



# Retention of new entrants in the construction industry

## Impact evaluation



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## Section 1 Introduction and context

ZK Analytics and Jura Consultants were commissioned by the Construction Industry Training Board to evaluate projects commissioned under to help increase the retention of new entrants. There were two projects commissioned under this theme with a joint value of approximately £230,000:

- The Breakfast Club in London,
- Mentoring for the Construction Industry in Wales.

'New entrants' were defined as individuals who have joined the industry within the last two years, and include trainees and apprentices.

The impact evaluation of the two projects has the aim of answering the following key research questions:

1. Determine whether the outcomes listed by each project have been met;
2. To understand the counterfactual impact of the commission and measure the additionally the funding;
3. Measure the direct and indirect impact of each completed project on its beneficiaries and stakeholders.

### The Breakfast Club

The Breakfast Club is implemented in London by BeOnsite, a wholly-owned not-for-profit subsidiary of Lendlease. The project aimed to deliver eight training and personal development sessions for 48 new industry entrants (4 cohorts of 12) over a 12-month period. This project was envisaged to run concurrently with the regular intake of new employees, allowing for evidence-based comparisons to be made.

The project was proposed to be run sequentially for 4 cohorts of 12 new entrants over a 12 month period from 2018 to late 2019. During this time the participants in each cohort would participate in several training sessions over a six month period. The themes of the training session were based on anecdotal evidence about the reasons for which new entrants leave the industry (are fired or resign). The sessions included:

- **Choices Plus:** A full day introduction session focusing on soft skills and mental health resilience training to prepare new entrants.
- **Putting the Pieces Together:** Part classroom based and part site based session led by a site supervisor. It would cover key trades operating on the

wider site and a feedback session to gain a better understanding of career paths available. This would include an opportunity for participants to discuss their assumptions about trades, jobs and careers before walking round site for a myth debunking, practical learning session.

- **Positive Conflict:** Developing communication skills to enable new entrants to build and manage relationships in the workplace.
- **First Aid Course:** Full day course aimed to provide candidates with practical first aid skills in the workplace and beyond. A three-year Level 3 Award in Emergency First Aid at Work would be issued to the learner, subject to successful assessment.
- **Financial Literacy:** The project would partner with Lloyds Bank to educate candidates in basic financial and tax matters, as well as guiding them in budgeting in order to be able to manage their finances competently.
- **Choices Plus Reflection:** Building on their very first intervention, this session would support participants to reflect on their training and careers so far within the industry and identifying areas of focus and interest going forward to build a clear career/progression path.
- **Influencing Others:** It will enable new entrants to communicate better and understand the needs and motives of others in order to influence them effectively.
- **Consolidation & Celebration:** This final intervention would recognise the progress achieved by candidates and celebrate their completion of the course. It will consolidate learning to date and set future targets for each participant.

The training sessions would take place on Fridays and breakfast would be provided (hence the name: 'Breakfast Club'). The plan entailed that participants would be released by their employers (BeOnsite or contractors on the Elephant Park site) to do the training on full pay.

### **Mentoring for the Construction Industry**

Mentoring for the Construction Industry was implemented in Wales by the Carmarthenshire Construction Training Association Ltd (CCTAL) and aimed to engage with 100 new entrants, introduce them to mentoring and pair them with a mentor. The project would also offer training to the mentors supporting this initiative. This would include 100 level 3 apprentices and 100 industry representatives.

CCTAL proposed two key activities:

- 'Mentoring Awareness', would target Level 1 Apprentices and will be integrated into the first year of craft training;
- Part two of the project, 'Strategy for being an effective Mentor', will be integrated into the final year of technical / craft training and would target Level 3 Apprentices. In addition, the project aimed to train and educate experienced workers to become effective mentors in the workplace.

The project suggested the pairing of potential mentees with mentors through a 'Buddy System'. Each mentee would be allocated a mentor who will have undergone a two day mentoring programme, with whom they will meet regularly, who will support their training and allow them to make better-informed decisions on whether to progress within the construction industry.

By training the three groups the project was seeking to ensure new entrants can set up support networks both in school and on site:

- Level 3 apprentices are closer in age to new entrants and could offer more personal advice how a career in the construction industry would influence their future, including on a family level. There would also be logistical benefit to this relationship. It is often the case that underage new entrants might not be able to get to a site due to lack of public transportation and lack of a driving license or personal car. This class of mentors could potentially help new entrants by driving them to and from a site.
- Industry representatives would act as on-site mentors to guide the new entrants when it comes to working practices and behaviours on a site.

The project sets out to directly support 300 beneficiaries. However, it is also expected to indirectly affect over 140 SME's in the South Wales construction sector, with impacts cascading further through to micro companies.

The main objectives of the project were:

- To improve apprenticeship and traineeship retention within the industry
- To motivate and support learners and the existing workforce
- To facilitate the delivery of an infrastructure to address the skills gap
- To support the Work-based Recorder Programme

## Section 2 Evaluation framework, outcome measures & methodology

In commissioning the independent evaluation of the funding stream that aims to increase retention rates of new entrants into the construction industry, CITB has expressed three main objectives:

**Objective 1:** *Determine whether the outcomes listed by each project have been met;*

**Objective 2:** *Understand the counterfactual impact of the commission and measure the additionally the funding provided;*

**Objective 3:** *Measure / assess the direct and indirect impact of each completed project on its beneficiaries and stakeholders.*

Starting from the three objectives listed above as guidelines, the following sections describe the approaches taken to develop the evaluation frameworks, including the outcome measures, and design the data collection and analysis methodologies.

### 2.1 Theory of change and causal pathways

Typically, the evaluation framework should be developed in close connection with the Theory of Change that each project (of the programme as a whole) would have put forward to substantiate the link between project activities and the desired outcomes.

A theory of change is a diagrammatic representation of the causal pathways through which a programme / project is expected to achieve its planned outcomes. This typically involves:

- The ToC outcome statement as the articulation of the overarching purpose of the project;
- The programme outcomes (e.g. increased retention rates) and sub-outcomes or intermediary outcomes;
- Understanding the interrelationships amongst outcomes;
- How each activity is thought to affect each outcome.

The role of the evaluation is to assess the assumed causal relationships between the different levels of the ToC and, critically, any assumptions which underpin them. By identifying reasons why some of the causal links identified may not hold true in practice, we will be able to explore the underlying conditions that need to exist for

planned changes to occur. These assumptions, and thus the causal logic of the ToC, are tested in the evaluation.

Our initial assessment showed that neither of the two project, nor the programme (i.e. the CITB funding stream) developed theories of change to sketch out how the projects (or programme as a whole) are expected to influence retention. However, this is not to say that no thought has been given to the link between activities and outcomes. In the funding proposal each project submitted, justifications were provided as to why and how the activities they are proposing should increase retention. We used this information to extract the assumed causal pathways and we embed them in the evaluation framework.

### **Breakfast Club: causal pathways**

Using over-time retention rates, BeOnsite, observed that 47% of those who start a job with them leave within the first three months. Anecdotal evidence (collected from BeOnsite and other contractors) suggested that new entrants were leaving the industry (being fired or resigning) due to poor communication between worker and supervisor, boredom, financial pressures or anger management issues.

