

The Rt Hon Pat McFadden MP, Secretary of State for Work and Pensions
Department for Work and Pensions
Caxton House
Tothill St
London
SW1H 9NA

Cc:

The Rt Hon Bridget Phillipson MP, Secretary of State for Education and Minister for Women and Equalities

The Rt Hon Steve Reed OBE MP, Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government

The Rt Hon Darren Jones MP, Chief Secretary to the Prime Minister

The Rt Hon Baroness Smith of Malvern, Minister of State (Minister for Skills)

Matthew Pennycook MP, Minister of State (Minister for Housing and Planning)

Samantha Dixon MBE MP, Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State (Minister for Building Safety, Fire and Democracy)

24 November 2025

Dear Secretary of State,

On behalf of organisations, businesses and academic institutions in the built environment, we are writing to urge you to raise the age of eligibility for Level 7 apprenticeship funding to 25 years old for built environment professionals.

Construction is one of the [largest sectors](#) in the UK economy, with a turnover of £370 billion and contributing £138 billion in value, and directly linked to the Government's growth agenda. From delivering 1.5 million homes to creating the next generation of new towns and working towards net zero, the built environment sector is integral to driving economic growth up and down the country.

Skills are central to this mission-driven Government, and to deliver on its ambitions, we need a pipeline of highly-trained professionals. Skills England's own [analysis](#) of current and future skills needs acknowledges that the Government's growth ambitions will increase the demand for architects, engineers, planners and surveyors. Its Sector Skills Needs Assessment for the construction sector also [estimates](#) that more than 250,000 additional workers will be needed by 2028 to maintain current construction output.

The Construction Industry Training Board (CITB) [states](#) that the major industries for skills in demand include private housing, infrastructure, and repair and maintenance, highlighting architects and construction project managers as key growth areas. The Government's recent policy change, which cuts off funding for Level 7 apprentices over the age of 21, directly contradicts this.

Many of us would like to see Level 7 funding to be accessible to learners of all ages. However, with [12.8% of all 16 to 24 year olds](#) not in employment, education or training in April to June 2025, we acknowledge the Government's commitment to refocus investment towards young people at the start of their working lives. We welcome the Prime Minister's recent announcement that the country should be aiming for two-thirds of young people to get higher-level skills, either through university, further education, or a "gold standard" apprenticeship by age 25. Extending the eligibility age for funding to 25 years old aligns with these ambitions.

Young people are central to building a resilient and productive labour market. They deserve the opportunity to undertake high-quality Level 7 built environment apprenticeships and raising the age of eligibility for funding would help achieve this.

Level 7 apprenticeships are a flexible and accessible pathway to becoming a professional within the built environment, allowing a balance of work and study. By allowing students to continue with their studies while earning a salary, those with additional responsibilities such as family or caring commitments can enter professions with the skills that employers need, without the burden of debt.

As a sector with many SMEs, a significant number of built environment businesses rely on access to Growth and Skills Levy funding to employ Level 7 apprentices. Without funding business's ability to support young people and access to new talent is restricted, it also lessens the gains made in social mobility in our professions.

The built environment sector is ready to work with you to turn the Government's ambitions into reality. However, to drive growth through creating and developing high-quality, well-designed buildings and places across the country, a dynamic and highly-skilled workforce is essential. Raising the age of eligibility for Level 7 apprenticeship funding to 25 years old for built environment professionals is one key mechanism to help achieve this.

Yours sincerely,

Chris Williamson, President, Royal Institute of British Architects
Andrew Leslie BSc, DipArch, FRIAS, RIBA, HonFaPS, Chief Executive, Association for Project Safety (APS)
Melanie Leech, Chief Executive, British Property Federation
Polly Wilkinson, Head of Academy, Building Research Establishment
Richard Harral, Chief Executive, Chartered Association of Building Engineers
Eddie Weir PCIAT, President, Chartered Institute of Architectural Technologists
Gavin Smart, Chief Executive, Chartered Institute of Housing
Simon Hamlyn, Chief Executive, Chartered Institution of Civil Engineering Surveyors (CICES)
Eddie Tuttle, Director of Policy, Research, and Public Affairs, Chartered Institute of Building (CIOB)
Ruth Cater, Chief Executive Officer, Chartered Institution of Building Services Engineers
Graham Watts OBE, Chief Executive, Construction Industry Council
Minnie Moll, Chief Executive, Design Council
Brian Berry, Chief Executive, Federation of Master Builders

