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Scaffolding Insider

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NOVEMBER/DECEMBER 2025

BACK TO THE FUTURE

Looking ahead at the end of NASC's 80th anniversary

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FROM THE EDITOR

As you read this, we are entering the final weeks of NASC's 80th anniversary year. The organisation has, of course, reflected a little on its past this year – and you can see the final instalment of *80 Years of NASC* on page 15, taking us to the present day – but its focus has very much been on the future.

On pages 12–14, we look at what that future may look like, what the early adopters are already doing, and we hear from some leading figures in the industry who gaze into their crystal ball. Such is the longevity of some of our interviewees that they have already seen extraordinary changes during their careers, from hand sketching on paper to 3D design; from manual inspections to drones; from counting every tube and board to automated stock checking and tracking via an app, and much more.

Looking ahead, there is talk of lighter materials, automation, and lifting assistance on site; and endless possibilities via technology off site.

As we all know, the core of scaffolding work is physical labour and that's not going to change. One often overlooked aspect of the process, though, is transport. Moving scaffolding around, loading and unloading it, is inherently hazardous and there are still too many incidents involving vehicles that result in death or injury.

On pages 8–9, we look at the issue with the help of Government body Driving for Better Business, who lay out the specific areas of concern and how to mitigate risk. As the organisation's Engagement Manager, Simon Turner, explains, scaffolding contractors operate in a high-risk environment, expertly managing complex site risks – yet road safety is often overshadowed by the demands of site work, tight schedules and complex logistics. But poor load security, inadequate driver training and inconsistent vehicle checks can lead to serious incidents, enforcement action and reputational damage.

On pages 15–18, we bring you news from NASC and CISRS, both of which are not only planning for the future but delivering all the services members need right now to put them ahead of the game in this fast-moving environment. Read about technological developments, and more, on our News pages.

And that's it for 2025. Thank you for reading, and do contact us if you would like to see your projects featured. We'll be back in January.

I hope you enjoy the magazine, and I wish you a very Merry Christmas



Nick Campion
Editor

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25% OF TRADESPEOPLE PLAN TO RETIRE WITHIN FIVE YEARS

The UK is facing a growing trade skills shortage, with one in four tradespeople planning to retire within the next five years, according to Screwfix's 2025 Voice of the Trade report.

With the UK already facing a shortfall of 250,000 tradespeople by 2030, the report highlights the increasingly urgent need for Government action to address the growing skills gap, which will be key to delivering several national priorities, including the pledge to build 1.5 million new homes and retrofit over 15 million properties to meet energy efficiency standards.

The report, based on insights from 700 trade professionals, reveals a sector under pressure. With just 24% of tradespeople under the age of 44, the pipeline of talent is declining, and small businesses are struggling to recruit and train the next generation.

The report outlines five key actions tradespeople want to see from policymakers:

- **Incentivise Apprenticeships:** Provide direct grants to help SMEs and sole traders train apprentices to full qualification, creating a robust talent pipeline.
- **Flexible Apprenticeship Models:** Encourage flexi-apprenticeship schemes that allow trades to share apprentices and ensure colleges support apprentices to complete their courses.
- **Encourage Trade Careers:** The education system should champion the trades as fulfilling careers, including financial support for apprentices that matches university pathways.
- **Upskilling on Trades' Terms:** Push training providers to offer courses at times that suit tradespeople's schedules.
- **Support Small Businesses:** Simplify VAT and accounting processes and streamline professional accreditation to reduce administrative burdens.

UNGUARDED SCAFFOLDING LEADS TO DEATH



A shop sign making and fitting company and its director have been fined after an employee fell from an unguarded scaffolding tower and later died from his injuries. Mr Mughal, 64, was working for WH Metals Limited installing a metal sign to the front of the shop in Darwen, Lancashire on 22 November 2022.

He was standing on the platform of a scaffolding tower without any edge

protection in place, when he fell to the pavement below. Although the height he fell from was only six feet, it was enough for him to suffer serious head injuries and sadly, he died from his injuries four days later.

An investigation by the Health and Safety Executive (HSE) found that WH Metals Limited and its director, who was on site at the time of the incident, failed to prevent the risk of a fall from a distance liable to cause personal injury. WH Metals Ltd pleaded guilty to breaching Section 2(1) of the Health and Safety at Work etc Act 1974 and was fined £45,000 and ordered to pay costs of £4,826. Mr Waqas Hanif, the company's director, pleaded guilty to breaching Section 37 of the Health and Safety at Work etc Act 1974 and was given a 26-week custodial sentence, suspended for 12 months. He was also ordered to pay costs of £4,846.



CONSTRUCTION'S MODERN SLAVERY RISK

Hundreds of workers are at risk of modern slavery in the UK construction industry, according to two organisations.

Data from the helpline of the anti-slavery charity Unseen has identified the construction industry as an emerging area of risk. It was second only to the care sector in terms of calls to its helpline in 2024 from people who claimed to be exploited.

The charity identified 492 potential victims relating to construction from calls to its helpline. It said exploitation of workers in the construction industry was an emerging trend.

Meanwhile, research commissioned by the Modern Slavery and Human Rights Policy and Evidence Centre at the University of Oxford last month found significant gaps in knowledge of modern slavery and labour exploitation in the construction industry.

It called on agencies that monitor modern slavery and labour exploitation to do more to analyse and share the data they collect.

1.5 MILLION HOMES PLAN HITS THE BUFFERS

According to new statistics, the Government's commitment to build 1.5 million new homes in England during the current parliament appears to be drifting out of reach.

Between April 2024 and March 2025, there were 190,600 new homes built in England, according to latest government statistics. Add in a further 17,710 new homes that were created from change of use, and there was a total of 208,600 net additional dwellings in 2024/25, which is a 6% decrease on 2023/24.

This means England's housing supply has declined for the third year in a row, prompting concerns from both MPs and the industry about the Government's ability to meet its own housebuilding targets.

