



NASC

# Scaffolding Insider

NEWS | FEATURES | COMMERCIAL | HEALTH & SAFETY

FEBRUARY 2024

## PRECISION ENGINEERING

KAEFER pushes the  
boundaries at nuclear plant

HOUSING  
DOWNTURN

The reality hits  
home for scaffolders

NASC  
MEMBERSHIP  
CHARTER

Why PAYE  
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## From the Editor

It seems like the government is making an announcement about housing or planning every few days at the moment – and you can see why. The housing market is in a very difficult place, no targets are being met, and there is an election around the corner. Unfortunately, it seems like the dynamic and optimistic party political rhetoric doesn't match the reality on the ground.

On pages 14-15, we look a little more closely at how the market is faring and how scaffolders in the supply chain have been experiencing it. Spoiler: it's not good. It is only a year or so ago that we were talking about materials and labour shortages in the housing supply chain but now it's a shortage of work.

One of the problems of slumps like these, of course, is that everything down the supply chain slows down too. Businesses have to rationalise and sometimes shrink or even fold. That leaves potential new recruits perhaps feeling nervous about launching into a new career in the broader construction sector – but it remains absolutely crucial that we continue to attract them as construction is critically short of the trained and skilled employees it needs. On page 7, you can read how the Build UK Open Doors initiative is seeking to address the skills gap – and in April NASC will launch its Talent Solutions Programme, which we will report on.

There are some incredible skills being employed on the Hinkley Point C nuclear power plant build and I'm really pleased to have been able to speak to KAEFER, which is heavily involved in the project. The technical demands are sky-high and the innovation needed in order to meet safety, logistical, quality and commercial demands is extraordinary. Read more about this remarkable project on pages 8-10.

On page 12, we take a more detailed look at one of the key changes to the NASC Membership Charter, which changed a few months ago. NASC has received a range of questions about making changes to its stipulations around how scaffolding and access companies employ their staff, and it seems like the change has not been well understood by all.

The remaining pages contain plenty of news for you to catch up on.

If you have any projects you'd like to see in the magazine or any views you'd like to share, please do get in touch.

In the meantime, I hope you enjoy the magazine.



**Nick Campion**  
Editor

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# Government Pins Hopes on Brownfield Sites

The Government says that building homes on brownfield land will be turbocharged under a major shake-up to planning rules to boost housebuilding, while protecting the Green Belt.

As part of its long-term plan for housing, the government has announced that every council in England will be told that they will need to prioritise brownfield developments and instructed to be less bureaucratic and more flexible in applying policies that halt housebuilding on brownfield land.

The bar for refusing brownfield plans will also be made much higher for those big city councils who are failing to hit their locally agreed housebuilding targets. Planning authorities in England's 20 largest cities and towns will be made to follow a 'brownfield presumption', if housebuilding drops below expected levels. This will make it easier to get permission to build on previously developed brownfield sites.

A consultation on these proposals will run until Tuesday 26 March, and the government will look to implement these changes to national planning policy as soon as possible.

The government says it is also helping developers overcome bureaucracy by slashing red tape that stops derelict sites and unused buildings being turned into new homes. Legislation laid in Parliament is designed to extend current permitted development rights, so that commercial

buildings of any size will have the freedom to be converted into new homes.

Homeowners will also be empowered to extend their homes outwards and upwards, says the government as it launches a consultation on proposals that would see more new extensions or large loft conversions freed from the process of receiving planning permission.

In an article in The Times, prime minister Rishi Sunak defended the decision to limit the measure to England's largest 20 cities and towns. He said: *"There's little point in trying to force large new estates on our countryside and green belt when that is where public resistance to development is strongest and where the GP surgeries, schools and roads don't exist to support new communities."*

The government's new announcement is the latest in a series of policy announcements as the government struggles to get near its housebuilding targets. For the bigger picture, including how the housebuilding slowdown is affecting the scaffolding industry, see pages 13-14.

PICTURE CREDIT: Madison Inouye

## Poor PPE Danger

The British Safety Industry Federation (BSiF) has issued a warning to those overseeing personal protective equipment (PPE) and safety product procurement after their latest tests on non-member products highlighted the widespread availability of substandard and even dangerous items.

Between December 2022 and December 2023, the BSiF examined 123 non-member products, assessing advertised performance, marking adequacy and compliance with standards. Shockingly, only 21% - 26 products - proved fully compliant, leaving a staggering 79% - 97 products - falling short of testing criteria. Worryingly, many of these substandard products are still available and in use, posing serious risks to unsuspecting users.

Some examples of products that failed testing include a Flame Retardant Parka, bought from an online retailer. During flame spread testing, the entire coat was consumed by flames. The garment also lacked correct documentation and markings in line with PPE Regulation requirements. A pair of safety boots from the same retailer failed toe cap compressions tests. A pair of safety glasses from a high street retailer failed an impact resistance test, with lenses cracking/breaking when struck by a projectile. Despite promises to remove the product from sale, it was still available over two months later.

Three pairs of protective gloves from a high street retailer failed testing against abrasion, returning just half the claimed performance level. When contacted by the BSiF, the retailer said they would take action but the products were still on sale four months later.

Meanwhile, a Respiratory Protective Mask (FFP3) purchased from a PPE distributor performed at only half the required level during filter penetration tests against contaminants. When contacted, the distributor didn't act to remove the product from sale or initiate a recall.



PICTURE CREDIT: Kinde! Media

**BSiF**  
BRITISH SAFETY INDUSTRY FEDERATION

# Plans go in for Printworks development



Developer British Land and pension fund AustralianSuper have submitted plans for a major cultural venue at London's Canada Water development.

The Printworks, which was once known as Harmsworth Quays, was where newspapers including the Daily Mail and Evening Standard were printed.

The plan will create a permanent music venue in one half of the building, while the other half will be a sustainable workspace and retail, known as The Grand Press.

There are four key new cultural spaces planned at the new Printworks, which is scheduled to reopen in 2026:

- **Printworks' world-renowned Press Halls retained.**

The iconic space will be kept with the Press Halls remaining the focal point of the Printworks' programme. Live music events, concerts, immersive art exhibitions and corporate events of similar capacity will be hosted.

- **A brand-new rooftop leisure and cultural space.** A new event space with amazing views of London.
- **The Inkwells.** A performance space dedicated to immersive exhibitions, multi-disciplinary art shows and more intimate music events.
- **A series of new suites with views of the Press Halls.** Versatile spaces for meetings, conferences, events, and corporate hospitality.

