

Scaffolding Insider

NEWS | FEATURES | COMMERCIAL | HEALTH & SAFETY

SEPTEMBER 2024

THE GOLDEN TICKET

Sky Scaffolding's
part in Wonka
triumph

BUSINESS BOOST

Why inclusivity
makes business
sense

PEOPLE FIRST

The workforce
challenges facing
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- ◆ 6:30pm – 01:00am BALL & AWARDS

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FROM THE EDITOR

I think it's fair to say that the creation of ScaffEx, the new Conference, Exhibition, Awards and Gala Dinner for the Scaffolding and Access sector, has energised the industry. Many people have told me that the industry has been waiting for something like this, and with tickets to the Conference selling well, a strong list of exhibitors booked in, and barely a handful of tickets left for the Awards Dinner, this does indeed seem to be the case.

This is reflected in this issue, which has leapt to a bumper 28 pages, full of news and features, including a look ahead to ScaffEx in Belfast at the end of November. On pages 11-12, you can hear directly from exhibitors about why they're attending and you can also find out the all-important Awards shortlists. The Scaffolding Excellence Awards have been rejuvenated this year with a different approach, focusing on ensuring a completely independent process with expert judges reviewing entries across nine categories. It's good to see such positive recognition for many smaller projects this year, the lifeblood of so many members and just as rich in quality as their larger counterparts.

One company who got involved in an unusual and fascinating project was Star Scaffolding, who helped build one of the main sets for the recent hit film, Wonka. You can read about how it all came together and what challenges they had to overcome on pages 13-16.

A challenge this industry continues to face is around recruitment and retention of staff and we have a couple of articles looking at different aspects of that. On pages 21-24, we look at why all companies in this sector should be seriously considering Equality, Diversity and Inclusion in their recruitment, retention and employment practices. There's not only a moral case for doing the right thing but a proven business case too – read more about that in the article.

NASC's CEO, Clive Dickin, is also a trained HR professional and he puts on his HR hat on pages 18-20 to look in some detail at the issues behind the current crisis. It's a fascinating dive down into a range of issues, and demonstrates what a complex and multi-faceted challenge remains ahead.

Clive also appears on pages 9-10, reviewing his first year in office and what progress has been made. There's also our usual Industry and NASC News pages to complete this edition.

I hope you find some articles to interest you and cause food for thought. More to come next month...

Until then, happy reading.



Nick Campion
Editor

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DAMAGE AFTER SCAFFOLDING COLLAPSE



Several cars were damaged after scaffolding blew off a roof on to a car park at Trident Industrial Park in the Tremorfa area of Cardiff.

Wales Online reported that South Wales Fire and Rescue Service received a report of the incident at 6:03pm on 19 August and a crew arrived at 6:05pm. It is believed that there are no injuries.

An eyewitness at the scene said that around 10 cars had been damaged in the incident, with the windscreens of some vehicles smashed. Photos from the scene show large cordons in place across the car park as fire officers dealt with the incident.

HOUSEBUILDING TARGETS REINSTATED

There is cautious optimism within the scaffolding industry, and construction sector more broadly, after Deputy Prime Minister Angela Rayner reinstated mandatory housebuilding targets for planning authorities across England.

This significant policy shift from the previous administration is part of Labour's ambition, as stated in their election manifesto, to build 1.5 million new homes in England by the next general election.

Rayner's new rules reverse last year's decision to dilute housing targets and Rayner has threatened government intervention should councils fail to develop adequate plans.

Labour believes the focus on brownfield land and their new 'grey belt' classification (areas on the edge of settlements and roads, including old petrol stations and car parks) should help streamline the approval process for new developments.

Achieving the target of 1.5 million homes by 2029 will require an almost twofold increase in the current annual output of 158,200 housing units in England. Rayner has set an even higher goal of 370,000 units per year, a figure that underscores the huge scale of this undertaking.

Industry leaders have responded positively to the announcement, with 33 major house-building companies, represented by the Home Builders Federation, expressing support for the government's reforms.

Richard Beresford, chief executive of the National Federation of Builders (NFB), highlighted the necessity

of removing barriers to construction and ensuring that policies not only facilitate planning approvals but also enable ground-breaking work. Colleague Rico Wojtulewicz, NFB's head of policy and market insight, called for greater attention to be paid to the role of SMEs, which are pivotal in training apprentices and building social housing.

Angela Rayner has also launched a new expert group to speed up delivery of stalled housing sites. The New Homes Accelerator will initially target 200 large sites which have outline or detailed plans ready to go but are yet to begin construction. The group consists of an experienced team from the Ministry of Housing and Homes England, which will work across government and with local councils to accelerate the build-out of housing schemes delayed by planning and red tape.

Sites to benefit will include Stretton Hall in Leicestershire, Tendring Colchester Borders Garden Community in Essex, and Biggleswade Garden Community in Central Bedfordshire.



Angela Rayner

PICTURE CREDIT: No.10

ALTRAD EYES BEERENBERG

Altrad has announced a voluntary cash offer to acquire all outstanding shares of Beerenberg AS, a prominent Norwegian provider of maintenance and modification services. This strategic move aligns with Altrad's ongoing efforts to expand its global footprint and enhance service offerings across various sectors.



Altrad's Co-CEO, Ran Oren, said: "We have admired Beerenberg from a distance for many years and have been impressed by the achievements of the management team and their talented people. Our objective is to build on this success by adding investment, skilled people, innovative products, and a broader range of services to support their clients' ambitions."

The acquisition will bring Beerenberg's 2,350 employees into the Altrad Group, where they will be integrated into Altrad's global network, which spans more than 55 countries.



SWIFT RESPONSE

In response to recent incidents where scaffolding has obstructed swift nest sites, RSPB volunteer Kerry Sabin-Dawson has issued a plea to scaffolding companies across the UK. This follows two cases where scaffolding unintentionally blocked the nests of swifts, a species now red-listed and at serious risk of extinction in the UK.

Speaking to Scaffmag, Kerry Sabin-Dawson pointed out that obstructing these nests' entry or exit routes is an offence under the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 – but there is also an ecological case, with swift populations in steep decline.

"Nest sites are often hidden," Sabin-Dawson explained, "but there are signs to look out for, such as the calls of nestlings, droppings, or adult swifts trying to access the site. Even if you don't see a nest, it doesn't mean one isn't there. That's why it's so important to check carefully before erecting scaffolding."

NO MORE WOMEN INTO CONSTRUCTION

The organisation Women Into Construction, which has been promoting gender equality in the industry since 2008, is now being closed due to what it calls a 'challenging economic climate for both the charitable and construction sectors.'



Managing Director Kath Moore said: "After 16 years of changing the face of construction, Women into Construction has taken the difficult decision to cease trading. We know that there is still much to be done to transform diversity in the construction industry, and we are proud of all that we have achieved over the past 16 years.

"Over 4,700 women have had in depth support, 3,000 completed industry training, 1,300 completed work placements, which led to an amazing 1,300 women gaining employment.

"We've worked with over 350 companies and forged partnerships with training providers, government agencies, local stakeholders and industry bodies to further our cause and support the industry.

"Our work has transformed the lives of over 1,300 women who now work across the sector – and we know that alongside all their colleagues and supporters, this mighty army will continue to challenge and change the construction companies in which they now work."

The organisation has appointed CBW Recovery LLP to manage the closure.

PERI UK TURNS 35

PERI UK recently marked a significant milestone, celebrating 35 years of operations in the UK construction industry.



Since its inception in 1989, PERI UK has established itself as a leading name in temporary works solutions within the construction sector. As the eighth subsidiary under the global PERI Group, the company has steadily expanded its influence and offerings in the UK market.

The journey began with its first project in 1990 when PERI played a pivotal role in the construction of the Queen Elizabeth II bridge. The company designed and supplied VARIO shutters for the wall formwork, complemented by its CB 240 climbing system, which facilitated pours at a height of five metres.

Ian Hayes, Managing Director of PERI UK, said: "PERI's success over the past 35 years has been made possible by the unwavering support and dedication of our employees, along with the loyalty of our customers and supply chain partners."

SUSTAINABILITY SUCCESS – BUT BARRIERS REMAIN

New research has revealed that the number of net-zero projects and sustainability targets being hit in the built environment sector are on the rise. However, barriers related to costs persist.

The Sustainable Futures Report from built environment platform NBS, developed in collaboration with the Royal Institute of British Architects (RIBA), surveyed nearly 600 professionals in the built environment to assess attitudes and practices around sustainability.

The report, which is the fourth such document, highlights the construction sector's increasing focus on environmental sustainability, showing a marked improvement in both the number of projects with green objectives and the success rate in meeting these goals, compared to previous years.