The data, published by the Ministry of Housing, Communities & Local Government, showed net additions to housing supply were at the lowest level since 2015/16.

Florence Eshalomi, Chair of the Housing, Communities and Local Government Committee said it was time for ministers to ramp up the pace of delivery: "The Government must be

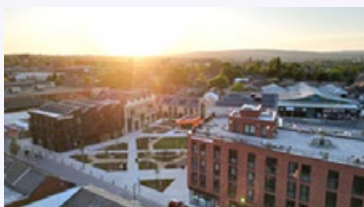


Florence Eshalomi

focused on getting to grips with this crisis and bring forward the delayed Long-Term Housing Strategy, which has been promised for over a year now," she said. "It must set out how we can ramp up the pace of housing delivery with practical reforms to build 1.5 million homes during this Parliament."

HUGE INVESTMENT FROM NEW JV

Public and private sector housing and regeneration experts have joined forces to boost the supply of homes for places most in need. Homes England has entered into a new joint venture – The Impact & Places Partnership – with Swiss Life Asset Managers and Capital&Centric – to spearhead the creation of more than 2,250 homes in underinvested areas in England.



The £860 million of new homes will be delivered over the next decade in regions where demand for housing is most acute. Homes England has a 40% stake in the joint venture under the terms of the agreement, with Swiss Life Asset Managers and Capital&Centric taking a combined 60% stake.

Steve Reed, Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, said: "We will get Britain building again by backing brilliant homegrown developers like Capital&Centric, and bringing in major institutional investors like Swiss Life Asset Managers, to build the homes this country desperately needs.

"We are pulling every lever to fix the housing crisis and it's exactly this kind of deal that will help us build the 1.5 million homes, faster, and in the communities that need them most."



Ministry of Housing,
Communities &
Local Government



Steve Reed MP

MANCHESTER'S £1 BILLION PUSH

Greater Manchester mayor Andy Burnham has unveiled a £1bn regeneration push that will see 30 major projects rolled out across all 10 boroughs.

The first £400m wave is due for sign-off next week by the Greater Manchester Combined Authority. Altogether, the schemes should result in nearly 3,000 new homes, 22,000 jobs and 2 million sq ft of employment space – along with the unlocking of a further £1.3bn in private capital.

The cash sits inside the new GM Good Growth Fund, backed by the Greater Manchester Pension Fund and designed to pump-prime stalled sites before recycling repaid loans back into the pipeline.

Burnham said the region was ready to 'pioneer a new model for economic growth' and warned that growth must now be felt 'on every street, in every district', not only in the city centre.

A second funding wave will land in March as Greater Manchester ramps up plans for town-centre housing, lab space, advanced manufacturing hubs and Bee Network-linked neighbourhoods across the region.



20 YEARS OF SIMIAN

Construction and scaffolding safety specialist Simian is celebrating 20 years of trading. Since its establishment in November 2005, it has grown from a small team of industry experts into one of the UK's foremost training and consultancy organisations, supporting businesses of all sizes across multiple sectors.

"Reaching 20 years in business is an incredible achievement and a proud moment for our entire team," said Simon Hughes, Managing Director at SIMIAN. "From our very first day, our focus has been on ensuring safe, compliant, and efficient working practices for the UK construction industry. Over the years, our team has grown, our training centres have expanded, and our services have evolved, but our commitment to excellence has never wavered. We look forward to continuing to support and develop the workforce for the next 20 years and beyond."

BILLIONS FOR BANKSIDE

London's Bankside is set to further cement its



position as one of London's most dynamic business districts over the next five years, as a wave of private and public development plans coincide with BID Better Bankside's new five-year strategy to support and enhance the area.

By 2030, around £4bn worth of investment across 28 major sites will deliver 10 million square feet of new development in Bankside: new workplaces, homes, cultural and leisure destinations.

Alongside this, Better Bankside, one of the UK's first Business Improvement Districts (BIDs), has published its five-year strategy for 2025–30, setting out how it will deliver on the resounding mandate secured in its ballot, when 91% of local businesses voted for another five years of Better Bankside.

INDUSTRY VIEW

This month, Trevor Steven, former footballer and now CEO of Mindflow, explains why football might hold the key to construction's mental-health crisis.

I've heard the same story many times over the last two years—men in construction quietly struggling, often alone, in an environment where banter can be brutal, pressure is constant

and vulnerability is treated like weakness. It resonates with me deeply because I've lived a version of that story myself.

My background isn't construction – it was football. At 33, a long term injury brought my career to an abrupt end and my identity literally vanished overnight. One day I was a footballer, the next I was in the history books. And like so many former players I drifted into a future that I really wasn't prepared for.

Years later, while living in Dubai and struggling along without clarity of what the future would hold I received a call from a friend and fellow Evertonian Phil Brown. Phil was the founder and CEO of Causeway Technologies a leading business that provides software to the construction industry. Phil told me he had just heard on a BBC 5 Live radio interview that two construction workers were taking their own lives every single working day. That was 2019. I wasn't aware of this crisis at the time. Over 600 lives were lost last year, four times higher than any other industry.

Phil and I talked about it there and then and realised that



Trevor Steven

there was a natural connection between football, construction and men's mental health. Both industries are tough, male-dominated, emotionally closed, and resistant to anything that looks like weakness. And both worlds desperately need change. Football's attitude to mental health has moved forward positively with some real tangible progress being made. Many players are now speaking out publicly and breaking down the stigma. Phil and I set ourselves one simple ambition: to make some impact in construction even if it was just to save one life.

That mission became the charity, Mindflow. I travelled the country, gathering insight from 1,500 men on construction sites. One finding jumped out: 67% of construction workers are football fans. I know it is actually an even bigger percentage across the industry. That became our bridge.

