

# Summary Report

## Closing the Performance Gap Training

### Introduction and Background

Alongside the Final Evaluation Report on the 'Closing The Performance Gap' training project provided to CITB Construction Skills the following provides a summary of project delivery, outcomes, what has been learnt and conclusions in relation to further training development.

### Training Delivery

It is not easy to assess the effectiveness of training delivered in training rooms, Jewsons branches, etc in terms of creating change in understanding and practices, however it is reasonable to assume that it has been no less effective than training on other themes delivered in such a situation. At this stage it is reasonable to conclude that it is worthwhile continuing to deliver training in such situations, and that its effectiveness can probably be best increased by:

- a) providing more / better practical tools for trainees to take away and use on live projects;
- b) following up the training and providing continuity, reinforcement or progression in the training.

From a) the session delivered to the Greswolde team at a portacabin on site at a Kingerlee Homes development in Birmingham, b) the session delivered to Thakeham Homes in Horsham and c) the course delivered for FMB at Chertsey, which had 9 attendees from one company, it was clear that the training definitely works well when delivered to a company team, as they are able to openly discuss the implications for their company and discuss whose responsibility it will be to implement the various practical responses needed to close the gap.

This implies that in delivering future training in-house training and on-site training to companies is a good way to go, as well as general open courses.

### Content of Training and Technical Issues

Generally the delivery of the project confirmed that the content of the training materials had an excellent focus, and the proposed strategy for closing the gap was very appropriate.

The delivery of the training confirmed that the focus on culture and process, as well as the technical issues, was very appropriate – and that culture was indeed probably the greatest challenge, but also can be seen as an opportunity to both tackle this issue and create other benefits.

Building services was regularly highlighted as a significant issue which, because of the separation of trades, technical expertise and skills councils, needs further consideration both a) how it is addressed in our own training, and b) how it is addressed in a practical way within projects and on-site. This suggests that discussion of these issues with Summit Skills (and/or the Green Skills Alliance of sector skills councils) should be included in any next steps.

### Awareness Raising and Media Strategy

One of the main conclusions we can draw from delivering the project as a whole, rather than the training, is that there is a very low level of industry awareness about the performance gap (at technical, management and operative levels) and that to both raise demand for the training and to help the industry close the gap a priority is to raise awareness of the performance gap across industry. Aside from the economic climate, the lack of awareness of the performance gap was the primary difficulty in securing attendance of the training.

It seems very appropriate that LABC and GHA should work together on generating more significant government-industry backing for an awareness raising campaign, together and with other bodies with an interest in the issues. This campaign should probably address a small number of related themes (such as Ventilation and Indoor Air Quality) which face the industry (and legislators/regulators) for the coming decade.

The media, marketing and awareness raising strategy should include:

- Press articles, ideally a short film for partner websites
- Statements from relevant Ministers and significant industry bodies on the importance of closing the performance gap and related issues.
- Publicising a) on-line access to training materials and b) availability of trainer-delivered training.

#### **Direct Feedback From Trainers and Trainees**

Feedback from trainers includes the following:

From Doug Basen, LABC:

“The main issue that cropped up time and time again was the lack of finance available to pay a real wage for work done by trades that impacted on Part L issues. Many thought the go back and fix it approach was still more cost effective.

Training for trades was not seen as realistic they need to be convinced we can offer a much shorter course for trades than the one we delivered.

The lack of understanding of what causes failure and the importance of small details by trades was seen as a big barrier to getting it right.

Many thought the people doing passivhaus construction were somehow a superior breed of people and must have been extra highly skilled - so dispelling the myth is still a big issue.”

From Barry Turner, LABC:

“One issue that did arise more than once was the 'migration' of trades from one site to another with different site management and practices making it difficult to embrace the 'blue line' concept. This may go some way to reconciling the Passive House concept which is a more recognisable agreed process. It may also point us in the direction necessary for greater improvements in building practices.

Also lessons learned do not seem to be implemented unless necessary as it costs time and therefore money.

Feedback from one trainee (Thakeham Homes MD) can be summarised as:

‘We all know this is how it should be done, and what needs doing. The big issue is how that’s achieved, and that is mainly down to site culture, project culture and business culture. How to achieve it with typical sub-contractors attitudes and relationships is a major challenge, and we’ll probably have to work out our own answers to that.’

### **Survey Responses**

The survey of trainees that has been undertaken has been useful, although this probably should have been given attention earlier in the project to try to secure a higher level of responses. However, given the agreed changes in the project outputs to include on-line training, with appropriate action to encourage further use of the survey, it should be possible to significantly increase the response levels to the survey, which will have value in providing a body of information to back up our proposals for further support of additional training development and delivery in this area.

