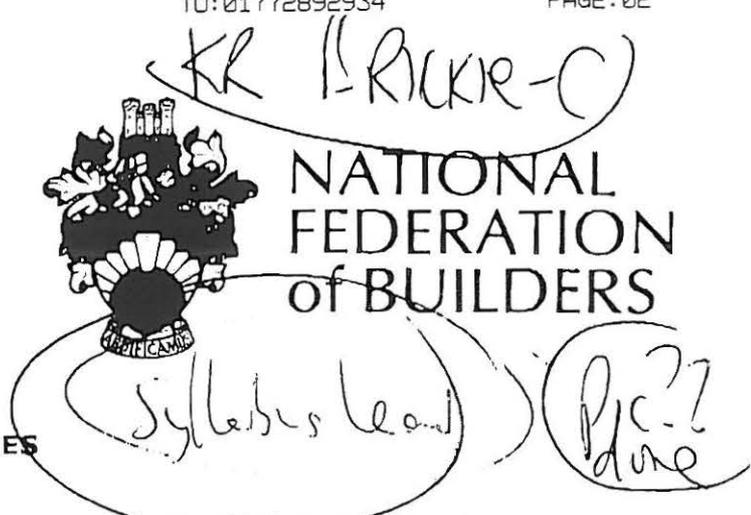


NEWS RELEASE



BUILDERS SAY HORSES FOR COURSES

Building industry leaders advise young people to think twice about university.

One of the country's leading construction industry associations is encouraging school and college leavers to think carefully about the real career opportunities offered by further education courses, including university degrees.

The National Federation of Builders (NFB), which represents almost 4,000 construction companies across England and Wales, is also urging young people not to shun traditional careers such as construction that offer quality 'on-the-job' training, excellent career prospects and strong earning potential.

Recent figures show that, although more than 50,000 people join the industry every year, the industry needs at least 75,000 new recruits in order to keep up with demand.

The organisation has warned that, with employers placing more and more focus on specific skills and training, next year's school and college leavers would be well advised to research the prospects that further education courses provide before they enrol.

Bill Rabbetts, chairman of the National Federation of Builders, said: "Employers are increasingly looking to a younger workforce and providing specific on-job training relevant to their needs. Many further education courses provide students with fantastic employment opportunities every year and this should continue to be encouraged. However, young people need to be aware that a degree qualification, for example, doesn't always carry a guarantee of immediate employment and they are right to fully consider the options available to them."

Ruth Lea, head of the policy unit at the Institute of Directors, says 'on-the-job' training is the best career option for many.

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She said: "It's a myth that graduates, whatever the subject and class of the degree and whatever the university, will slide effortlessly into high quality jobs. Many will, but many won't - these will either end up in a 'non-graduate' job or find it difficult to get any form of skilled employment at all. (Preston)

"Indeed, for some graduates three years at university may even damage rather than enhance their employability. It's far better if people for whom university isn't appropriate, go straight into work from school and train for a trade which will guarantee them stable employment with good opportunities for career progression and self-development."

Mr Rabbetts continued: "The National Federation of Builders is working with the industry to attract school and college leavers into a sector that offers higher than national average salaries and genuine opportunities for career progression.

"The national average wage in the UK is currently around £21,000, with graduates currently averaging £15,500 in the first year. By comparison, a skilled bricklayer can earn in excess of £24,000 a year, with technical and managerial jobs, like a Quantity Surveyor commanding salaries of up to £30,000."

"The industry offers a wide scope of career paths with integrated training schemes designed to get fast-track first-jobbers into management positions. Not all graduates have the skills employers are looking for even after three-years of university education."

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Note to Editors:

1. Examples of salaries and career opportunities in the construction industry include:

- Site Engineer: Earns up to £25k a year. Qualifications required are: degree or HND/HNC.
- Dump Truck Driver: Earns up to £450 a week. Specialist training required.

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- Carpenter: Earns £500 plus a week. Modern apprenticeship to NVQ level 2 and 3 required.
- Estimator: Earns up to £25k. A-levels or a HND/HNC required.
- Planning Engineer: Earns up to £25k. Degree or HNC/HND required.

2. The National Federation of Builders has national headquarters in central London and key regional offices in Cambridge, Nottingham, Northallerton (North Yorkshire), Liverpool, Preston, Eastleigh (Hampshire), Cardiff and Exeter.

3. The National Federation of Builders membership carries out approximately 85 per cent of all construction work carried out in the UK.