Today, thanks to our funding partner, the UK's largest watch brand Christopher Ward, Mindflow brings former professional footballers onto sites to talk openly and honestly about their own mental health journeys. When a familiar face opens up about challenges like depression, identity loss or fear, something remarkable happens: the room listens. If he can talk about it, then I can talk about it.

We're starting in the North West, but our vision is to roll this out nationally. We're working collaboratively with other charities such as Chasing the Stigma and the Lighthouse Club, and we're asking businesses to join our mission by embedding mental-health awareness into everyday site culture, not just posters on canteen walls.

In football and in construction, men tend to say they're fine even when burdens become unbearable. But the longer we hold things in, the heavier they get. If we're going to bring that tragic number down, we need to learn to look out for each other.

Football can help start that conversation. Construction can help finish it. And together, we can save lives.



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LOADED WITH RISK

According to the Health and Safety Executive, every year, around 50 people are killed and more than 5,000 are injured in accidents involving workplace transport. The most common causes are people falling from or being struck by a vehicle, objects falling from a vehicle or vehicles overturning.



Simon Turner

Initiatives like Driving for Better Business offer practical solutions to improve compliance, reduce collisions, and protect reputations. Simon Turner, Engagement Manager at Driving for Better Business explains: *"Scaffolding contractors operate in a high-risk environment, expertly managing complex site risks – yet road*

safety is often overshadowed by the demands of site work, tight schedules and complex logistics. The risks associated with transporting scaffolding materials, often on large, heavily loaded vehicles, are substantial. Poor load security, inadequate driver training and inconsistent vehicle checks can lead to serious incidents, enforcement action and reputational damage."

Simon lays out the key road risk challenges facing scaffolding firms and how practical support from Driving for Better Business can help address them.

Load Security and Vehicle Compliance

Scaffolding loads are inherently awkward with long tubes, heavy boards and irregular components that require precise loading and securing. Poorly restrained loads can shift during transit, causing collisions or shedding items onto the road or into oncoming traffic. Enforcement agencies actively target scaffolding vehicles due to the high risk of non-compliance.

Time Pressure and Fatigue

Scaffolders often work long hours, starting early and travelling between multiple sites. This increases the risk of fatigue-related incidents, especially if drivers are rushing to meet deadlines or skipping rest breaks. Fatigue impairs reaction times, decision-making and concentration – critical factors when operating large vehicles in urban environments.

Inadequate Vehicle Checks and Maintenance

Daily walkaround checks are a legal requirement, but in practice may be compromised under time constraints. Defects such as worn tyres, faulty lights, or loose restraints can lead to breakdowns, collisions or enforcement action. Many scaffolding firms lack robust systems for defect reporting and follow-up, leaving vehicles on the road in an unsafe condition.

Lack of Formal Road Risk Management

Unlike larger logistics firms, many scaffolding contractors may not have access to dedicated fleet management, making structured support especially valuable. This leads

to inconsistent or unsafe practices, poor record-keeping, and reactive rather than proactive safety management.



Driving for Better Business

Driving for Better Business (DfBB) is a Government-backed programme that helps employers manage work-related road risk more effectively. For scaffolding contractors, it offers a structured, accessible way to improve safety, compliance and efficiency.

DfBB provides free toolkits, policy templates and guidance documents designed for small and medium-sized businesses. Scaffolding firms can use these to build or improve their road risk management systems without needing specialist knowledge or expensive consultants.

Contractors can assess their current practices using DfBB's risk management gap analysis to help prioritise improvements and demonstrate commitment to safety to clients, insurers and regulators.

DfBB shares real-world examples of companies that have improved safety and reduced costs through better road risk management, showing that change is achievable and beneficial, even for smaller operators. The organisation also



DfBB, showing a typical scaffold lorry they might encounter



DfBB, showing a typical load which needs securing before the lorry enters the highway.

emphasises the role of leadership in setting safety standards. For scaffolding firms, this means directors and supervisors taking ownership of road risk, embedding safe practices into daily operations, and recognising good driving behaviour.

DfBB's resources help contractors stay compliant with key legislation such as the Health and Safety at Work Act and the Road Traffic Act. This reduces the risk of enforcement action and supports a proactive safety culture.

The Business Case

Improving road risk management isn't just about avoiding fines – it's about protecting people, assets and reputation. Scaffolding contractors who invest in driver safety see fewer collisions, lower insurance premiums, reduced downtime and improved client confidence.

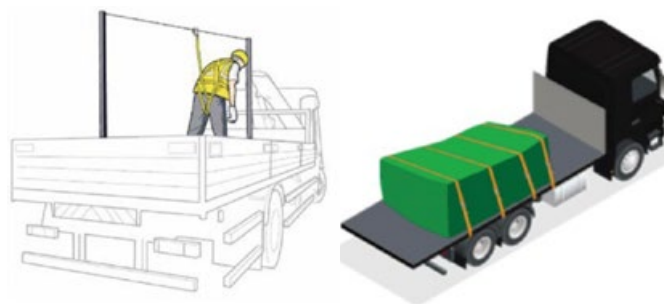
Driving for Better Business helps contractors make that leap. By embedding road safety into their operations, scaffolding firms can safeguard their teams, meet legal obligations and demonstrate leadership in a high-risk sector. Have a look at DfBB's free Driving for Work Policy Builder templates at www.drivingforbetterbusiness.com/support

SG30: the definitive guidance

NASC has produced a definitive guidance document: SG30:25 Management of Road Transport and Safe Loading for the Access & Scaffolding Contractor. Over 39 pages, the newly-revised SG30 guidance provides advice for employers on what they need to do to comply with the law and reduce risk. It is also useful for the responsible person (eg transport manager), managers, supervisors, employees and their safety representatives, as well as contractors, vehicle operators and other organisations concerned with transport workplace transport safety.

