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FROM THE EDITOR

NASC has released one of its most important annual documents, its Safety Report, which shows that last year, despite a major increase in the total number of NASC operatives, there was a decline in the number of RIDDOR reported accidents.

NASC has been collecting accident data from its members since 1975, and these statistics demonstrate the progress the industry – and NASC members in particular – has made over the years. Headline figures include the lowest ever Accident Incidence Rate and Accident Frequency Rate, despite a 17% increase in the number of operatives in member companies. Additionally, the 131% increase in subcontract operatives has not led to an increase in accidents. Read more on pages 8–10.

NASC is not complacent, however, and continues to work to help members reduce accident risk still further. Incidentally, it's interesting to note that in the 1960s and 1970s it was safety that drove much of NASC's work as a growing membership body (see p15).

Safety is a focus in our article on the differences between industrial and commercial scaffolding too. We learn from those who have seen both sides of the industry about how very different they can be, and how safety is a critical concern for all scaffolders but the consequences of simple mistakes in the industrial setting can be catastrophic.

The article also explores differences in areas such as the working environment – the biggest difference – as well as materials used, skills needed by the scaffolders, workforce challenges, and the commercial realities. Read more on pages 12–14 – and feel free to let me know what you think.

Excitement is building now for ScaffEx25, which is just over two months away. On pages 16–17, there's more information about how NASC listened to feedback from the inaugural show in Belfast last year, and has enhanced this year's show in a big way. Exhibitors have much more space to play with and have some brilliant plans, while there will also be a Demo Area this year, as well as a Training Pavilion and Careers Zone.

The two-day Conference will see speakers from every part of the industry, including hands-on, active scaffolders, and should provide great opportunities for learning and debate. And on the final evening, the Awards are set to be spectacular. Book your place now!

Finally, there are our usual news items to keep you up to date.

I hope you enjoy the issue.



Nick Campion
Editor

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NATIONAL HOUSING BANK UNLOCKS BILLIONS

Hundreds of thousands of extra homes will be delivered thanks to a bold new Government-backed 'housing bank' that is designed to unlock billions in private sector investment to turbocharge housebuilding.

The National Housing Bank, a subsidiary of Homes England, will be publicly owned and backed with £16 billion of financial capacity, on top of £6bn of existing finance to be allocated this Parliament, in order to accelerate housebuilding and leverage in £53 billion of additional private investment, creating jobs and delivering over 500,000 new homes.

With long-term, flexible capital, the National Housing Bank will be able to act as a consistent partner to the private sector, bringing the stability and certainty that housing developers and investors need to make delivery happen. It will also support SMEs with new lending products and enable developers to unlock large, complex sites through infrastructure finance.

Deputy Prime Minister and Housing Secretary Angela Rayner said: *"We're turning the tide on the housing crisis we inherited – whether that's fixing our broken planning system, investing £39 billion to deliver more social and affordable homes, or now creating a National Housing Bank to lever in vital investment."*

This builds on the £39 billion investment announced at the Spending Review for a new 10-year Affordable Homes Programme, which is the biggest boost to social and affordable housing investment in a generation.

The National Housing Bank, says the Government, will help unlock a wide range of sites, including larger ones which struggle to get up front lending given their risk and complexity, using a mixture of equity investment, loans and guarantees to leverage global institutional capital into UK housing, reducing risk at the early stages of development.

It will also support SME lending by establishing additional lending alliances with private sector partners and leverage in additional capital and expertise, including providing revolving credit facilities to help SMEs to grow and build out their housing pipeline more quickly.



Angela Rayner

PICTURE CREDIT: UK Parliament

GOVERNMENT COMMITS MORE MONEY TO NUCLEAR



The Government is looking to encourage private investors by committing more public money to nuclear power. It has allocated another £14.2bn investment to the development of the proposed Sizewell C nuclear power station in Suffolk over the next four years. However, there is still no final investment decision and no start date, although site preparation has been going on for years.

With projected cost estimates as high as £40bn, substantial private investment is still needed.

Energy secretary Ed Miliband said: *"We are entering a golden age of nuclear with the biggest building programme in a generation."*

He also announced that Rolls-Royce SMR has been selected as preferred bidder to build the UK's first small modular reactors, subject to final Government approvals and contract signature. The Government has allocated £2.5bn for the overall small modular reactor programme in the current spending period.

PROPOSALS TO PRIORITISE BRITISH JOBS

Contractors bidding for major public sector work will face a new test to prove they can boost British jobs and skills under plans to overhaul infrastructure procurement. The Cabinet Office has launched a consultation that will see contractors bidding for road, rail, school and hospital jobs ranked not just on price and quality, but on how much they contribute to local communities.

Under the proposals, companies will need to clearly show how they will offer apprenticeships, training and employment opportunities for disadvantaged groups as part of their bids. These pledges will be tracked to ensure promises are kept.

Cabinet Office minister Pat McFadden said: *"Whether it's building roads, railways or schools, we want to open up opportunities on major infrastructure projects for firms that boost British jobs and skills."*

The changes form part of the government's wider Plan for Change and its upcoming Infrastructure and Industrial Strategies.



Pat McFadden

PICTURE CREDIT: UK Parliament

RNDV INDUSTRIES TAKE SCAFFCHAMP CROWN

RNDV Industries from Lithuania were named the winners of ScaffChamp 2025 following a flawless performance in front of a home crowd in Vilnius.

As reported in ScaffMag, the Lithuanian team was among the first to complete the challenging scaffold structure. Their clean execution and fast, safe dismantling helped secure the top spot. The team also collected the Health & Safety Award, recognising their methodical and disciplined approach throughout the build.

Held on Saturday, 7 June, in Vilnius, ScaffChamp 2025 brought together 20 teams from around the world to participate in this demanding competition.

This year's contest followed a two-round format, with 10 teams competing in each round. Every team was timed during the erection phase before referees scrutinised the scaffolding structure and applied any necessary penalties.

The event sold 600 in-person tickets and saw more than 10,000 viewers tuning in to the live stream from around the globe.

The 2025 edition also marked a historic moment for the competition. FTF Servicios, representing Chile, included the



first woman to ever compete at ScaffChamp.

