

PCA project Final Report and Findings

This Report was researched and written by Angus Hamilton, Advisor for CITB.

Introduction

The project initially involved me working with the PCA 2 days a week from May through to August 2018, as a result of the time needed to investigate certain areas this was extended through to the end of March 2019

The main contacts I worked with at the PCA were Steve Hodgson and Lisa Holdich.

The Purpose of the project was to improve and support the joint working between CITB, PCA and their membership. Examine the impact that the changes CITB has introduced to the Grants Scheme has had on PCA members, to identify possible solutions and funding streams registered employers might not be accessing. The idea behind this approach was to develop a series of case studies that could be used by other PCA members who were CITB registered employers to indicate funding streams they could access.

The project was born out of a shared concern about the impact of the changes CITB implemented to the Grants scheme, and in turn how these changes had impacted employers in the amount of grant they claimed and the amount of training they undertook.

The PCA Headquarters and Operation Centre is based in Huntingdon, this is supported by regional groups and regional meetings, which happen twice a year. PCA has over 450 members across all categories of membership. They currently offer a SAP in Damp and Timber which has 2 cohorts a year with 6-8 on each cohort; they have a Waterproofing SAP in development, hoping to have the first cohort starting in November. PCA run approximately 53 In-Scope courses per year with courses group sizes varying between 15 and 22 delegates.

Project Objectives

The main focus areas for the project were

- Objective 1: Apprenticeships including SAPs
- Objective 2: Short Duration Training
- Objective 3: Longer duration Courses
- Objective 4: Trailblazers
- Objective 5: ATO status
- Objective 6: Case Study Employers

Objective 1- Apprenticeships offered by PCA (including Specialist Apprenticeship Programmes)

Current Position

- Funding is now £4,000 paid directly to training provider from CITB Employer asked to contribute £2,500 +VAT towards fees.
- Employer gets back £600 for NVQ achievement and £650 for short duration training (also potentially £70 (for first aid) if they have a Wage bill below £80,000) cost to employer for having a SAP trainee £1750.

Impact of Training Model

- Before the changes CITB paid £6,750 to the employer for talking on a SAP but this was paid during the training so the employer would have to initially pay the full amount.
- So while the employer has to contribute to the apprenticeship they are not being expected to pay as much upfront.

Potential Solutions

- Exploring the development of a trailblazer apprenticeship which would mean that employers would be entitled to £6,000 in grants as well as having fees paid for college attendance (potentially the employer would have to contribute 10% depending age of applicant) dedicated apprenticeship officers to manage progress, citb to manage hotel booking and to deal with any issues arising from staying in hotels.
- Explore whether for companies who have less than 99 PAYE employees, can they put in a Skills and training fund bid to cover the shortfall.
- Employers can put through operatives who might have previously completed a full apprenticeship onto the SAP, but not someone who has completed an OSAT NVQ, My next step is to further explore whether the employer could put in a Skills and Training bid to cover most of the training costs in these instances.

Objective 2 - Short Duration courses offered by PCA and their associated standards

Current Position

- Standards team have been working with PCA to develop standards linked to the short duration achievement courses run by PCA all of these have been Tiered at level 1 £30 achievement (at current rate)

- Some courses have been deemed as out of scope activity Safe use of biocides (this could have an impact for member companies where most of the activity of their staff is in this activity as these companies could be deemed out of scope.)

Impact of Changes

- Companies were claiming £50 a day attendance grant on these courses in the past some courses are 3 day courses. These are now tiered at £30 on achievement, this is a £120 drop in grant for these courses
- Every short duration course has been negatively impacted by the Tiering of Grants.
- When courses are tiered no consideration has been made for the amount of providers delivering or how specialised the course is.
- The Steve Hodgson from the PCA feels that the £30 Grant for Short Duration courses makes courses unviable for employers.

Potential Solutions

- Looking at the Grant eligibility criteria and see if there are any changes that could be made to courses that would enable them to be reassigned to a higher tier – adding formal assessments.
- Are there some courses where the practical training is between 30-49% of course content where it could be extended to 50% to get extra tiering points.
- PCA could work with other specialist sectors to identify whether it is possible for CITB to have an extra scoring box added into course tiering to take into account specialist provision where there is often only one provider delivering courses across the country.