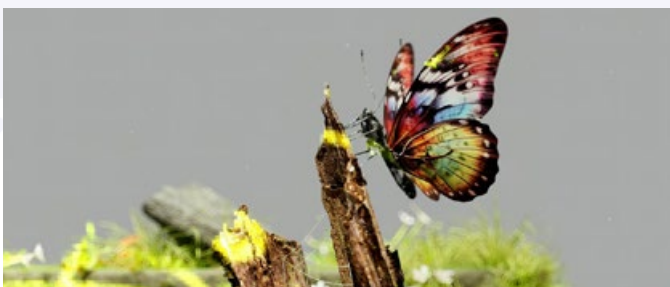
## New green rules for housing schemes

All major housing developments are now required to deliver at least a 10% benefit under new government Biodiversity Net Gain rules.

Developers in England are now legally required to deliver at least a 10% increase in biodiversity when major building projects are undertaken.

Biodiversity Net Gain requires development to avoid harm to nature, but where that is unavoidable, developers must create new habitats or enhance existing ones either within the site itself or by investing in nature sites elsewhere.

Biodiversity Net Gain for small sites will be applicable from April 2024, and implementation for Nationally Significant Infrastructure Projects remains planned for 2025.



PICTURE CREDIT: Google Deepmind

## £2.54 billion deal sees Barratt buy Redrow

The biggest housebuilder in the country is buying the sixth-biggest, with the combined business expected to turn over £7.45bn and deliver over 22,600 homes a year. The combined business would have net cash of £874m. Subject to regulatory and shareholder approval, the deal is expected to be completed in the second quarter of this year.

Barratt said the deal would allow for £90m in cost-saving synergies and offered opportunities to consolidate the supply chain. Around 800 jobs could be lost as the deal looks set to reduce total employees by around 10%. Barratt currently employs 6,000 people and Redrow 2,300. It is understood that job losses will be from where there are overlapping central and support functions but site-based staff are thought not to be at risk.





PICTURE CREDIT: Thirdman

## RAAC Audit Finally Complete

The Government has completed its Reinforced Autoclaved Aerated Concrete audit of the school estate and found 1% of schools impacted. The Government has committed to remove RAAC from all schools in England, retrofitting or rebuilding blocks at the 234 schools found to contain dangerous aerated concrete panels and beams within the building fabric.

Just over half – around 119 schools – will have one or more buildings rebuilt or refurbished, nearly all funded through the School Rebuilding Programme (SRP), after they were included in the final tranche of allocations announced on Thursday.

A further 110 schools and colleges will benefit from fresh grant funding to remove RAAC from their buildings where works will typically be smaller in scale.

Five schools and colleges will avoid works by taking the building out of the school estate over the longer term.

The total rebuilding and repair programme has now been closed at 513 schools.

## Electric shock leads to fine and sentence

Canterbury City Scaffolding Ltd, a Kent-based scaffolding company, has been fined and its director given a suspended prison sentence following a tragic incident where a scaffolder suffered a severe 11,000-volt electric shock.

The incident has raised concerns about the safety of workers near high-voltage power lines and the importance of meticulous planning to prevent such accidents.

Scaffolder Steven Gilmore inadvertently made contact with a live 11kV power line while lifting a six-metre scaffold tube. This shock caused him to fall over five metres to the ground, leading to a severe leg injury and life-changing electrical burns to both hands.

A subsequent investigation by the Health and Safety Executive (HSE) revealed alarming safety lapses by Canterbury City Scaffolding Ltd and its director. They had failed to conduct a proper risk assessment for the high-risk job of assembling the temporary roof scaffold near a high-voltage line.

Additionally, despite being aware of the proximity of the temporary roof scaffold to the 11kV line, neither the scaffold contractor nor its director consulted UK Power Networks (Network Operator) to ascertain line voltage and safe clearance distances.

The director also permitted his team to use six-metre-long metal scaffold tubes at near-vertical angles within striking distance of the high-voltage line without taking any precautions to prevent injury.

The court subsequently imposed a £50,000 fine on Canterbury City Scaffolding Ltd. In the case of Ian Pepper, he was sentenced to 18 weeks in prison, although the sentence was suspended for 12 months.

Pepper was further ordered to complete 200 hours of unpaid work and 20 rehabilitation activity requirement days as part of his punishment.



### Framework winners announced

Housing procurement group Communities and Housing Investment Consortium has revealed the winners of a new eight-year Framework for construction works and consultancy services worth £3.2 billion. It will cover for a wide range of project types, from small infill and garage sites to large estate regeneration projects including newbuild, refurbishment/retrofit, cross subsidy housing for sale, and also MMC solutions. The huge procurement consortium of more than 60 housing associations and local authorities can access the framework via mini-tender or direct award.

### New Legal and Debt Advice Service

Following increasing concerns about the economy and with members reporting increasingly challenging contractual terms, NASC has announced its new Legal and Debt Advice Service. To access the service, either call NASC offices or email enquiries@nasc.org.uk and the team will put you in touch with our qualified and experienced scaffolding and access lawyers or licensed insolvency practitioners. The service is free at the point of advice; charges may be applicable depending on advice and actions recommended.

### All change at ISG

ISG chief executive Matt Blowers and finance director Karen Booth are leaving the business – with Blowers having been at ISG for 26 years, the last two of which he was chief executive. Finance director Karen Booth has been with the firm for five years. Chief operations officer Zoe Price becomes the new chief executive and Andrew Page the interim chief financial officer.



### BAM Hits the Top Spot

BAM has made a flying start to the New Year, with two new major orders putting it at the top of the contracts league rankings. The firm's building arm finalised the contract to repurpose Digbeth's historic Typhoo Tea Building into a new home for the BBC in Birmingham, while its civils operation BAM Nuttall achieved final sign-off on a £250m job to improve road congestion on the A38 around Derby. In the rolling 12-month league of wins, Morgan Sindall continued to rank top, followed by Sir Robert McAlpine and then BAM.

# Opening Doors to a scaffolding career



**OPEN DOORS**  
Get into Construction

NASC members will be among the hundreds of companies across the country participating in Build UK Open Doors 2024, which takes place from Monday 18 to Saturday 23 March. The event provides an excellent opportunity for scaffolding – and wider construction industry – professionals to showcase the fantastic range of careers available to young people and careers changers.

BuildUK Open Doors is a national initiative that gives visitors a behind-the-scenes look at the world of construction. Hundreds of companies across the UK will be opening their doors to the public, offering tours, talks and workshops. This is a fantastic opportunity for young people to learn about the different career paths available in the industry, from scaffolding and site management to civil engineering and architecture.

Build UK reports that almost 5,000 people took part in the event in 2023, and 96% of visitors rated their experience as ‘excellent’ or ‘good’ and 87% would be more likely to consider a career in construction after their visit. The initiative reaches several million users across social media each year. With construction needing around 45,000 new entrants each year, initiatives like this are invaluable.