The guidance covers the following:

- Operator's licence requirements
- Company and responsible person competency
- Driver roles and responsibility
- Working from vehicles
- Securing of loads, and safe loading and unloading of vehicles
- Movement of vehicles on site
- Use of digital tachograph machines
- Prevention of theft and terrorism
- Appendices covering key areas such as: convictions that must be declared, example vehicle defect report form, guidance on safety inspection intervals, a maintenance planner, example safety inspection record, example maintenance agreement, guidance of safe unloading/loading of scaffolding vehicles on public roads, and job description templates.



Scaffolding lorry collides with house and cars

In November, a lorry loaded with scaffolding collided with a house near Bristol, damaging two cars as well as the property.

The vehicle was unoccupied at the time and no-one was injured but the extent of the damage to both the house and the cars shows what can happen when an incident with a scaffolding lorry occurs.



PICTURE CREDIT: BBC



PICTURE CREDIT: Bristol Post



PICTURE CREDIT: BBC



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THE FUTURE OF SCAFFOLDING: INNOVATION, IDENTITY, AND OPPORTUNITY

Scaffolding, for too long perceived as simply a support structure in construction and too often an afterthought, is undergoing a profound transformation. The sector has had enough of being in the background, its capacity for excellence too often overlooked. It is now at the forefront of technological innovation, safety and professional development, and it's time the industry shouted this from the rooftops (while wearing a safety harness, obviously).

The scaffolding industry is poised to redefine itself – not just as a provider of temporary structures, but as a key enabler of safer, smarter and more sustainable construction.

All the key elements of scaffolding's future self are already in play among the innovators and the early adopters. Digitally designing scaffolds and integrating them into project plans from the earliest stages allows for precise planning, real-time adjustments and seamless coordination with other trades. Augmented reality (AR) and virtual reality (VR) will enable workers to visualise scaffolding assemblies before a single component is installed, reducing errors and improving safety.

Robotic systems, lifting aids and drones are among the technology already in use but this will increase, especially the use of drones for inspections, monitoring structural integrity, and ensuring compliance with safety standards.

Sustainability will be another defining theme. As the

construction industry faces increasing pressure to reduce its environmental footprint, scaffolding manufacturers and contractors will need to adopt greener practices. This could include the use of lightweight, recyclable materials, modular designs that minimise waste, and logistics solutions that reduce transportation emissions. Digital tracking of scaffolding components will enable more efficient reuse and recycling, supporting the circular economy and helping companies meet stringent sustainability targets.

Although there will always be a need for hands-on scaffolders, the demand for skilled workers who can operate advanced equipment and interpret digital data will rise. Training programmes will need to evolve accordingly.

As NASC nears the end of its 80th year celebrations, a period of reflecting on the past but primarily looking to the future, we called upon the voices of six industry leaders – Clive Dickin, Colin Murphy, David Anderson, Lisa Rooney, Luis McCarthy and Wayne Connolly – to offer their vision of scaffolding's future. Their perspectives, rooted in decades of experience, reveal a sector that is dynamic, essential, booming and brimming with opportunity.

Scaffolding's Evolving Identity

Clive Dickin, CEO of NASC, highlights a persistent challenge: *"Anyone in and around scaffolding for construction, industrial and events industries (and many more) will tell you how integral scaffolding is to all manner of projects – but it's just not recognised for its critical importance. This has an effect on recruitment, where not enough people see it as a career option."*



This sentiment underscores a key issue: scaffolding is often overlooked, despite being foundational to every major construction project, and so many other developments. The sector's image problem is not just a matter of public perception; it affects recruitment, investment and innovation. As Lisa Rooney, Director at Midland Scaffolding Services, notes, *"Scaffolding definitely has a stigma to it, which we need to break. You've got all sorts of roles within the scaffolding industry: it's not just scaffolding."*

Colin Murphy, Head of Technical Authorities at Altrad, adds: *"I think a lot of people have a misconception of the industry because all they see is maybe a small scaffold in a town centre."*



You know that's not what we are doing and not what a lot of members are doing on industrial sites: nuclear plants or offshore oil rigs. They are highly skilled professionals who are doing a really challenging job in sometimes harsh environments, in the middle of the North Sea for example."

For young people considering their futures, scaffolding offers a unique blend of physical challenge, technical problem-solving and financial reward. Clive Dickin says: *"For any young person: if you enjoy teamwork, visible results, working out, solving problems with engineering, earning good money – then scaffolding is the career for you."*

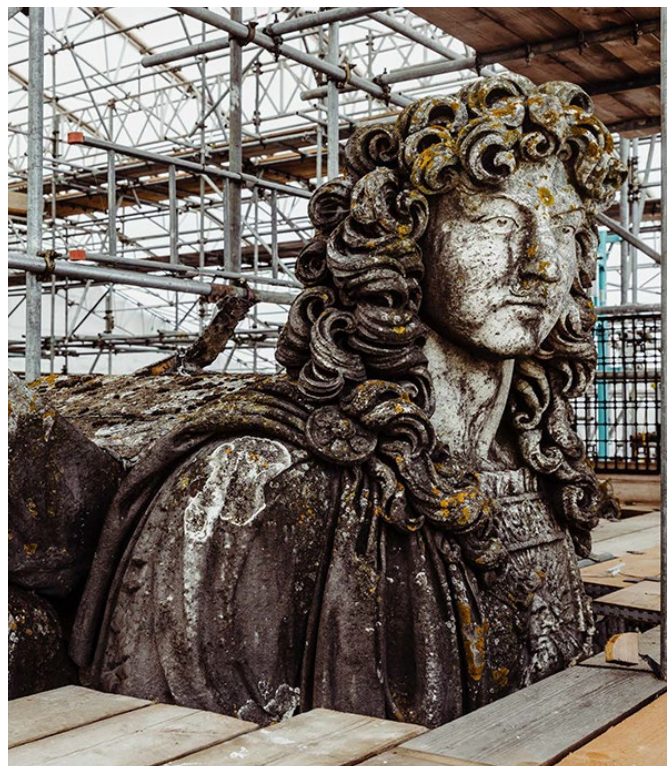
Lisa Rooney adds, *"There's a whole spectrum of challenges – one of those is that we don't get the school leavers. It is just a matter of getting the word out there that scaffolding is a career."*