Key findings from the report include:

- 70% of construction projects now incorporate sustainability targets
- 43% of industry professionals report successfully

achieving sustainability goals, up from a third in 2022

- A 13% increase in net-zero projects compared to the previous year's report
- 64% of professionals have worked on a net-zero project in the past year, a significant rise from 49% in 2022
- 16% growth in the number of organisations measuring their carbon footprint, with 70% now tracking emissions
- 14% rise in firms setting carbon reduction goals, with 76% now doing so, compared to 62% previously
- 53% of companies have adopted carbon offsetting strategies, up from 38% in 2021

NBS' parent company Byggfakta Group's head of sustainability, Dr Lee Jones, said: "The construction industry's green momentum is building, with NBS reporting a small boost in net-zero projects and environmental targets being met. These are welcome figures and show that, whilst much more must be done, the sector is progressively aiming for a sustainable future."

INSOLVENCIES REMAIN PREVALENT

Construction firms accounted for 16.9% of all insolvencies in England and Wales in June 2024, according to the Insolvency Service, with 397 registered construction businesses becoming insolvent.



The Insolvency Service

In the year to June 2024, the total number of construction firms becoming insolvent was 4,690. This was a 2.1% increase on the 4,595 insolvencies recorded in the year to June 2023, and a 53.3% increase on the 3,060 in the year to June 2020.

Of all cases where the industry was captured in the statistics, construction experienced the highest number of insolvencies in the year to June 2024.

The Insolvency Service said that while the insolvency rate has increased since the lows seen in 2020 and 2021, it remains much lower than the peak of 113.1 per 10,000 companies seen during the 2008-09 recession.

In Scotland, there were 24 construction company insolvencies in July 2024, accounting for 20.5% of all insolvencies in the country. This was three more than in June 2024, and five more than in July 2023.

Within the construction industry, firms categorised as providing specialised construction activities are consistently the most affected across Great Britain.

A multitude of factors feed into company insolvency, though the construction industry is particularly exposed to financial difficulty. This is in part due to the nature of contract cycles and the challenges of cash flow management that contractors and subcontractors have to deal with.

The Insolvency Service data also showed that 349 – that's 24% – of self-employed or trader bankruptcies in the year to April 2024 were in construction in England and Wales.

HEAVY LOSS FOR BAM



According to annual results posted at Companies House, BAM Construction reported a loss of £31.4m in 2023. In the previous year, profit of £21.6m was recorded.

The company's profitability in the year to 31 December 2023 was impacted by high inflation and 'unprecedented levels of supply chain liquidations'. Bam Construction has recently been troubled by issues with its Co-op Live job in Manchester.

Revenue was also down, from £900.9m to £897.6m. The value of BAM Construction's forward order book stands at £606m, down from £971.6m at the end of the previous year. The company said: "Orderbook has been impacted by project commencement delays as we support customers in addressing affordability challenges, through extended PCSAs, as a result of the inflation and interest rate environment. This is showing signs of easing with increased numbers of projects expected to come to market in 2024."

The company recently began a redundancy consultation with 40 staff working at the Northern and London arms of its construction business. The firm employs 2,200 people across its UK construction division.

THIRD TIME LUCKY

Media mogul Richard Desmond has gained planning at the third attempt to redevelop his former Isle of Dogs printworks site in London with a vast luxury flats scheme.

The £1 billion, 1,360-home Millwall outer dock waterfront plan will see the comprehensive redevelopment of the 6.15 hectare brownfield site, formerly occupied by his Northern & Shell publishing company's Westferry Printworks.

A third of the homes will now be affordable – a major point of contention in previous applications. Thirteen buildings ranging from 4 to 31 storeys will be built in four phases over an eight-year building programme.

The scheme also includes a 1,200-place secondary school, a rejuvenated dock front, over two hectares of public open space together with ground-floor shops, restaurants, community centre and workspaces.



CHRIS SEDGEMAN WINS

NASC member Chris Sedgeman Scaffolding has won the Construction News Specialists Award for Access & Scaffolding Specialist of the Year. The judges of this prestigious award said: *"The panel felt our winners exuded pride, knowledge and passion which clearly runs through the core of the business. The success they have achieved has been built on the foundations developing and investing in their workforce and systems, including a new training centre and interactive training tools. They are clearly invested in leaving a positive legacy in their community and industry."*



DELAYS LEAD TO LOSSES FOR YUANDA

Project delays have led to envelope specialist Yuanda UK falling to an £11.8m pre-tax loss. The UK's seventh-largest envelope contractor fell into the red in the year ending 31 December 2023, dropping from a pre-tax profit of £635,000 in 2022. Directors attributed the loss to prolonged programmes on its ongoing projects, as well as fluctuating shipping costs, the war in Ukraine, inflation, the pound's performance, and recruitment and retention of skilled staff.

In the last 12 months, turnover also halved – from £103.3m to £50.9m – although the firm won new projects worth £48m across the year. Yuanda focuses on bespoke facades and has in recent years worked on prestige skyscrapers including the £140m One Blackfriars and the £400m 100 Bishopsgate, both for Multiplex.

Directors reported that the firm would depend on its Chinese parent company for support 'for the foreseeable future'.

NEWS IN BRIEF

Traffic breaches

The Building Safety Group (BSG) has reported a 33% increase in major traffic management breaches on construction sites. The report was based on 7,000 site inspections carried out during the first half of 2024, when comparing Q1 to Q2. This concerning rise comes in the context of around seven workers dying as a result of accidents involving vehicles or mobile plant on construction sites each year, according to the HSE, with a further 93 seriously injured.

DIO chooses six

The Defence Infrastructure Organisation has revealed its six partner contractors for a new alliance to build single living accommodation for the Armed Forces. The chosen firms are: Bowmer + Kirkland, ExtraSpace Solutions, Kier McAvoy, Kier Metek, Laing O'Rourke and REDS10; between them, they will build 1,600 bed spaces over the next six years, under the deal thought to be worth £2bn.

Costain profits double

Costain doubled pre-tax profit to £17m in the first half of the year as operating margins strengthened across the business to a group-wide 2.5%. On the back of the strong performance and cash position, chief executive Alex Vaughan announced a £10m share buy-back to start with immediate effect. Vaughan said Costain was now on track to meet margin targets of 3.5% and 4.5% for this year and next.

Scottish Water tender

Scottish Water has set out plans to invite tenders in November for places on a framework to deliver a £6.3bn investment plan over 13 years. The water company is looking for both civils infrastructure and MEICA asset delivery partners. Successful bidders will be announced before April 2026. Scottish Water aims to deliver the programme of works under an Enterprise model of delivery. This bespoke contract will be based on the NEC4 Alliance model. A bidders' day will be held on 24 October 2024 in Glasgow at the Crowne Plaza.

Super cluster

The 40-acre Gloucestershire Science and Technology Park in Berkeley has been sold to developer Chiltern Vital Berkeley Ltd (CVB), who plan to create the UK's first low carbon 'super cluster' for nuclear research, education and AI. Chris Turner, Chief Executive of Chiltern Vital Group, said: *"I look forward to being involved in turning Berkeley/Oldbury into a low carbon supercluster over the next decade and supporting the positive impact that this project will have on the local, regional and national economy."*

Collapse leaves £2.3m unpaid

The collapse of leading Scottish façade specialist Charles Henshaw & Sons has left unpaid bills of £2.3m, with more than 100 suppliers and subcontractors being hit by the demise of the firm, which was working for main contractors including BAM, Balfour Beatty and Multiplex. Henshaw offered full design, fabrication, supply and installation of building façades across various sectors, including commercial, residential, and public buildings. It suffered financial pressures from additional costs in relation to legacy contracts, and significant main contractor delays on start dates for new projects, leading to reduced margins and trading losses.

REFLECTIONS ON A YEAR OF CHANGE

In July 2023, NASC appointed Clive Dickin as CEO. The Board chose him for his energy, drive, ambition and proven ability to effect positive change in trade associations. After just over a year at the helm, Scaffolding Insider asked Clive a few questions on that first year.

Scaffolding Insider: Thank you for talking to us Clive. What were your first impressions as you joined NASC?

Clive Dickin: I immediately saw that NASC was something of a sleeping giant, with huge potential to do more for its members and the wider industry. NASC's standards were already highly regarded by clients and its guidance equally highly regarded by scaffolding contractors but it was really only in the foothills in terms of its potential.

SI: How have you been able to build on what was already being offered to members?

CD: NASC has continued to provide its members with the critical information and documents they need to run their businesses effectively, efficiently and at a competitive advantage. We have added to the guidance documents for which the organisation is renowned, with the innovative digital SG6 training video signalling a new way forward, and work beginning on TG30 for System Scaffold, whose first part will be launched at ScaffEx. We have extended our guidance into areas such as PAYE, VAT and Mental Health and issued safety bulletins on base plates and fire risk management.

SI: What about maintaining standards for members and prospective members?

CD: We have made major inroads into improving the audit process and standards, making changes around NASC's entry criteria that reflect the modern industry and also allowing compliance officers more time to inspect the quality of the scaffolding and the structure of the business.

This has seen a growth in membership, making NASC the largest and most dynamic scaffolding and access body in the UK.