Too many young people still don’t understand the huge range of fantastic careers available in scaffolding, access and construction and Open Doors helps to showcase what a modern, innovative sector this is. The range of roles available means there’s something for almost everyone. Build UK says there are more than 180 different roles in the construction industry: it is critical that this becomes more widely understood among young people and career changers.

Several NASC members will be participating in Build UK Open Doors 2024, including: NETA, JMac Scaffolding, Star Scaffolding, Alltask, and LTC.

GKR Scaffolding, who work in London and the South-east, have been involved in Open Doors several times. Peter Cullen, Health & Safety Director for GKR, comments: *“It is a great opportunity and we’ve always been keen to support it. There is a skills shortage and it’s important the industry addresses that. By bringing school leavers and graduates on site, we are able to give them a real insight into the industry. We’ve used virtual reality to help them experience what it’s really like to be a scaffolder working at height, and we’ve talked to them about all the*

*different roles, the training, the pay.*

*“Once they get a better understanding of scaffolding, the trade becomes a lot more appealing – especially when they learn what they could earn, which is always appealing to young people starting out. I’ve worked in construction all my life and I love it and I want to pass that on to the next generation.”*

## Recruitment crisis

The scaffolding industry is currently facing a recruitment crisis, with many companies struggling to attract younger people to the industry. While Open Doors is an excellent and important event, NASC believes more needs to be done. This is why NASC is developing a range of talent solutions to help its members attract and retain talent. Coming this spring, NASC will be launching its Talent Solutions Programmes for NASC members, including:

- **New Talent portal:** This will connect members directly with candidates. The portal will also provide up-to-date information on key industry recruitment events and the ability to request the resources members need to attend these events.
- **Careers Event resources:** Packs equipping members with careers resources they need to attend recruitment events such as a VR Headset, Connects Blocks and Point of Sales materials promoting the excellent career of scaffolding
- **Training and Development Programme:** Equipping members with resources and tools to create a positive and rewarding work environment, including access to training and development programmes, competitive compensation packages, and opportunities for career advancement.

Henry Annafi, NASC Training Manager, commented: *“Securing talent in the scaffolding and access sector has been a serious challenge recently for some contractors. NASC recognises that we need to approach things differently; while we continue to support Open Doors as an excellent initiative, NASC is going further with the launch of its Talent Solution. The Solution includes the Talent Portal, advertising, and resources to drive interest in the sector from candidates. We will be showcasing the service in its build-up stage at the NASC regional meetings, with the project going live on 29 April 2024”*

There will be more information about NASC’s Talent Solution Programmes in the next issue of Scaffolding Insider and at NASC regional meetings. For more information about Build UK Open Doors 2024, go to <https://opendoors.construction/>



# THE NUCLEAR OPTION

Scaffolding and access is an industry where precision matters, whatever size the project and whatever sector it's in. However, there can be no more exacting standards than those that must be met in the nuclear industry. Here we look, with the help of those who made it happen, at a truly extraordinary project that not only required precision but also technical mastery and true out-of-the-box thinking.

KAEFER UK & Ireland is responsible for delivering the Containment Liner & Concrete Coating Package for the Hinkley Point C nuclear power plant build. Sounds straightforward enough... So, let's look at a few details...

KAEFER are involved in delivering part of the 10,000 perfectly painted concrete rooms; self-supporting scaffolding and steel liners that weigh more than a jumbo jet; specialist access and temperature-controlled environmental encapsulation – all this on a barely imaginable scale.

The containment liners are 57 metres tall and 47 metres in diameter. More than 20,000m<sup>2</sup> of steel required abrasive blast cleaning and protective coating application with little margin for error and a finish as smooth as glass, as these liners will surround and protect the nuclear reactors. And there's much, much more.

But firstly, how does a company come to work on a project like this? Paul Ferrand, Operational Delivery Lead for KAEFER UK & Ireland at Hinkley Point C, said: "Preparation for Hinkley Point C began a good ten years ago. Our company strategy was that involvement in the project was a priority. KAEFER has a strong history supporting UK nuclear as well as the operating EDF nuclear power plants in France and also working on the other EPR new build projects at Flamanville and Olkiluoto. We also have expertise in specialist insulation and coatings that we knew would be priority disciplines on the site. We were appointed to the project to provide



*civil specialist coatings and began work in 2020 when a small team was mobilised to the site; the work involved documentation and planning for the containment liner coating activities."*

A project like this must present some unusual challenges? Paul continues: "Some of the access solutions required to fulfil the coatings contracts have been extremely innovative, having to work to the site rules and ensure that other critical activities are not hindered. Design has to be perfect, so design engineers make minutely detailed calculations that then have to be checked and double checked by the client's engineers prior to acceptance – understandably, as nuclear safety has to be at the forefront at all times."

Thomas Hurst, Assistant Head of UK Design at KAEFER, adds: "Throughout the project a variety of technically and operationally challenging situations have occurred which have pushed the limits of what is possible with scaffolding. These have included the modification of a 16m high freestanding scaffold to be used as guide to mitigate the lateral loads for the lift of the 340 tonne liner, which allows the client to lift the liner without striking the scaffold. This reduced the programme by weeks, ensuring the client met critical project milestones.

"We also erected a three-lift scaffold for high loading activities, namely painting and blasting operations, from a temporary platform circa 30m from ground whose loading was limited to 1.5kN/m<sup>2</sup> and where a limited exclusions zone can only be implemented below for very short periods of time.

"The close integration of the design engineers and operational teams has also allowed for significant reduction in working at height. With erecting at ground level and lifting





***“ Other contractors had said it couldn’t be done but we were confident we could design and build a safe access system to meet the client’s requirements. ”***



*into place, some projects have seen a 90% reduction in working at height where access is severely restricted. All of these have been possible because we’ve used the latest 3D design and structural analysis software, ensuring the greatest accuracy and complete analysis of the scaffold structures. These models have been integrated into the client’s analysis software to allow for a complete analysis of the system as a whole. The accuracy of the design’s equipment schedules has ensured that KAEFER have been able to employ a just-in-time delivery method of scaffolding components to the site and the workface, so the client is not paying for unused scaffold tonnage, and there’s a reduction in transportation cost and greatly improved work throughput.”*

## **Making the impossible possible**

Time to look at the project in more detail. Working with the containment liners presented unique challenges. These cylindrical, tall structures aren’t able to support scaffolding in the traditional way with bracing or tying, as the steel needs to be free from defects at the end of the coating process. So, KAEFER had to develop a self-supporting, curved scaffolding system to provide access. The design process involved creating digital animations and models to test whether the structure would fit and cope with the stresses to which it would be subjected.

