

New construction T-Levels welcome boost to sector: but is it enough?

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At a time when the construction sector is contending with acute skills shortages, the announcement from the Department for Education that it is to introduce T-Level courses, is welcome news. However, while it is a step in the right direction, more needs to be done to attract pupils to take the new vocational qualification in the first place. That's according to specialist rail and construction recruiter, One Way, which argues that unless radical steps are taken to educate students about the opportunities that the sector offers, the new initiative will simply fall at the first hurdle due to a lack of take up.

Commenting on the new T-Levels, Paul Payne, Managing Director of One Way comments:

"Any initiative that addresses the longstanding skills shortage in the construction industry is clearly a step in the right direction. In theory, the newly announced construction T-Levels could be particularly promising because they will, crucially, offer 'on the job training' rather than purely classroom based learning. However it can't be ignored that the construction industry faces a real image problem – too many people are simply put off entering the field. Consequently unless more is done to change the outdated perception of a male only environment with jobs purely being 'on site', too few pupils will choose to do them.

We've long championed the need to not only encourage more females into construction – via our #Girls Allowed campaign – but to also educate all pupils on the varied opportunities available through our One Way into Construction initiative. And we'd like to see more organisations follow suit. We need to get away from the old age belief that you have to be on a building site laying bricks to work in the sector and utilise role models to highlight what being in construction is really all about. Schools often get visits from legal firms, accountants and technology companies, for example, but rarely do you see a construction business go in and this needs to change. Only when the sector is truly viewed as a career of choice for everyone will initiatives like T-Levels get the take up they need to help solve the skill shortages."

ENDS

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