As such, the activities of the Breakfast Club (see previous chapter) were designed to address these issues that are seen to be linked with losing new entrants. Each training session was designed to address (at least) one of these reasons. Moreover, the project suggests that:

*“all interventions will build up a new entrant’s sense of self-worth and understanding, leading to a calmer approach to work, having gained the knowledge they need to communicate effectively with their peers and supervisors thereby mitigating the risk of impetuous resignations and firings. They will have had exposure to multiple trades and will have developed a clear understanding of the numerous career paths on offer and crucially understand how to navigate them”*

The outcome statement of the project could be summarised as follows:

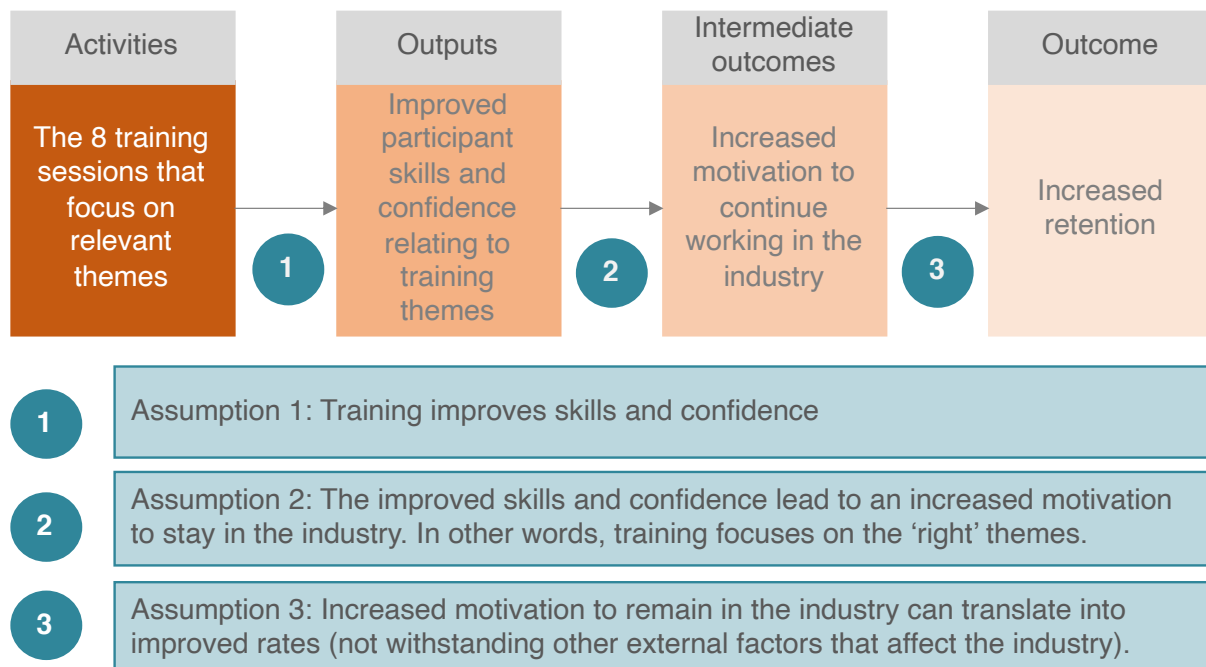
*“In effect success should lead to more confident employees embarking on not just a job in construction, but a career”*

We used this information on casual pathways to retrospectively construct a high level Theory of Change. This is displayed in Figure 1. The ToC relates the project activities to the expected outputs which are then related to intermediary outcomes and, subsequently, final outcomes. Progressing from one level of the ToC to the next depends on certain assumptions about the links between the levels holding true. For example, BeOnsite have proposed a list of themes under the assumption that these

are the most useful themes in which to provide training to increase retention (assumption 2 in the diagram). It is also assumed that the trainings will increase participants' skills and confidence in those themes (assumption 1) and, that increased confidence and skills translates into an increased motivation to remain in the industry. The final assumption is that increased motivation is instrumental in increasing actual retention.

The role of the evaluation framework is to set out the methodological means through which each outcome and assumption can be tested.

Figure 1: The Breakfast Club retrospective Theory of Change



### Mentoring for the Construction Industry: causal pathways

The project relies on results reported by IFF research to justify the usefulness of mentoring as a tool to increase retention. It mentions research results that show that 21% of new entrant leavers would have been encouraged to stay had they received support and advice from their colleagues and tutors.

As such, the project identifies a formalised form of mentoring as a potential scalable and sustainable solution that will help improve retention rates.

CCTAL acknowledge that there are a number of complex factors that may have an effect on new entrants leaving the industry, although no information is provided on what these factors might be. Some references are made to the importance of



providing advice and guidance to new entrants and helping them develop. A ‘Buddy System’ is envisaged that would pair mentees and mentors. This would provide mentees with pastoral and professional support that is seen to...

*“...improve the potential new entrant’s decision-making ability, confidence to retain and progress throughout their apprenticeship programme and further their careers within the industry. (...) by sharing personal experiences, the Mentor will be best-placed to guide the mentee through the process of learning in the workplace, passing on invaluable life skills, guidance and knowledge”*

As we will discuss in the following sections, CCTAL did not follow the project plan described in the funding proposal and the mentoring element of the project was not implemented: mentees were not systematically matched with mentors. The project’s sole focus was that implementation of the training activities. However, as we outline above, the mechanisms through which the project is seen to increase retention are linked to the activity of mentoring (i.e. the interaction between a mentee and a mentor), in the absence of which the outcomes cannot materialise.

The trainings that are the focus of the project can be seen as a tool that can foster mentoring and increase its quality, but in the absence of the mentoring interaction, they cannot have a direct impact on retention. This why we do not construct a retrospective Theory of Change for this project, instead we rely on the ToC developed for the Breakfast Club, with minor adjustments.

As a result of how the project was implemented, it essentially became a training project allowing us to apply to it the same framework as we applied to the Breakfast Club. In addition, this enables us to obtain a set of outcome measures that are comparable between the two projects, allowing for overarching conclusion to be drawn.

## 2.2 Indicators and outcome measures

As part of the funding application, both projects were asked to submit a list of expected outcomes and outputs their projects will achieve. We include these in Appendix 1.

In reviewing these documents we note these terms (‘outputs and ‘outcomes’) are used inconsistently, denoting results at different levels, and on occasion they are confused with activities. We attempted to clarify this by constructing the retrospective ToC. However, for the avoidance of further confusion we define what is meant by each of these terms in the context of this evaluation:

- **Activity:** an intervention delivered as part of the project. For example, CCTAL aims to “develop and deliver a structured mentoring programme”<sup>1</sup> which would represent the collection of the activities of the project. The Breakfast Club aims to run trainings, such as the Choices Plus full day training. *Both projects’ proposals list activities under the ‘outputs’ (and in some cases also under the ‘outcomes’ headings).*
- **Output:** an immediate result of delivering an activity. For example, increasing new entrants’ understanding of the construction sector. We do not consider the fact that the activity was delivered to be an output. *Outputs are listed under the ‘outcomes’ headings in BeOnsite’s submission.*
- **Intermediary outcome:** A change induced by the project that is required for the final outcome to occur. For example: changes to personal attitudes that are linked with a new entrants’ motivation of staying in the industry.
- **Outcome:** This is the ultimate result of the project. For example: increasing new entrant retention rates.