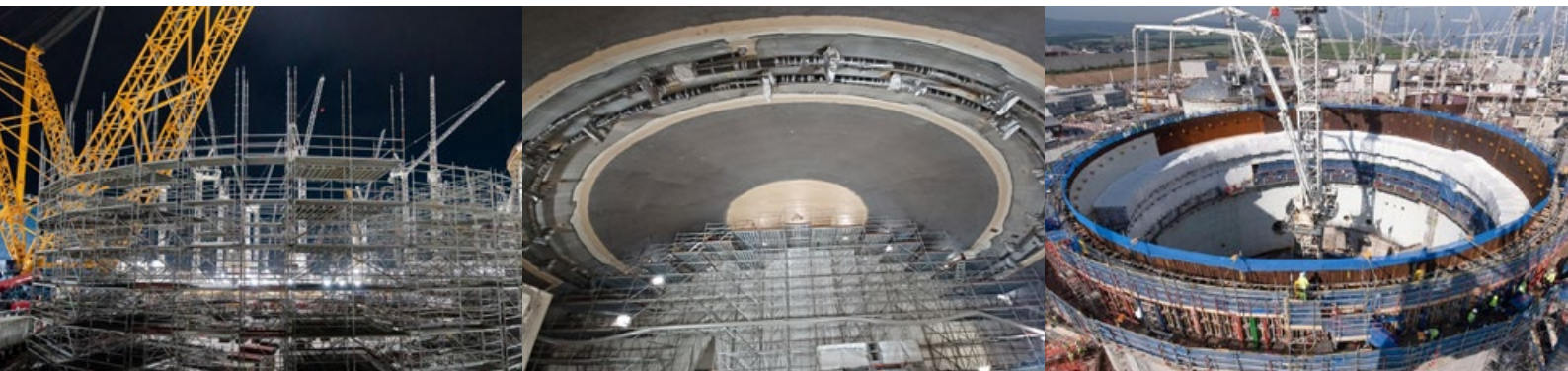
In addition to 3D modelling, KAEFER brought another

significant innovation to the project: movable suspended scaffolding. Using a bespoke design focusing on buildability and minimising the need to work at height, the scaffolding was erected at ground level and then lifted into position, 35 metres high, by ‘Big Carl’, the world’s largest construction crane.

*“We proposed a suspended scaffold design to allow the project to continue on schedule,” Thomas Hurst explains. “Other contractors had said it couldn’t be done but we were confident we could design and build a safe access system to meet the client’s requirements.”*

In April 2021 KAEFER built a 171 tonne, 160m circumferential scaffold onto the Slab 8 construction area at Hinkley Point C. This then had the second 17m high liner ring for Hinkley Reactor 1 lifted over it, allowing contractors, including the KAEFER painting team, access before it was lifted into its final position on top of Liner 1 in November 2021.

Before lifting the second 47m ring into position in November, an equipment hatch needed to be welded to the liner. Waiting for this work to be carried out would have delayed a critical element of the build project so KAEFER stepped in to provide a solution where others had said it couldn’t be done, allowing the project timelines to be met. In March 2022 the KAEFER team devised an innovative suspended scaffold for the ring which was built on the ground and then lifted into position, allowing for the welding of the equipment hatch onto the ring liner, and the project to



***“Thanks to the KAEFER temporary works team’s agility, disruption to other trades was minimised, allowing for project timelines to be met.”***

continue to schedule.

In August 2022 the same KAEFER scaffold on Slab 8 was reused and the 12m-high liner ring three was lifted over it, again allowing the KAEFER team and other contractors access to it before it was lifted to its final position on top of ring two in December 2022. Hinkley Point C project milestones had required the planned timeline to be shortened so when the third ring was lifted into position on top of ring two in December 2022 it still required additional work.

The KAEFER temporary works team were tasked with designing a scaffold to allow for the blasting and painting operations to ring three, as well as to provide access to aid with both the installation of the polar crane and the final dome top.

Initial discussions on the project began in November 2022 and involved stakeholders NNB, Bylor, Tissot, APCO Technologies, site operations and the KAEFER coatings team. Design considerations included loading onto the existing platforms in the liner, the available weight loadings of the liner itself due to the concrete pours on the external sides of the liner, suitable access being provided for the range of trades which needed to work on the ring, and the tie points for the scaffold: these all needed to be reflected in the design.

A plan was devised by the KAEFER temporary works team to use stillages and load them with the tower components to build them in situ on the existing platforms. *“A challenge presented itself when the planned crane was moved out of service for several weeks, meaning a new crane and material store had to be arranged,”* explained Paul Ferrand. *“This required daily coordination with several stakeholders to organise deliveries with crane time booked in advance: on a busy site like Hinkley Point C this can be difficult.”* Availability of Hinkley Point C riggers to support the crane tasks was also limited during the day; this, combined with working at height safety requirements minimising available working areas below the scaffold, meant there was only one available option: the KAEFER team moved to night shifts.

Incident first response manpower availability at Hinkley Point C is reduced overnight so KAEFER collaborated with Bylor’s HSE team, creating a viable rescue plan from the working platform to ensure the safety of the KAEFER team members. A designated platform, within reach of a specified crane, was established and a brief with all teams took place so they all knew the procedure. A test run of the process was performed with a successful lift and landing accomplished.

