

# Narrowing the skills gap

Furthering the conversation

# Delivering the political promise of 1.5 million homes



**Shortfall of > 200,000 new homes in past few years**

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**House prices ~18 x above average income in 2022/23**

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**Third of take-home income spent on rent**

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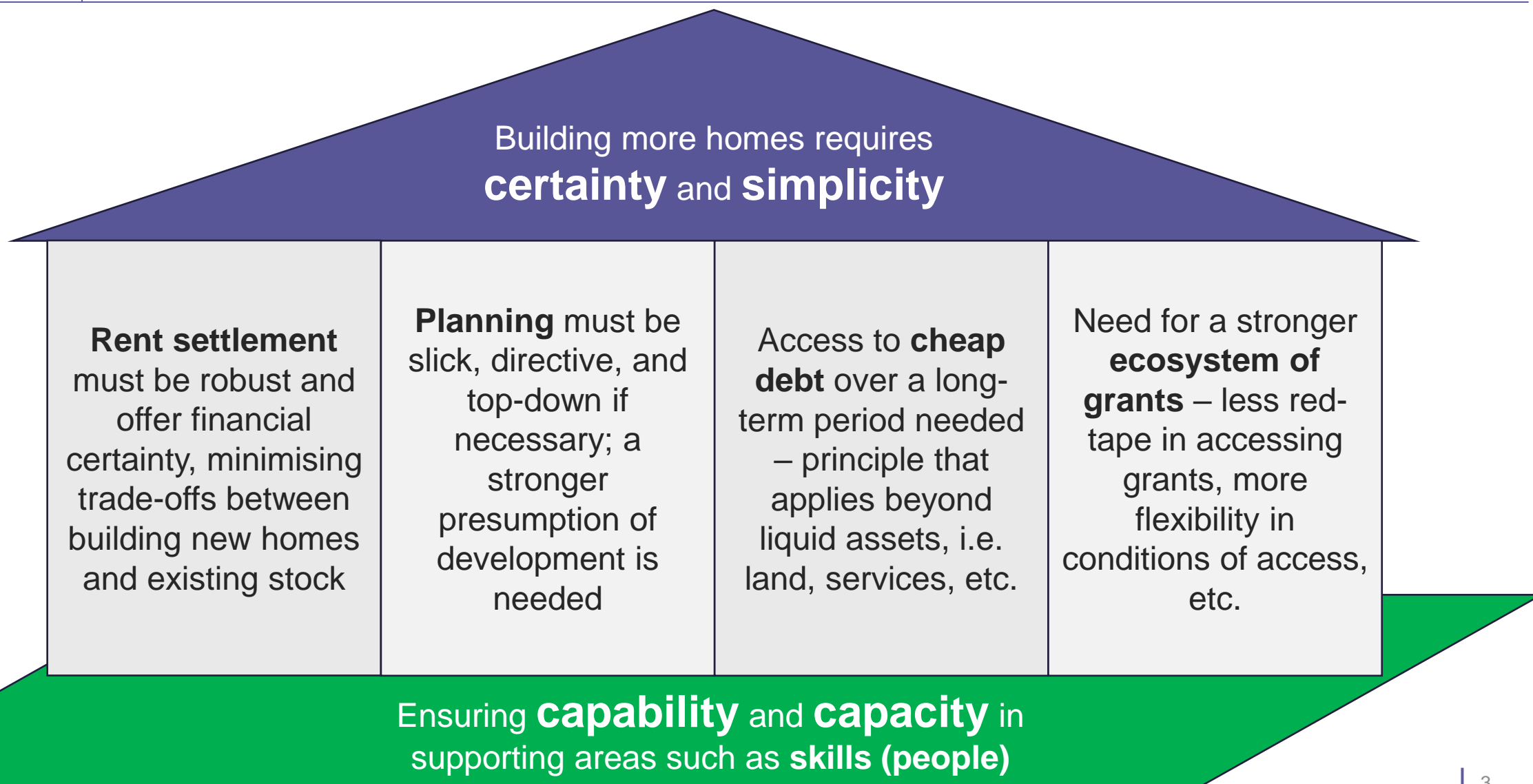
**~4,667 people sleeping rough on a single night (autumn 2024)**

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**~159,000 children living in temporary accommodation**

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# Identifying key enablers of the housing ambition



# The challenge



## ***Skills Shortage***

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The UK is experiencing a shortage of skilled professionals in the Housing sector, particularly due to the rising demand for housing across the country.