### 2.2.1 Process indicators (activities and outputs)

The first step in evaluating the project is to determine if activities were implemented and outputs achieved. We look at:

1. whether the activities of the project were delivered according to plan;
2. whether the activities of the project delivered on and/or supplied the participants with the resources the project aims to supply them with (outputs). Such indicators do not and cannot be used to deduce actual *impact* they should be seen as precursors of impact. They are enablers, resources the project provides to facilitate impact.

For example, the project aims to offer participants training in first aid. Whether the project actually delivered this activity and provided this training to the number of participants it aimed to provide it to is captured by examining the project implementation plans and M&E records. On the other hand, ascertaining how confident a participant feels about offering first aid is an output, but not a direct impact indicator. Being able (and confident) to offer first aid might enable a person to have better outlook as to their career options in construction, but it does not itself achieve this.

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<sup>1</sup> CCTAL have set this as both an output and an outcome

### 2.2.2 Attitudinal indicators (intermediary outcomes)

This group of indicators measures the intermediary outcomes. These are attitudinal changes associated with the project. Process indicators would set the basis of the evaluation and show that participants were enabled to change. The next step is to assess if, as a result of the project, participants' attitudes actually changed. This level is important for two reasons:

- Attitude change is a precursor of behaviour change. Following Stern's ABC (Attitude-Behaviour-Context) model of behaviour change, behaviour can be seen as an outcome of the interaction between attitudes and the external context. When the influence of the context is constant (or weak) the link between attitudes and behaviour is strongest and changes in attitudes should translate into changes in behaviour. If the context is strong, it can override the impact of changes in attitudes. Of course, context is outside the control of the project.
- Given the nature of the project there will naturally be a (potentially significant) time lag between project implementation and when behaviour change can reasonably be measured. The ultimate goal of the project is increasing retention rates beyond 2 years.

To follow the example started in the previous section, an attitudinal indicator of impact would be measuring participants' self-reported likelihood of remaining in the industry. We argue that this type of question measures attitudes that are instrumental in achieving the behavioural outcome.

### 2.2.3 Behavioural indicators (outcomes)

The final group of indicators is more closely linked to the overall aim of the project and is focused on participants actually remaining longer in the construction industry. This is difficult to measure within the time frame of this evaluation as typically such effects will take longer to manifest themselves. As highlighted above, achieving behaviour change is complex as it depends on external, contextual factors in addition to attitudinal drivers that the projects could directly impact.

## 2.3 Identifying impact

To generate insight that is both scientifically robust and useful, we need to be careful and explicit about the 'locus of impact'. By this we mean that for each type of measure it is crucial to 'search' for the impact of the project in the place it is most likely to occur. This is important to avoid generating a false negative error.

## 2.4 Methodology: quantitative element

We implemented a mixed methods approach that, in addition to the projects own M&E efforts, included both quantitative and qualitative elements.

The **quantitative element** was based on a survey that participants were asked to fill in before starting and after completing their participation in a project. The survey captured participants' perceptions and attitudes.

**The Breakfast Club** participants filled in the baseline survey before the start of their first training session. They were asked to fill in the follow-up survey during their eighth and final session. The paper-based questionnaires were provided to participants by the BeOnsite project team or trainers<sup>2</sup>. The filled-in paper questionnaires were scanned and securely sent to the evaluation team who entered the data into a digital format.

There were two types of participants in the **Mentoring for the Construction Industry** project and a different approach was taken for each group:

- Level 1 apprentices (who underwent a one day training) were asked to fill in the baseline questionnaire before the start of the training. To avoid recall bias, the follow-up questionnaire was provided to participants at least two weeks after the date of the training. Both questionnaires were provided to participants on paper by the project team. After the completion of the questionnaires by the participants the project team entered the data into our online data-entry platform that was made available through SurveyMonkey.
- Mentors (level 3 apprentices and industry professionals) underwent a two-day training sessions. In agreement with the project team we did not implement baseline/follow-up measurements on this group. They were solely asked to fill in an evaluation questionnaire at the end of their participation. It was felt that the burden on participants would outweigh the usefulness of the results given that in the absence of the actual mentoring element, the training of mentors itself could not have had a direct impact on retention.

### 2.4.1 Sample size

In an ideal scenario all participants who take part in a project would also take part in its evaluation. This was not possible in this case and the table below outlines the

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<sup>2</sup> Initially an online survey was trailed whereby participants would be emailed an invitation to the survey which they could then fill in using a smart phone or a computer. Given the very low engagement with this method of delivery we redesigned the approach and produced paper questionnaires.

achieved samples of participants for the two projects. There are different reasons for this.

- **The Breakfast Club:** The Breakfast Club commenced in the autumn of 2018 while this evaluation was commissioned at the beginning of 2019. This meant that by the time the evaluation framework was developed, the first cohort had already completed their participation and the second cohort had started it. As such no data was collected on the first cohort and only follow-up data was collected for the second cohort.

Table 1: Number of respondents, the Breakfast Club

| Group            | Baseline | Follow-up | Respondents who have filled in both surveys |
|------------------|----------|-----------|---|
| Cohort 1         | -        | -         | -   |
| Cohort 2         | -        | 6         | -   |
| Cohort 3         | 10       | 7         | 7   |
| Cohort 4         | 8        | 6         | 5   |
| Comparison group | 6        | -         | -   |

- **Mentoring in the Construction Industry:** Due to the initially weak engagement with the evaluator no participants before the autumn of 2019 were provided with the evaluation questionnaires.

Table 2: Number of respondents, Mentoring in the Construction Industry

| Group                                     | Baseline            | Follow-up | Respondents who have filled in both surveys |
|---|---------------------|-----------|---|
| Level 1 Apprentices (1-day training)      | 24                  | 25        | 24  |
| Level 3 Apprentices (2-day training)      | <i>Not measured</i> | 11        | -   |
| Industry representatives (2-day training) | <i>Not measured</i> | 52        | -   |

## 2.4.2 Questionnaire

The questionnaire included attitudinal measures that operationalise the outputs and intermediary outcomes. We detail these in the following sections. Examples of the questionnaires are included as Appendices.

The survey also contained demographic questions, along with key indicators that were shown by previous research quoted by CITB to affect retention. These include apprenticeship status, job area (e.g. wood, trowel, etc); size of the contractor.

The baseline and follow-up questionnaires were mostly identical, the sole difference was that the follow-up survey also included questions that evaluate the participant’s experience and satisfaction with the trainings.

### 2.4.3 Sample profile

The table below details the high-level characteristics of the sample that was collected.