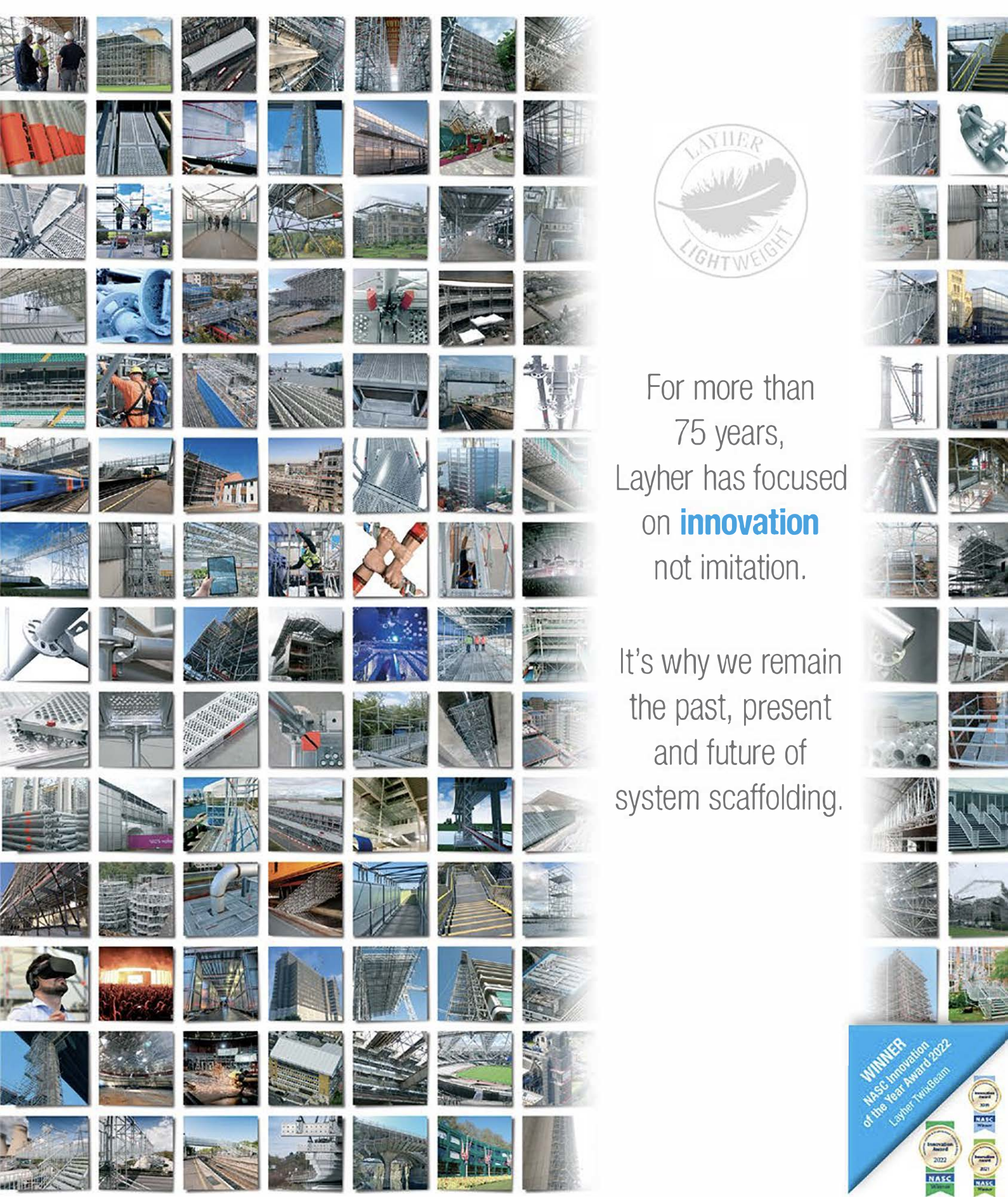
With the scaffold build now fully underway it was imperative to keep the motion going. *“We attended daily coordination meetings during the day and ensured this information was handed over to the night shift teams,”* said Paul. *“Ongoing design amendments continued throughout the programme to modify the scaffold for crane operations.”* Thanks to the KAEFER temporary works team’s agility, disruption to other trades was minimised, allowing for project timelines to be met.

Once the scaffold build was completed, it was handed over to the KAEFER containment team to encapsulate the structure. Over 2,400m<sup>2</sup> of flame retardant shrink wrap material was used to create an enclosed habitat for the KAEFER coatings team to complete blasting works. This habitat contained the garnet blasting medium used in the coating’s preparation works. The habitat also protects the three-coat phenolic epoxy-polyamide PIC 100 coatings scheme as it cures. The KAEFER coatings team is applying this scheme to 26,000m<sup>2</sup> of steel across the inside of both containment liners.

The scaffold build and containment took, including downtime for bad weather and crane availability, 52 nights. *“These efforts allowed project critical operations to continue, meaning Hinkley Point C is one step closer to providing zero-carbon electricity for around six million homes,”* said Paul. *“We’re proud to be playing our part and it’s a good feeling to know that whatever challenges we’re set, our team are equipped ready to handle them.”*

**Do you have a project that you’re particularly proud of?**

We’d like to hear from you, email us at [editor@nasc.org.uk](mailto:editor@nasc.org.uk) with a summary of the project and maybe it too could feature in Scaffolding Insider.



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# NASC MEMBERSHIP CHARTER: WHY PAYE IS AT THE HEART OF MODERNISATION

Three months ago, the NASC Membership Charter was updated and further modernised to make sure that membership requirements realistically fitted today's scaffolding businesses.

One of the most significant changes was to remove the requirement for scaffolding operatives to be predominantly (51%) directly employed (PAYE). This change has sparked many lively discussions within the industry, some well informed and others less so. Below we clarify what the changes actually are and why they were made. Jamie McGuire, Head of Business Development, comments: "NASC advocates for the highest standards and best practices in contract scaffolding and the new Charter focuses on exactly that. When it comes to contract staff, all of the workforce must be legally onboarded, briefed, given the correct PPE - all to the same high standards as those who are directly employed. Our NASC Compliance Officers are looking to ensure all contractors are inducted, trained and embedded into the company's working ethos."

Looking a little deeper into the rationale behind this change, we can review the context, challenges and objectives that prompted NASC to reconsider its PAYE requirement.

**Diverse Business Models:** The construction industry has evolved significantly in recent years, witnessing the emergence of various business models and workforce arrangements. Many companies now engage subcontractors and use agencies rather than maintaining a permanent workforce. Some do this through choice but some because operatives do not wish to be employed directly, meaning the company directors have to consider alternative labour models. NASC recognised the need to adapt its membership criteria to accommodate these diverse business structures and employment practices in the modern construction industry, while not reducing the standard of scaffolding.

**Promoting Compliance and Best Practices:** While adjusting the PAYE requirement, NASC remains steadfast in its commitment to upholding high standards of professionalism, safety and compliance within scaffolding. The confederation continues to emphasise the importance of adhering to relevant legislation, industry standards and best practices, regardless of the method of contracting the workforce.

**Improved Quality:** Over the past few years the PAYE level has gradually been reduced from 90% to 75%, then to 51%. This has been as a direct result of changes in workforces and the way NASC-approved contractors were having to contract their labour. The reality was that training was equally reducing, so by removing the blunt test of a percentage, the entire workforce becomes subject to the increased rigour of the training, briefing and PPE requirements.

**Flexibility and Adaptability:** The decision to change the PAYE requirement underpins NASC's commitment to remaining flexible and adaptable in response to evolving industry dynamics and regulatory changes. Recognising

that rigid and outdated membership criteria could potentially limit NASC's relevance and outreach, the organisation sought to create a more inclusive membership Charter that aligns with the evolving needs and practices of its members and the wider construction industry.



## Implications and Benefits

The decision to change the PAYE requirement for NASC membership carries several implications and benefits for both the association and its members.

Wayne Connolly, Vice President of NASC and Chair of the Membership Compliance Committee, comments: "The simple truth is that NASC should not be tying the hands of its members on what is effectively a commercial business decision. The blunt PAYE test simply was not achieving the desired need to ensure the labour used by NASC members met the standards. We have seen PAYE staff that do not meet the standard and contract operatives that do... as a result a fresh, more up-to-date approach is needed. NASC now looks at all the operative workforce and wants to ensure they are trained, supervised, briefed, have the correct PPE and that the NASC member is given the freedom to manage them in accordance with NASC standards. After all, you can be a bad employer through PAYE as well. In addition, it has become increasingly clear that there is no commercial benefit in using contract labour as opposed to PAYE, especially if you factor in the additional management time and increased labour rates.