Technological Transformation

The scaffolding sector has witnessed a technological revolution in recent years. Colin Murphy, with two decades in the industry, reflects on this journey: *"When I started, we didn't even use digital cameras. Now we're using 3D laser scanners. We went from hand sketches on paper to 3D design. We've got handheld devices on site and scaffold inspection apps which all help to improve productivity. We've got a lot of innovation around lifting, preventing dropped objects, trying to reduce the number of accidents, certainly falls from height. The rest of the world are looking at what we are doing in the UK to see how they can improve."*

These innovations have not only improved efficiency but have also enhanced safety and quality. The adoption of scaffold inspection apps, for example, allows for real-time monitoring and documentation, reducing the risk of oversight and error. Automated stock checking and tracking has already begun to give some businesses a huge advantage in terms of efficiency.

Looking ahead, the integration of AI and robotics is set to redefine the industry. **David Anderson**, General Manager, Allen & Foxworthy, who entered scaffolding 40 years ago, envisions a future where technology is central: *"In the next 20 years I imagine some great innovations in scaffolding, including the use of robots, AI and Virtual Reality. Not only will they*



save time on the job but they're going to help in the training process of scaffolders, who will be able to put on a headset and build the scaffolding artificially in the office before they go out onto site."

Wayne Connolly, NASC President, emphasises the transformative impact of digitisation: *"The biggest change that I've seen, certainly in the last five or ten years, has been digitisation. And now, it is AI that is the game changer. We're using it within our business and it really does help the health and safety department, it helps the commercial department, and I can see huge, huge changes ahead for the industry with AI."*



Lighter, Stronger, Smarter

The future of scaffolding will also be shaped by advances in materials science. Colin Murphy predicts, *"If I could imagine the sector in 20 years' time, I imagine we're going to have a lot more lightweight materials, automated material transport, hoists, braked gin wheels, and so on. Any equipment we can use to enhance productivity, it's going to be a good thing."*

Luis McCarthy, CEO, JMAC Group, adds, *"In 2045, if I walk onto a project on a site, what do I expect to see? Lighter products, stronger products – we are already seeing the likes of lift bots attaching to the side of scaffolds that will carry materials up and down and reduce the amount of manual handling required. We need innovation in software, we need innovation in processes, we have to embrace that in our businesses but also in our sector."*





Safety and Professionalism

Safety has always been paramount in scaffolding, but the approach has evolved dramatically. David Anderson recalls a time when, “there were no safety harnesses, there were no leading edge handrails – we used to walk around scaffolding tubes and nobody would bat an eyelid.” Today, the industry is governed by rigorous standards and the injury statistics reflect this huge shift to a safety-first culture, which will only be enhanced further as time goes on.

Colin Murphy reinforces this: “It’s the number one consideration for us and our clients – we’ll do the job safely or we won’t do it at all. We say to our guys: if anything’s unsafe, stop the job, speak to your supervisor, sort it out immediately. That’s what the industry always does and that’s what we’ll always do.”

Professional Recognition

Despite the sector’s complexity and skill requirements, scaffolding is still fighting for its due recognition as a profession. Lisa Rooney observes, “It is such a highly skilled job and I think sometimes people forget that. Certainly we find that going out to tender for jobs, scaffolding is the last package they think of. But if you don’t have scaffolding, you can’t build a building.”

Wayne Connolly sees the solution in collaboration and advocacy: “We need, as NASC, to raise the game with principal contractors. We need to, as a collective, make sure that we are constantly actually building that professionalism and putting it front and centre. Look at some of the projects in the UK right now and the scaffolding is a work of art. They’re designed by engineers, they’re put up by people who have been in the industry for 30 or 40 years. It is a skill like no other.”

The Human Element

While technology will continue to reshape scaffolding, the human touch remains irreplaceable. Luis McCarthy says: “If I compare the scaffolding sector to the likes of legal or accountancy, AI is starting to take away the entry level jobs for the likes of young legal professionals. The beauty of our sector is that they can’t take away our hands, and we’re going to need people that build scaffolding forever. Don’t get me wrong, we can harness AI and other tech to improve our processes, to streamline and to make us a lot more efficient but when it comes to the actual hands-on side of things, I

think that’s the most important in any business.”

The passion for the craft is palpable among industry veterans.

Lisa Rooney shares, “I’m as excited now as I was 20 years ago, coming into work, doing the job I love. In 20 years’ time, we’ll have more women in the industry and young passionate people into all aspects of the scaffolding sector: it is exciting and the sector is definitely evolving for the better.”

Luis McCarthy reflects: “The project that I am most proud of in my career is the Envision project with AESC, in a collaboration with Wates as construction partner. This plant is very special as it is the first lithium battery plant in the United Kingdom to manufacture car batteries for electric cars – what better project to indicate the future of scaffolding?”



Challenges and Opportunities

One of the sector’s biggest challenges is attracting new talent. As Lisa Rooney points out, “We don’t get the school leavers. It is just getting the word out there that scaffolding is a career.” The industry must also work to break down stereotypes and encourage diversity.

Change is often met with resistance, but as David Anderson asserts, “There’s always some resistance to change, but in our game, change is good. If you move with the times, with a lot of hard work and a lot of planning, everyone will reap the benefits.”

Wayne Connolly adds: “Shaping the industry over the next 20 years, I think collaboration is the number one. We have to engage with manufacturers more, we have to engage with the industry more.”

It will be important, too, that education and training keeps pace with the speed of change, and NASC, through CISRS, has already begun to put in place the foundations for this step-change in agility.