The top five were:

1. **RNDV Industries** – Lithuania
2. **N-Projects** – Poland
3. **Stabil Építő** – Hungary
4. **Team Türkiye** – Türkiye
5. **NBIK (Team Mongolia)** – Mongolia

The UK's AK Scaffolding came a creditable 12th.

HS2 NIGHTMARE CONTINUES



PICTURE CREDIT: HS2

Transport Secretary Heidi Alexander has promised a fundamental one-year reset for HS2 after admitting to Parliament that there was no way presently to deliver the project on schedule and to budget.

She slammed a litany of failures for wasting billions on the project, blaming bad management, constant changes and ineffective contracts with the supply chain. She said: *"Phase one could end up becoming one of the most expensive railway projects in the world. We have started the year-long task of fundamentally resetting the project. As part of that reset, we have reduced financial delegations to HS2 Ltd, placing a lid on spiralling costs until the rest is complete and we regain confidence."*

The transport secretary also pledged to fully investigate allegations of fraud in the supply chain and prosecute if proven.

LORDS LAUNCHES BSR ENQUIRY

The House of Lords Industry and Regulators Committee, chaired by Baroness Taylor of Bolton, has launched an inquiry into building safety regulation, with a particular focus on the work of the Building Safety Regulator.



The Committee is seeking evidence from building industry specialists, housing associations, architects, resident groups, safety experts, local authorities and other relevant stakeholders on a number of questions, including:

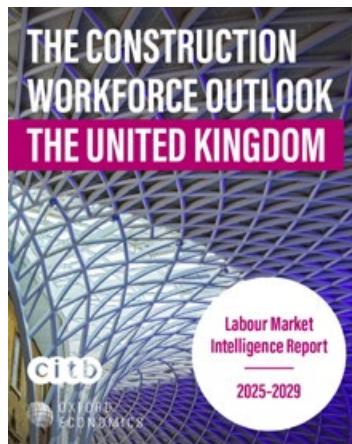
- has the introduction of the BSR improved the safety of the buildings it is responsible for?
- does the Building Safety Regulator's regulatory framework strike the right balance between providing a holistic, outcomes-based view of safety and ensuring that developers and building owners understand what they are required to do?
- what impacts could the framework have on the delivery of the Government's housing targets?
- to what extent are delays in approvals for high-rise buildings down to the regulatory processes used by the BSR?
- are the BSR's approval processes sufficiently clear and understandable to developers?
- does the BSR have access to the skilled staff necessary to carry out multidisciplinary assessments of safety?
- is the relationship between the BSR and building control authorities and inspectors working well?
- how does the Building Safety Regulator's work relate to the regulation of construction products?
- how does the Building Safety Regulator's regulatory framework compare to how building safety is assured in other countries and jurisdictions?

The Committee invites written contributions to its inquiry by Sunday 31 August 2025. More information at <https://committees.parliament.uk/committee/517/industry-and-regulators-committee/news/207876/industry-and-regulators-committee-seeks-views-on-building-safety-regulator/>

CITB PUBLISHES CONSTRUCTION WORKFORCE OUTLOOK

The Construction Industry Training Board (CITB) has launched its Construction Workforce Outlook 2025–29, a report that sets out the workforce needs of the UK construction sector over the next five years.

Previously named the Construction Skills Network report, the Workforce Outlook reflects a broader understanding of the sector's needs. The outlook shows that there are opportunities ahead, says



CITB. Successfully achieving them requires long term commitment from employers, Government, training providers and CITB. For construction to have the workforce it needs in the future, investment in training that supports people into jobs is crucial.

Construction Workforce Outlook 2025–29 report can be viewed and downloaded here <http://www.citb.co.uk/cwo>.

LUTON COUNCIL BLAMES THE BSR

Luton Borough Council has clashed with the Building Safety Regulator (BSR), blaming it for delays to a £136 million Child Graddon Lewis scheme for the town centre.



The regulator, which has been at the centre of much negative attention recently, turned away a building control application for the council-backed, mixed-use scheme known as The Stage. It claimed the team had 'failed to demonstrate [the proposals] would meet legal requirements'.

The council said the BSR was being being 'unresponsive'. Luton BC's property and infrastructure director, Roger Kirk, told a meeting earlier this month that its BSR stage two application, submitted in July 2024, should have been determined by November.

In January this year, the regulator said it had only allowed construction to start on two out of 130 higher-risk building schemes submitted since the start of the new gateway regime.

INDUSTRY VIEW

Sarah Klieve, Business Director, High Peak Scaffolding Ltd, gives us this month's industry view.



Sarah Klieve

Scaffolding is the best kept secret in construction and I am passionate about getting more young people into the industry. It's not usually people's first choice of vocation because they are just not aware of it, but once you get into the industry, it's so rewarding.

Many scaffolding businesses are very family based, with lots of new starters coming from employees' families and family friends. This is great but there is a danger of missing some 16 to 18 year olds who don't have family in and around the business. Unfortunately there isn't a single clear route through from school or college into the industry, although NASC and others are working hard to change many aspects of this situation.

As a business, we like to invest in our guys from 16 to 18 years old and bring them with us – that's really worked for

us as a company. Of course, you have to be careful with youngsters on site, choosing sites and jobs particularly carefully after plenty of risk assessment. But some are just ready for it. School isn't for everyone.

We had one young lad come to us at 15 for work experience, then he kept coming back in his school holidays, we got to see more and more of him, and then offered him an apprenticeship. Now, he's one of our senior supervisors, an advanced scaffolder, and carries an HGV licence.

Scaffolding really is a career, not just a job. There's such a clear, linear career path. So many of our senior people came up through the ranks from labourer.

I've been in my role for 20 years this year and it's nice to now see the guys I met in the early part of my career bringing their children into the industry and into the company. If you want your kids to follow you into an industry, what better endorsement is there?

While NASC is doing huge amounts around engagement with educational establishments and with the creation of careers packs for companies to take to careers days and events, job centres, and so on, it is important that scaffolding companies are proactive themselves in their locality. So, please do get out there to schools, to colleges, to careers fairs. Tell the young people what you do and why you're proud of your company and our industry.