Rachel Morris, Chief Executive Officer, Institute of Clerks of Works and Construction Inspectorate

Linda Hausmanis, Chief Executive Officer, The Institute of Workplace and Facilities Management (IWFM)

Rob Hughes, Chief Executive Officer, Landscape Institute

Nick McKeogh, Chief Executive, NLA

Justin Young, Chief Executive Officer, Royal Institution of Chartered Surveyors

Dr Victoria Hills MRTPI, FICE, Chief Executive, Royal Town Planning Institute

Caroline Hamilton MBE, Chief Executive, Safety Assessment Federation

Dr Caroline Sudworth, Director, Technical Apprenticeship Consortium (TAC)

Robin Nicholson CBE, Convenor, The Edge

Leanne Tritton, Chair, The London Society

Ian Shepherd, Associate Professor, Department of Architecture and the Built Environment, Birmingham City University

Timothy Barwell, Architect Apprenticeship Programme Leader, Leicester School of Architecture, DMU

Kaye Newman, Deputy Dean of School of Art, Architecture and Design, London Metropolitan University

Gavin Richards, Head of Architecture, Nottingham Trent University

Alberto Villanueva, Head of School of Architecture and Built Environment, Ravensbourne University London

Graeme Barker, Deputy Head of Department and L7 Apprenticeship Programme Director, The University of Nottingham

Professor Timothy Brittain-Catlin, L7 Architect Course Leader, University of Cambridge

Peter Wislocki, Director of Studies, University of Kent

Rebecca Galbraith, Course Leader, University of Portsmouth

Ashley Wheaton BA (Hons) HonRICS Hon FCABE, Vice Chancellor, University of the Built Environment

Andrew Bourne, Associate Director - Integrated Practice, UWE Bristol

Richard Fairhead, Director, 3DReid

Sian Milliner, People Manager, ADP Architecture Ltd

Anthony Langan, Managing Director - Architecture, AHR Architects Ltd

Andrew Thomas, Head of HR, Allford Hall Monaghan Morris Ltd

Jo Bacon, Managing Partner, Allies and Morrison

Chris Brimble, Principal & Director, Arden Kitt Associates

Warren Jukes, Managing Director, Associated Architects

Nicholas Wills, Apprentice Development Manager, AtkinsRealis

Félicie Krikler, Director and Head of Residential, Barr Gazetas

Nick Fairham, Chief Executive, BDP

Rebecca Wise, Principal Architect, Best Little Projects

Colin Briggs-Campbell, Director, Bowman Riley Architects

Jerene Irwin, Architect/Director, Chaplin Farrant Ltd

Yashin Kemal, Associate Director, Chris Dyson Architects

Simon Jones, Group Director, Corstorphine & Wright Ltd

Roddy Langmuir, Practice Leader, Cullinan Studio

Julius Steinert, Managing Director - South, DB3 Group

Kevin Davis, Director - Chartered Architect, DJD Architects
Dorian Proudfoot, Chief Executive, Donald Insall Associates
Chris Castle, Managing Director, EPR Architects Limited
Stephen McIntyre, Partner, FaulknerBrowns Architects
David Stansfield, Senior Partner, Feilden Clegg Bradley Studios
Kees van der Sande, Director and Trustee, Formation Architects
Peter Garstecki, Associate Partner, Foster + Partners and Chair, Architecture Trailblazer
Hazel York, Managing Partner, Hawkins Brown Architecture Ltd
Philip Watson, Chair, HLM Architects
Femi Oresanya, Principal, HOK
Glenn Howells, Partner, Howells
Caroline Dove, Partner, HTA Design
Kay Hughes, Principal, khaa
Graeme Dodd, Director, Napper Architects Ltd
Patrick Devlin, Partner, Pollard Thomas Edwards
Andrew Drummond, Director, R H Partnership Architects Ltd (RHP)
Dr Izzy Williams, Senior Learning and Development Lead, Ryder Architecture
Darren Comber, Chief Executive Officer, Scott Brownrigg
Lisa Mcfarlane, Director, Seven Architecture
Raymond Alan Shingler, Partner & Chairman, Sheppard Robson
James Nicholls, Managing Partner, Stephen George + Partners LLP
Oluwafunmbi Adeagbo, Director, StudioOOAA
Anna Liu, Director, Tonkin Liu Architects
Richard Crowson, Regional Director, Watson Batty Architects
David Vanderson, Principal Director, Weedon Architects