"Rest assured that NASC - and its members - are still of the belief that full direct labour is a better vehicle for employment and long term growth; however we recognise that flexibility is needed."

In summary, NASC's decision to change the PAYE requirement for membership reflects a strategic effort to adapt to the changing dynamics of the construction industry while maintaining its core values of professionalism, safety, and best practice. By embracing inclusivity, flexibility, and adaptability, NASC aims to strengthen its position as a leading advocate for excellence in contract scaffolding, fostering collaboration, innovation and continuous improvement across the sector.



Phil Goddard, NASC  
Business Development  
Manager

If you would like to discuss the Membership Charter or are interested in joining NASC, Phil can be contacted at [Phil.Goddard@nasc.org.uk](mailto:Phil.Goddard@nasc.org.uk)

# Photo of the Year

NASC members work on some extraordinary jobs that lend themselves to some equally extraordinary images. Now, NASC is looking for the very best photos to showcase the world of scaffolding. The Association has launched its new Photo of the Year competition, with the winner receiving a £100 Amazon voucher and being featured in Scaffolding Insider.

You can submit photos that are related to scaffolding in any way. This might be completed projects, artistic close-ups, colleagues at work, in-progress structures – just show your unique perspective.

You can enter by either sharing your pictures on social media using the hashtag #NASCPhoto2023 or by emailing the photos directly to [marketing@nasc.org.uk](mailto:marketing@nasc.org.uk)

## The deadline is close of business on 29 February

So get scrolling through all your photos now and send in your best. There is no entry fee and there are conditions, which can be found on the NASC website.

## REGIONAL MEETINGS

The latest set of NASC regional meeting dates has been announced. These important meetings are a great opportunity for members to meet face-to-face with NASC representatives, to hear the very latest about the benefits that membership offers, and to contribute to the development of both the Association and the wider industry. The meetings are also an opportunity to network with NASC Services & Ancillary Product members to see what value they can bring to your business.

On the agenda for these meetings will be an update on Careers and Recruitment with details on the new NASC Talent Portal, which will be delivered by Henry Anafi, NASC Training & Careers Manager. This is an opportunity for members to contribute to this very important project in the early stages.

Also on the agenda, NASC's newly appointed Business Development Manager, Phil Goddard, will be introducing himself to members and will provide an update on the important work he is doing involving major industry stakeholders and clients.

South West & South Wales	– Tuesday 27 February
Midlands	– Wednesday 28 February
Northern & North Wales	– Thursday 29 February
London & South East	– Tuesday 5 March
Scotland & NI	– Thursday 7 March



SCAN ME

## LATEST WEBINARS NOW ONLINE

NASC has made its recent webinars available online so members can access them at any time.

A very useful webinar on mental health and on NASC's new guidance document on mental health was delivered by NASC's Head of Technical Steve Kearney; this can be found at: [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=kXjYjox6n\\_0&t=2s](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=kXjYjox6n_0&t=2s)

NASC also delivered a webinar on its new Membership Charter, so to learn more about this, go to: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xTeYIsUKNDE>



## CISRS Labourer card reminder

NASC is reminding members that from 1 March 2024, delegates attending a CISRS Operative Training Scheme (COTS) course will only be eligible to apply for a CISRS Labourer card.

An initial 18-month CISRS Trainee Scaffolders card will only be issued upon successful completion of a CISRS Part 1 course. This will mean that all operatives holding the Trainee card will have received industry recognised training in basing out, erecting, and dismantling a range of scaffold structures including towers, birdcages, independents plus an introduction to relevant industry guidance and best practice.

This change allows the operative the full three years (2 x 18 months cards) to complete their relevant on-site experience, Part 2 course, S/NVQ2 and skills test.

Dave Mosley, CISRS Managing Director, said: *"Following these changes to the scheme rules, CISRS will monitor the industry feedback from training providers, delegates, and employers to ensure Part 1 content remains relevant and achievable. We want people to take advantage of the full life cycle of both trainee cards, as such will also keep an eye on the timescales that most operatives are taking to complete the required training, experience, and assessment."*

## Training survey

NASC is aware that there are currently many questions in the sector around the training and education system for scaffolding and access. The best way to address these questions is to understand the full picture, so NASC intends to conduct a comprehensive, structured review of the market and the needs of NASC members. This will help NASC and its partners, such as CISRS and the ITBs, to develop future training provision.

The first step is to understand the views of NASC members, so this month a training and education questionnaire is being issued to all NASC members asking for their input. The questionnaire will not only assess the current training market capacity but also the future needs of members.

The questionnaire will be straightforward and only take a few minutes but NASC would really appreciate your invaluable input. Please look out for it in your inbox.



SCAN ME

# SCAFFOLDERS SUFFER AS HOUSING MARKET STALLS

Michael Gove, Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, has once again sought to intervene in what can reasonably be called a housing crisis as he recently outlined the government's new planning system. However, with councils being given far more freedom to set lower housing targets and there being no clear plan to reinvigorate a creaking planning system, optimism is hard to find.

The Conservatives promised in their 2019 manifesto to build 300,000 homes a year in England. Underpinning that pledge was a requirement for local authorities to set their future housing plans according to a formula that took into account expected population growth. Last year, dozens of Conservative MPs threatened to amend the Levelling-up Bill if Gove did not drop the mandatory requirements for councils, a move that in effect would mean the end of the 300,000 target. Gove agreed to do so, publishing proposed changes to the national planning policy framework that would allow local authorities to treat the formula for setting housing targets as advisory rather than binding.

Since then, about 60 local authorities have withdrawn or delayed the publication of their housing plans as they wait for the new rules to be published – and the 300,000 new homes target has not once been hit.

According to a recent report by the non-partisan urban policy research unit Centre for Cities, Britain now has a severe housing



Secretary of State, Michael Gove

crisis. The organisation's recent report, *The Housebuilding Crisis*, says the UK has a building backlog of an incredible 4.3 million homes. Even if the government's target to build 300,000 new homes a year were to be reached, it would take half a century to catch up.

