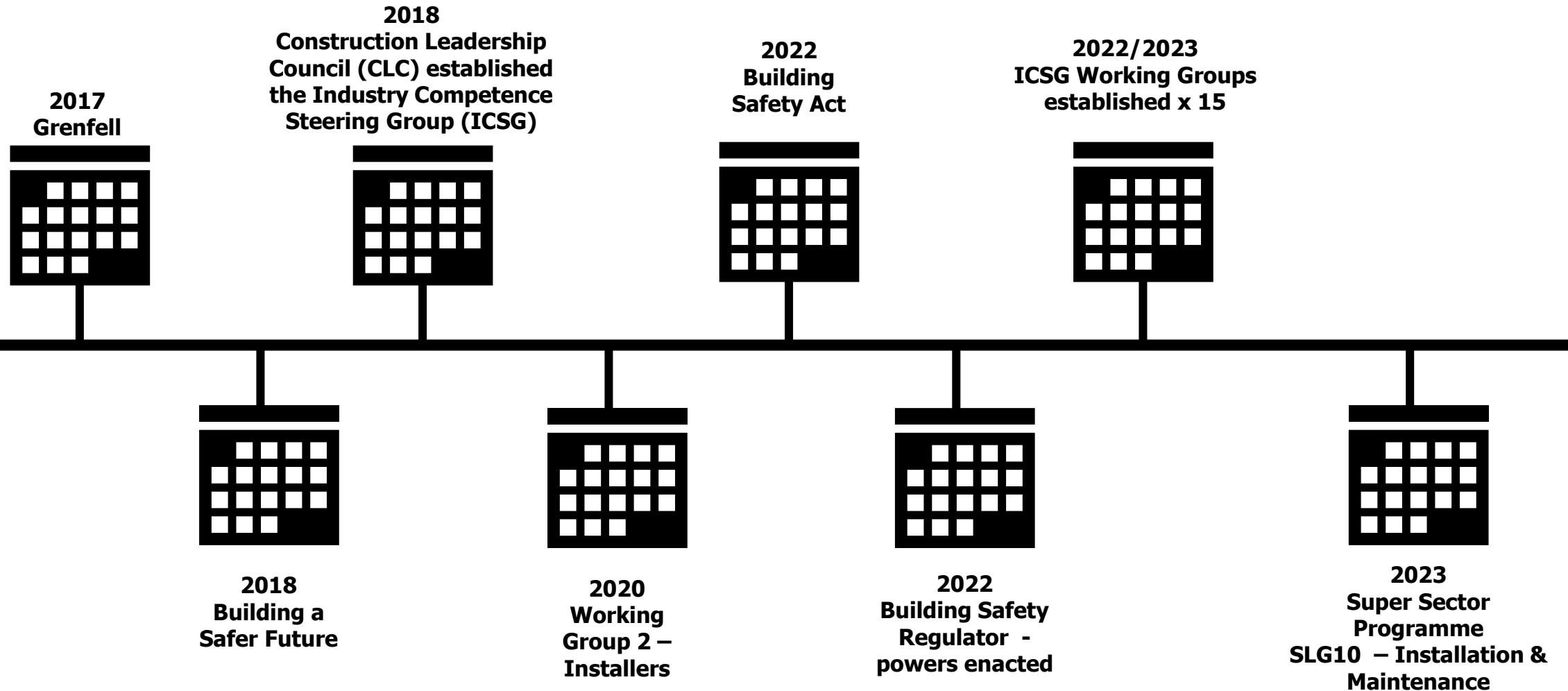




**Latest position
on changes to
EPA assessments
from the
Construction
Coalitions
perspective**

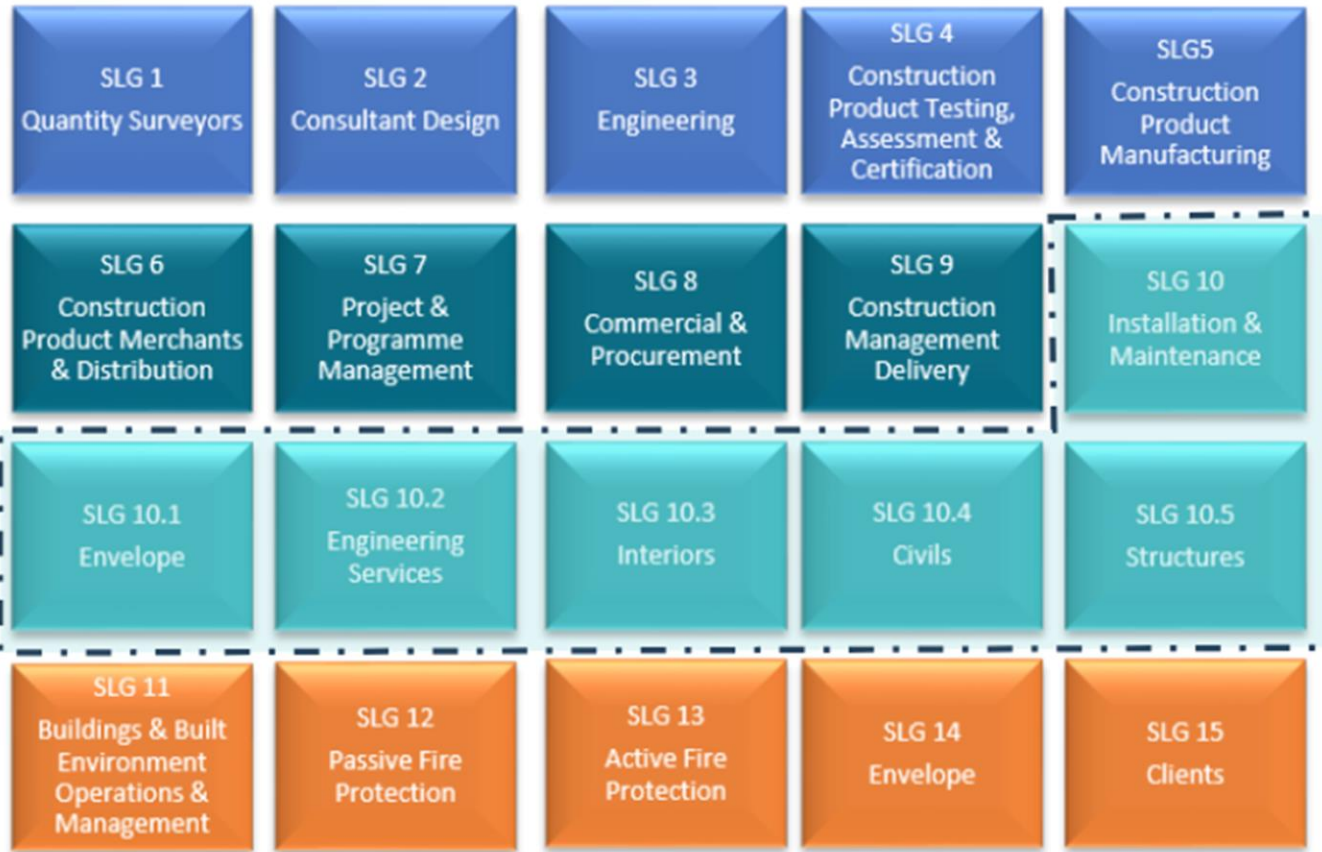


Why are we here?



Why are we here?

The Industry Competence Steering Group (ICSG)



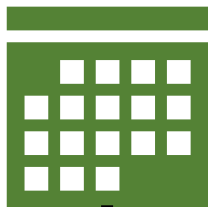
SLG = Sector Lead Group

ICSG – Purpose to improve competence across the built environment, including developing, managing and maintaining competence frameworks

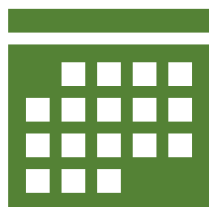


Why are we here?

2023
SLG10 - Envelope –
Door, Gates &
Shutter



16 June 2025
Competence Framework /
R2C released for public
consultation



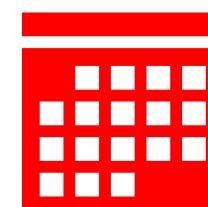
4 September 2025
Skills England -
Implementing
apprenticeship
assessment reforms for
the first five standards:



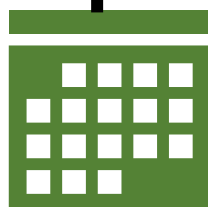
September 2025
Construction Coalition
formed
23 Membership
Organisations



December 2025
All “construction & built
environment” apprenticeship
placed on hold by Skills
England