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SAFETY REPORT REVEALS OUTSTANDING FIGURES

NASC has released its annual Safety Report, which shows that last year, despite a major increase in the total number of NASC operatives, there was a decline in the number of RIDDOR accidents. This outstanding achievement headlines these statistics, which are explored in further detail below.

NASC has been collecting data from its members since 1975. Those statistics demonstrate the progress the industry has made over the years – and also show the areas where further work is needed to make the industry even safer.

Headline figures include the lowest ever Accident Incidence Rate (AIR) and Accident Frequency Rate (AFR), despite a 17% increase in the number of operatives in member companies. Additionally, the 131% increase in subcontract operatives has not led to an increase in RIDDOR accidents.

Fatalities and injuries

NASC contractor members reported only 73 RIDDORs in 2024, from a combined workforce of 19,442 operatives, employed by 303 NASC contractor members. While every RIDDOR accident is regrettable, NASC members continue to lead from the front and strive to eliminate harm.

This year’s report tragically includes one fatality involving an experienced advanced scaffolding inspector. The scaffold had previously been inspected and handed over to the customer and was in use. None of the customer’s operatives working on site witnessed the fall. This tragic event remains under investigation.



Table 2.1: NASC Accident Figures – Causes of Accidents to Operatives on Sites

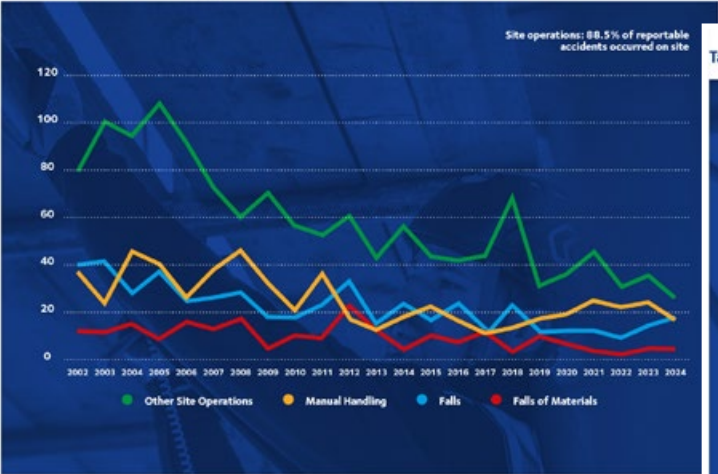
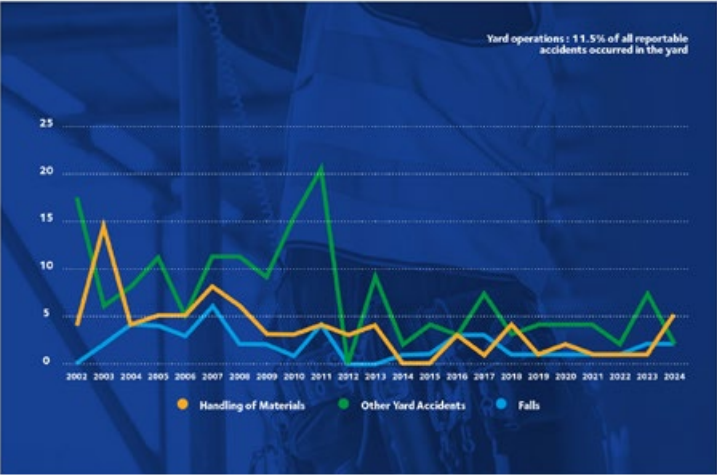
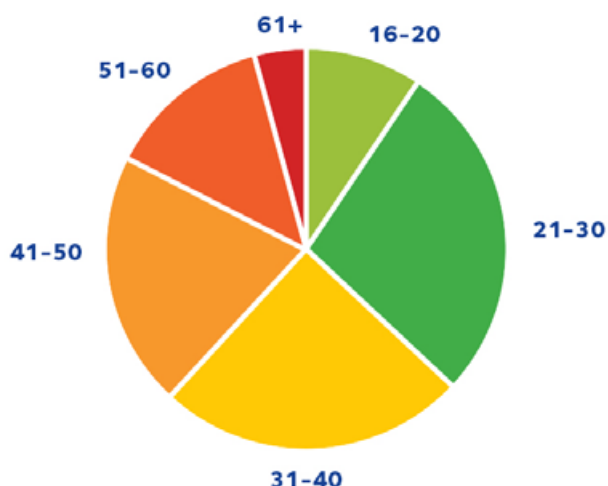


Table 2.2: NASC Accident Figures – Causes of Accidents to Operatives in Yards



Accidents by age



While NASC members have achieved the lowest AFR/AIR in NASC's recorded history, scaffolding is nonetheless a high-hazard industry, and NASC remains committed to eliminating harm. NASC, its members and committees will analyse the safety report's data, to identify incident trends, highlight areas for improvement, and target better results in the coming years.

NASC H&S and Technical committees will analyse RIDDOR data, producing guidance, videos, posters, toolbox talks, bulletins and digital content to raise awareness of the hazards and risks in the industry, and drive and foster health and safety leadership.

NASC standards, contractual, and audit committees will use the analysis to drive stronger standards. In particular, they will seek to build on the stringent audit process, ensuring that contractor members continue to follow NASC guidance, adhere to relevant legislation, and maintain the high quality and safety that NASC members are known for within the industry.

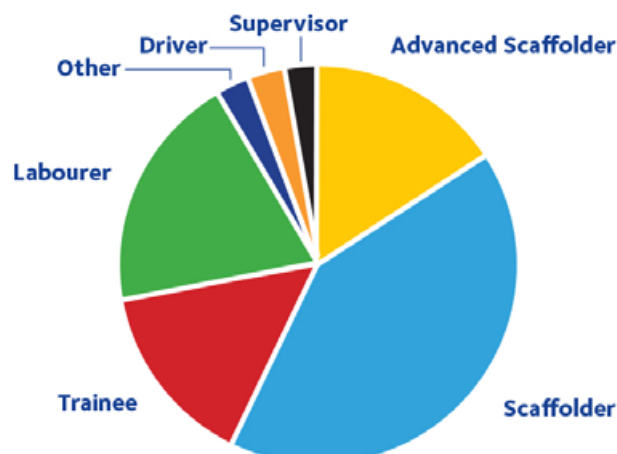
Incident data will also be shared with the Health & Safety Executive (HSE) and other bodies to support them in the development of further regulation and safety campaigns.