The future of scaffolding is bright, combining technological advances with the skill, passion and pride of those in the industry. For those willing to embrace change and seize the opportunity, the next 20 years promise to be the most exciting yet.

To watch the film *Better, Safer, Smarter, More* and see more in-depth interviews, visit nasc.org.uk/futureofscaffolding

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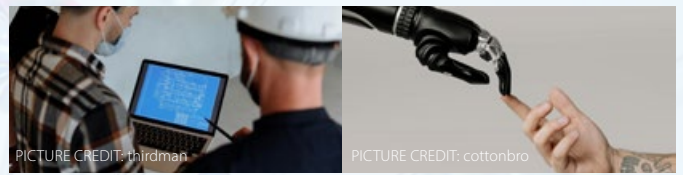
NEW DIGITAL INFRASTRUCTURE TO FUTURE-PROOF NASC

The future of scaffolding, like most other sectors and industries, is inevitably going to be more digital. While we may be some way off robots putting up scaffolding, the back offices of scaffolding firms all around the world, whether they are contractors, suppliers or both, are already undergoing a transformation.

Now NASC is positioning itself to be at the forefront of change, so it can ensure its members are too. Already, innovations such as TG20 and TG30 are changing how projects are designed and built, speeding up processes and ensuring safer, more compliant scaffolding on the most complex jobs. These highly complex digital systems have been proving themselves invaluable to members.

Looking ahead though, NASC is investing in an entirely new digital infrastructure, including new back-office systems based around a state-of-the-art customer relationship management (CRM) system designed specifically for trade associations and membership bodies. It promises to deliver a better member experience with a more tailored, member-specific website and a completely new mobile app. Members will be able to choose what information they want to see, and where and when they want it to be sent to them.

This new technology platform will transform the way members interact with NASC, streamlining how they manage their data and keep track of payments, enhancing the audit experience and transforming how they book into and keep track of NASC events, whether regional meetings or



PICTURE CREDIT: mirdman

PICTURE CREDIT: cottonbro

committee and council meetings as well as larger events such as ScaffEx.

It will similarly transform the user experience for CISRS training centres and cardholders alike, with the new platform representing a major step forward in how all participants in the CISRS environment engage with each other and with CISRS.

Due to launch at the end of January, the new digital environment will look and feel different and will improve members' experience of NASC and CISRS. A completely new app, launching a few weeks after the website's launch, will bring further enhancements, allowing users to interact with NASC via mobile phones, with tickets for events, push notifications and a digital CISRS card (although full functionality may be released in stages).

Later in the year a new learning management system (LMS) will go live, allowing trainees to access digital learning for the classroom aspects of CISRS training courses, with specially designed guided learning modules offering a more interactive experience for learners.

More details of all these developments will be announced in the coming weeks.

80 YEARS OF NASC: THE 2010s and 2020s

In the final instalment of this series of articles looking at NASC and the scaffolding sector through the last eight decades, we bring the story right up to the present day.

Since 2010, NASC and its members have significantly elevated safety, professionalism and innovation across the UK scaffolding industry. With the members' support, NASC has driven training initiatives, industry-wide recognition programmes, enhanced standards and guidance.

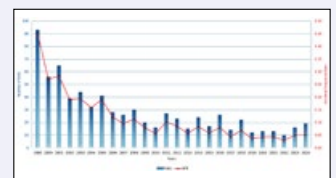
NASC's technical and safety guidance is widely respected and promoted by the Health & Safety Executive (HSE), Build UK, the National Federation of Builders (NFB) and other enforcement bodies and authorities. For example, the updated guidance document SG4 Preventing Falls in Scaffolding Operations has become the quasi-approved code of practice for scaffolders working at height.

In 2010, NASC prohibited 'unprotected traversing' in SG4:10 and its User Guide, building on the work of Appendix A, mandating the use of the scaffolder's safe zone, and clipping on when exposed to the risk of a fall from height. Further iterations of SG4 in 2015 and 2022 tightened it up even more to further drive safety across the industry. Since SG4's inception in the 1990s, NASC has seen an 89% reduction in the RIDDOR accident frequency rate (AFR) for falls from height.

In NASC's 2025 Safety Report, which detailed 2024 figures, NASC's contractor members reported the lowest RIDDOR AFR and AIR (accident incidence rate) in NASC's 80-year history.

Similarly, in 2011, TG20 Comprehensive Guidance on

Tube and Fitting Scaffolding (which was issued in 2008), officially replaced the old British Standard BS 5973. NASC has continued to develop and improve TG20, issuing updated guidance in 2013 and 2022, and is currently reviewing possible updates for its next revision.



CEO Clive Dickin has, over the last two years, driven several initiatives to improve NASC and the sector. For example, TG30 Comprehensive Guidance on System Scaffolding has been introduced to give those using system scaffolding the same benefits that TG20 brought to the industry.

Amongst other initiatives over recent years, NASC has:

- tightened its membership criteria, making its standards and guidance the benchmark for scaffolding excellence
- driven an increase in membership, with over 800 companies now part of the confederation, 300+ of which are contractor members
- launched initiatives aimed at helping members transition toward net zero operations, aligning with broader environmental goals
- invested in training grants to support workforce development, helping members upskill their teams and attract new talent
- hosted Europe's first major scaffolding conference and expo, Scaffex, marking a turning point for industry networking and knowledge sharing.

WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW ABOUT WASTE

NASC's Head of Technical, Mark Collinson, explores the implications of this year's Waste Segregation Regulations for scaffolding contractors of all size and in all regions. He writes:

In March 2025, new and updated waste segregation regulations came into effect across the UK and Ireland. This has had a major impact on how scaffolding contractors handle waste on site and in their yards.

In England, the new Separation of Waste (England) Regulations 2025 require all businesses to separate recyclable materials, such as paper and card, plastics, glass and metal from general waste. Food waste must also be collected separately (where produced in significant amounts), for example in welfare units or canteens.