Table 3: Sample profile by project

| Group  | The Breakfast Club | Mentoring in the Construction Industry (1-day training) | Mentoring in the Construction Industry (2-day training) |
|--|--------------------|---|---|
| Gender: Male   | 80%                | 92%   | 74%   |
| First language: English  | 75%                | 92%   | 93%   |
| Apprentice Level 1 or 2  | 0%                 | 80%   | 0%  |
| Apprentice Level 3   | 17%                | 8%  | 18%   |
| Apprentice Level 4 and above   | 6%                 | 4%  | 0%  |
| Not an apprentice  | 77%                | 8%  | 82%   |
| Average length of time worked in the construction industry before the training | 27 months          | 27 months   | -   |
| Average number of construction companies worked for                            | 2                  | 1.4   | 2.9   |
| Taken part in mentoring in the past  | -                  | 30%   | 60%   |

## 2.5 Methodology: qualitative element

The surveys captured participant’s views immediately prior to, and on completion of the trainings and as such provided a snapshot of views, opinions and likely influences on attitudes. To compliment this, the study team developed a qualitative research approach and question toolkit to capture more detailed information from participants on their thoughts and opinions of the projects. The **qualitative element** was implemented between the autumn 2019 and spring 2020. It consisted of semi-structured interviews conducted with project participants. The data collection arrangements and the types of participants interviewed differed by project. However, a coordinated interview guide was used for both projects designed by the evaluation team to tap into similar issues. Moreover, the interview guides were designed in such a way as to have a connection to the questions included in the quantitative research, allowing us to better understand the findings that emerge from it. The interview guides are included in as Appendices.

Interviews and discussions undertaken as part of the qualitative research process included respondents that underwent the trainings at various points in time. Some research participants were interviewed some months after completion of the trainings. This allowed a review of the participant's recall and thoughts of the programme after some time had passed, and also allowed the participant to consider if the training had any impact on their work or life.

We developed a list of questions and created a conversation topic list for the main participants in trainings and stakeholders: employees and contractors at Lendlease, and mentors, level 3 and new entrant mentees for the Mentoring in the Construction Industry Project.

The topic guides were shared with the main project contacts for each project. These were then revised in light of comments provided and a process for data capture was agreed with each project. This engagement was important as our research was intended to complement user research that was to be undertaken by each project.

A common set of questions was developed to be used for both projects to ideally provide some inter-project comparison and consideration. Project specific questions were also developed to respond to the unique elements and activities associated with each project.

Following much debate and discussion, the following data capture process was used:

- ***The Breakfast Club***: contractors contributed to the research through either self-completion of templates, or telephone interview carried out by Jura Consultants.
  - Six employers were interviewed, five of which provided written responses and one participated in a telephone interview;
  - Four employees that participated in the training sessions were interviewed, three took part in a telephone interview and one provided comments in writing.
- ***Mentoring in the Construction Industry***: all research participants that contributed to the research did so through telephone interviews with project staff, using templates produced by the project team. All data captured was then reviewed and analysed by Jura Consultants. Overall:
  - Seven Level 1 apprentices who underwent mentoring awareness training were interviewed;
  - Five Level 3 apprentices who underwent mentoring training were interviewed;
  - Three industry representatives who underwent mentoring training were interviewed.

## Section 3 Delivery of activities and outputs<sup>3</sup>

### 3.1 Activities

We start by assessing **activities** to understand if the projects were implemented as planned. This entails identifying if any elements of the project were modified compared to the proposal along with the reasons for this. We also assess if all elements of the project were implemented and provide explanations for any changes. Next, we assess if the proposed activities were carried out in accordance with the funding application.

To determine if the activities were carried out we:

- Reviewed quarterly M&E reports submitted by each project;
- Carried out interviews and discussions with key staff at BeOnsite:
  - Rose Newton (Finance manager at BeOnsite and Project Lead for the Breakfast Club)
  - Ali Sajedi (Contractor Engagement Manager at BeOnsite and responsible for the running of the project)
- Carried out interviews and discussions with key staff at CCTAL:
  - Nicola Tinnuche (Project team member)
  - Anthony Rees (Project lead)

#### **The Breakfast Club**

The project was implemented following the proposed processes and timeline. The activities included in the funding proposal were implemented. The details as to the numbers of participants are included the project's quarterly monitoring reports.

The overall number of participants was lower than planned. This can be explained by the changes to the context of the project between proposal and commencement. The project that was proposed was organically and collaboratively developed by BeOnsite and contractors expected to work on the Elephant park site in London. However, before the project's commencement the main partnering contractors were not contracted by Lendlease to work on the site. This meant that for the project to be implemented new contractor partners needed to be identified, engaged and brought on board. As described by the project team this presented with difficulties due to the requirement that participants be released for the training on full pay. Nonetheless, the project team adapted to this situation and developed new engagement

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<sup>3</sup> The original objective mentioned 'outcomes', however to be consistent with our classification of project results we modify this to 'activities and outputs'.



approaches (by speaking directly to contractors' senior management) enabling the project to eventually overcome this hurdle, in time for the start of cohort 4.

### **Mentoring for the Construction Industry**

As implemented, the project aimed to offer participants training in the various aspects related to mentoring. The details as to the numbers of participants who were involved are included in the project's quarterly monitoring reports.

The overall number of participants was lower than planned. This can be explained by the high no-show rate identified by the project. To increase attendance rates the project implemented extensive marketing initiatives.

Even though not included in the outcomes' table included in the funding proposal, it is proposed the project will enable mentoring to occur in a formalised way connecting mentees and mentors. Indeed, the impact of the project on retention is framed as stemming from the mentoring interaction.

Contrary to what was suggested in the proposal, the project does not connect the mentees with mentors in any systematic or formalised way. Indeed, some new entrants (or professionals) might never enter into a mentoring relationship, or they might do so with a person not trained in this project.

The project explained that given the Shared Apprenticeship Scheme it is also running<sup>4</sup>, it would be impossible for a new entrant to be paired with an industry mentor as it would be unlikely that the mentee and mentor would work on the same site. With regards to Level 3 apprentices it was stated that some informal connections might be made by college advisors based on perceived personality fit between level 1 and level 3 apprentices, but this would occur outside this project.

This is crucial from an evaluation perspective and means that we can solely assess the impact of the training sessions offered by the project on the attitudes towards the sector.

## **3.2 Outputs**

To determine whether the projects achieved their outputs we relied on the quantitative data collected through the participant surveys and used a set of five indicators. Each indicator was designed to measure whether the projects induced changes on a distinct aspect that the trainings targeted:

- Feeling confident in communicating and avoiding conflict with team mates;

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<sup>4</sup> In our understanding this is also funded by CITB under a different grant.