It is worth noting that there were no RIDDOR accidents to members of the public in 2024. There was one reported RIDDOR injury to a third party, where an operative working for another company climbed onto a scaffold lorry without using the correct access equipment. Subsequently, when the operative dismounted from the lorry, he decided to jump down a distance of around 400mm, which caused him to suffer a sprained ankle.

Manual handling

There has been a decrease in manual handling injuries (down from 25 in 2023 to 22 in 2024), with an AIF drop of 25% in accidents. This has coincided with NASC updating its SG6 Management of Manual Handling in the Scaffolding Industry Guidance Note, as well as its SG6 User Guide, and SG6 digitalised video. This year NASC will be reviewing and updating any required CISRS training, as well as the SG6 digitalised manual handling video.

Accidents by CISRS group



“NASC is the only scaffolding trade body in the UK that audits its members to ensure they adhere to stringent safety protocols.”

Wayne Connolly, NASC President

Slips & trips

There has been a decrease in slips and trips injuries, with 21 RIDDOR accidents in 2024 (down from 28 in 2023), with an AIR percentage drop of 36%. Customers' ground conditions continue to be an issue, but while many incidents were attributed to scaffolding operatives slipping and tripping on poor ground conditions, it must be stressed that scaffolding contractors are responsible for the safety of their employees, and others, when they work on their customers' sites.

Falls from heights

There were 19 falls from height in 2024 that occurred on site and in members' yards, compared to 16 RIDDOR accidents in 2023. These falls had a major negative impact on the operatives concerned, their families and friends. NASC says the prevention of falls continues to be its number one priority and while it already produces a raft of guidance to raise awareness and promote safer work at height, it will continue to look for ways to reduce those falls from height numbers.

By age

The highest number of injuries by age were suffered by operatives aged 21-30, closely followed by the 31-40 bracket. Falls from height were mostly in the 31-40 age range, which was also the case in 2023, and were followed by the 51-60 age range. Most slips and trips on the same level were in the 21-30 and 31-40 age range. Manual

Table 7.1: All Injuries

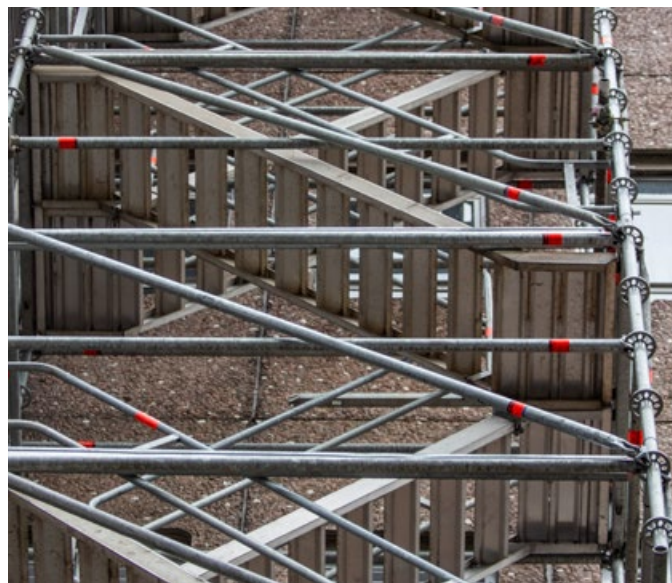
	Arm	Back	Eyes	Face	Feet / Ankles	Finger(s)	forearm	Hands / Wrist	Head	Knee	Leg / Hip / Groin	Multiple	Neck / Shoulder	Ribs / Chest / Stomach	Grand Total
Amputation						2									2
Bruising													1	1	2
Cut						1		1			1				3
Dislocation											2		1		3
Fracture	2	2		2	10	8	1	5			3	3	1		37
Laceration			1						1		1				3
Multiple					2			1	1	1		2		1	8
Sprain		1			4			1		1		1			8
Strain	1	1											1		3
Unconscious									1						1
Other	1									1				1	3
Grand Total	4	4	1	2	16	11	1	8	3	3	7	6	4	3	73

handling accidents were mostly concentrated in age ranges 31–40 and 41–50

CISRS stated that in 2024 the percentage of CISRS cards in the UK scaffolding industry were as follows: Advanced 23%, Scaffolder 47%, Trainee 14%, and Labourer 18%.

By type

The most common injury sustained was a fracture (37), followed by sprains (8), multiple injuries (8), cuts (3), dislocations (3), lacerations (3), strains (3), amputations (2), bruising (2), injuries causing unconsciousness (1), and other uncategorised accidents (3). The most common body parts injured were feet and ankles (16), fingers (11), hands and wrists (8), and legs, hips, and groin (7).



Wayne Connolly

NASC President Wayne Connolly commented: “NASC is the only scaffolding trade body in the UK that audits its members to ensure they adhere to stringent safety protocols. This year’s impressively low number of RIDDORs is testament to the professionalism and collective effort in fostering a safety-first culture.

“This approach is strengthened by the tireless hard work of NASC’s Health & Safety Committee and Technical Committee, both of which play crucial roles in developing and disseminating comprehensive safety and technical guidelines. One of the cornerstones of their work are the detailed guidance documents, regularly updated and released. They serve as a key resource for scaffolding contractors. These documents address the important aspects of safety and regular updates meaning they continue to reflect best practice and industry standards.”

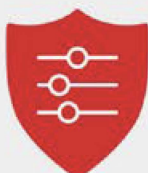
To read more and see the detailed statistical breakdown, go to www.nasc.org.uk/information/safety-reports



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INDUSTRIAL v COMMERCIAL: WHAT'S THE DIFFERENCE?

Scaffolding is scaffolding, right? Well, not quite. In this issue, we explore the differences – and similarities – between scaffolding in the industrial setting and in commercial applications.