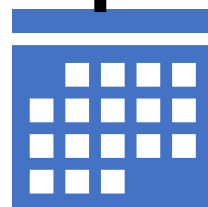
2023
SLG10 - Interiors –
1st & 2nd Fix Site
Carpentry



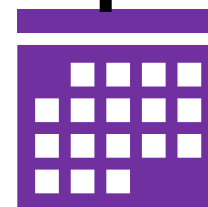
19 June 2025
Skills England host
their first “Testing the
apprenticeship
reforms”



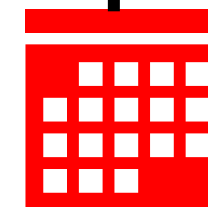
19 September 2025
Skills England submit
the 5 test standards to
the Route Panel for
approval



23 October
Letter sent to
Government

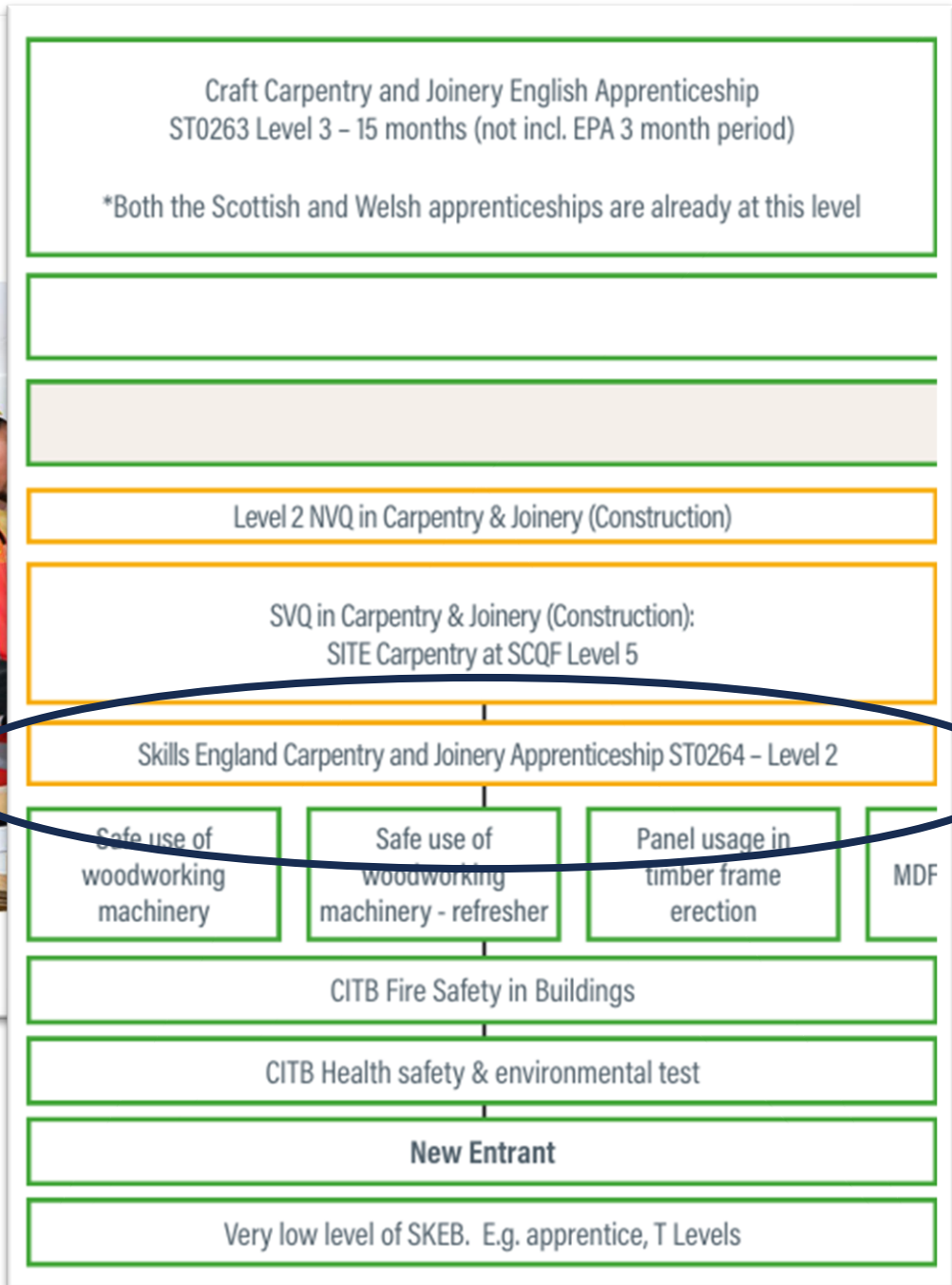


December 2025
Construction Taskforce
Formed by Skills
England

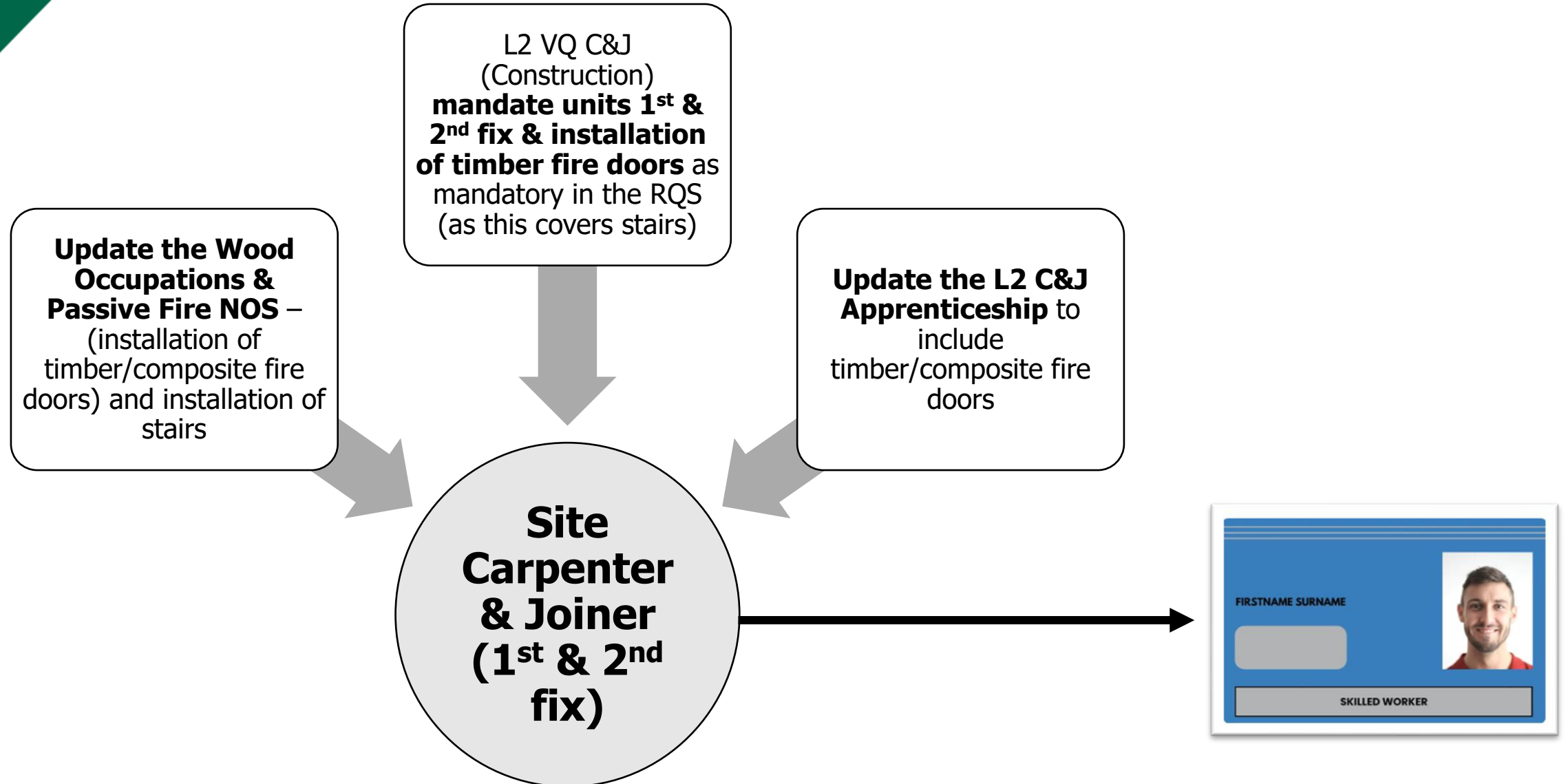


Site Carpentry - Specific to First and Second Fix Activities (Doors and Stairs) Competence Framework