Members should be reassured that standards have certainly not slipped, as evidenced by the applicant rejection rate of up to 42% at points over the past year. We will not reduce standards: it is important that NASC helps lead the whole industry into higher standards of safety and competence.

We have tightened our complaints procedure and where there is non-compliance, we act quickly and have a forthright dialogue with the member to ensure speedy corrective or disciplinary action. Taking this positive reinforcement approach has resulted in zero expulsions this year, with many members improving enormously.

There is more still to do, including bedding in a new governance structure to allow for further improvements in standards and the audit process over the next three years.



Clive Dickin, NASC CEO



SI: One of the biggest new developments we've seen this year is the creation and launch of ScaffEx. What was your thinking behind that?

CD: The scaffolding industry has been crying out for an event like this and the enthusiasm with which conference delegates, award entrants, exhibitors and dinner attendees have become involved proves that. With its Conference, Exhibition, Awards and Gala Dinner, ScaffEx has quickly become the leading event in the sector. Currently, we have over 1000 delegates registered and I'm hoping for even more.

It will be a wonderful day of engaging with peers, contractors, suppliers, decision-makers and leaders all in one place. Attendees will be able to engage with all the latest discussions in the sector, as well as find out the very latest product and service developments that will help their business. We have top quality exhibitors booked in, an outstanding speaker line-up and a star-studded gala dinner.

The Scaffolding Excellence Awards are now fully independent and judged by a panel of highly-esteemed industry figures. Excellence happens at every level, and I'm delighted to see changes to Award categories that mean we have far more smaller projects quite rightly getting their moment in the sun. I see ScaffEx as going from strength to strength in years to come, with interest already high for 2025.

SI: We've seen some fairly significant changes recently regarding training and CISRS. What's happening there and what are you trying to achieve?

CD: Yes, we have begun to see developments in education and training: members responded in high numbers to our recent questionnaire about training provision and we are now undertaking further research on what training the industry needs. This will inform how CISRS operates in the future and what its provision looks like. We have certainly heard what members have said about training and we are determined to ensure CISRS provision aligns with what the industry wants and needs. In many ways, CISRS is embarking on a programme of transformation much as NASC has been on.

We have already begun to make changes, such as the availability of Health & Safety testing online instead of having to travel to a centre. We are also building a relationship with Anglia Ruskin University which will mark a step-change to CISRS provision – watch out for further announcements.

SI: Looking outwards, what kind of work have you been able to do to enhance NASC members' reputation and make their membership worthwhile in terms of winning work?

CD: This year, we have really reinforced the way we back our members and help create more opportunities for them by working hard to engage clients and aid them to understand why they should only specify NASC members for their scaffolding needs. Through both direct conversations and the ongoing #ItHasToBeNASC campaign, we have brought big names on board, such as the National Federation of Builders, Scottish Building Federation, and multiple principal contractors such as Vinci, who will now only engage with NASC members. We have also written to every local authority in the UK to explain how scaffolding is procured and how they can ensure they only use high-quality scaffolding businesses and avoid incidents such as the high-profile collapses we've seen recently. We have also raised concerns about road permits being issued to unqualified organisations for temporary works. This is just the beginning of our war on poor standards.

While that happens on a macro level, on the micro level we have made membership more of a benefit by holding member prices on things like the e-portal but trebling

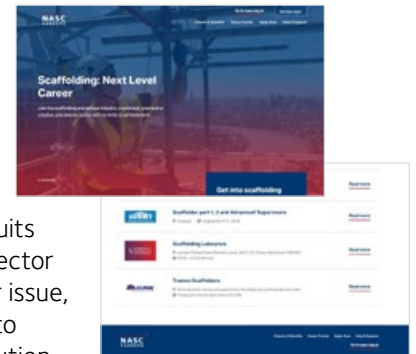


non-member rates. That extra income will help fund further improvements for members. We have changed compliance sheets so it's immediately clear if contractors are dealing with a member or a non-member.

At ScaffEx, we will launch the NASC Common Assessment Standard, whereby NASC members will be able to meet all the CAS obligations by taking the NASC audit. When tendering for larger scaffolding contracts, NASC members are often required to have completed a selection questionnaire or a pre-qualification questionnaire and an additional test using a service provided by one of up to 13 assessment bodies, such as Achilles, CHAS and ConstructionLine. These will be made redundant over time by the CAS – and with NASC becoming a Recognised Assessment Body, we will be able to offer CAS to contractor members in an efficient and cost-effective way. For members who say, 'but my client says we have to be a member of X,Y and Z schemes' – please be assured NASC has a letter from the CLC pointing out clearly that you only need to be a member of one scheme.

SI: The other major launch this year has been the Talent Solution. Why was this necessary and what do you hope to achieve?

CD: The lack of new recruits and the skills gap in the sector is well known and a major issue, so we have taken action to address it. The Talent Solution aims to connect potential new entrants and align them with reputable employers via a comprehensive platform to streamline the recruitment process and promote the diverse opportunities within the sector. In its first six months over 400 have registered. The Talent Solution provides a user-friendly interface for candidates to register and connect with employers and the online portal also carries lots of valuable information for potential recruits, promoting the sector, its opportunities and its roles. NASC members have exclusive access to the Talent Solution – and can also acquire a comprehensive Talent Pack, which includes display materials and interactive equipment designed to showcase the exciting and diverse opportunities within the scaffolding and access sector. This will remain a major focus for us in the year ahead.



Clive visiting UK Access Solutions' Jim Cotterill and Ashley Rookes

SI: It sounds like a huge amount has been achieved this year?

CD: So much has been achieved in a short time, which is only possible thanks to the NASC team's incredible dedication and fortitude. This is just the beginning of NASC being a major force for good in the scaffolding and access sector, and we have a great team to make this happen. I'd like to record my sincere thanks to Lynn Way, who finishes her term as Past-president and to David Brown for his Presidency, and I look forward to working with Wayne Connolly over the next two years as we build on what has been achieved over the past year.

SCAFFEX 2024: TWO MONTHS TO GO



The clock is ticking down to the industry’s brand new, premier Conference, Exhibition, Awards and Gala Dinner, ScaffEx. The event will be held on 29 November 2024 in Belfast.

The Conference is entirely free to members and non-members alike and there are a host of fantastic speakers to hear from. The Exhibition will feature 30 leading names in the industry, while 800 people will gather for the Scaffolding Excellence Awards Gala Dinner.



James Butcher



David Abraham

More speakers engaged for Conference

The Conference, which is free to attend and runs through the day on 29 November, has gained two further speakers to add to its line-up, which is set to inform, guide, discuss and stimulate debate.

The new speakers are James Butcher from the National Federation of Builders (NFB), who will speak in the Meet the Buyer segment; and David Abraham from Fulcrum Scaffold Safety and a NASC Award winner in 2023: he will speak about the training sector.

Other speakers already confirmed include: Suzannah Nichol, CEO of Build UK; Julio Black, Head of Product & Marketing at AT-PAC; Tim Balcon, Chief Executive Officer of the Construction Industry Training Board (CITB); Dr Yasuo Toyosawa, President of the Scaffolding & Construction Equipment Association of Japan (SCEA).

SCAFFOLDING EXCELLENCE AWARDS: THE SHORTLISTS

The new Scaffolding Excellence Awards shortlists have now been announced. Judged by a completely independent panel of industry experts, these are the outstanding companies and individuals who made it to the shortlists.

Apprentice of the Year



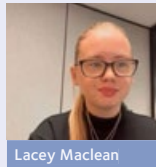
Albie Cooper



Harrison Mapley



JJ Aicken



Lacey Maclean

Albie Cooper, Benchmark Scaffolding
Harrison Mapley, Star Scaffolding
James Joseph Aicken, K2 Scaffolding
Lacey Maclean, Everlast Scaffolding

Design of the Year

Buckley Design Solutions – Blackburn College
Lyndon SGB – New Register House
Scaffold Erection Services – HM Prison Birmingham
SRK Scaffolding – Industrial storage tank

Product of the Year

GKR Scaffolding – Soterdevice
PERI – PERI UP Cladding
Layher – FW System

Service of the Year

Footprint – Interactive project tracking
Safety & Access Ltd – Scaffold training programme
Costain/Skanska (SCS Railways) – Scaffold request app

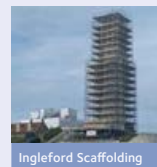
Lifetime Achievement Award

Lee Rowswell
Tom Gent
Alwyn Richards
Ray Johnson

Project of the Year – Small



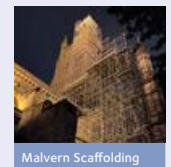
Advanced NI



Ingleford Scaffolding



Shield Services Group



Malvern Scaffolding

Advanced NI – Royal Victoria Hospital, Belfast
Ingleford Scaffolding – St Mary’s Lighthouse, Whitley Bay
Shield Services Group – Cathedral Park, Bristol
Malvern Scaffolding – Worcester Cathedral

Project of the Year – Medium

Chris Sedgeman – Market House, Penzance
Everlast Scaffolding – City Exchange, Leeds
Inner City Scaffolding – Parkside Court, Chelmsford
Scaffolding Access – Former Somerfield Store, Newhaven,

