

CITB-ConstructionSkills takes steps to help businesses through the recession

Like the rest of the economy the construction industry is facing a number of challenges in the current economic climate. CITB-ConstructionSkills which is responsible for collecting the Levy on the industry, as well as handing Grants is taking steps to ensure that business are given a helping hand during the recession.

The current economic climate means that the CITB-ConstructionSkills Levy and Grants scheme is more crucial than ever. UK plc still needs a construction workforce that is both professional and safe. Now, more than ever before it is important that the industry continues to train up its future workforce, so that we are ready when the upturn comes.

More than 60% of employers believe there would be a detrimental impact on training in the industry if the Levy was removed. Parliament recently endorsed this by the introducing a three year Levy Order covering Levies payable in 2009, 2010 and 2011. Levy rates remain unchanged at 0.5% in respect of payments to directly employed personnel (PAYE) and 1.5% on payments to labour-only sub-contractors (LOSC) for all three years. In addition, small firms' exclusions have also been increased to £80,000 for the same period. This will insure that business can plan for the future and guarantees support for the construction industry at a time when it needs it most.

Assessments for this years Levy are based on earnings from the first quarter of 2008. This means that despite the current problems in industry Levy payments continue to remain high. This has meant that many businesses are facing problems in paying the levy. CITB-ConstructionSkills have put a place a number measures to help business to managed payments. Businesses are able to set up a payment plan, or to pay by Direct Debit and spread the levy over 10 monthly payments.

In addition, CITB-ConstructionSkills is ensuring that those business who pay their Levy benefit from the scheme. From August 2009, any employer that has not paid

their 2008 levy will be unable to claim grants. This is to ensure that there is enough money to provide grants for employers who have paid into the system.

The message from CITB-ConstructionSkills is very much one of we are here to help. Last year, 23,500 employers claimed grants and benefited from the Levy system, and support will continue to help people throughout the industry over the coming years. The CITB-ConstructionSkills website – www.cskills.org – has a dedicated Levy and Grant's page with lots of useful advice and phone numbers. In addition, the Levy and Grant customer service team can be contacted on 0300 456 7668.