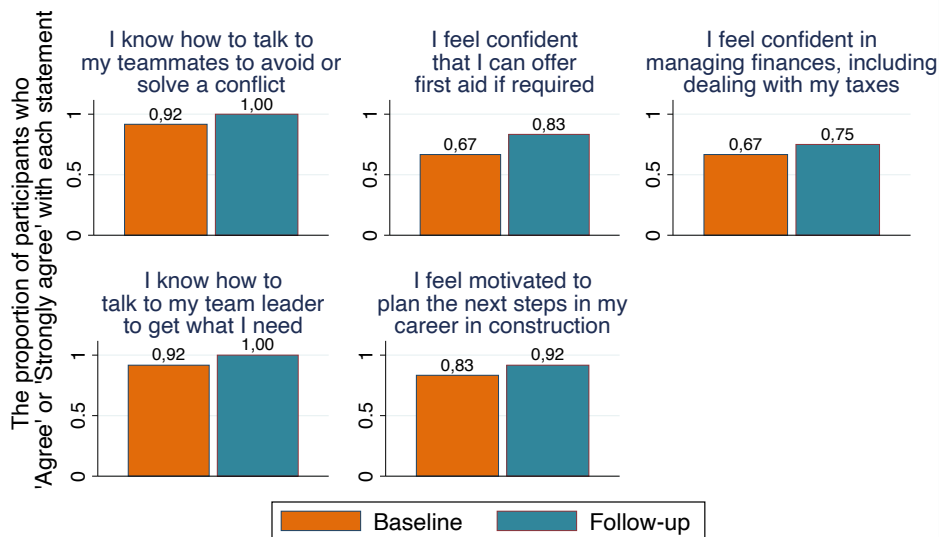
- Feeling confident in offering first aid;
- Feeling confident in managing finances and taxes;
- Knowing how to talk to the team leader;
- Being motivated to plan next steps in construction.

### The Breakfast Club

The results displayed in Figure 2 suggest that the participation in the trainings as part of the Breakfast Club increased the confidence shown by participants in the key areas the project provide training in. It is worth noting that the effect observed manifests itself on top of already high levels of confidence or motivation.

Given the small sample size and the small differences between the measurements the results are not statistically significant<sup>5</sup>.

Figure 2: Comparison of output indicators between baseline and follow-up for the Breakfast Club



Base: Participants in cohorts 3 and 4 who have completed both baseline and follow-up. Sample size: 12 participants.

<sup>5</sup> This was tested using p tests for proportions.

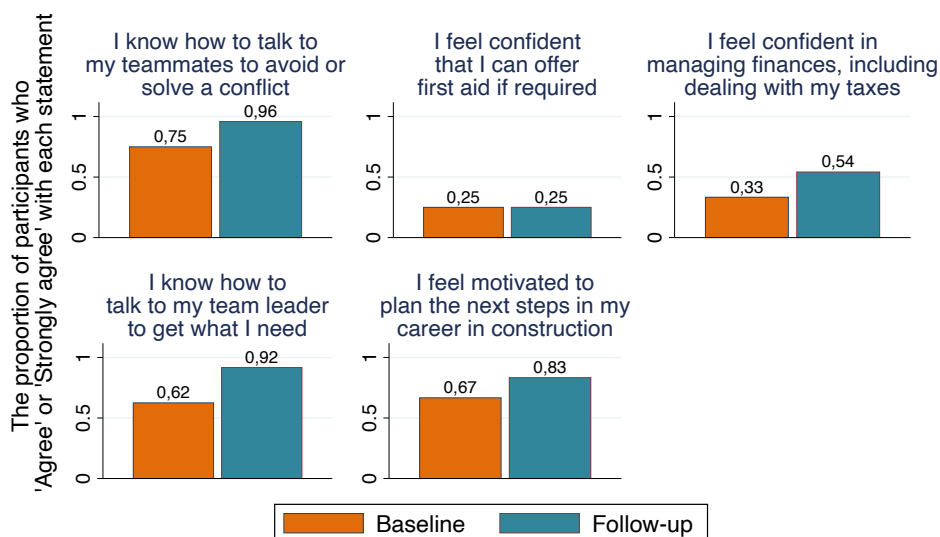
### Mentoring for the Construction Industry (MfCI)

Similar to the results for the Breakfast Club, the results displayed in Figure 3 suggest that the Level 1 apprentices' participation in the mentoring awareness trainings has increased their reported confidence in the areas we measure.

Given the higher sample size, some of the results we generate attain statistical significance at the 0.05 level<sup>6</sup>. These are the differences in knowing how to talk to teammates to avoid conflict and knowing how to talk to a team leader.

The training implemented by CCTAL did not include first aid. The question was nonetheless retained as a control measure. As expected a small proportion of participants feel they are confident to offer first aid, and more importantly, the proportion does not change in the follow-up.

Figure 3: Comparison of output indicators between baseline and follow-up for MfCI



Base: Mentee participants who have completed both baseline and follow-up surveys.  
Sample size: 24 participants.

Even though, the results, in general, lack statistical significance, we suggest that they can be interpreted, with care, using a qualitative lens. As can be seen in both graphs the direction of the effect is consistently positive and does not show signs of random variation.

<sup>6</sup> Statistical significance was tested using the p test proportions.

### 3.3 Participants' evaluation of the activities

In addition to objectively assessing whether the projects carried out the proposed activities and fulfilled their objectives, we also asked participants to evaluate their experience.

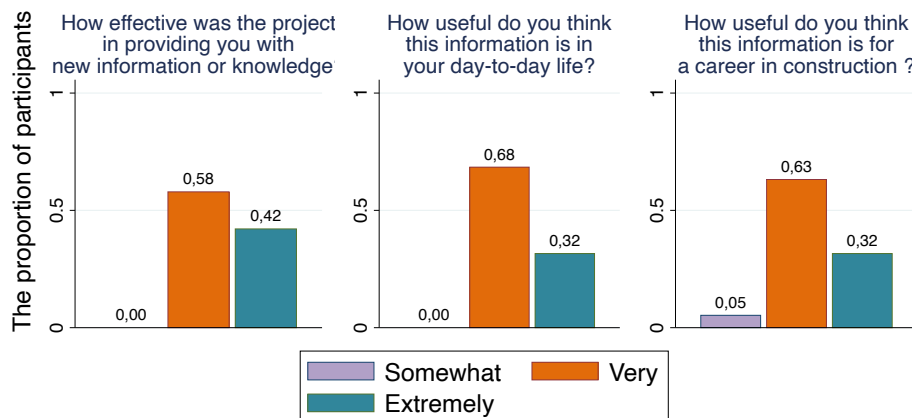
To this end, the follow-up surveys for both projects included questions designed to tap into these experience and capture participant's satisfaction. While we tried to ensure that the evaluation questions are as similar as possible across the projects and participant types, these were adapted to suite each group's experience.

#### The Breakfast Club

We use the following questions to tap into participants' experience:

- How effective was the training in providing them with new information;
- How useful this information is for their daily life;
- How useful the information provided by the trainings is for a career in construction;
- How satisfied were they with the project.

Figure 4: Evaluation indicators for the Breakfast Club

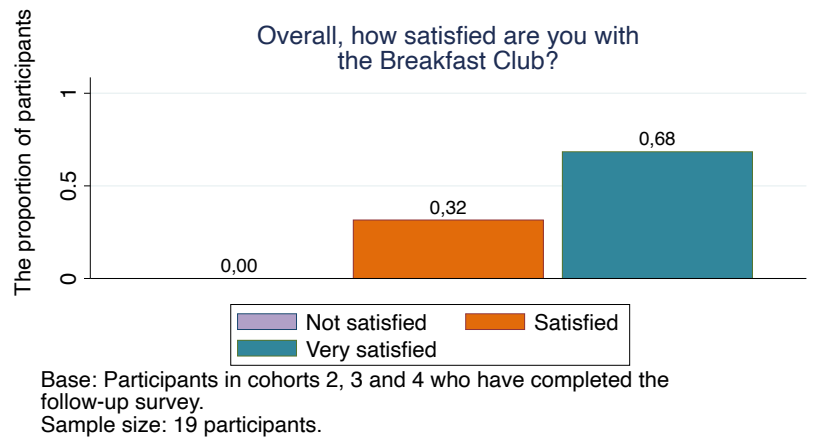


Base: Participants in cohorts 2, 3 and 4 who have completed the follow-up survey.  
Sample size: 19 participants.