## ***Future Skills***

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Our sector is changing at a significant rate, we need to upskill our colleagues with the right skills to meet the future demands of our sector.



## ***Training Quality***

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Training in our sector has often lacked relevance and flexibility. We need industry-specific training that blends practical skills with a values-driven approach, delivered by experienced professionals.



## ***Customer and Community impact***

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Creating local opportunities in communities attracting those furthest from the job market into work. Upskilling Customers with the knowledge, skills and behaviours to Thrive.

# The solution

*“An Academy, exclusively for those in the housing sector, that guarantees relevant, values-led learning by experts in the sector.”*



## The Thrive Academy



# The locations

## Apprenticeships Technical and Future Skills Organisational Development

All apprenticeship training will be conducted through the Academy using a block release model, allowing us to accept apprentices from across the UK and increase the **'speed to competency rate'**. All other learning will be delivered locally or in one of our Academy Hubs.

Learning centres across the UK:

*Edinburgh*  
*Newcastle*  
*Leeds*  
*Hull*  
*Preston*  
*Chorley*  
*Rotherham*  
*Sheffield*  
*Nottingham*

*Derby*  
*Norwich*  
*Huntingdon*  
*Milton Keynes*  
*Bristol*  
*Hounslow*  
*London*  
*Chichester*

*Academy Hubs  
National*

*Main Academy  
Derby*

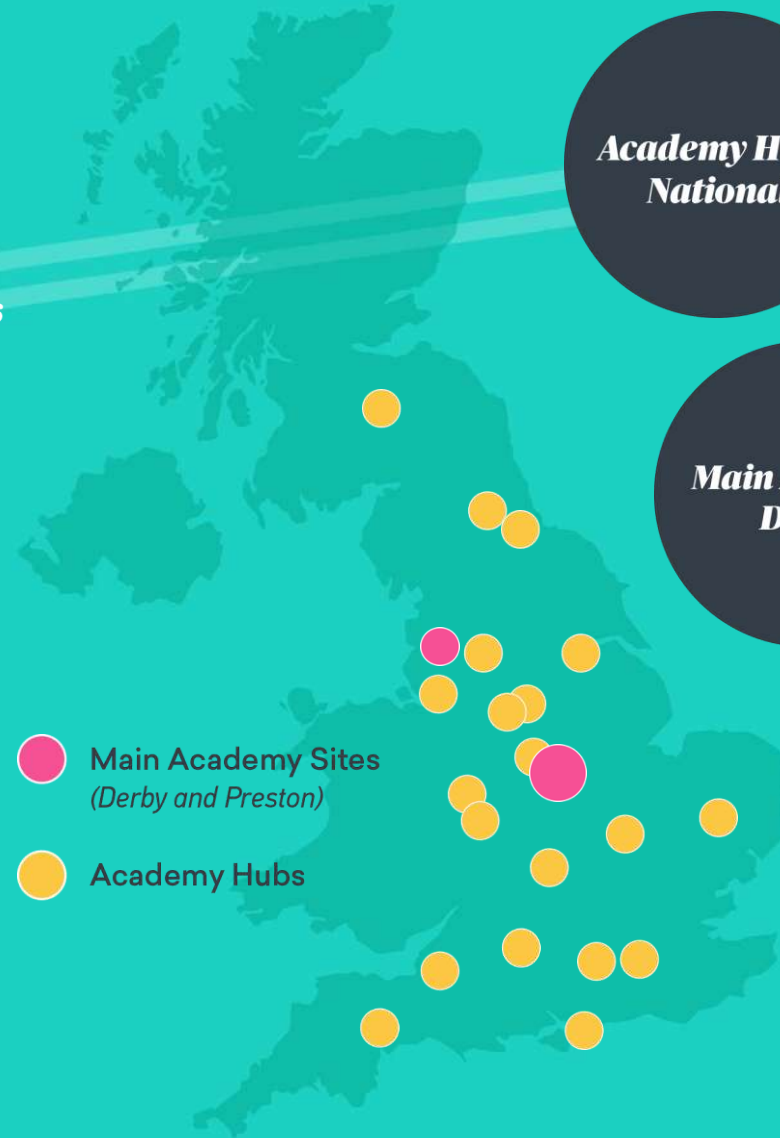


● Main Academy Sites  
(Derby and Preston)

● Academy Hubs

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(Derby and Preston)

● Academy Hubs



# The offering



## Flexible Apprenticeships

High-quality apprenticeships tailored specifically for the housing sector, provided by experienced professionals who blend practical skills with values-driven learning.