The survey questions and responses were as follows:

#### **1. Company Name**

Andy foster architects  
Elim Housing Association  
H+H UK  
Halsall Construction  
Helm construction  
Housing21  
jones homes  
Rich Scanlon  
Waterloo Housing Group  
Woodlands Building Contractors Limited.

#### **2. Category - – e.g. small builder; architect; project manager; site manager; trade/operative; etc.**

architect  
Building Contractor.  
developer  
Housing Association  
Housing Association developer  
Main contractor  
Manufacturer  
Project Manager  
Property maintenance  
Site manager

#### **3. How would you rate the usefulness to you / your company of the Performance Gap training: Not Useful At All 1 – 2 – 3 – 4 - 5 Extremely Useful**

1 – 0 votes (i.e. not at all useful)  
2 – 0 votes (i.e. not very useful)

- 3 – 1 vote (i.e. useful)
- 4 – 5 votes (i.e. very useful)
- 5 – 4 votes (i.e. extremely useful)

4. **Which aspects of the training did you find most useful and why?**

- \*Clear and concise presentation of information Practical application Excellent real life knowledge by presenter
- \*Content of general interest.
- \*Detaining of construction
- \*information about accredited details and BB Constructive details
- \*insight into where the possible issues are
- \*It was a good summary of what to look for in design and construction to reduce linear thermal bridging and improve airtightness
- \*It was good to exchange information and experience.
- \*The information regarding heat loss
- \*the issues regarding the fine detail
- \*Understanding why there is a performance gap

6. **Have you implemented any changes** in how your company operates as a result of "The Performance Gap" training:

Yes = 2

No = 8

8. **If you answered yes** to the question above, please describe these changes below

- \*As a supplier we have looked at our junction details to see if they can be made more buildable
- \*Much more careful about training and installation

9. **Do you feel this is an important area** for developing different types of training?

Yes = 8

No = 2

11. **If you answered yes** to the question above, please describe what training you think will be most useful / most needed:

- \*A seminar targeted at architects to highlight what problems to look for on-site, based on collected experience of LABC inspectors.
- \*Continued updates of current practice
- \*It would be good to provide the training to all levels, even passing the information onto colleagues is useful.
- \*Training on changes to Building Regulations is always useful to keep everyone updated.

\*On-site training is very important

\*Repeat of the same training at a later date Same training for more of our design and construction team Specific training for site managers and operatives

\*Site based training for those at the sharp end.

\*Training of those on site to understand the importance of getting the details correct. The effect of product substitution. The need to take care over some of the minor detailing.

12. **Please tick** which of the following types of training on "How To Close The Performance Gap" you would use if it was available:

- Technical training – for architects, construction technical teams, project and site managers, etc. - 8 ticks
- Tool Box Talks – for site teams, sub-contractors, trade operatives. - 5 ticks
- Workshop / Training by trainers - 1 tick
- On-line training material - 2 ticks
- Other on-line resources e.g. handbook; research reports; etc. - 2 ticks
- None of the above - 0 ticks
- Other - 1 tick
  - \*Site based training.

Even though the response levels are low, the survey response show that those who did complete the survey have provided useful information about:

- a) what they felt they gained
- b) what training would be most useful moving forward.

## Conclusions

1. The training was perceived as valuable and important by most trainees ( from both verbal responses at training sessions and those that completed the survey)
2. Awareness raising is vital:
  - a. about the performance gap and its importance;
  - b. that solutions to close the gap are known and do-able.
3. An awareness raising, marketing and media strategy is needed to raise awareness and demand for the training.
4. Two first step in the media strategy will be:
  - a. to email all participants when the downloads are available a) to encourage their use and b) to encourage more to complete the survey so that additional survey information can be gathered as an evidence base for further funding applications etc.
  - b. to plan a media strategy for promoting the availability of the training a) on-line and b) as a trainer-delivered option
5. Further training is seen as important, particularly:
  - a. Technical training for professionals, technicians and managers;
  - b. Tool-box talks

c. Training that can be delivered on-site

6. Further consideration of how to address the culture issue is needed within next steps and future funding applications/training project proposals, including in innovative ways.
7. On-going collaboration between LABC and GHA, and other partners such as FMB, on this theme makes sense for both organisations, and there is a good case for proposing further training development and delivery and pursuing funding applications to this end.