Wales introduced the Waste Separation Requirements (Wales) Regulations 2024, and Scotland has had comparable rules since the introduction of the Waste (Scotland) Regulations 2012.

In Ireland, The Waste Management (Collection Permit) (Amendment) (No. 2) Regulations 2023 introduced mandatory measures for commercial waste collection companies.

In the Channel Islands, the regulatory frameworks are less uniformly national (each island has its own legislation).

Wherever you operate, the message is consistent: separating waste correctly is no longer optional.

Why It Matters to Scaffold Contractors

The scaffolding sector produces a wide range of waste, from site-based waste, such as timber and tube offcuts, scrap materials, used sheeting and debris netting to office-based waste such as cardboard, paper and canteen waste. Simply throwing everything into one mixed waste skip will no longer meet regulatory requirements.



PICTURE CREDIT: enginakyurt

By introducing proper segregation:

- You'll stay compliant and avoid fines or enforcement
- You can reduce disposal costs by diverting recyclables from landfill
- You'll boost environmental credentials, something increasingly valued in tenders.

The rules apply to all non-domestic premises, including scaffolding yards, offices and construction sites. In England contractors with fewer than 10 full-time employees have until March 2027 to comply.

Scaffolding contractors should:

- Review your waste arrangements. Talk to your waste carrier to make sure your collections meet the new standards.
- Add extra bins or skips. Provide separate containers for metal, timber, cardboard, plastics and residual waste.
- Brief your teams. Include waste segregation in site inductions and toolbox talks.
- Keep good records. Maintain waste-transfer notes and recycling data to demonstrate compliance.

The Separation of Waste (England) Regulations 2025 are part of a UK and Ireland wide push towards a more circular, resource-efficient economy. For scaffold contractors, this is an opportunity to review waste segregation practices, cut costs and strengthen sustainability credentials.

BACKGROUND PICTURE CREDIT: victormoragriegga

NEW ROLES AS NASC GROWS

NASC has announced the appointment of two new members of the team. Nickie Battersby joins in the new role of Head of Operations, while James Clowes joins in another new role, as Business Development Manager for Wales and the Midlands.

Clive Dickin, Group CEO, welcomed both appointments and explained: *"These new roles are a sign of our recent growth and success. While the expansion of the Business Development team will doubtless continue, it was also clear that now was the right time to separate out our operations and finance functions."*

"Both Nickie and James bring lots of experience and professional expertise from different backgrounds that will add to the strength in depth of the senior team at a vital time for NASC and CISRS."

Meanwhile, current team member Sarah Phillips becomes Head of Finance.



James Clowes



Nickie Battersby

DIGITISING LEARNING: OPPORTUNITIES FOR ALL

The construction sector has long relied on rigorous, hands-on training to ensure safety and competence, but the way learning is delivered has remained largely traditional. Now the NASC-owned Construction Industry Scaffolders Record Scheme (CISRS) is poised to change that for good with the introduction of its Learning Management System (LMS).

Due to launch in 2026, the LMS, developed in partnership with Rise Up, represents a major leap in the digital transformation of the scaffolding sector across the UK and beyond. It will provide a centralised, secure environment to host online courses, track learner progress, manage certification, and deliver critical health and safety training, all while maintaining the high standards for which CISRS is known.

By integrating with the forthcoming CISRS mobile app, the LMS creates a connected ecosystem that brings together learners, instructors, and training centres in an effective and coherent digital experience. Whether a trainee is learning on-site, at home or on the move, the platform ensures access to consistent, high-quality content.

For decades, CISRS training has relied on in-person instruction across a network of approved centres. This approach has ensured quality, but it has also posed challenges:

- Limited flexibility for learners who may struggle to attend scheduled classes
- Administrative overheads for centres managing enrolments, certification and compliance
- Difficulties in collecting and analysing data for quality assurance or strategic planning.

The LMS addresses these challenges head-on, aligning with the wider digital transformation strategy of NASC. By digitising the delivery and administration of training, the system enhances accessibility, reduces administrative burden, and provides actionable insights, without compromising on CISRS standards.

At the heart of the LMS is a token-based payment model. Training centres purchase digital tokens corresponding to specific learning pathways, which learners then redeem upon enrolment. This innovative approach allows centres to retain existing commercial arrangements while enabling CISRS to monitor delivery quality, learner progress and completion rates.

The LMS will initially focus on core Health and Safety modules, CISRS Operative Training (COTS), and foundational scaffolding courses. These courses will be delivered digitally, using interactive content, quizzes and assessments to engage learners. Over time, more advanced scaffolding courses will adopt blended learning formats that combine online theory with hands-on practical assessments at approved centres.

This phased approach ensures continuity for existing operations while gradually introducing modernised learning methods.

The LMS is not just a digital upgrade, it is a strategic tool for the scaffolding sector. Key benefits include:



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- Consistency across centres: standardised content ensures all learners receive the same high-quality training, regardless of location.
- Enhanced learner engagement: multimedia content, self-paced modules and mobile access make learning flexible and accessible.
- Data-driven quality assurance: comprehensive reporting enables CISRS to monitor standards and identify trends.
- Foundation for future innovation: the platform supports digital certification, international delivery and ongoing professionalisation of the workforce.

For trainees, this means more convenient access to learning without compromising practical competence. For centres, it reduces repetitive administrative tasks, allowing them to focus on delivering high quality training. For the sector as a whole, it represents a step towards a more modern, professional and data-informed approach to workforce development.

Integration with the CISRS mobile app will further enhance the learner experience. Trainees will be able to:

- Access course materials on smartphones or tablets
- Complete modules and assessments remotely
- Track progress in real-time
- Receive digital certification upon completion.

