number of insolvencies across the sector. Rising operating costs, combined with intense competition and limited ability to recover additional expenditure from clients, are creating real challenges for many businesses."*

Political Considerations

While retail diesel prices are heavily influenced by global oil markets, Government policy also plays a major role. Fuel duty and VAT account for a substantial proportion of the price paid at the pump, making taxation a recurring topic of debate within transport and construction industries.

Successive Governments have faced calls to provide greater support for sectors heavily dependent on diesel-powered transport. Industry groups have argued that businesses critical to economic growth and infrastructure delivery should not bear disproportionate costs arising from international events beyond their control.

For the scaffolding sector, the debate is particularly relevant. The industry enables construction, infrastructure, maintenance, energy and housing projects. Any cost pressure affecting scaffold contractors ultimately affects wider economic activity. As Clive Dickin noted, the scaffolding and access sector is *"fundamental to the Government's ambitions for economic growth, housing delivery and major infrastructure investment."*

Industry groups will be watching the Budget for any measures aimed at easing fuel costs. The most likely intervention would be an extension of the existing fuel duty relief, given that trade bodies including the Construction Plant-hire Association have already called for the 5p fuel duty cut to be maintained and for targeted support on commercial and off-road diesel. However, there has so far been no indication of a bespoke support package for construction firms.

What now, what next?

Many scaffolding contractors have implemented measures including:

- Route optimisation software to reduce mileage
- Improved vehicle utilisation
- Consolidated deliveries
- Reduced non-essential site visits
- More detailed estimating procedures
- Greater scrutiny of fleet performance

NASC's survey found that businesses are actively reviewing pricing processes and delivery logistics to offset rising fuel costs. Some larger operators are exploring alternative fuels, including Hydrotreated Vegetable Oil (HVO), although availability, infrastructure requirements and cost remain barriers for widespread adoption.

Meanwhile, fleet renewal programmes are helping improve fuel efficiency. Modern Euro VI trucks and vans can deliver meaningful gains compared with older vehicles, providing some protection against future fuel volatility.

Few analysts expect fuel markets to become entirely stable in the near future. Geopolitical uncertainty, energy-transition policies and changing global supply patterns suggest volatility may remain a permanent feature of the operating environment.

For scaffolding companies, future success is likely to depend on a combination of commercial discipline and operational efficiency.

Several trends appear increasingly important:

Smarter logistics: Digital route planning, telematics and fleet management systems will become more valuable as businesses seek to maximise efficiency.

Contract flexibility: More contractors may pursue fuel-adjustment clauses within long-term agreements to reduce exposure to sudden cost spikes.

Alternative fuels: While diesel will remain dominant for the foreseeable future, interest in HVO and other lower-carbon alternatives is likely to grow.

Data-driven estimating: Accurate forecasting of transport costs will become a key competitive advantage.

Industry advocacy: Trade bodies such as NASC will continue to play an important role in highlighting the challenges facing scaffolding businesses and ensuring policymakers understand the sector's contribution to the wider economy.

As global uncertainty continues to influence energy markets, scaffolding contractors will need to remain agile, innovative and commercially disciplined.

VIDEOS PUT SCAFFOLDING CAREERS IN THE SPOTLIGHT

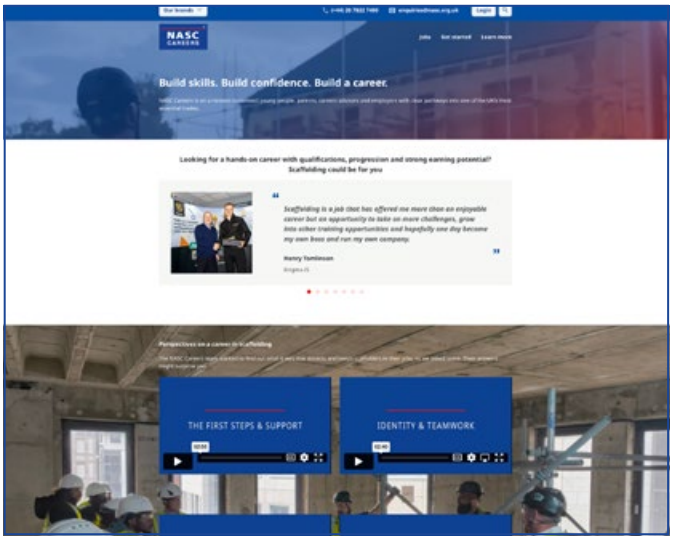
New video content on the NASC Careers website is helping prospective recruits discover what a career in scaffolding can offer, with first-hand perspectives from people working across the industry.