The results are displayed in Figures 4 and show that all participants rated the project very positively. Approximately two thirds of participants said that the project was very effective in supplying them with new knowledge and that this knowledge is useful in life and career. The remaining third of participants had an even more positive view choosing the top option, considering the project to be 'extremely' useful.

Overall, two thirds of participants were ‘very satisfied’ and one third were ‘satisfied’. None of the participants appeared to be dissatisfied.

Figure 5: Satisfaction with the project for the Breakfast Club

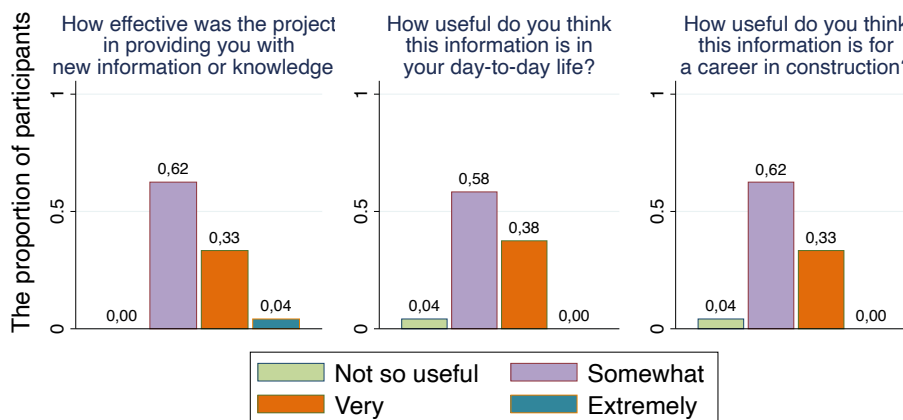


### Mentoring for the Construction Industry (MiCI) – Mentor awareness 1 day trainings

To assess Level 1 apprentices’ evaluation of the 1-day mentoring awareness training we used the questions we discussed above for the Breakfast Club, to which we added the following:

- How interested is the new entrant in mentoring;
- How likely they are to seek out and find a mentor.

Figure 6: Evaluation indicators for MiCI (1-day training)



Base: Mentee participants who have completed the follow-up survey.  
Sample size: 24 participants.

The results displayed in Figures 6 suggest a moderate level of participant satisfaction. Approximately two thirds of participants think that the information they received was only ‘somewhat’ useful and that the training was ‘somewhat’ effective.

In addition, following the mentoring awareness training almost 80% of participants say they are only ‘somewhat’ interested in mentoring and only about half of participants say they are likely to try to find a mentor, with no participants saying they are ‘extremely likely’.

Overall, 75% of participant appear satisfied with the training (with no participant being very stratified with it) and 25% are not satisfied.

Figure 7: Self-reported interest in mentoring following the MiCI 1-day training

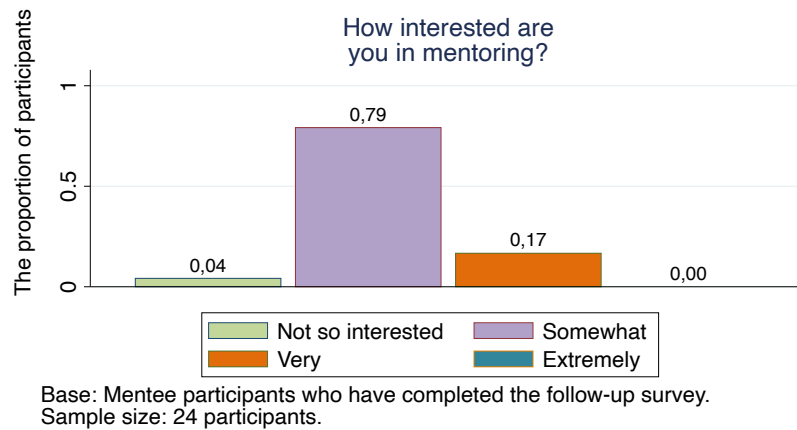


Figure 8: Perceived likeliness of finding a mentor following the MiCI 1-day training

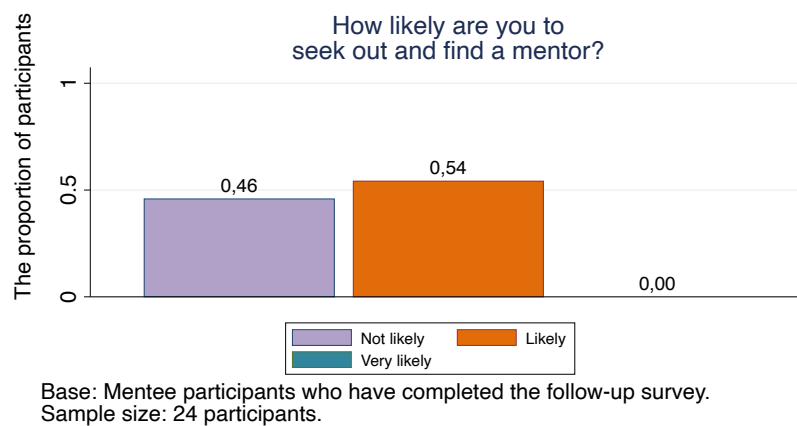
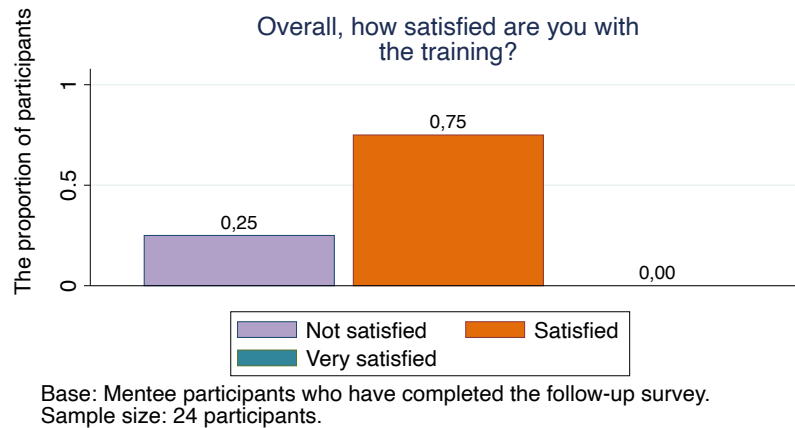


Figure 9: Satisfaction with the project for MiCI (1-day training)



### Mentoring for the Construction Industry (MiCI) – Mentoring strategy 2 day trainings

In addition to new entrants undergoing the mentoring awareness training, the project also provided training to Level 3 apprentices and industry representatives. As we discussed earlier, this group was only asked to fill in a follow-up questionnaire. This means that we cannot ascertain change, however it is useful to review their assessments of the trainings. We present these below.