Derby Academy



## Short courses

Equip those in the housing sector with the skills required both now and, in the future, while also enhancing the quality and value of the current learning opportunities available.

Regional delivery or local



## Organisational Development

A range of organisational development products tailored to the housing sector, designed to meet the demands necessary for business growth.

Regional delivery or local

# We can't do this alone...

- ✓ Be part of the PFP Thrive movement
- ✓ Advertised as our partner on all media outlets
  - ✓ Sit on employer board of PFP Thrive
- ✓ Have full access to the PFP Thrive academy
  - ✓ Have first access to funded learning

## PfP Thrive learners

Any organisation that has learners on any PFP Thrive courses starting in September 25 will become a 'Cornerstone Partner'. These include;

**Apprenticeships  
CIH Qualifications  
Short Courses  
Future Skills**

## Sponsorship

Organisations that support PFP thrive in various ways.

**Promotion of its products and services  
EDI organisations and charities  
Equipment, products and training  
partnerships**

## Change a life

Our Social Value Pathway supports social housing customers by connecting them with sponsoring organisations to transition from unemployment to meaningful employment.

**This 9-week, bootcamp-style course in Derby provides trade qualifications alongside essential employability training, including CV writing, interview skills, and Maths & English support.**

A £7,000 social value contribution per participant helps create real opportunities for individuals to build sustainable careers.

**£7,000 to change a life**



# We must act now.

Can you take on an apprentice? Or can your contractor?

Upskill existing teams

Think - can customers be our apprentices of the future?

# Construction and Building Trades: The Skills Horizon

Dr Hannah Holmes  
Dr Gemma Burgess

# Outline

- Existing evidence about the skills horizon in the construction and housing sector
- Recommendations on how to improve the skills landscape going forward

# The skilled trades and the repair and maintenance sector

- 10% of workers in England are employed in skilled trades:
  - Bricklaying, roofing, plumbing, heating engineering, joining, glazing, plastering, tiling, painting and decorating
- Skilled trades are essential both to new construction, and to repair and maintenance
- Demand for repair and maintenance is growing (particularly within the private housing sector)





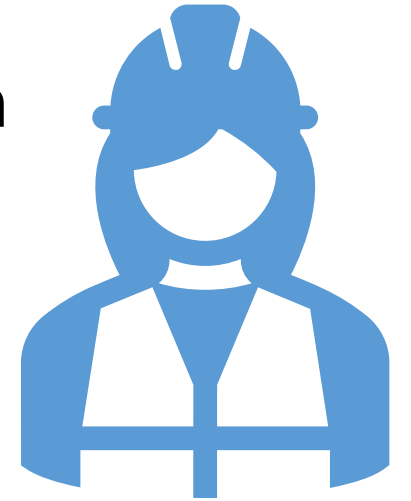


## Skills gaps

- As of July 2023, there were 140,000 vacancies in the UK's construction sector
- Some trades are worse affected than others (e.g. plumbing, carpentry, and electrical trades)
- Many trades have seen a decline in numbers of workers
- Skilled trades shortages lead to delays and cancellations of construction jobs

# Workforce equality, diversity, and inclusion

- A lack of diversity in the construction workforce
- Racism has been shown to be a persistent issue within the industry, with racist language used in workplaces, and people facing obstacles to career progression
- LGBT workers also report harassment and discrimination from colleagues and customers
- Gender inequality is a clear issue in the sector:
  - Men make up 85% of the construction workforce
  - 92% of people starting construction apprenticeships in 2021-2022 were boys and men



# An ageing workforce

- 750,000 construction workers are expected to retire by 2036
- The workforce across several key trades (including bricklaying, carpentry, and electrical trades) is thought to be ageing



# Regional variations in skills needs

Region	Number of additional employees needed by 2027
Northern Ireland	4450
Scotland	19550
Wales	9100
East Midlands	17500
East of England	19050
London	22800
North East	7900
North West	25400
South East	17800
South West	38200
West Midlands	25350
Yorkshire and the Humber	17800