Project of the Year – Large

Lyndon SGB – New Register House, Edinburgh
SCA Group – Centenary Quays, Southampton
SRK – Inovyn Runcorn Power Station
V3 Group (CASS) – The Milliners, Bristol

Project of the Year – Major

Crossway Scaffolding – Lloyds Trinity Road, Halifax
GKR Scaffolding – 25 Canada Square, Canary Wharf
Scaffold Erection Services – HM Prison Birmingham

Scaffolding Excellence Awards judging panel

- Dr James MacFadden (Chair), Senior Responsible CSA Engineer, Sellafeld
- Caroline Gumble, CEO, Chartered Institute of Building
- Ken Johnson, No Falls Foundation

- Andrew Stotesbury, former Temporary Works Lead, Lendlease
- Zilvinas Rubinas, Principal Structural Engineer, Goldberg Engineering
- Tim Balcon, Chief Executive, CITB
- Damini Sharma, CEO, The OM Group

Meet the Exhibitors



Explore the latest innovations in scaffolding and access from the UK's top suppliers and service providers to the scaffolding industry. Learn about cutting-edge products and services that are shaping the future of the industry. Scaffolding Insider asked some of the exhibitors why they jumped at the chance to attend ScaffEx...

"There's no question that ScaffEx will be the largest scaffolding industry event of the year. As the construction industry continues to evolve, it's essential for contractors across the scaffolding sector to stay ahead with solutions that offer both efficiency and safety. We're excited to use this opportunity to connect with industry professionals and showcase how trades across the entire construction sector—not just scaffolding contractors—can benefit from integrating the PERI UP range into their projects, whether for access, shoring, or managing structural challenges. The event will be particularly special for us as we'll be joined by our Northern Ireland-based customer, K2 Scaffolding, who we've been proud to support since the start of their system scaffolding journey. This will also give us the platform to prove how strong collaborations between suppliers and contractors, along with versatile systems like PERI UP, can positively impact projects."

Charles Stratford, Business Development Manager, PERI UP

"NASC has always provided great opportunities for its members to expand our business and reach customers. ScaffEx this year is one of those opportunities that allows us to showcase our products and connect with more people in the industry in one venue. Imagine meeting hundreds of potential customers in one day—now that's a really good day for the business!"

Nick Munster, Director of SP Group & SP Gilray

"Specialist access system innovator Pilosio UK, in collaboration with our UK Approved Installer Partner APA Height Access, will be attending ScaffEx 2024 to present the safety, productivity, and end-value benefits of the cutting-edge Flydeck suspended access system. Pilosio UK and APA believe that Flydeck is the game-changing suspended system that the UK market has been waiting for."

Andy Graham, Managing Director, Pilosio UK

"As soon as we heard the details about ScaffEx, we booked an exhibition stand straight away. We attend as many events organised by NASC as we can, as they are always expertly run and provide excellent value for money."

Adrian Brine, Partnerships Manager, Citation

"We are excited to participate in ScaffEx 2024, which is the perfect platform for us to showcase our cutting-edge services and share our ambitious vision of becoming a market leader in the scaffolding industry. Our goals are to: raise awareness of our range of services and innovative solutions; build connections and network with industry professionals and forge valuable partnerships;

and drive growth by attracting new business opportunities and expanding our market presence. On our stand, visitors will be able to learn more about how we can support their projects, including showcasing 2D printed designs, video of 3D modelling, and they can speak to our expert team. We'll have our latest 3D BIM model on the prestigious Elizabeth Building, Blackburn and our 2D designs printed in A1 showing meticulous detail and buildability for scaffolders and if you visit us and leave your contact details, there's 20% off your first design (redeemable within 3 months) as well as free merchandise to take away."

Lee Buckley, MD, BDS

"Catari Ireland is delighted to be exhibiting at ScaffEx in Belfast, a city that perfectly embodies the spirit of innovation and progress we strive for in the scaffolding industry, and that is so close to our depot in Meath. This event presents a fantastic opportunity for us to showcase our cutting-edge products that prioritise efficiency, quality, and safety. We are eager to see our valued customers and to make new connections. At Catari, each solution is focused on the needs of those who trust us and we look forward to sharing our vision at ScaffEx."

John Carolan, Managing Director, Catari Ireland

"At SMART Scaffolder, we are thrilled to be attending the ScaffEx Expo. This event presents a fantastic opportunity for us to network with new and existing clients, strengthening relationships and exploring new avenues for collaboration within the scaffolding industry."

"As the developers of the NASC's Compliance E-portal software, we have always prioritised industry standards and compliance, which is why we are particularly excited to support NASC in their new venture with the TG30 System Compliance Standard. We believe that TG30 will set a new benchmark in scaffolding safety and quality, and we are eager to contribute to its success."

"ScaffEx represents a significant milestone for the industry, and we see it as an invaluable platform for exchanging ideas, showcasing our latest developments, and demonstrating our ongoing commitment to innovation and excellence in scaffolding compliance. Our participation at ScaffEx underscores our dedication to supporting NASC and the wider industry as we continue to drive forward positive change."

Jonathan Threadgold, Product Owner and Sales Lead for SMART Scaffolder

REGISTER NOW

Register free for the Conference and book your tickets to the Awards Dinner as soon as possible: there are just a couple of tables still available.

To register, book and find out more visit:
<https://scaffex24.com>



WONKA

SKY WINS THE GOLDEN TICKET



Scaffolding jobs certainly do encompass pretty much every scenario you could think of – but there can't be many better jobs than working on a blockbuster new movie that brings to life one of children's literature's greatest characters: Willy Wonka.

Wonka was a 2023 film starring Timothée Chalamet, which gave the backstory behind the man who would become the most famous chocolatier of them all, focusing on a time when Wonka was young, wide-eyed and full of hope and optimism. The film also starred British acting favourites such as Sally Hawkins, Rowan Atkinson, Jim Carter, Olivia Colman and Hugh Grant.





Warwick-based Sky Scaffolding played a key role in ensuring this latest interpretation of Roald Dahl's much-loved character was delivered safely.

The production of the much-anticipated Wonka movie required innovative solutions to overcome a variety of technical challenges. One of the most notable was the construction of a large temporary roof scaffold, which played a crucial role in ensuring the safety and efficiency of the filming process.

Here, we will take a look behind the scenes at the creation of this high-profile film production, and the scaffolding work that enabled it.

Galleries Gourmet

Situated at the heart of the fictional city in which the film unfolds, Galleries Gourmet stands tall – a retail complex taking its inspiration from Milan's renowned Galleria Vittorio Emanuele II. The mall features a key intersection where the storefronts of Wonka's and Slugworth's proudly stand.

The crossroads play a significant role in the opening sequences of the film, serving as the stage for dancers and trapeze artists in front of the shops.

Warner Bros Studios Leavesden, which is also famous for its association with the Harry Potter film series, James Bond films and The Dark Knight trilogy, reached out to Sky

Scaffolding Midlands Ltd with a challenging set of scaffold requirements for the movie set near Watford. The set design required a 53m x 46m weatherproof structure for a crossroads with retail units. The scaffold also had to support lighting, camera gear, catwalk, and 20 trapeze artists at a height of 14m.

Wonka's scaffold innovation

In the preliminary design phase for the temporary roof, the proposed solution was a large square structure featuring a dual-pitched roof. The four corners of the building were designed as birdcages that would support the roof, with sheeted perimeter sidewalls. However, as the design evolved and the trapeze height requirements escalated, it became evident that the square layout of the building did not promote efficient use of materials as there were large areas where weather protection was not needed.

In collaboration with leading scaffold designer Rob Hastings, Managing Director of SDC Scaffold Design Consultants Ltd, Sky Scaffolding developed an enhanced design that featured a central roof situated along the main direction of the set, flanked by two smaller roofs on either side to create a cross-like formation.

This alternative roofing solution facilitated a reduction in the necessary scaffolding materials for the supporting

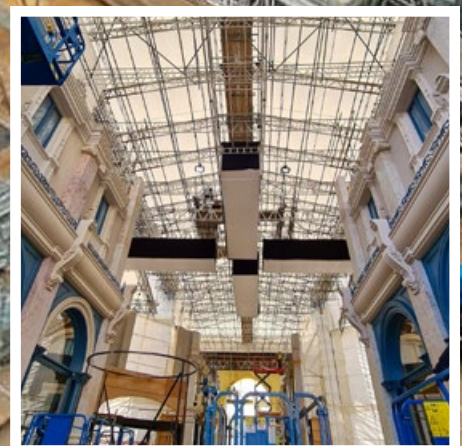


The design vision

Filming at Leavesden began in the autumn of 2021, shooting for 21 weeks on more than 50 sets, and there was also shooting at more than 10 locations across the country. Production Designer Nathan Crowley said: *“Designing for Wonka allowed me to go into pure fantasy, and to think differently than I usually do when designing other types of films. I could be more creative and experimental. As a designer, I’m trying to make the world seamlessly exist for the audience without being distracting. With fantasy, you get to stretch that idea considerably and hopefully create a world that is both whimsical and believable.”*

“The film’s setting is a fictional city that is flavoured with many familiar elements of different European cities, but Willy Wonka’s influence changes that city into a magical place where anything is possible.”