Are there any grounds for optimism at all? Not really, says Rico Wojtulewicz, Head of Policy and Market Insight at the House Builders Association: *"Interest rates have created an issue but that's not the main problem, which is the hangover from Covid and all the subsequent delays. It takes two years to plan a site and when Covid hit, planning stopped and everyone focused on finishing the sites they had going. So that has now caught up with us and meanwhile there's a chain reaction whereby the cost of materials and labour has gone up, so housebuilders are resubmitting sites to planning and delays continue."*

*"Hopes for a rebound have been quashed by the government changing regulations so that local authorities' building targets are now only advisory, not mandatory. Local Plans are not playing out as the government had hoped. Housebuilding companies are going to the wall or downsizing, and those that remain face more and more planning delays and that can become a cost too far."*

*"New houses in the Midlands and North-west are still selling well but other places, especially East Anglia and the South-east, are struggling. The North-east is slow and the South-west is expensive and not keen to build. With 49% of the housing sector being self-employed, and direct labour both complex and expensive, the supply chain can go under"*



very quickly, which means it may not be there to turn the taps back on when needed. There are no new players coming into the sector, there are fewer employees, less training... Overall, this is a really sticky patch for housing supply and I can't see things changing very quickly."

Karl Purple, Operations Director, Narford Scaffolding Limited, shares Rico's lack of optimism and says the developers are not helping matters. He explains: "It's not good – the work has been dropping away in the last year and the developers are just not speaking to us. We'd normally have weekly or monthly meetings to discuss progress but now we just wait to hear from them. We got beaten up last year on materials and labour and now we're being told nothing – which is hard to take after working so hard to build relationships with main contractors."

"As a company, we don't put all our eggs in one basket fortunately but housebuilding is a large part of the business and a proportion of our guys are highly skilled in this work. But it's hard to see a way out of this housing crisis, with politicians seeming to be ignoring it."

Scaffolding Insider spoke to a director of another scaffolding company working in the sector, who asked not to be named because of fears that it could affect their work. The director explained: "Communication from the housebuilders has been terrible. None of them have actually explained that they are going to slow down or stop – but all of them have. They're hard taskmasters and not particularly fair – they even want to talk discounts when there's no work. They always want more and more for less and less."

"It feels like they're running away from the situation and don't know what to do or say. The externally optimistic messaging from Contract Managers certainly doesn't match the reality. They're bashing their subcontractors in order to maintain their own profits. Subcontractors are barely hanging on in there. The lads are worried for their jobs and all the businesses like ours are looking for other work to sustain their companies."

"There are knock-on problems such as the housebuilders wanting all our scaffolding on their sites removing – but there's no room in the yard for all the gear so we have to look for somewhere else to store it: another cost."

"One of the most frustrating things is that housebuilders are all different and ask for different things. We've got six SSIPS (Safety Schemes in Procurement) – it's crazy. It costs

so much money and time to maintain them all.

"I don't know what the answer is. The Help to Buy scheme really helped – maybe something like that is needed again."

The frustration in the voice of this director is echoed in figures produced in a new report by the Home Builders Federation (HBF), Close Brothers Property Finance and Travis Perkins plc about SMEs in the sector. The report says:

- 93% of SMEs cite delays in securing planning permission as a major barrier to growth
- 91% say planning departments in local authorities are under-resourced, which is hindering growth of SME home builders
- 46% of SME developers say the cost of obtaining planning permission has risen by over 30% in the past three years – even before December's planning fee rises were introduced
- 72% claim interest rate rises have been a major obstacle in the past year
- Just 13% think the Government's current approach on housing and planning was positive for first time buyers (down from 39% in 2022).

Stewart Baseley, Executive Chairman of the Home Builders Federation, said: "The house building industry faces some major barriers to delivery and all indicators now show sharp falls in supply. SMEs in particular are unable to manage the delays caused by the collapsing of the planning system and the lack of capacity in planning departments."

"The increasingly onerous policy and regulatory environment has seen the number of SME builders plummet in recent years, and we urgently need to see a reversal of the anti-development approach by Government or more companies will disappear."

"SMEs are vital to the industry's ability to deliver the homes we need and play a vital role in training and communities across the country."

It's a depressing picture all round. Does Rico Wojtulewicz have any words of encouragement?



"It is hard to see how change will come, even if there is a change in government. The government's Design Code may achieve something but it will take a while to get moving, especially if the localism agenda remains. And even if we do suddenly get going, large sites take a while to get moving again, so the impact could be five years away."

To help members in this challenging time, NASC is providing all members with a new leaflet promoting the benefits of using a NASC member contractor.

The new leaflet will be launched with NASC's client engagement programme at the end of its regional meetings.

# Services & Ancillary Products Members



If you're looking for a specialist service to support your scaffolding company, check out NASC's Services & Ancillary Products members below:

**360 Degrees Consultancy Ltd**  
Buxton SK17 6HX  
T: 07787 408544  
E: karl@360degreesconsultancy.co.uk  
www.360degreesconsultancy.co.uk

**A**  
**ADI Scaffold Products Ltd**  
Brierley Hill DY5 1TX  
T: 01384 483657 E: sales@scaffoldfixings.co.uk  
www.scaffoldfixings.co.uk  
**All Aspects Scaffolding Ltd T/A All Aspects Scaffolding Safety Services**  
Grays RM16 3HU  
T: 01375 893590  
E: info@allaspectscaffoldsafety.co.uk  
www.allaspectscaffolding.co.uk

**Avontus Software Ltd**  
Ely CB7 4WH  
T: 03303 801 349  
E: sales@avontus.co.uk  
www.avontus.com

**B**  
**Beacon Group International Products Ltd T/A Leach's**  
Hereford HR2 6BQ  
T: 01432 346 800  
E: sales@leachs.com  
www.leachs.com

**Brady Corporation Ltd T/A Scaffoldtag**  
Sully CF64 5AB  
T: 01446 725300  
E: customer.services@scaffoldtag.com  
www.scaffoldtag.co.uk

**BWS Clearmind Limited**  
Oldham OL3 5AY  
T: 07519 915 468  
E: bwsclearmind@gmail.com  
Bwsclearmind.co.uk

**C**  
**Cactus Security**  
Herne Bay CT6 9AS  
T: 01227 365 000  
E: info@cactussecurity.co.uk  
www.cactussecurity.co.uk  
**Carney Consultancy Ltd**  
North Shields NE30 1JE  
T: 01912 963 652  
E: info@carneyconsultancy.co.uk  
https://www.carneyconsultancy.co.uk/

**Citation Ltd**  
Wilmslow SK9 5AR  
T: 0345 844 1111  
E: hello@citation.co.uk  
www.citation.co.uk

**Clarke Health and Safety Consultants Ltd**  
Liverpool L16 4PN  
T: 0151 722 8268  
E: markclarke207@btinternet.com  
www.clarkehealthandsafety.com

**Computer and Design Services Ltd**  
T/A SMART Scaffolder  
Broadstone BH18 8AX  
T: 01202 603031  
E: sales@smartscaffolder.com  
www.smartscaffolder.com