Dennis Braithwaite

NASC's Technical Manager, Dennis Braithwaite, says: *"The scaffolding has to be the same in essence, erected the same way. There are slight technical deviations for some specialist industrial applications, such as offshore where you need an extra guardrail, but the main issue is the environment: some industrial*

applications have additional hazards – whether that's salt water corrosion in offshore work, the risk to workers of gas or chemical leaks, isolations on certain sites, and so on.

"Of course, commercial scaffolding can also be highly complex and have to operate in incredibly demanding environments too – but as a sector, industrial environments are consistently demanding, complex and large scale. And while all scaffolding is totally driven by safety, the intensity of the focus is increased on industrial sites because the consequences of errors can be so much worse and more hazardous. The consequences of dropping a fitting on a building site versus dropping a fitting on an industrial site can be very, very different."

WORKING ENVIRONMENT



Lee Marshall

Lee Marshall, Regional Health & Safety Lead at Bilfinger UK, has been a Safety Professional in both the construction and industrial sectors. He explains the industrial working environment: *"In industrial scaffolding, common work environments include refineries, power plants, and chemical plants.*

These environments present significantly more severe hazards, including hot surfaces, chemical exposure, high-pressure lines, and moving machinery. Scaffolders often work in complex, high-risk areas, such as confined spaces, elevated platforms, or around volatile materials.

"Commercial scaffolding is typically found on new construction sites, such as office buildings, residential developments, or public infrastructure projects. Here, the risks are more related to public interface, traffic management, and site logistics. While the hazards in commercial environments are generally less extreme, scaffolders still face challenges such as pedestrian safety, site congestion, and accessibility issues, which can contribute to slips, trips, and falls.

"In industrial environments, scaffolding operations are governed by permit-to-work (PTW) systems due to the



PICTURE CREDIT: ISS

hazardous nature of the work. Industrial scaffolding often occurs in live plants, around high-voltage equipment, or within explosive atmospheres. Every phase of the scaffolding process—from delivery to dismantling—is thoroughly planned, risk-assessed, and requires formal approval. Specific permits, such as hot work, confined space entry, isolation, working at height, and simultaneous operations (SIMOPS), are routinely issued. Scaffolders can also be required to hold additional certifications for specialised environments, such as offshore survival (BOSIET) or nuclear safety protocols, depending on the nature of the job."

One HSEQ Manager at a major industrial scaffolding firm, who chose not to be named, adds: *"Sometimes just getting a job done can prove incredibly hard: jumping through all the hoops put in front of you, all the PPE requirements to meet, the protocols for how to move materials, all the permit systems and so on. Then even if everything is perfectly planned in and all hoops jumped through, you might still not get it done because of external reasons."*

SAFETY AND RISK

Lee Marshall considers the role of safety in the two sectors: *"Safety protocols in industrial scaffolding are highly structured, with pre-start briefings, a strict adherence to step-by-step methodologies, and restricted access zones for authorised personnel only. The work is not just about compliance – it's about ensuring that every action, no matter how routine, aligns with the highest standards of safety and operational integrity.*

"Commercial scaffolding operates within a less rigid framework, though it is still governed by robust safety regulations. Most commercial scaffolding tasks are managed through general method statements and risk assessments, with teams conducting dynamic risk assessments on-site. The workforce is typically equipped with CISRS Part 1 & 2



training, along with general site safety awareness, although specialised certifications are generally not required unless specific hazards are present.

“Although the risk profile may not be as high as in industrial environments, scaffolders still face challenges such as tight deadlines, limited access, and pedestrian safety. The emphasis is on efficiency, while still ensuring that safety protocols like manual handling training, safe erection/dismantling procedures, and awareness of common hazards (e.g., slips, trips, and falls) are upheld.

“Both sectors ensure that safety remains the primary focus at all stages of the scaffolding process.

“Manual handling risks are notably higher in industrial scaffolding due to the heavier, bulkier materials scaffolders need to handle. These workers are often required to shift, lift, and assemble heavier components, frequently while working at height or in restricted spaces, with PPE that can restrict movement. The use of mechanical aids in these environments is limited, which increases the risk of musculoskeletal injuries and requires a higher level of coordination and physical exertion.

“In commercial scaffolding, although the tasks can be repetitive and the materials lighter, scaffolders still face risks associated with repetitive manual handling and working at height. Access to sites is often better, and the working environment is typically cleaner, but there is still the potential for slips, trips, and falls, particularly when safety protocols are rushed or shortcuts are taken.

“The safety demands in high-risk, high-consequence environments – such as oil refineries, chemical plants, power stations and offshore rigs – go far beyond protecting the scaffolders themselves. These environments often involve working with hazardous substances, pressurised systems, moving machinery, and live processes, all of which introduce significant risks. A simple mistake – whether it’s a dropped tool or an improperly calculated load – can have catastrophic consequences, not just injuring someone but potentially shutting down an entire plant or triggering a major safety incident. Industrial scaffolding typically supports critical maintenance or shutdown work, where there is zero tolerance for shortcuts or deviations from rigorous specifications.

“In commercial scaffolding, safety remains a priority and scaffolds must meet legal requirements, though tolerances



are generally not as tight. A missed inspection or minor delay might be flagged, but it’s unlikely to bring the entire site to a standstill.”

MATERIALS

Industrial scaffolding typically utilises tube and fitting systems, which are built to support complex structures like pipe racks, tanks, and for use within confined spaces. Its flexibility in adapting to complex, irregular structures and working around pipework, vessels, and other awkward configurations is invaluable. The materials used are generally more heavy-duty, designed to endure extreme conditions such as high temperatures, chemical exposure, and abrasive environments. Components like steel boards, flame-retardant materials, and customised access points are frequently incorporated, particularly in industries like power, refining, and offshore oil platforms.

Of course, much commercial scaffolding also uses tube and fitting but is increasingly turning to modular scaffolding systems due to their speed, efficiency, and cost-effectiveness. The materials used are generally lighter—often consisting of aluminium or timber boards—with standardised components that allow for quicker erection and dismantling. While the work environment is less hazardous, the pace can be relentless, often with an emphasis on quick turnaround times and maximising productivity.