# The future skills landscape

- UK Trade Skills Index forecasts growth in repairs sector of 1.5% per year until 2027, then 1.9% each year thereafter until 2032
- Drive towards net zero will boost demand, and will generate demand for skills needed for this transition
- Demand for skills in modern methods of construction



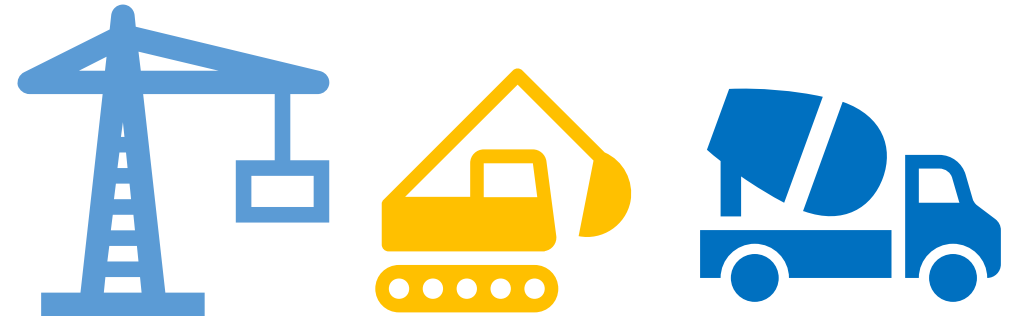
# Recommendations



- Improving diversity and attracting talent
  - Promoting a wide range of roles
  - Supporting employees to retrain into skilled trades from other company roles
  - Investing in career guidance for young people, and targeting outreach and information to underrepresented groups
  - Commissioners and clients setting out EDI requirements at procurement stage
  - Providing EDI training and emphasising inclusivity
  - Making work experience placements more accessible
  - Displaying sensitivity to cultural norms and traditions
  - Making the most of offsite construction opportunities

(NHBC Foundation, 2017; CIOB, n.d.; Construction Leadership Council, 2022; Catney and Sabter, 2015; Maslova et al., 2021)

# Recommendations



- Meeting future skills demand
  - Scaling up delivery of net zero buildings by ensuring learning from individual projects is retained
  - Training on digital skills for existing staff
  - Providing financial supporting retraining of existing skilled trades workforce
  - Reviewing minimum standards for trade skills
  - Sustaining investment to ensure confidence in future demand for skilled workers, and to encourage retraining
  - Emphasising skills development as a key component of ESG frameworks (Killip, 2020; Shojaei et al., 2023; Hotwater Industry Council, 2023; NHBC Foundation; Burgess et al., 2023)

<https://www.landecon.cam.ac.uk/cambridge-centre-housing-and-planning-research>

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# Role of Diversity in Addressing Skills Shortages

Mushtaq Khan  
Housing Diversity Network



### Board Diversity Programme

is an exciting initiative which draws on leading diversity practice to make a real and lasting impact at board level.

### Staff Mentoring

can contribute to a wide range of organisational strategies and objectives around learning and development, inclusion and talent management.



Landlord defends merger  
consultation process after  
discrimination complaints

L&Q accused of discrimination as  
it seeks eviction of autistic  
resident from supported housing

ITV News investigation exposes racism in  
social housing sector

HOUSING

**Black and minoritised ethnic  
communities at disproportionate risk  
of homelessness in the UK**

RBH apologises after ‘making  
assumptions’ about lifestyle of  
Awaab Ishak’s family

Disabled tenants speak out  
through new charter

Discrimination in out-of-area  
housing placements

INSIGHT 06.03.23 7.00 AM BY KEITH COOPER

### **RACISM AND HOUSING**

Black and Asian-led households were placed out of area to a disproportionate degree in most authorities, and councils that rehouse many Black-led households also do so in predominantly white areas. Keith Cooper reports. *Illustration by Matt Rota*

Workplace sexism experienced by  
a quarter of female social housing  
professionals in past three years

Tribunal finds ‘unconscious bias’ in  
how London landlord handled  
recruitment process

The question a little boy’s death  
raises about racism and the  
housing sector

## Why Diversity Matters

- Wider talent pool
- Innovation and performance
- Reflecting areas we work in, better understanding of tenant needs
- Workplace inclusion
- Fairer opportunities for wide range of suppliers



## HDN's Work

- Leadership and talent development
- Board Diversity Initiatives
- Training and awareness
- Developing an offer for the construction sector



# The bigger picture

- Tackling economic inactivity
- Breaking inter-generational barriers
- Sustainable workforce development
- Developing an offer for the construction sector





For more detail about how we can help –  
through membership or our other services,  
please get in touch.