**Croner-i Ltd**  
London SE1 8NW  
T: 07970 016 674  
E: philip.chapman@croneri.co.uk  
www.croneri.co.uk

**E**  
**Easy Inspect Ltd**  
Epsom KT17 2JJ  
T: 0203 576 1278  
E: info@easy-inspect.co.uk  
www.easy-inspect.co.uk

**Ensise Ltd**  
Gravesend DA13 0QB  
T: 07743 364 260  
E: john@ensise.co.uk  
www.ensise.co.uk

**F**  
**Falconbridge Site Security Ltd**  
Nottingham NG16 5AZ  
T: 01773 776 996  
E: office@falconbridge.co.uk  
www.falconbridgesecurity.co.uk  
**Footprint WFM**  
Belfast BT9 7GQ  
T: 02890 767 002  
E: ciaran.boyd@footprintwfm.com  
www.footprintwfm.com

**G**  
**GPS Services**  
Horley RH6 8JZ  
T: 07854 697789  
E: info@gps-services.uk  
www.gps-services.uk



**H**  
**Height Industries Ltd**  
Salford M6 8QN  
T: 07860 472300  
E: enquiries@heightindustries.co.uk  
www.heightindustries.com  
**Houlihan Safety Services Ltd**  
Hornchurch RM12 5BB  
T: 07930 606 665  
E: houlihanassociates@googlemail.com  
http://www.houlihansafetyervices.co.uk/

**Hydrajaws Ltd**  
Tamworth B77 1AG  
T: 01675 430 370  
E: sales@hydrajaws.co.uk  
www.hydrajaws.co.uk

**I**  
**iPhorms Ltd**  
Macclesfield SK11 7HG  
T: 01625 464 238  
E: nigel@iphorms.com  
www.iphorms.com

**J**  
**J Mac Safety Systems Ltd**  
Stockton-on-Tees TS18 2PJ  
T: 01642 563 696  
E: sales@jmacsafetysystems.co.uk  
www.jmacsafetysystems.co.uk  
**J S Safety Associates**  
Welling DA16 2EP  
T: 07792271308  
E: jsaoffice@gmail.com  
www.jsasafetyassociates.com

**K**  
**KEWAZO GmbH**  
Garching bei München D 85748  
T: +49 1577 8497982  
E: info@kewazo.com  
www.kewazo.com/



# Services & Ancillary Products Members

(continued)

If you're looking for a specialist service to support your scaffolding company, check out NASC's Services & Ancillary Products members below:

## L

### Lakeside Industries Ltd T/A Alto Access Products

Redditch B98 7SE  
T: 01527 500 577  
E: sales@altoaccess.com  
www.altoaccess.com

### LDS Hire & Sales Ltd T/A G-Deck

Leicester LE2 5NG  
T: 0116 251 0352  
E: office@gdecking.com  
www.gdecking.com

## M

### McCarron Coates Ltd

Leeds LS27 0BZ  
T: 0113 298 3489  
E: luigi@mccarroncoates.com  
www.mccarroncoates.com

### MOR1X Business and Consultancy

London SW14 8HX  
T: 07555 800700  
E: des@mor1x.co.uk  
www.mor1x.co.uk

## N

### NexGen Insurance Solutions Ltd

East Malling ME19 6BJ  
T: 01732 496 000  
E: enquiries@nexgeninsurance.co.uk  
https://nexgeninsurance.co.uk/

### Nicholas James Health & Safety Solutions Ltd

Dartford DA1 2EN  
T: 01322 472995  
E: enquiries@nicholasjamessafety.com  
www.nicholasjamessafety.com

## O

### Osborn Scaffolding Services

East Sussex TN22 4LA  
T: 07935 748 683  
E: osbornscaffolding@gmail.com

## P

### Portman Finance Group

Northampton NN4 7SL  
T: 01604 761 276  
E: info@portmanassetfinance.co.uk  
www.portmanassetfinance.co.uk

## Q

### QSCL (Quintessence Safety Consultants Ltd)

Burnley BB12 6AQ  
T: 07432 032 443  
E: dave@quin-safe.co.uk  
www.quin-safe.co.uk

## S

### Safety & Access Ltd

Nottingham NG6 8WA  
T: 0115 979 4523  
E: safe@safetyaccess.co.uk  
www.safetyaccess.co.uk

### ScaffFloat

Penryn TR10 9LH  
T: 01326 702 260  
E: sales@scafffloat.co.uk  
www.scafffloat.co.uk/

### ScaffGap Ltd

Hornchurch RM12 5BB  
T: 07930 606665  
E: scaffgapltd@gmail.com  
www.scaffgap.co.uk

### Scaffmag

Grimsby DN31 3AT  
T: 01472 476 024  
E: sadmin@scaffmag.com  
www.scaffmag.com

### Scaffolding & Access Safety Consultants Ltd (SASC)

Seaview PO34 5JP  
T: 01983 613 666  
E: tony@sascasafety.co.uk  
www.sascasafety.co.uk

### SJB Safety Services Ltd

Antrim TN28 8SE  
T: 07902 011 622  
E: sjb.safetyservices@yahoo.com  
www.facebook.com/SJBSafetyservices/

### SP Group Global Ltd

Middlewich BT41 2SJ  
T: 0289 442 8611  
E: accounts@s-pgroup.com  
www.s-pgroup.com

### SpanSet Ltd

Middlewich CW10 0HX  
T: 01606 737494  
E: customerservices@spanset.co.uk  
www.spanset.co.uk

### Stay Safe Scaffold Products

Wareham BH20 4SP  
T: 01929 552 625  
E: info@ntgroup.co.uk  
www.scaffoldgate.co.uk



## StrikeSoft Ltd

Ware SG11 1PH  
T: 01920 823740 E: sales@strikesoft.co.uk  
www.strikesoft.co.uk

## T

### Training in Mind

Birmingham B43 6BP  
T: 07545 080 011  
E: traininginmind@outlook.com  
https://traininginmind.info

## V

### Vertex Training & Consultancy Ltd

Manchester M25 1PY  
T: 07920 557 234  
E: hello@vertexscaffoldingssafety.co.uk  
www.vertexscaffoldingssafety.co.uk

## W

### Winters Safety Services Ltd

Glasgow G68 0GL  
T: 01236 728290  
E: winters.safety@virgin.net  
www.winterssafetyservices.co.uk

### Worldwide Scaffold and Access Ltd

King's Lynn PE30 4DJ  
T: 01553 674 044  
E: tony@wwsa.co.uk  
www.wwsa.co.uk

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 ICC BELFAST

## *Schedule:*

- ◆ 8:00am – 4:00pm EXPO
- ◆ 9:00am – 4:30pm CONFERENCE
- ◆ 6:30pm – 01:00am BALL & AWARDS

with Guest Speaker

**DAVID MEADE**

International Business Speaker



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