The website brings together information for young people, parents, careers advisers and employers, presenting scaffolding as a practical career with qualifications, progression and earning potential.

A dedicated section exploring perspectives on scaffolding careers asks what attracts people to the trade and keeps them in it. Alongside the videos, personal accounts highlight the variety of work, the satisfaction of building structures, and opportunities to develop new skills or move into supervisory responsibilities.

For contractors involved in careers outreach, the content offers a useful way to introduce the industry before a classroom discussion, careers event or conversation with a potential apprentice.

Scaffolding firms are encouraged to explore the videos and share the website with prospective recruits, education contacts and careers advisers.



Visit **https://scaffoldingcareers.com** to view the content and discover the supporting careers information.

SCAFFOLDERS ENCOURAGED TO GET INVOLVED IN FUTURE SKILLS PROGRAMME

Future Skills

Scaffolding businesses and training providers are being encouraged to explore opportunities through the Future Skills Programme, helping prisoners develop skills for sustainable employment on release while supporting the sector's recruitment needs.

As part of the Skills Academy offer in prisons, the programme brings together employers, training providers, charities, social enterprises and HM Prison and Probation Service (HMPPS) to design sector-focused training that responds to workforce demand and skills shortages. Construction is among the sectors it can support.

Scaffolders can contribute industry expertise or specialist trainers, deliver training using existing staff, or work with partners to shape programmes linked to interviews and employment opportunities. HMPPS offers access to suitable learners, links with prison education and resettlement teams, and support with programme planning and employment pathways.

For participating businesses, the programme offers opportunities to build recruitment pipelines and strengthen social value commitments, while helping reduce reoffending.

Interested in getting involved? Start by registering as a supplier on the Ministry of Justice Sourcing portal at **https://ministryofjusticecommercial.bravosolution.co.uk**. If you require any support to navigate the process, contact **scaffoldingcareers@nasc.org.uk**

NASC RELEASES NEW GUIDANCE

NASC has produced three new guides to help members navigate the minefield of recruiting and retaining staff. Those publications can be found in the Member Area; they are:

EG4:26 Best Practice Recruitment Methods for Scaffolding & Access Companies



This guidance is designed to support scaffolding, access and construction businesses in recruiting safely, fairly and effectively. It recognises the specific challenges faced by the sector, including skills shortages, physically demanding roles, safety-critical work, and the pressure to recruit quickly to meet operational demands.

EG3: 26 A Guide to Grants and Funding Pathways for Scaffolding & Access Companies



This guide provides an overview of the main funding and grant pathways available for construction training, including scaffolding specific routes. It is designed to support: construction employers, individuals entering or progressing in the industry, careers advisors and employment services, training providers and employer networks. The guide explains what funding exists, what it is designed for, and how to find and access it.

EG2:26 Adult Work Experience Guidance

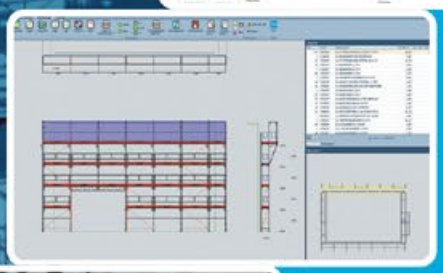


Adult work experience placements give employers the chance to showcase their businesses, inspire job seekers, and build a stronger, more sustainable workforce. This document explains the benefits, objectives, roles and responsibilities, logistics and legalities.

SCAFFOLDING PLANNING IS MULTI-FACETED AND INTERCONNECTED.

LAYHER'S LAYPLAN SUITE PROVIDES POWERFUL 360° PLANNING, DESIGN AND PRESENTATION CAPABILITY, INCLUDING THE GAME-CHANGING SIM2FIELD.





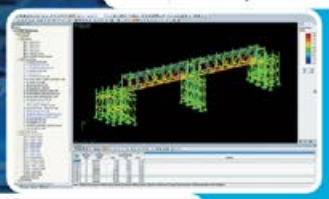
















NOT ALL SCAFFOLDING SUPPLIERS CAN SUPPORT YOU LIKE THAT.

Layher

More Possibilities. The Scaffolding System.

layher.co.uk