First of all, we asked participants to assess the extent to which they think mentoring helps mentees build a career in construction and understand how such a career will impact their life. As can be seen in Figure 10, a very high percentage of respondents think that the training was ‘very helpful’ in these regards. The graph compares participants who have mentored with those who have not. It is apparent that those who have not yet mentored are slightly more positive at thinking that mentoring can successfully help mentees understand what a career in construction entails. This difference is significant at the 0.1 level. There were no differences in answers based on whether the respondent was an industry representative or a level 3 apprentice.

We also asked if the mentor sees any improvements in mentees as a result of mentoring. The results displayed in Figure 11 suggest a slightly lower level of strong agreement compared to other measures discussed above. The differences between industry representatives and level 3 apprentices are not statistically significant. And we do not display them.

Finally, we tested if the participants think that a mentor would make efforts to ensure that the mentees develops in a variety of areas. The results are presented in Figure 12 and indicate slightly higher levels of agreement (on some measures) for those participants who have mentored in the past compared to those who have not yet mentored. Although, in general, the differences are not statistically significant.

Figure 10: Perceived impact of mentoring on mentees' career development following the 2-day training

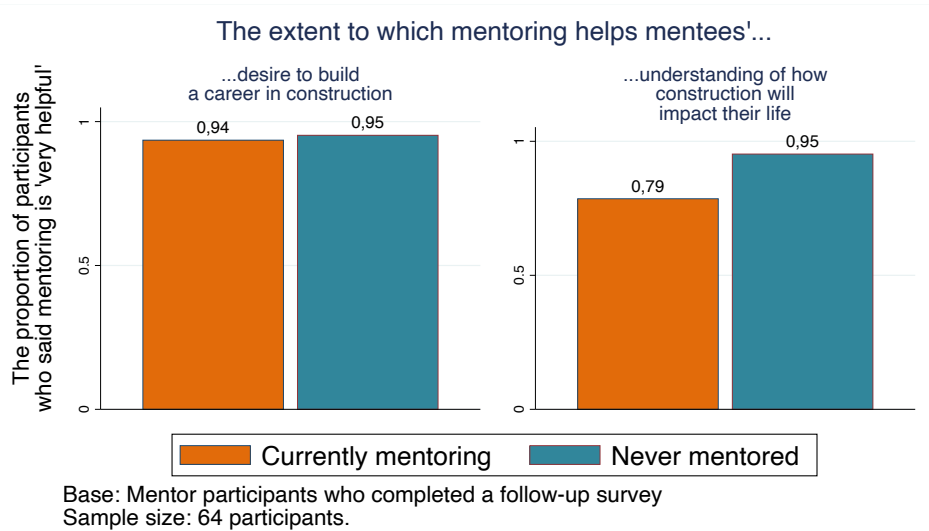


Figure 11: Perceived impact of mentoring on mentees' practical development following the 2-day training

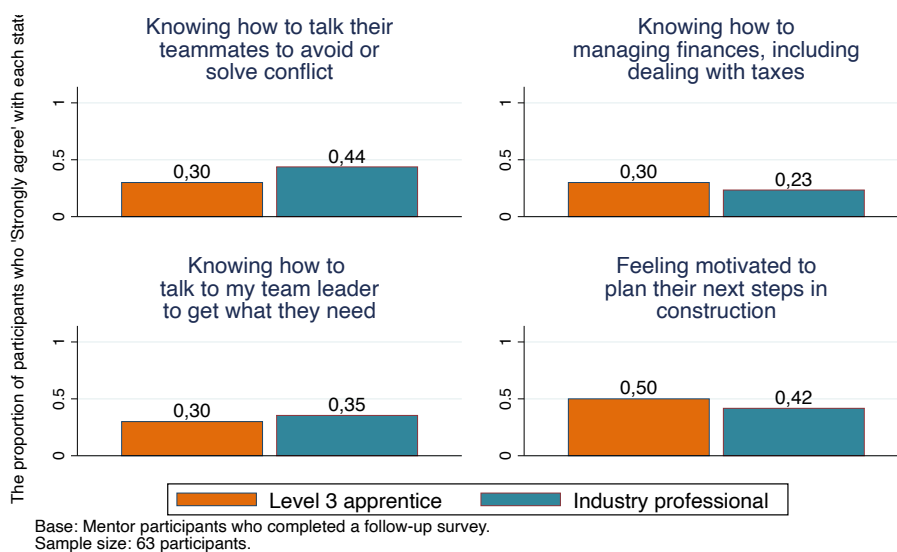
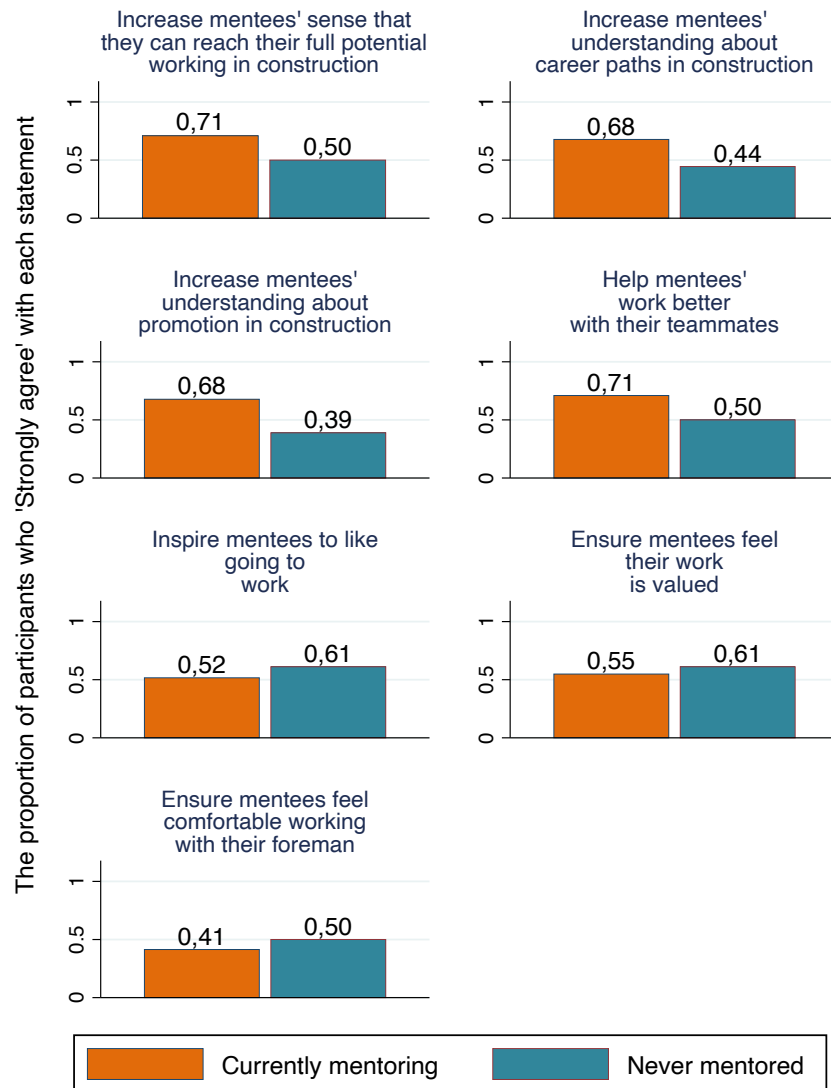