Continue →



SLG10 - The Site Carpenter & Joiner Route to Competence



Why did the BWF challenge Apprenticeship Reforms



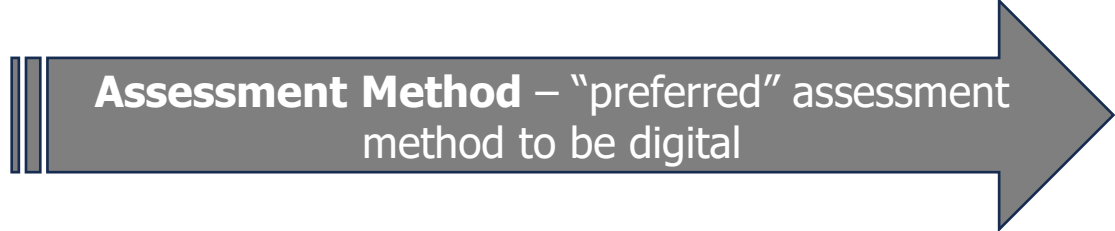
Under the BSA industry is having to **increase the future competence** of an individual



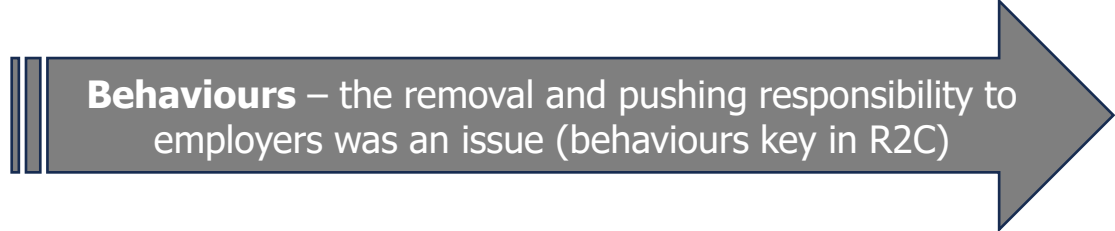
Under the SE apprenticeship reforms the **competence of an individual will decrease**



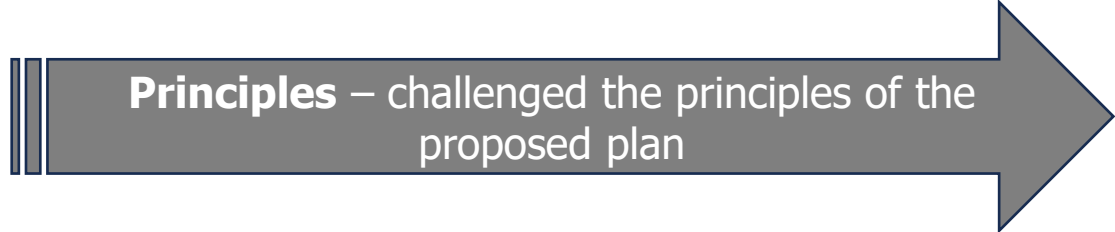
Risk Rating – AI rated C&J as low to medium risk occupation



Assessment Method – “preferred” assessment method to be digital



Behaviours – the removal and pushing responsibility to employers was an issue (behaviours key in R2C)



Principles – challenged the principles of the proposed plan

How does this impact L2 Carpentry & Joinery Apprenticeship

75 Skills/Knowledge/Behaviours & 5 EPA's

SE wrote the assessment plan with no input from the Trailblazer/Employers

Reduce the assessment plan to a "high level" two-page plan

Remove the option to mandate assessment methods - digital where possible.