Nathan worked closely with set decorator Lee Sandales and property master Jamie Wilkinson to create the charming town with a mix of Belgian, Czech, Dutch, French, German and Swiss architecture that is central to the whole film – and built on Sky Scaffolding’s expertise.





structure and a 30% reduction in the temporary roof cover required, from 2440m² down to 1720m². The reduction in materials that this alternative achieved led to significant savings in both material and labour costs, which were instrumental in Sky's successful procurement of this project.

Pure imagination into reality

Construction began with the assembly of the four support structures, standing 17m in height and covering a plan area of 23m by 16m each. These scaffolding structures were assembled in the Layher Allround system, configured in bay sizes of 2.57m with double bracing required throughout. Stability for these structures was ensured using water-filled Intermediate Bulk Containers (IBCs).

The next phase involved the construction of the massive spine beams to bridge the intersection. These two structures, stretching 23m and 25m in length respectively, were constructed using banks of 1300mm Apollo X-Beams, braced in parallel five-abreast.

The completed beams, weighing up to three tonnes each, were assembled at ground level before being hoisted into place by a crane. The Layher support scaffolds were strengthened using traditional tube and fitting at the spine beam support locations so that every one of the five beams were supported on their own standard down to ground.

The 17m long duo-pitch roof beams were next to be installed. Constructed using the HAKITEC 750 roofing system, the main roof was 52m long, and the two smaller side roofs were 15m long each. Again, these were constructed in braced pairs at ground level, before being craned into position.

Following completion of the roof, 750mm aluminium lattice beams were installed throughout to support the lighting and camera equipment, catwalk, and trapeze hoist pulleys. The lighting catwalk was erected using traditional tube and fitting to support lighting cables and provide access above the set, with access being provided from ground level at one end via a Layher site access staircase.



Innovation and Collaboration

The temporary structure for the movie set of Wonka not only met the technical challenges but also showcased the creativity and expertise of the team involved. The collaborative effort between Warner Bros Studios, Sky Scaffolding Midlands Ltd and SDC Scaffold Design Consultants Ltd resulted in a cost-effective and efficient solution that provided a safe working environment and allowed the filming to progress in all weather conditions. The successful completion of this project highlights the importance of value engineering and creative problem-solving within the scaffolding industry.

Partners

SDC Scaffold Design Consultants Ltd provided scaffold design services for the project. Commenting on the project, MD Rob Hastings said: *"When you receive a phone call from a client asking if you want to be involved in the design of a temporary freestanding simulated shopping mall complete with temporary roof cover, to be used in a major film production at Warner Brothers Studios, you jump at the chance! And if this type of design wasn't complex enough, it also needed to accommodate 20 suspended actors (including Hugh Grant and Matt Lucas) so we jumped in with both feet. Two storms later and the completed scaffolding didn't budge – a great team effort."*

UK System Scaffold Hire Ltd provided the temporary roof materials for the project. Shire Shrinkwrap provided the shrinkwrap for the project.

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HR CHALLENGES: A DEEP DIVE

Scaffolding Insider asked NASC CEO Clive Dickin to call upon his expertise in Human Resources (HR) to give us a comprehensive overview of some of the HR challenges the sector faces. There is no simple solution to the recruitment and retention challenges, and Clive, who is a qualified HR practitioner who has worked across many industry sectors, gives us his take on some of the complex web of issues the industry must face and overcome.

The scaffolding and access sector is a vital part of the UK economy, providing critical infrastructure for everything from housing developments to large-scale civil engineering projects, from utilities to transport projects. However, like many service-related industries, scaffolding faces significant HR challenges. These range from acute skills shortages and recruitment difficulties to the management of an aging workforce, literacy and numeracy deficits, and a growing need to address social issues such as mental health and substance abuse. This article explores these challenges in depth, highlighting the resources available to the industry, particularly from NASC and the Construction Industry Training Board (CITB), while also shedding light on the role of key industry players, including my own role at NASC.

Skills shortages and vacancies

One of the most pressing HR challenges in the UK scaffolding and access sector is the ongoing skills shortage. The construction sector as a whole has been grappling with a skills gap for years, and scaffolding is no exception. The industry's specific requirements for skilled, trained and accredited personnel exacerbate this shortage, as not just anyone can work in scaffolding – a substantial level of training and certification are mandatory.

The skills shortage is driven by several factors:

- **Aging Workforce:** A significant proportion of the current workforce is nearing retirement age, and there are not enough young people entering the industry to replace them.
- **Training and Retention:** Training for scaffolders is extensive and time-consuming, which makes it critical that companies retain staff after investing in their

training. Unfortunately, turnover in the sector is high due to tough working conditions, fluctuating demand and competitive salary pressures from other industries.

- **Brexit and Labour Pool Reduction:** The exit of the UK from the European Union has significantly reduced the availability of skilled workers from Europe, further limiting the available labour pool.

As of 2023, the CITB reported that vacancy levels in construction-related roles, including scaffolding, remain stubbornly high, with many employers citing an inability to find workers with the necessary skills or experience. That trend has continued into this year. The CITB's Construction Skills Network (CSN) predicts that the construction industry will need to recruit an additional 216,800 workers by 2025 to meet demand, a number that includes scaffolders. The recruitment crisis is thus not a short-term issue but a long-term challenge that demands immediate and sustained attention.

The Role of NASC and CITB

NASC and the CITB are two key organisations that are working to address the skills shortages and provide resources to the scaffolding sector.

NASC plays a pivotal role in setting standards and providing training resources for the scaffolding industry. The organisation's core mission is to promote safe working practices and high standards of training, ensuring that the workforce is skilled, accredited and competent. NASC offers a range of resources, including guidance notes, safety bulletins and training schemes to help scaffolding contractors and their employees maintain the highest levels of

competence. CISRS' Scaffolder Training Scheme is recognised across the industry as a standard for quality training.

The CITB has also been instrumental in providing financial support and training opportunities for the scaffolding sector. Through its grants and funding schemes, the CITB helps employers offset the cost of training new scaffolders, which can otherwise be prohibitively expensive. The CITB offers apprenticeship programmes, and the introduction of the Scaffolding Trailblazer apprenticeship has been a major step forward in attracting young talent to the industry. These initiatives are designed to address the skills gap, but the pace of recruitment and training is still not enough to meet demand.

Challenges in managing current talent

In addition to recruitment challenges, employers in the scaffolding sector also face significant difficulties in managing their existing talent pool. These issues stem from a variety of factors, including:

Salary challenges and competition from other sectors

Salary remains one of the most significant HR challenges in the scaffolding industry. Scaffolders are highly skilled tradespeople, and their compensation needs to reflect the level of risk, physical exertion, and expertise required for the role. However, despite the high demand for scaffolders, wages in the sector have not always kept pace with those in other industries, especially when compared to sectors like logistics or warehousing, which have seen rapid wage inflation.

Some employers in the scaffolding sector struggle to offer competitive salaries, particularly smaller firms that may not have the same financial resources as larger competitors. This makes it difficult to retain experienced workers, who are often tempted by better pay packages in other fields or other regions. In addition, the proliferation of the rumour of higher pay by being self-employed needs to be challenged by employers and professional services providers. The burden of sick/holiday pay, pensions and business costs such as insurance must be addressed by employers when an



employee presses to go self-employed. This is not to blame the employer but to encourage them to be able to make the legitimate case for employment as better for both employer and employee. NASC's position on PAYE is that it is preferable to have employees on PAYE but of course employers must also react to their unique circumstances and may find the flexibility of a mixture of employed and self-employed staff is what works best for them.

Aging workforce and succession planning

The scaffolding industry, like much of the broader construction and service sector, is dealing with an aging workforce. A significant proportion of scaffolders are over the age of 50, and many are approaching retirement age. This creates a pressing need for succession planning and the transfer of skills from experienced scaffolders to the next generation.

Unfortunately, the industry is finding it difficult to replace those older workers, partly due to the skills shortage and partly because scaffolding is a physically demanding job that requires a high level of fitness and agility. Younger workers, when they do enter the industry, often find it challenging to work under the same conditions as their older counterparts. As a result, employers must navigate the delicate balance of retaining experienced workers while developing the next generation of talent. This being said, the earning potential in the sector is massive and must not be overlooked as this is an attractive quality to the young people considering joining the industry.

Literacy and numeracy levels

Literacy and numeracy levels represent another key HR challenge in the scaffolding sector. Scaffolders need to be able to read and interpret technical drawings, calculate load capacities and follow safety procedures, which requires a solid grounding in basic literacy and numeracy. However, a significant portion of the workforce may struggle with these skills.