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**“Out-of-the-box Thinking”: Zero-carbon Modular Homes  
and PBH (Prisoners Building Homes) Program**

**Debansu Das**  
Business Development Director, ZED PODS  
Chairman (NED) - Housing Diversity Network



# About ZED PODS

1. **Leverage Net Zero** as a solution to address fuel poverty, **address social and environmental inequality** in housing.
2. **Design & build zero-carbon homes** for social housing sector using integrated design & delivery (**full turnkey**) package.
3. **Unlock constrained market failure sites** for social & affordable homes by using **MMC (Cat 1)** methodology.
4. **Embed digital construction** (ISO 19650) BIM for improved quality & productivity, rapid construction and efficient maintenance regime.



## Fortis House, Ashford

23 zero-operational carbon housing scheme in flood zone 3



## Hope Rise Bristol

11 zero-operational-carbon new homes above car park



## Kevin Fenton Mews, Bromley

25 zero-operational-carbon new homes above car park



## Hill Street House, Newport

12 zero-operational-carbon new homes



# Offsite & Onsite

DRAGONHEART  
HOMES™



## Offsite

- 54,000 sq ft factory (Peterborough)
- 400 new homes / year
- **Largest Employer of the PBH Program**



## ZED PODS: Designers & Technologists



- Zero-carbon Homes for social-rent
- Unlock brownfields e.g. Flood Zone
- Design, Planning, PMO & PC roles
- Full Turnkey: from concept to completion
- **Bespoke design using BIM (ISO 19650)**
- **Workforce: Women 27%, BME 60%+**



## Onsite



**Modular construction can achieve  
up to 95% completion in our factory.**



# Prisoners Building Homes



“With the reoffending rate at over **25%**, rising to nearly 50% for burglary, reoffending is costing us **£18 billion** a year”

The PBH Programme is a national pilot, led by 5 South West PCCs under the SW Reducing Reoffending Partnership whose membership also includes HM Prison and Probation Service, MoJ, the Police, NHS England, Office for Health Improvement and Disparities, Youth Justice Board, DWP, SW Councils, and the Voluntary Sector.

**Purpose:** To upskill prisoners, help them access employment after release which reduces reoffending, enable them to turn their lives around and reduce the cycle of reoffending.

**Payment:** They earn Living Wage & pay tax, NI and victim support contribution. Their remaining wage allows them to support their families / post release resettlement cost (e.g. rent/deposit to access PRS).

## In our factory premise:

- 48 inmates have worked till date
- Currently 18 inmates (1/3 of our work force)
- Living Wage paid to all workforce
- Funded NVQ's, Forklift/ Scissor Lift training + working on modular NVQ level 2 course.
- Wraparound support including mental health
- Working on Centre of Excellence NVQ Training programme (without any grant support)
- Small training centre set up inside the HMP
- Every £ spent with us = £3 value added to the taxpayer (as per MOJ estimates)

# PBH: PERSONAL IMPACT

PODS

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“

*The opportunity I have been given has been really good for my mental health and way of life in prison. It has boosted my self-esteem. The work placement has shown me living in a normal way and has provided me with a second chance, and **I can see myself as the owner of a successful construction business building houses in five years.**”*

**Luke**

PBH participant in our factory.

# PBH: FINANCIAL IMPACT

## Cost Savings

For **every person** we prevent from reoffending, the MoJ saves **£66,384** in processing; prison place cost of **£52,196** for each subsequent year they would have been imprisoned. Total savings of **£118,580 pp.**  
Total savings of over **£5 million** to UK taxpayer.