SKILLS AND APPROACH

What about the people – the scaffolders who make it all happen? Lee Marshall again: *“Industrial and commercial scaffolding require distinct skills, mindsets, and attitudes from scaffolders. While they share the same trade, the demands of each sector create very different environments, requiring scaffolders to adapt accordingly. Industrial scaffolders are akin to tactical operators—their work is deliberate, precise, and heavily reliant on advanced training and technical expertise. Every move is calculated, and the focus is on safety and accuracy.”*

“Commercial scaffolders are like the infantry—they need to be fast, resilient, and able to keep the pace of constant construction progress. Efficiency is key, as commercial sites often demand rapid turnaround times to meet tight deadlines.”

“Both roles demand a high level of respect and professionalism. Over the years, I’ve seen exceptionally skilled scaffolders who thrive in one environment really struggle in another.”

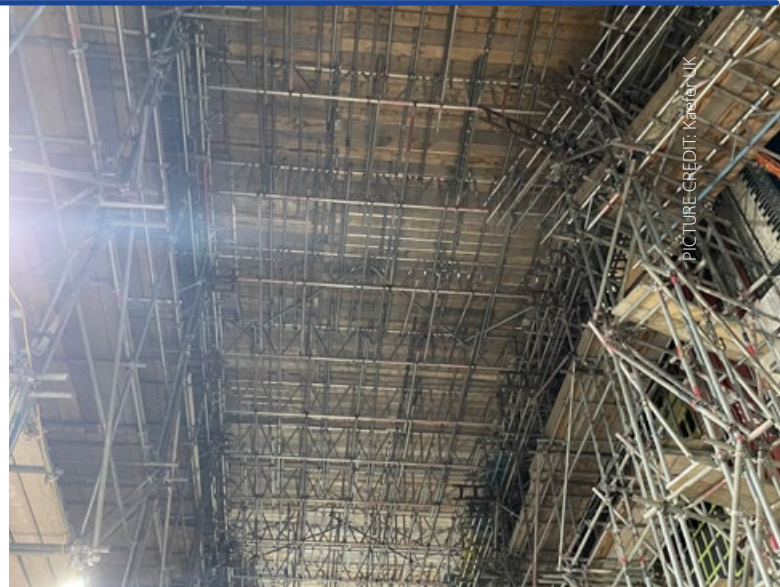
CORPORATE/COMMERCIAL

So what of the bigger picture for scaffolding companies – which is the better sector to work in? Lee adds: *“Here’s my take on it: commercial scaffolding is where you generate revenue, while industrial scaffolding is where you build a reputation. Commercial keeps the lights on, and industrial helps you build your brand.”*

“In industrial scaffolding, projects typically involve longer-term contracts, higher day rates, and more secure client relationships, often with large, established companies in industries like energy. The scaffolds themselves are more complex, which means greater design input and planning, as well as opportunities for variation orders and day work. The budgets tend to be larger, but so are the risks. There are higher labour costs, increased insurance premiums, and the need for specialised training. Additionally, delays, shutdowns, and permit restrictions can easily lead to cost overruns. The upfront investment in skilled personnel, specialised equipment, and robust procedures can be significant, but the rewards can also be substantial if done right.”

“On the flip side, commercial scaffolding can also be very profitable—if you focus on efficiency. These jobs are typically shorter-term, and often involve system scaffolds that are quicker to install. With less emphasis on design (and fewer delays or redesigns), and more repeatable work such as housing developments or refurbishments, commercial jobs lend themselves well to fast turnarounds. However, margins are typically thinner, and cash flow management is critical, especially when working with slow-paying contractors.”

The large firm’s HSEQ Manager adds: *“One thing you do have to be in the industrial sector is a large company. Only then can you absorb this uniquely dynamic and testing environment, and have the ability to suddenly go from 70 to 700 men in a matter of weeks, and back again. The big industrial companies are running out of companies to go to and I think there will be a correction at some point. It’s tough out there at the moment.”*



WORKFORCE AND SKILLS

The scaffolding industry, particularly in the industrial sector, is facing a significant challenge with an aging workforce. Many of the experienced scaffolders are approaching retirement age, and there is a noticeable gap in the influx of younger workers entering the field to replace them. Lee Marshall adds: *“The skills required in industrial scaffolding are highly specialised. It’s not just about knowing how to erect a scaffold—it’s about understanding site-specific risks, interpreting complex designs, and working in environments with dangerous materials and hazardous conditions. This level of expertise takes years to develop, and it’s not something that can be acquired through short courses or quick training.”*

“The skills shortage in industrial scaffolding is a pressing issue. Younger generations often perceive the profession as physically demanding with limited long-term appeal, particularly when other industries offer more flexible or higher-paying options. This gap in workforce development has left many companies struggling to find skilled personnel to fill the demand, and the situation is likely to worsen in the coming years.”

The HSEQ manager agrees: *“It’s hard to attract people. Guys can earn as much in the street now as on these sites, which isn’t how it always was. And industrial is a tough environment to work in: lots of work gets started but not finished, the scope changes and suddenly all your scaffolding is in the wrong place. We’re very much at the whim of rapidly changing situations and priorities, and we’re constantly moving men and materials.”*

“You tend to stick with experienced people who are used to working on these sites, who understand them, and understand their safety systems.”

“The age demographic of the workforce is way too high, with many well over 50. New people are just not coming into this work. They see it’s restrictive, you have to move a lot, there’s no smoking, no mobiles, extra PPE, rapid shifts in plans and so on. We’re trying to grow our recruitment in any way we can, including ex-service people, foreign labour, and more. Enticing young people into the industry is a challenge – but that’s not a new thing. Recruitment is tough.”

ANNUAL REPORT MARKS OUTSTANDING YEAR

In 2024, NASC made significant strides in redefining industry standards, focusing on safety, training, innovation, and international collaboration. The year was marked by the launch of the sector's most forward-thinking audit process and the introduction of major new industry standards. Despite economic volatility, regulatory changes, and labour market shortages, NASC continued to grow and support its members with practical solutions. These are just some of the headlines from the organisation's recently-released Annual Report.