The CITB has identified literacy and numeracy as a barrier to upskilling in the scaffolding industry. Addressing these issues often requires additional training and support, both from employers and from the wider industry. Programmes designed to improve basic skills are available but uptake has been slower than hoped, often because workers are hesitant to admit their shortcomings in these areas.

Social and domestic challenges

HR challenges in the scaffolding sector are not limited to technical skills or workforce demographics. Social and domestic issues have a significant impact on the workforce, with mental health and substance abuse becoming increasingly prevalent concerns.

Mental health issues have become a major focus for HR professionals in the scaffolding sector in recent years. The construction industry has long struggled with mental health challenges, largely due to the high-pressure, physically demanding nature of the work, and scaffolding is no different. The sector's workers are often subjected to long hours, work away from home, and potentially hazardous



conditions, all of which can contribute to stress, anxiety and depression.

Organisations like the Lighthouse Club, which supports construction workers' mental health, have been instrumental in raising awareness and providing resources for workers facing mental health challenges. However, stigma remains a significant barrier to workers seeking help. Employers are increasingly offering mental health support services, but there is still much work to be done in this area to create an environment where workers feel comfortable addressing their mental health needs.

Substance abuse, particularly drug use, is another significant issue in the scaffolding sector. The nature of the job - high-risk, physically demanding and often away from home for extended periods - can lead some workers to turn to alcohol or drugs as a way to cope with stress or isolation. NASC has identified substance abuse as a growing problem in the industry and has been working to raise awareness and promote drug and alcohol testing among its members.

Employers face a delicate balancing act when addressing substance abuse. On the one hand, there is a need for zero-tolerance policies to ensure the safety of workers and the public. On the other hand, there is a growing recognition that workers who struggle with substance abuse often need

support and rehabilitation, rather than simply being dismissed.

Domestic issues, such as family stress, separation, and financial pressures, can also affect scaffolders' performance at work. Long hours, frequent travel and extended periods away from home can strain family relationships, leading to issues such as divorce or absentee parenting. These challenges are particularly acute in the scaffolding sector, where workers are often required to travel long distances for jobs.

Maintaining a healthy work-life balance is difficult in this environment, and employers must be sensitive to the fact that personal issues can have a significant impact on job performance. HR teams in the scaffolding sector are increasingly being called upon to offer flexible working arrangements or support services to help employees manage their personal challenges. New entrants in particular have become used to a world where expectations around flexibility of working have become heightened. Use of technology like geocaching clocking in can change the outlook of the workforce to a more flexible work approach while still achieving the delivery of projects.

Employers and leaders

Several major employers dominate the UK scaffolding sector, each facing the HR challenges outlined above. Those large scaffolding contractors operate across a range of sectors including commercial construction, energy, and infrastructure; they must lead the way in innovative practices around HR - and many of them do.

I am also aware that I have a role to play with NASC in shaping the future of the industry. In just over a year as CEO, I have made sure NASC has been at the forefront of addressing many of the HR challenges facing the scaffolding sector, from advocating for better mental health support to promoting drug and alcohol testing, as well as working tirelessly to close the skills gap through improved training and accreditation standards. This is just the beginning of the debate, and I would welcome your views and experiences, members and non-members alike. **Please email me at ceo@nasc.org.uk with your views.**

Conclusion

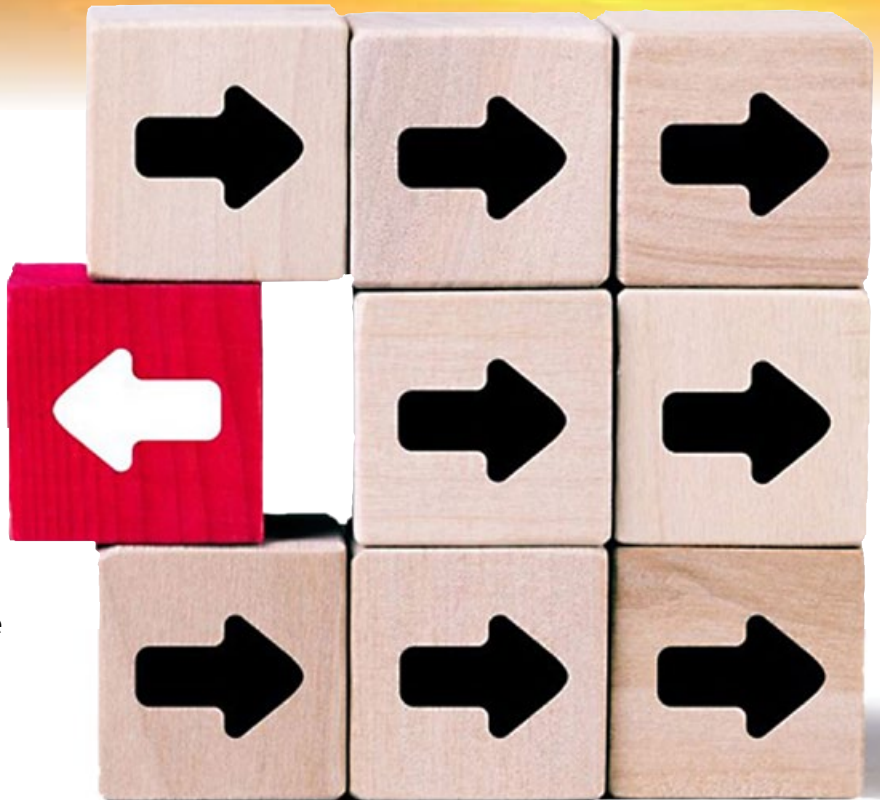
The scaffolding and access sector in the UK faces a range of HR challenges that require a multi-faceted approach. From addressing the skills shortage to managing an aging workforce, improving literacy and numeracy, and tackling social issues like mental health and substance abuse, the industry is at a critical juncture. Organisations like NASC, CISRS and CITB are providing invaluable resources, but the sector must continue to innovate and invest in its workforce to meet the demands of the future.

As the industry continues to grow, attracting and retaining talent, its long-term success will have to be based on ensuring worker wellbeing and maintaining high safety standards. Every single company in this industry can make a difference - I would urge you to ask yourself what you can do. Meanwhile, NASC, other industry bodies and major employers must be instrumental in helping shape a brighter future for the scaffolding sector.

DIVERSITY: THE TIME IS NOW

Construction, and scaffolding in particular, are best known as a working man's job, and although progress has been made in recent years regarding diversity and inclusion, it has been slow going – as shown by figures from the CIOB (Chartered Institute of Building):

- Women make up only 15 per cent of the UK construction industry, with approximately 2 per cent working on site
- BAME employees make up 6 per cent of the workforce
- Disabled employees also make up 6 per cent of the workforce
- 60 per cent of LGBTQ+ employees have experienced homophobic and derogatory terms at work.



CIOB points out that with a large proportion of the construction industry made up of white males, there is a significant risk of unconscious bias in decision-making, and a tendency for cultures to be shaped around the majority view. This often results in acceptance of inappropriate behaviour and language as 'normal' practice, leaving those on the receiving end of discriminatory or offensive comments or behaviour to decide that a career in construction is not for them. This means that the construction industry will lack innovation and different viewpoints, which a diverse workforce promotes.

Whilst there is a growing awareness and understanding from both a leadership and management level when it comes to equality, diversity and inclusion (EDI), this is not translating effectively into practice on-site, says the CIOB. There are reports from those working in the industry about the lack of female-sized PPE, non-male toilets being locked where workers need to ask for a key from a male supervisor because the space is being used to store equipment, and comments about their gender, sexuality or appearance. Furthermore, employees from minorities have experienced

a lack of inclusion in conversations and have cited that concerns about diversity have not been taken seriously.

Current situation

NASC Vice-President Wayne Connolly comments on how he sees the current situation: "I don't think scaffolding companies are restricting their options deliberately when



Wayne Connolly

it comes to equality and diversity in recruitment – it's just another symptom of the short-termism that affects the industry far too much: the age-old problem of not looking past Friday. Managers and leaders in scaffolding companies must look to the future and form a strong strategy for recruitment and that includes recognising

that there is only a finite amount of talent and we are in a constant fight to recruit the good people in a tough market. Why would you restrict your options to a fraction of the talent that's out there?

"The hours are much better now than they used to be, system scaffolding has helped make the actual job of scaffolder more accessible to more people, and don't forget the all-important teams that make it all happen: the estimators, the logistics specialists, the marketing team, the yard, commercial, finance, and so on. The scaffolding industry is open to all and we should make sure it is seen as such."

The benefits

The benefits of increasing diversity in the workforce are numerous. It brings different thinking to the table, ensuring the widest range of ideas are explored, and makes the industry more representative of its customers and wider society.

One of the biggest draws of having a more diversified team is that you'll appeal to a broader set of customers. For example, a female client may feel a lot more comfortable with a team made up of male and female members, as it shows the team has respect and confidence in both women and men.

The same would be true when appealing to customers of different ethnicity. Customers like to feel well represented and confident that someone can understand the concerns that are experienced by people of their ethnicity, gender or orientation.