This connectivity allows instructors and centres to monitor performance, intervene when learners need support, and ensure high standards are consistently met. It also lays the groundwork for continuing professional development (CPD) tracking, helping scaffolding professionals maintain competence and advance their careers.

The launch of the LMS represents a key milestone, but it is just the beginning. Future developments include:

- Expansion of the course catalogue, including specialised scaffolding modules
- Enhanced analytics to identify learner trends and inform strategic decision-making
- Integration with CPD tracking systems to support lifelong learning and professional development.

By embracing digital innovation, CISRS is positioning the scaffolding sector to meet the demands of a rapidly evolving industry, ensuring workers remain safe, skilled and adaptable. The CISRS LMS will become the digital backbone for CISRS, supporting national and international delivery, CPD tracking, competence renewal and ongoing workforce development.

PIONEERS PUSH PLEDGE PLACES OVER 100

Ahead of the official launch of the 2026 5000 Work Experience Placement Pledge in partnership with DWP, NASC says it has had over 100 individual placements pledged across various members and non-members.

JMAC Industrial and Access Group, Lee Marley, Star Scaffolding, Smartway Scaffolding, Extreme Scaffolding, Optimum Scaffolding, Connolly Scaffolding, Rowecord Total Access, Work Works Training Solutions, Spartan Scaffolding and JEM Scaffolding have all made pledges, with roles varying from labouring and administration to estimating and design. In December 2025, NASC will launch its Work Experience Pledge Pack, which will provide resources to support the placements being undertaken.

The process is straightforward. Members who make the pledge receive clear guidance, resources and one-to-one support to help ensure placements are safe, engaging and well

managed. Whether an employer can offer a single placement or several throughout the year, every contribution helps widen access to careers and strengthens the collective talent pipeline.

Lee Marley Group has pledged 10 work experience places, saying: "At Lee Marley Scaffolding, we recognise the importance of opening up access to our industry and inspiring the next generation of talent. By supporting the NASC Work Experience Pledge, we are providing site visits that give people valuable first-hand insight into what a career in scaffolding can offer. This initiative is an excellent way to broaden horizons, encourage new entrants, and strengthen the future of our sector."



LEE MARLEY
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WASTED OPPORTUNITY: WHY THE WHITE PAPER IS MISSING A VITAL PIECE OF THE SKILLS JIGSAW

Last month, the Government published its Post-16 Education and Skills White Paper, which proposes reforming the skills system to align education and training with labour market needs and address shortages in key sectors. The plan aims for two-thirds of young people to reach higher-level learning by age 25, introducing initiatives like the Lifelong Learning Entitlement and expanding Technical Excellence Colleges. The paper also outlines changes to qualifications, introducing V Levels alongside A Levels and T Levels, and proposes a 'Youth Guarantee' to support young people not in education, employment or training. Funding reforms include leveraging the Growth and Skills Levy for flexible apprenticeship units to upskill the existing workforce.

Paul Napper, Head of Training and Education at NASC, comments: "I'm encouraged to see technical education being taken seriously. For years, employers across construction have been calling for a training system that reflects the world we actually work in. The White Paper at least acknowledges that mismatch.

"But as I read through the sections on construction, technical excellence colleges, sector-specific programmes and the new vocational routes, something stood out to me: there is no mention of the access and scaffolding sector.

"Scaffolding is not an optional add-on to construction. It is the foundation that enables every other trade to operate safely and effectively. Major infrastructure, renovation, energy, manufacturing: none of this happens without safe access.

"Our workforce is highly skilled, safety-critical and trained to rigorous standards through CISRS. Yet time and again, when government talks about construction skills, our sector is quietly put into a more generic category, despite having its own needs, pathways and regulatory frameworks.

"The White Paper talks about digital, clean energy, advanced manufacturing and construction as priority areas, and sets out £1 billion investment in skills programmes. It talks about technical colleges, V Levels alongside A and T Levels, and a simplified Level 2 offer. It talks about employer-led pathways.

"But nowhere does it acknowledge the specialist nature of scaffolding, or the fact that we need sustained investment in



PICTURE CREDIT: Simian



competent people to meet demand over the next five years. For a sector this essential to national delivery, being overlooked is not just frustrating, it is a strategic mistake.

"The paper talks repeatedly about working with industry to shape provision. NASC and CISRS have been doing exactly that for decades. Our training standards and safety requirements are all built around the realities of the job. If the aim is to match training to genuine employer need, then scaffolding should be part of the conversation.

"Despite the omission, I believe there is a real opportunity here. The proposed reforms, particularly the new vocational pathways and the emphasis on modular, flexible learning, could help strengthen access to our industry if implemented with proper engagement. There is space to modernise delivery and ensure that scaffolding pathways sit clearly within the new landscape rather than being lost in the background.

"We will be responding fully to the Post-16 consultation, pressing for recognition of scaffolding as a distinct vocational route and ensuring progression into our sector is protected, visible and understood. We will also be engaging with the Construction Leadership Council as it develops its 2026 Action Plan, making sure that access and scaffolding are not left out of future workforce planning.

"NASC will continue to push firmly, but constructively, for the recognition our sector deserves. We will keep working with Government, industry partners and the wider construction sector to make sure our workforce remains world-leading and properly supported. Because you can't build anything safely, efficiently and at scale without the people who make access possible."

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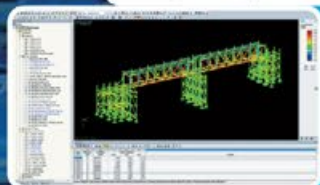
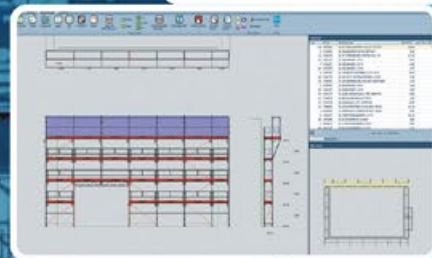
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