Objective 3 - Long Duration Courses offered by PCA

- The long duration courses offered by PCA are the SAPs so see above.

Objective 4 - Trailblazers

- PCA are concerned about finding a provider who is willing to deliver the Trailblazer if it gets developed, as other sectors have struggled with this issue.
- PCA are concerned about finding an End Point Assessment Centre for the main qualification. Alan Wemyss (from the CITB Specialist Team) has suggested that R miller or Lee smith (QA manager) could support this process as they have for other Specialist Trailblazers.
- If the Trailblazer does get developed it could mean more PCA members will adopt this training as the training would be fully funded and grant supported.

Objective 5 - Approved Training Organisation status

- PCA were approved as an ATO in April to run assured courses.
- 22 standards have been developed by the CITB in relation to the Short duration courses delivered by PCA.
- Once a standard is developed and approved the Training Provider will have the duty to claim grants on behalf of the employer.
- PCA did have an issue with some standards being wrongly named, despite informing the CITB standards team on many occasions the correct name of the course. This has now been resolved.

Other Matters Arising

Scope issue in relation to use of Biocides

- While the project was ongoing an issue was raised about a standard that was in development by the CITB Standards team, this was deemed to be an Out of Scope activity as a result would not be aided by the Grants Scheme. This led to conversations with CITB Levy and Grants Teams about which activities would be classed in or Out of Scope.

The Response from Levy Grant is As previously advised the Scope Order excludes at paragraph 2(c)(viii) *“the application of any form of chemical treatment to **wood**, being part of a building, for preventing or remedying the presence of insects, mites, fungi or marine organisms;”*. The exclusion therefore specifically relates to the application of chemical treatment to **wood** and not the chemical treatment of masonry or other so doesn't apply in this case. I would add that no other specific exclusions apply to the chemical treatment of masonry meaning we must now consider whether the activities fall within the 'in-scope' paragraphs (paragraphs 1) of the Scope Order. Only if they don't will the activities be excluded and 'out of scope'.

Contained at paragraph 1 (a)(i) of the Scope Order is *“all operations in.....the construction, alteration, repair or demolition of a building or part of a building”*. The treatment of masonry using chemicals is a **repair** to that piece of masonry (i.e. restoring something damaged, faulty, or worn to a good condition) so providing the activity is treating masonry which forms part of a building or civil engineering structure then it will be an in-scope activity.

In terms of seeking clarification in respect of *“...all works that are needed to facilitate and make good following such treatments...”* it is likely that such activities are also in-scope. The Scope Order includes *“all operations in...the repair to a building or part of a building...”* and most civil engineering structures. This means that any activities which are incidental or ancillary to the principal activity of repair being carried out will form part of the overall 'operation'.

I can therefore confirm that using masonry biocides and all works to make good following such treatments are both likely to be 'in-scope'; however if you would like to provide any specific examples in respect of *‘...all works that are needed...’* then we can provide a

definitive response to each of the individual activities and confirm whether they are in or out of scope.

- As a result of this ruling the dedicated CITB Advisor for each CITB registered company, will be able to assist affected employers who, as a result of this judgement believe that their range of work now means they are an Out of Scope employer. Once it is decided how the PCA want to action this ruling I will contact the relevant advisor to explain the background, depending on the scale of this work it might be possible for me to act in a support role during this work.

Objective 6 - Case Studies

- The four Case Study candidates were chosen by the PCA from PCA members who were CITB registered.
- These consisted of telephone conversations followed up with Face to Face meetings which were followed up with emails with action points and in some cases further telephone conversations.
- Overall finding from the case studies is that some companies are benefitting from the Grants scheme but overall companies visited here either fairly unengaged or proportional worse off due to the changes see individual case studies for details.
- Anecdotal comments from employer case studies ranges from hard to bulk upload claims, CITB website over complicated to navigate, differing messages coming from different parts of CITB.
- Employers can't claim for first aid, manual handling, and fire marshal courses as they are classed as generic course.