It says a lot about your business too. For example, it gives you a head start in pitching: your potential client knows immediately that they would be working with a company that cares about its people, develops their talent and is the kind of company that minds about its values and cares about its customers.

The problem with the word 'Diversity' is that these days it can come with a whole load of baggage, assumptions and prejudices. For some people, it can feel like the focus is over the top and it's just not relevant to our everyday lives. But it is. It is relevant for every scaffolding company, every employee and every client. Paying attention to diversity is not only a moral obligation if we believe in a just society but it also makes total business sense.

Gemma Howlett, Principal Lecturer at the University of Cumbria, explains in more detail why embracing the challenge of widening access and accepting diversity, equity and belonging in our profession is critical for success: *"On one level, diversity is more obvious and often visual, while the second level is not immediately apparent. The first category – the more visual diversity – can include factors such as dress, body language, tattoos as well as race, age, gender representation such as 'typical masculine or feminine' traits – and these are often what we form our early views and opinions on – essentially the things we immediately notice about someone. This happens often before we get to know anything about them.*

"But when considering diversity, we have to think beyond the protected characteristics categories: it is important to understand there is a deeper level of diversity that incorporates what people think, their experiences, how they view the world, how they form opinions, and so on. This cognitive diversity is influenced by factors such as upbringing, education, where you grew up, what you read and watch, who you associate with and other similar factors.

"Most people, on the surface, agree that people should have equal opportunities. First it is important to consider why diversity, representation and equal opportunities are important.

"Beyond it being the right thing to do in terms of social justice and equity, there is also evidence to show that diversity within teams makes an organisation more successful. Professor Catherine Phillips dedicated her life's work into looking at diverse teams and discovering why they were successful if they embraced all levels of diversity.

"Professor Phillips conducted various trials where she gave homogenous groups and diverse groups the same task to complete simultaneously. When asked to report on how a task went before hearing the results, the homogenous group would always report a high level of success while the diverse group found it uncomfortable, didn't think they'd done a good job, thought they'd taken too long to get to their answer and hadn't done well. In reality, the success levels of the diverse group were actually objectively higher, but it was the discomfort of the situation, of being in a group of people not like them, of the challenge, critique and questioning that was present due to the diversity of thought and experience that made the task feel harder and made them question or



“Beyond it being the right thing to do in terms of social justice and equity, there is also evidence to show that diversity within teams makes an organisation more successful.”

doubt their success.

“So why would this be so? Well, firstly, it’s nice when people agree with you, when you have your views validated and to feel a commonality with people. The source of the other group’s discomfort – the challenge that comes with working with a range of different views and experiences – was actually the source of their success.

“Diverse recruitment strategies give you a wider talent pool. Efficiency, productivity and innovation are also shown to be improved. A truly diverse organisation that really lives its values is also a safer place to work: there is less sexual harassment and bullying in organisations that allow people to bring their whole authentic selves to work. People then often feel safer to report or discuss mental health and wellbeing issues rather than hiding them due to fear of negative consequences.

“So, given all this, why are more teams not more diverse? Let’s look at some of the barriers. It’s important to note at this point that some of those barriers will be deep-seated societal issues and not related specifically to your organisation.

“Recruitment often represents a major barrier. You may think your vacancies are open to everyone, and anyone can apply. But if you’re not reaching certain demographics because of where you advertise or how the ads are written, then they’re not going to be truly inclusive. Ask yourself how you make your reach as wide as possible. If you find that only a certain demographic is applying for your roles over and over again, then there’s something in your comms and

marketing that is not reaching diverse groups of people – so you’re limiting the pool of people you are recruiting from.

“Another barrier is where an organisation may have diverse recruitment strategies but once employees have joined the team, they might find they’re not allowed to be their authentic selves, to have an equal voice, to challenge practices and they’ll become demotivated quickly and will leave the organisation. So if your company is in the early days of trying to increase diversity, then it’s critical that company culture and practices allow those diverse recruits to find their place in the organisation and help to embed that cultural shift.

“We also need to look at bias. We are all biased – it’s innate to us and our survival. We must examine and understand all biases including the biases that we may not even be aware that we have. We must understand our biases, own them, and educate ourselves in order to prevent them negatively or incorrectly influencing decisions or actions we take.

“So where does bias come from? Some of our bias comes from the unconscious part of the brain which is situated in the limbic system, which is what kept us alive as we look back in our evolution. It is all about survival. The brain processes all the incoming data and quickly categorises everything that comes through your senses – and anything that sits outside of what your brain sees as normal is treated as a threat. It can make us jump to conclusions, to categorise people or situations from pre-existing views or opinions. The trigger is something unfamiliar or unexpected, which therefore according to our brain in that moment, may be

dangerous; these days unfamiliar doesn't have to mean dangerous but your brain can often respond in the same way.

"Allied to this is the human propensity to form tribes to keep themselves safe in a hostile world, and anyone outside of that tribe can be seen as a threat. We still do this to a certain extent: we like to spend time with people like us, who think like us and who make us feel safe.

"This directly feeds into the recruitment process and leads to certain types of bias. A piece of research by one company showed that their middle management was very similar in demographic, thought, experiences and how they looked at problems. What they identified was that the recruitment panel that they used for that layer of management was always the same. So this company set up a mock recruitment for a made-up role for this panel and hired six actors to play the part of interviewees and briefed them on what to wear, how to enter the room, what to say and how to present themselves. They put hidden cameras in the room.

"What they were trying to capture was the very initial response to when the person came in the room, and what they saw was a very immediate, visceral reaction before the game face came on. What also happened was that the person who got the job wasn't necessarily the person who gave the best answers but the person who looked most like the panel and gave the answers most aligned with the panel's own thoughts. This is known as affinity bias. They subsequently put more diverse panels together at that – and other – levels of the organisation.

"You also have conformity bias, with everyone conforming with the strongest person in the room. This is when the culture is such that no-one feels able to speak out, to challenge the status quo. There's also gender bias, with people believing women should be in certain roles and not others.

"You need to ask yourself about barriers in your organisation. It can seem daunting but I like black tennis player Arthur Ashe's quote, 'Start where you are, use what you have and do what you can.' This puts you in a much more positive place of seeing what you can do, not what you can't.

"As well as organisational reflection, it's also important to have self-reflection. Looking at my own story, I never used to notice what was going on around me regarding diversity, never questioned white male hierarchies that I saw in the organisations I worked for. I have educated myself a lot around this since but I had to understand my own

barriers, my own self, to examine firstly why I didn't notice it for a long time and then why I did not feel comfortable or confident in calling it out, why I felt like I had no voice. So this is my story: I grew up in a socio-economically deprived area of South Wales where we were told by teachers not to aim too high because of where we came from. I'm also a woman and have been taught by society to be compliant, to be a 'good girl' and not shout or be angry; and I'm also gay and I grew up under section 28 in a time where homosexuality was prohibited from being mentioned in schools. So at best, my identity was invisible; at worst, it was wrong and that filled me with shame and an awareness of my difference. My reaction was to get my head down, get on and fit in as best I could. I wasn't about to start shouting about all-male hierarchies, inequality, class systems and LGBTQ+ rights.

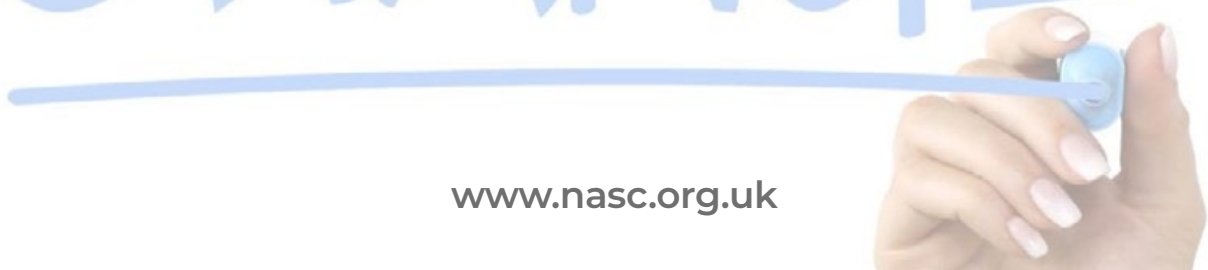
"But eventually I did start to see it. In my work life, I started to wonder why it was all white men in senior management positions, why there were hardly any people of colour in the rooms I sat in. So I educated myself, and I continue to do so, speaking to and learning from people who are not like me, who face different challenges or maybe have not faced many challenges, people with a different view and lens through which they view the world, different opinions and, just as the evidence says organisations are richer for it, I truly believe I am a better version of myself.

"As well as this personal reflection, you also have to look at your organisation – and this can be difficult too. You may be very proud of your organisation, what it stands for and what it achieves. But in terms of diversity and inclusion, you have to go on this difficult journey.