Remove behaviours and pass responsibility onto Employers

Reduce the mandatory elements to 11 SK (OR!) to 30%-40%

Assessment Organisations **to write their own** – based on a two-page plan

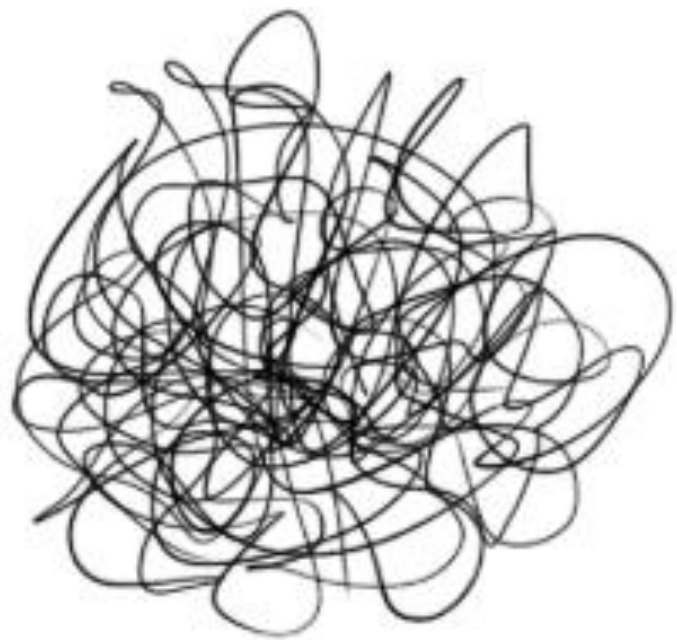
Little time allowed for meaningful consultation (bulldozed through)

Pass on responsibility from SE to OFQUAL

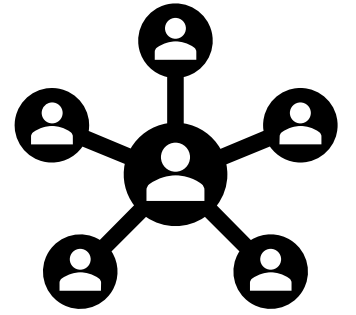
The Building Safety Regulator



- BSR are supporting the work of the Super Sectors and the “statutory committees”
- Building Safety Act 2022
 - Section 6
 - Section 10
- Using the routes to competence as their “benchmarks” for individual competence
- Not just looking at HRB’s will be focusing on management and maintenance of buildings



Construction Coalition



ActuateUK
Association of Fencing Industries (AFI)
Association of Technical Lightning & Access Specialists (ATLAS)
Automatic Door Suppliers Association (ADSA)
British Association of Construction Heads (BACH)
BEMS Controls Engineer Trailblazer Chair and member of the Industry Competence Committee
British Coatings Federation (BCF)
Constructure
CONSTRUCT Concrete Structures Group
British Construction Steelwork Association (BCSA)
British Drilling Association (BDA)
British Institute of Fitted Interiors Specialists (BIFIS)
British Woodworking Federation (BWF)
Building Controls Industry Association (BCIA)
Building Engineering Services Association (BESA)
Construction Plant Association (CPA)
Contract Flooring Association (CFA)
Electrical Contractors Association (ECA)

Federation of Piling Specialists (FPS)
Federation of Master Builders (FMB)
Finishes and Interiors Sector (FIS)
Glass and Glazing Federation (GGF)
International Powered Access Federation (IPAF)
Joint Industry Board (JIB)
National Access & Scaffolding Confederation (NASC) & Construction Industry Scaffolders Record Scheme
National Federation of Builders (NFB)
National Federation of Roofing Contractors (NFRC)
Painting and Decorating Association (PDA)
Road Safety Markings Association (RSMA)
Structural Timber Association (STA)
The Safety Assessment Federation (SAFed)
The Scaffolding Association
The Technical Apprenticeship Consortium (TAC)
The Tile Association
Thermal Insulation Contractors Associate (TICA)
UNITE The Union

Apprenticeship Reforms – Concerns Raised

Putting Industry at Risk - Occupational Competence

Employers have real concern that these reforms are not feasible or sufficient for **safety-critical industries**, potentially leading to a lack of occupational competence and health and safety implications.

The reforms are in direct conflict with the **Building Safety Act 2022** – placing the work of Sector Led Group 10 under the Sector Led Competence Steering Group (SLCG) into a precarious place.

The reforms threatens the whole skills system, **including the issuing of CSCS cards**, which are the backbone of our industry. If the reforms move ahead, CSCS will no longer recognise apprenticeships as they will not be confident individuals who have met the minimum standard to demonstrate competence and safety. **This removes a clear pathway to a skilled, qualified and competent workforce, and puts more pressure on an industry already suffering a widely acknowledged skills shortage and aging workforce.**

Apprenticeship Reforms – Concerns Raised

Putting Industry at Risk - Occupational Competence

1. The one-size fits all approach does not work, particularly when it comes to safety-critical industries. There is anxiety building across many manufacturing sectors (nuclear, food & drink, chemicals, engineering, marine) that the reforms will **dilute quality**, especially if there are no mandated common standards between assessment organisations and how an assessment is sampled.