Conclusions

- From the case studies a proportion of the sample group demonstrated that they were negatively impacted by the changes to the grants scheme, so were claiming less grants from CITB. A larger examination of comparison grant claims has been undertaken with the results below
- The sample of 17 PCA member companies who were CITB registered were examined for amount claimed in Grant over the following Grant Years 2016-2017, 2017-2018 & 2018-2019 the results of this can be seen below. It is worth noting that CITB is still getting in Grant claims for the 2018-2019 period, these will come in up to the 30th June so it is likely that the figures for this period will increase, but whether they will increase to bring them in line with previous years it seems unlikely.

	2016 - 2017	2017 - 2018	2018 - 2019
Sample of 17 employers	11 claimed average £3,489.53	9 claimed - ave - £5866.61	14 claimed ave - £709.28
Without larger company from sample			
	10 claimed £1469.50	8 claimed - £2633.69	13 claimed £571.54

As a result of the changes to the Grant scheme it can be seen that while more companies did claim grants the amount of grant each company is getting is greatly reduced with the amount claimed in 2018-19 -22% of the 17-18 claim amount and 39% of the 16-17 amount (using the currently available figures)

A larger sample of registered employers would need to be looked at after the 30th June Grant claim cut off to give a truly accurate representation of the grant claims across the years

- The case studies demonstrate that with support from CITB staff, employers are likely to be able to access more funding and grants, whether that is through Skills and Training Funding or a simpler system for accessing short duration training grants. Every employer has a dedicated Advisor who can arrange a meeting with them to work with them to make sure they are aware of all the funding streams available.
- The suite of specialist short duration standards that PCA deliver have now been agreed and are in the process of being published on the CITB website and available for PCA members to access.
- The scope order and further clarifications from the Appeals Team clearly states which activities are either in or Out of Scope, one such activity that is now definitely Out of Scope is chemical treatment to wood. PCA members will need to consider the impact of this ruling in relation to the % of time taken up by their workforce on out of scope activity; again this can be done after first speaking to the relevant CITB Advisor.
- PCA will need to consider how they want to share the finding of this report and the case studies with their members.

Future Relationship and Actions

- A larger study of registered employer will need to be conducted to give a truer reflection of comparable grant claims but the sample does go some way to show that PCA member companies are claiming significantly reduced grants in comparison to previous years taking into account the variables mentioned already.
- The project has set a clear starting point for future partnership working between PCA, PCA member and CITB as it clearly highlighted and in some cases resolved technical barriers which were having a negative impact on PCA and its members and preventing them from benefitting from the appropriate support from CITB.
- CITB and PCA are committed to continue to work together in maintaining a positive working relationship, which is focussed on supporting PCA members with their Training and Skills needs.
- CITB and PCA will work together to survey PCA member to continue to identify members training needs and to see how these are supported within the offer from CITB.
- CITB will continue to advocate the training needs of the Property Care Sector and work to find solutions to those needs.
- CITB will continue to identify ways which it can improve its offer to PCA members and use this work as an exemplar of how they should be working with specialist sectors. We will use this work to follow up and communicate internal within CITB on considerations that should be made when implementing changes that will have a greater impact on the specialist sectors.
- CITB will continue to work together with PCA to make sure that PCA and its members are actively and visibly supported by CITB at a national and local level.
- PCA members who are eligible to apply for Skills and Training Fund can use this fund to support the development of their workforce. This may also be used to lessen the impact of the deficit between how much a SAP costs and the money that CITB provides to cover fees and the Grants payable to the employers for VQ achievement and Short duration achievement.
- The Emerging Trailblazer will provide a real focus for the ongoing working relationship between PCA and CITB.
- PCA have held meetings to develop the trailblazer but are now looking for a provider to be affiliated to, so the apprenticeship can be developed into a full standard. CITB will work with PCA to research this issue to identify suitable a College/FE partners and to carry out a feasibility study on the demand for apprentices if the trailblazer does go ahead and get a full standard.

Signed on behalf of CITB

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Date

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Signed on behalf of PCA

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Date

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