"We can't just leave this work to those who are on the receiving end of this unfair situation. It cannot be down to people in underrepresented groups to fix the problem – it will never be solved this way. Everyone needs to be an ally, needs to be part of the solution. You need to challenge misogyny, sexism, racism every single time you encounter it. Don't make decisions and write policies in homogenous groups – always look for diversity of thought and opinion. Think about the words you use: 'Take it like a man', 'Oh, she's one of the lads – we like her': this sort of language creates barriers.

"This all means you might just have to get comfortable with being uncomfortable for a while. It's difficult to reflect on yourself and your company but you have to keep it on the agenda and keep pressing for change. It can be a long journey but the conversations will become easier. There are definitely things that all of us can do."

CHANGE





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CISRS LEADS SYSTEM SCAFFOLDING EXPANSION

In response to the increasing adoption and growth of system scaffolding in the UK, the Construction Industry Scaffolders Record Scheme (CISRS) has for some time been collaborating with leading manufacturers to address this additional training requirement. This collaboration initially led to the development of the System Scaffold Product Training Scheme (SSPTS), a two-day programme designed for holders of existing tube and fitting scaffold cards. Upon successful completion and assessment, participants receive an endorsement on their scaffold card for the specific system scaffold.

As system scaffolding gained traction and some companies transitioned exclusively to system scaffolding, the training suite was expanded to cater to these needs and ensure comprehensive training. CISRS System Scaffold Training now mirrors the tube and fitting route, including Trainee Scaffolders Part 1 System only and Part 2 System only. This progresses to the Scaffolders Card System Scaffold only.

With the growth of system-only scaffold companies and the demands for appropriate certification from main contractors, there was a recognised need for an advanced system course. Two years ago, CISRS conducted a pilot advanced course in the Layher Allround System, which, despite its success, saw limited uptake at the time. However, with the continued expansion and increased



use of system scaffolding, it became evident that revisiting the advanced scheme was timely.

Building on the previous pilot and aligning with the tube and fitting advanced course structure and practical elements, two advanced system courses in the Layher Allround System were successfully conducted. This has established a framework for other system scaffolding products to develop similar advanced courses. In summary, CISRS now offers:

- An advanced scaffolder card for Layher system and one-day add-on inspection courses available in Layher, Haki, Plettac Metrix, Altrad Metrix, Kwikstage and Peri Up systems.
- The training route mirrors that of tube and fitting, with the distinction of being recognised for system scaffold only.

SAFETY BULLETIN ISSUED AFTER GRENFELL INQUIRY

In response to the recent fire at a residential block in Dagenham and the final report from the Grenfell Tower Inquiry, NASC released an essential Safety Bulletin. This document provides crucial guidelines for scaffolding contractors to ensure compliance with the Building Safety Act 2022 and HSG168 (HSE fire guidance). This underscores NASC's commitment to enhancing safety standards and clarifies the role of scaffolding in fire risk management.

The Safety Bulletin highlights the need for a comprehensive approach to fire safety, including thorough risk assessments and effective preventative measures. NASC's Safety Bulletin emphasises that while scaffolding may contribute to fire hazards, the risk of fire is extremely low and more significantly influenced by other factors.

Key aspects of the Bulletin include:

- Compliance with Safety Legislation
- Risk Management
- Enhanced Safety Measures
- Training and Education

NASC members can view this Safety Bulletin under 'Information and Resources' when logging into the members' area.

NASC TO FEATURE AT UK CONSTRUCTION WEEK

UK Construction Week Birmingham returns to the NEC on 1-3 October. NASC will be hosting a stand and CEO Clive Dickin will be speaking on 1 October at 3.25pm, as part of the Roofing, Cladding & Insulation Hub.

Clive will be focusing on critical safety measures within the scaffolding industry, working at height and the importance of using compliant scaffolding contractors. Clive will note that NASC has released numerous technical and safety guidance documents.

Attracting visitors to the show are features including:

- The Net Zero Hub, making its debut at the show with a focus on strengthening sustainability in the construction industry.
- Net Zero Trail has also been launched to showcase the latest innovations and sustainable practices driving the construction industry toward a net-zero future.
- Roofing, Cladding & Insulation Expo. Showcasing the latest solutions and ideas in the roofing, cladding and insulation industry.
- Speaker sessions hosted by industry



- experts and professionals.
- Co-located with UKCW and making its debut appearance is Onsite On Hire, a new hire industry showcase.
- Opportunity: industry professionals can enjoy networking opportunities, face-to-face meetings with high profile brands, and seminars, workshops and CPD sessions.

To register for UKCW Birmingham for free, visit <https://ukcw-birmingham-2024.reg.buzz/nasc-magazine-inclusion>

KEY EVENTS

NASC has a number of important events to come in the remainder of 2024 and beyond. Below are some of the events planned for the rest of the year.

For full details and booking, go to <https://nasc.org.uk/events/>

CEO Surgeries

6 November:
Perth, Scotland

20 November:
Northern Ireland

Regional meetings

24 October:
London and South East,
Brentwood

12 December:
Midlands, Coventry



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- ✓ TRADLOK
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- ✓ TRADGUARD
- ✓ LOADING HATCH
- ✓ ALLOY BEAMS
- ✓ SCAFFOLD FITTINGS
- ✓ TRADSTAIR

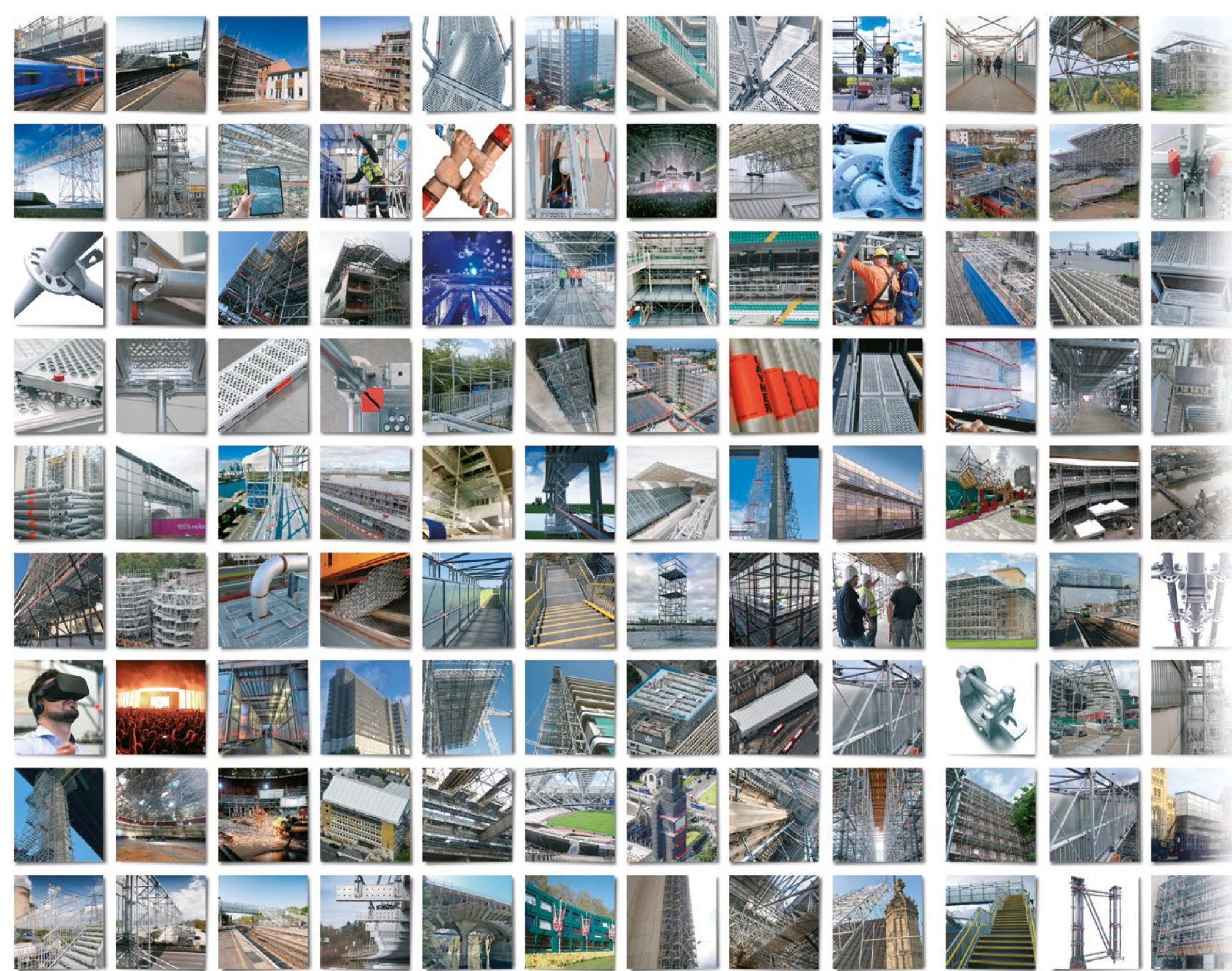


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