2. The use of 'sampling' within a competence-based assessment is one of the biggest and contentious concerns employers and manufacturing & construction industries have. Previously apprentices needed to demonstrate they can meet all of the Knowledge, Skills and Behaviour criteria. Under the new proposals each assessment organisation will be asked to select a smaller sample of criteria to assess and use that to infer the apprentices' overall competence. Any form of sampling will create inconsistency across different assessment providers and stimulate a race to the bottom, as providers are incentivised to create lighter touch assessments to secure better pass rates and cost efficiencies

It is crucial that knowledge, skills and behaviours required for competency is maintained, not only to keep people safe but to also ensure that quality remains at the heart of apprenticeships – the removal of behaviours from the assessment is a concern too.

Apprenticeship Reforms – Concerns Raised

Putting Industry at Risk - Occupational Competence

3. The **removal of tolerances in the assessment plan**, especially when this comes to practical trades and working with life safety critical products poses a concern for safety critical occupations.

4. The **reduction of mandatory requirements to around 30/40%** ruling now stated in the assessment plans. This ruling makes it impossible to demonstrate an individual's competence especially when working with life safety critical products and occupations.

5. The proposal for **digital assessment** to be the "preferred method". So, the assessment method needs to be aligned with the occupation and risk assessed. Concerns over what "digital assessment" actually means, there is no guidance in the assessment plan – this is too open and vague. How can practical trades and safety critical occupations be assessed thoroughly.

Apprenticeship Reforms – Concerns Raised

Reduction of delivery time

6. The proposal to reduce the apprenticeship to an 8 month delivery period.

Confusion about the reforms

SMEs are time poor, busy running their business and meeting the challenges of the day. These reforms are complex. **There has been insufficient awareness of their full implications for employers large and small.** This is exacerbated by the fact that employers are only just beginning to adapt to the EPA format: to change course so quickly increases the burden on employers

Apprenticeship Reforms – Concerns Raised

Future of apprenticeships moving forward

With no common standard of assessment, **employers feel that the apprenticeship certificate could have a reduced currency outside of the employer where the apprenticeship was undertaken.**

This will be a detrimental impact to the individual and to the apprenticeship brand which is now increasingly being seen as a valid alternative to academia by young people and parents.

The **removal of the independent assessment of behaviours**, with employers taking on this role, could create differences.

When the new assessment plan is released, it will not be reflective of employers and industry needs – undermining employer confidence and resulting in fewer apprentices taken on by employers.

Apprenticeship Reforms – Concerns Raised

Ignoring industry voices and unrealistic timelines

The industry is concerned that throughout the test phase of the apprenticeship reforms and subsequent reviews since (group 1 & 2) that employers and industry are being subjected to **DWP & Skills England's ambitious timeline and unrealistic timelines.**

The **consultation process is remaining ambitious** and continues to be clumsily managed with unrealistic timelines imposed and the fact that all reforms are to be completed by June 2026 for roll out September. Initially group one to be completed by end March 2026 (93 frameworks).

A view that DWP are **reducing the involvement of employers in designing standards** underpinning apprenticeships which will lead to a misalignment with industry need and reduced buy-in from employers.

The speed of the policy development process has led to employers of which many are SME's feeling out-of-the-loop.

Confusion on who "**Groups of Persons**" are – this is very vague and no detail being released. Now we are hearing about **Expert Networks** or **Occupational Groups**.

The unknowns!

1. Is the Construction Taskforce going to achieve what SE/DWP want it to?
2. Is the Construction Taskforce a smoke screen to try to buy time?
3. Will it be used as pilot to help tackle all the other sectors – will there be several Taskforces – *“In response, we are working with a dedicated construction taskforce to ensure sector-specific needs are fully reflected. We will take a similar approach in other sectors where risks and regulatory requirements demand it”.*
4. Will DWP meet their August 2026 deadline?

The knowns !

SE are desperate for some good PR to try to restore employers' confidence in the apprenticeship reforms

**“Strengthening assessment
without compromising quality,
- Carmel Grant”**

**“We are listening, we have
heard”**



Questions?