NASC celebrated record membership growth in 2024, ending the year with 830 member companies, which now account for more than 80% of the industry by turnover. This growth was driven by the strength of NASC's audit approach and the value placed on this accreditation by members and their clients.

In 2024, NASC launched its Approved Product scheme, which replaced the old Code of Practice Audit. This scheme provides formal NASC endorsement to products that meet stringent performance, compliance, and testing standards. The launch of TG30, a guidance framework for system scaffolding, was another significant achievement. Developed in partnership with system scaffold manufacturers, TG30 ensures compliance with design and installation standards.

In November 2024, NASC launched ScaffEx, Europe's first scaffolding expo, which attracted over 40 exhibitors and more than 750 delegates. The event was a significant moment for the industry in Europe, providing a platform to discuss challenges and opportunities and showcase innovations.

NASC also launched NASC Insurance Services in October 2024, offering tailored insurance products for scaffolding businesses. The organisation continued to engage with the Government, launching the NASC Manifesto to champion scaffolding and access work as an essential skilled trade. NASC's international collaborations included signing Memoranda of Understanding with scaffolding bodies in New Zealand, Malaysia, and Australia.

The organisation aims to continue leading the industry by investing in digital tools, advancing equality and diversity, and shaping scaffolding's role in various sectors. The focus remains on delivering real value to members, raising professionalism, simplifying compliance, and advocating for members across industry and government.



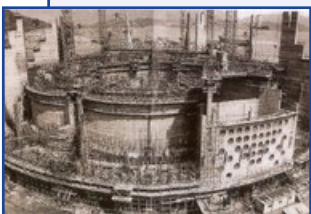
80 YEARS OF NASC: The 1960s & 1970s

In the early 1960s, scaffolding was still a small industry. Unfortunately, between 1961 and 1969, notified accidents in scaffolders had risen by 218% and scaffolding's reputation was becoming more and more tarnished. By the end of the decade, the industry had an unfair image of being dangerous.

Three major collapses in the late 1960s and early 1970s forced the industry into action. The third one – Loddon bridge on the M4, when formwork collapsed killing three workers and injuring 10 – was the final straw. Even though subsequent inquiries found that the scaffolding was not the cause of the accidents, many people felt they were at risk from badly constructed scaffolding, including members of the public, where scaffolds were being used over or near streets.

In March 1972, this pressure resulted in the joint advisory committee's report on safety and health in the construction industries. The subcommittee was appointed to consider what action should be taken to prevent the collapse of scaffolds. The end result was the Department of Employment Report 'Safety of scaffolding', published in 1974. There were nine recommendations made to deal with the fundamental causes of bad practice.

NASC was required to start collecting accident data from 1975 and a few years later began producing its Safety Reports. The figures it collected combated other figures being floated around at that time, which were giving the scaffolding industry an unfair reputation. The new figures from NASC demonstrated that scaffolding was no more dangerous than other sectors.



BRIAN HOUSTON

NASC was saddened by the news of the death of Past President Brian Houston. Echoing through the various messages of sympathy for Brian was the phrase 'a true gentleman'.



Brian Houston

Suzannah Nicol, Chief Executive, Build UK, said: "What this man didn't know about scaffolding wasn't worth knowing. I thoroughly enjoyed working with Brian, he was generous with his time and knowledge and is someone I was lucky to have as part of my career journey."

Mark Collinson, NASC's Head of Technical, added: "Brian's time at NASC as President and on the board of directors was hugely important. SG4:00 had been developed and was a massive culture change for the industry. There was also the introduction of the Work at Height Regulations in 2005 and subsequent update to SG4:05, which set the foundations for the industry we know today. Brian played a significant part in driving this culture change and improving and shaping the safety of the industry."

Wayne Connolly, NASC's current President, said, "Brian served NASC for many years, across numerous roles, including Regional Chair, Non-Executive Director, President and Auditor. NASC would not be what it is today without this dedication."

Brian was awarded the MBE in 2008 for services to the construction industry.

MEET YOUR ENTIRE SUPPLY CHAIN: ONE PLACE, TWO DAYS, ENTIRELY FREE SCAFFEX25

PICTURE CREDIT: Andy Mallins Photography

When NASC launched ScaffEx with an event in Belfast in 2024, the response was overwhelmingly positive. A survey of delegates found that 86% had found attending valuable or very valuable, with 76% saying they would be attending this year's event in Manchester, with a further 20% saying maybe.

But the delegate feedback also contained plenty of suggestions for how NASC could improve ScaffEx for 2025. Those suggestions included things like making it a two-day event, increasing the size of stands and the number of exhibitors, introducing a wider variety of exhibitors and including a live demo zone of some kind.

NASC listened and acted. This is why ScaffEx25 will be on a different scale to the event in 2024. That was a great start, but this year ScaffEx will indeed be bigger, better and more comprehensive.

The Exhibition

Clive Dickin, NASC's CEO, reveals that he has already had a sneak preview of some of the stands being built by key participants: *"There are limits on what exhibitors are prepared to give away at this stage. This is a very competitive market and ScaffEx25 will see all the key players from the industry under one roof. Understandably, they aren't keen to share too much in advance. But I have seen some of the early design and build work already underway and I have been blown away."*

"There are going to be some serious bits of kit and impressive feats of engineering on display. For anyone with an interest or involvement in scaffolding – whether as a supplier, contractor or a client commissioning scaffold – this is absolutely a must-attend event."

Learning by doing is a key part of the everyday experience of scaffolders. And one repeated request from delegates last year was for there to be some kind of live demonstration area this year, away from the individual company stands.

So this year, the exhibition will include just such a Demo Area, with the ability for suppliers to showcase their latest innovations and new products or services. With regular demo slots running throughout both Thursday and Friday, there will always be something new and exciting to discover.

The Training Pavillion

Training is the lifeblood of the industry, responsible for not only bringing new talent into a career in scaffolding and access but also allowing those already working to keep up-to-date and fully compliant. Training sits at the heart of NASC's commitment to keeping safe all operatives working

at height. This year, ScaffEx recognises the vital role played by the Construction Industry Scaffolders Record Scheme (CISRS) in this process of training and retraining. The Training Pavillion will be a showcase for the UK's training centres to highlight the excellent work they do in providing the courses from level 1 trainees to advanced scaffolders. All CISRS centres have been invited to contribute a stand to show off the work they deliver.