## Low Re-offending Rate

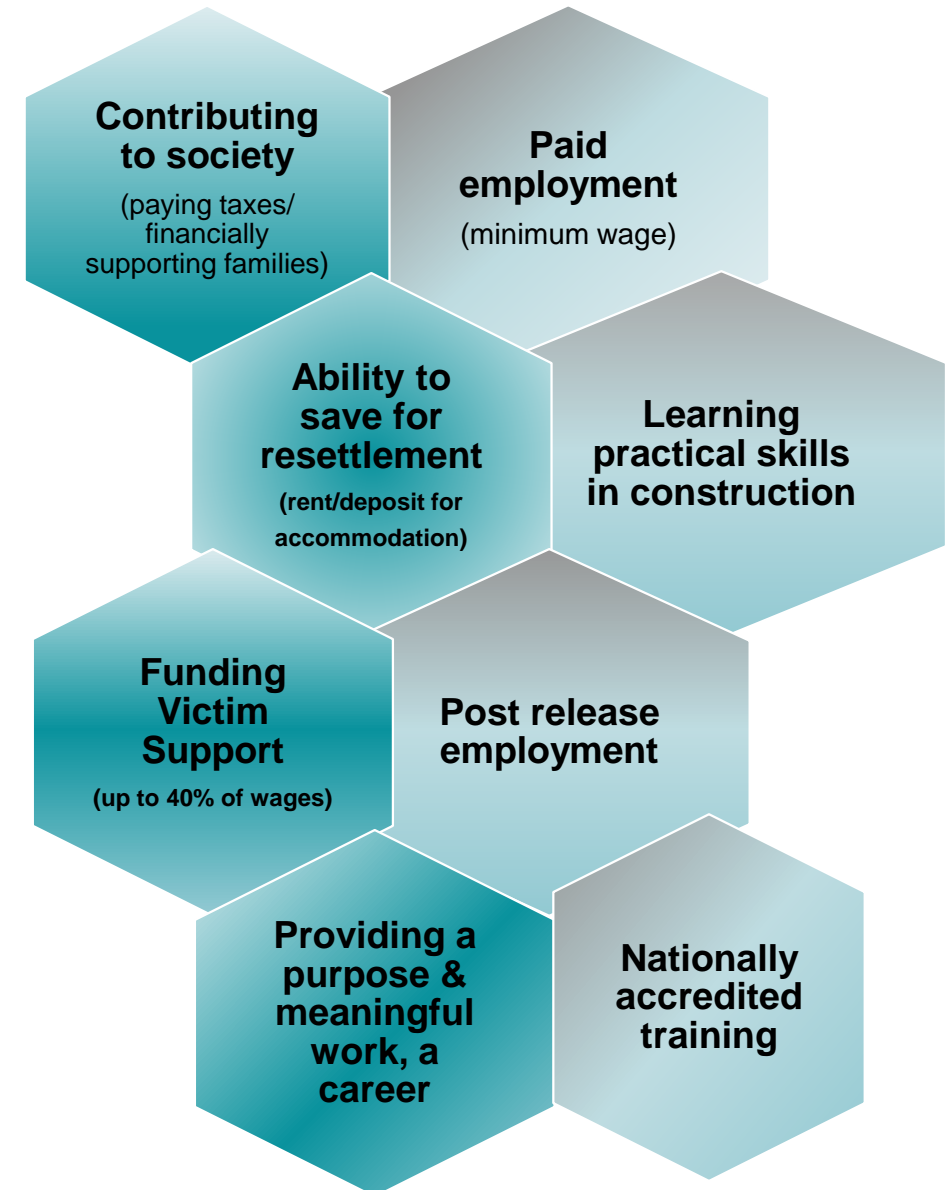
National reoffending rate of **25%+**, DH achieved **2.5 times less** than the prudent national rate. For 48 prisoners, 12 would have reoffended by now, **however DH cohort have 0.12% reoffending rate.**

## Victim Support Contributions

**Up to 40%** of earnings deduction from the net wage.

PODS

DRAGONHEART  
HOMES™



## Key thoughts:

- Individual Initiatives - How to improve? Where to find workforce? (E.g mentoring)
- Strengthen partnerships with educational institutes, collaborate with similar minded organisations, learn from other sectors + “Out of box” thinking.
- Invest in “Targeted” training (e.g. Green Skills) to enhance employee capabilities and retention. Financial stability and meaningful careers attract new entrants.
- Enhance Industry Image and Working Conditions: By encouraging/showcasing advancements in technology and sustainable practices, prioritising safety, work-life balance, employee well-being – we can attract diverse workforce.
- Leverage Technology: Adopting innovative construction techniques, such as MMC/Offsite manufacturing, can improve efficiency and appeal to tech-savvy workers. Investing in technology (e.g. BIM) addresses labour shortages by enhancing productivity.





**Alison Nicholl,**  
Head of Constructing Excellence,  
Building Research Establishment





# Discussion