There will also be a Careers Zone, with a focus on encouraging new talent into the industry. The Careers Zone will feature some of NASC's legendary Talent Packs, with the ability to offer visitors to the stand a virtual reality tour of a scaffold and the chance to experience what it is like to work at heights.

The Future of Scaffolding

A key feature of ScaffEx25 will be the two-day conference, the first of its kind dedicated to scaffolding and access. The extra time, again something that delegates who attended in 2024 called for in their feedback, will allow more time to bring in a wider range of topics and to cover them in more detail.

With 2025 seeing NASC celebrate its 80th birthday, there would be a temptation to look back at this 80-year history and reflect on how far the industry has come in those 80 years. But NASC prefers to look forward, as Clive Dickin explains, *"Yes, the last 80 years have seen tremendous changes in scaffolding and access, not just here in the UK, but all around the world. The safety statistics for NASC members very clearly tell the story of how quality and safety standards have improved over that time."*

"But there is so much change across the sector that we really want to look forward to the next 20 years. It is fair to say that we may see even more transformation over the next 20 years than we have over the last 80. Technology and innovation are affecting all industries – scaffolding and access will be no different. This is why ScaffEx25 is focused on the future of scaffolding."

Confirmed speakers at the conference include active



PICTURE CREDIT: Andy Mallins Photography

SCAFFEX25
MANCHESTER 11-12 SEPT

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More Possibilities. The Scaffolding System.

scaffolders, many of whom are running their own firms, as well as major suppliers to the sector, those running scaffolding procurement for large buyers across the industry, and those running key training bodies and other scaffolding organisations from around the world. Hosted and led by talented broadcast journalists, Sophie Long and Nina Hossain, the discussions are bound to stimulate debate and offer new thinking and insights.



THE SCAFFOLDING EXCELLENCE AWARDS

ScaffEx25 wraps up on Friday 12 September with a celebration of all that's good across the industry in the form of the Scaffolding Excellence Awards 2025. Here, across nine categories, the best people, projects and companies in scaffolding will be recognised by their peers at a star-studded event co-hosted by the One Show's Alex Jones, fellow BBC presenter Clare Balding and comedian and author, Leigh Francis.



Alex Jones



Clare Balding

PICTURE CREDIT: Nicky Johnston

Tickets for the Scaffolding Excellence Awards are on sale now from <https://nasc.org.uk/product/scaffex25-awards-individual/>

CREATING RECRUITMENT OPPORTUNITIES

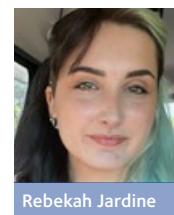
NASC's Careers Team has stated that while it begins to develop and enhance its Careers Strategy, it wants to highlight to members some easy ways to support new entrants into the industry.

NASC has recently been establishing working relationships with partners such as Youth Employment UK, Amazing Apprenticeships and the Strategic Development Network as well as re-establishing relationships with the Department for Work and Pensions to ensure it is creating opportunities for members to attend events and host activities that are targeted at the people who are interested in either joining the industry or getting back into the industry after some time away.

As NASC develops these relationships, it will be developing a whole suite of resources to raise the profile of the industry. These resources will be directly delivered into schools,

colleges and external organisations supporting people into work, training and apprenticeships.

NASC is particularly keen to maximise the potential of Careers Fairs. Rebekah Jardine, Careers Executive at NASC, comments: *"Careers Fairs are a great way to engage with a large number of people to raise their awareness of the industry and the opportunities they may not be aware of. It can be an effective route to meet potential new recruits for your current and future vacancies, as well as a chance to source work experience placements and get more insight into the types of candidates available within your local area. Careers Fairs can also be an opportunity to network, to share success stories and bring your team together to celebrate and promote the work you do."*



Rebekah Jardine

TALENT PACKS FOR CCS SCAFFOLDING

One NASC member, CCS Scaffolding Ltd, has been making use of NASC's new Talent Packs as it seeks to develop interest in the industry among young people. CCS Scaffolding Ltd is based in Northfleet, Kent, but serves customers across the UK. Established in 2011 by Gary Coote, the company has built a strong reputation for delivering comprehensive scaffolding solutions across various sectors, including commercial, civil engineering, rail, and infrastructure.

Operations Director Leon Watson and Trainee Scaffolder Tyler Cheeseman attended a Careers Fair at Hayes College to showcase scaffolding as a dynamic and rewarding career path and to promote apprenticeship opportunities within their company and the wider industry. Their goal was to engage the next generation and highlight the long-term career potential available in scaffolding, especially to those who may not have previously considered it.

Leon said: *"We brought along the NASC Talent Pack along with a range of branded marketing materials, including banners, promotional memory sticks, cups and pens. These helped spark conversations and left students with useful takeaways to remember us by."*

"The most successful aspect was the positive interaction with the students. There was genuine interest from both male and female attendees, and we were encouraged by the number of students asking questions and expressing interest in apprenticeships. The VR scaffold experience also proved to be a great talking point and helped us stand out."

"The session had a strong impact. Many students left with a better understanding of the scaffolding industry and the career pathways available. We helped shift perceptions and opened doors for young people to consider roles in a sector that is both essential and full of opportunity."

"Several students expressed interest in joining our apprenticeship programme, and we are currently awaiting CV submissions. The event reinforced the importance of



engaging directly with young people, and we've recognised that attending more of these events is vital if we want to attract fresh talent and secure the future of our industry."

Members can book VR Headsets for a careers event at any time. Just email rebekah.jardine@nasc.org.uk To find out more about how NASC can support you attending events, visit www.scaffoldingcareers.com



Rebekah Jardine, Careers Executive, writes: *"We are looking to hear from you, our members, about how best we can support you with your social value requirements, your recruitment/retention and how you are engaging in the careers space. What can we at NASC do better to support you? What are you currently finding challenging that we can support you with?"*

If you are interested in being involved with any of the above, please email Rebekah.Jardine@nasc.org.uk

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