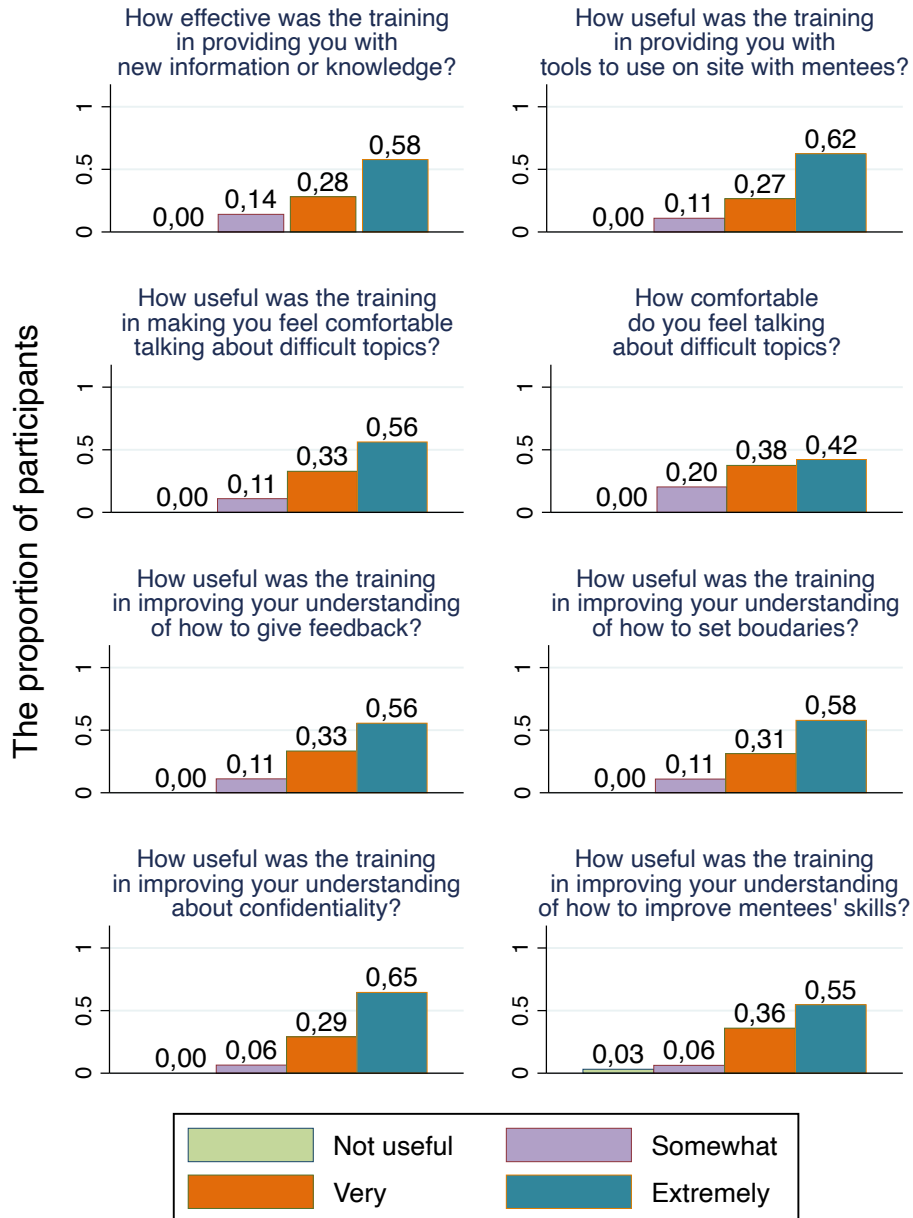


Figure 12: Perceived impact of mentoring on mentees' retention indicators following the 2-day training



Base: Mentor participants who completed a follow-up survey.  
 Sample size: 52 participants.

Figure 13: Evaluation indicators for MiCI (2-day training)



Base: Mentor participants who completed a follow-up survey.  
Sample size: 63 participants.

To assess the perceptions and evaluations of Level 3 apprentices and industry representatives as to the usefulness of the training we included the following questions:

- How effective was the training in providing them with new information;
- How useful was the training in providing them with tools to use with mentees;
- How useful was the training in helping them talk about difficult topics;
- How comfortable they feel talking about difficult topics;
- How useful was the training in helping them give feedback;
- How useful was the training in helping them understand how to set boundaries;
- How useful was the training in helping them understand how to deal with confidentiality;
- How useful was the training in helping them understand how to improved mentees skills;
- How satisfied they are with the training.

The results presented in Figure 13 are consistent in showing that the training is seen to have been effective. For all but one question over half of the respondents used the highest possible rating. Only when asked about being comfortable in discussing difficult topics were the evaluations slightly more negative. Overall, three quarters of participants are very satisfied with the two-day training they received.

Figure 14: Satisfaction with the project for MiCI (2-day training)



## Section 4 Attribution and additionality

As we discussed earlier, the impact of the project on participants can be assessed using two types of indicators that correspond to the levels of outcomes:

- Attitudes (intermediary outcomes)
- Behaviours (outcomes)

Below we detail how the impact of the project on each of these types of indicators could be measured and was manifested.

### 4.1 Intermediary outcomes: attitudes

To understand impact and measure additionality the analysis needs to determine and capture two things. First, whether there was a difference in the participant group when comparing measurements taken before and after participation in the project. Second, whether this change would have occurred in the absence of the project.

#### 4.1.1 Identifying changes in attitudes

The survey included questions on participants' views of the construction industry and their future plans for their future and career. This included self-reported answers to questions that can be seen as drivers of retention:

- I feel like I am able to reach my full potential working in construction;
- I can see myself working here in a year;
- I have a clear understanding of my career path in construction;
- I have a clear understanding of possibilities for promotion in construction;
- I feel comfortable working with my teammates;
- I like going to work;
- I feel like my work is valued;
- I feel comfortable working with my foreman;
- I would apply for this job again;
- I would refer a friend to work in construction;
- I want to build a career in construction;
- I understand how my working in construction will impact my life;
- How decided are you to continue working in construction in the future.

We implemented descriptive statistics to ascertain whether there was a change between baseline and follow-up on these indicators and used significance testing to assess whether these changes are statistically significant.

The evaluation framework originally included plans to run tests to control for the impact of potential confounders (e.g. company size), however, given the low sample sizes that were achieved we were not able to carry these out.

### **The Breakfast Club**

We used a set of indicators that can tap into retention, highlighting their motivation to stay in their current job. The results, detailed in Figure 15, conform to our expectations, and show that most measures increase or are stable over time, however, none of the differences are statistically significant.

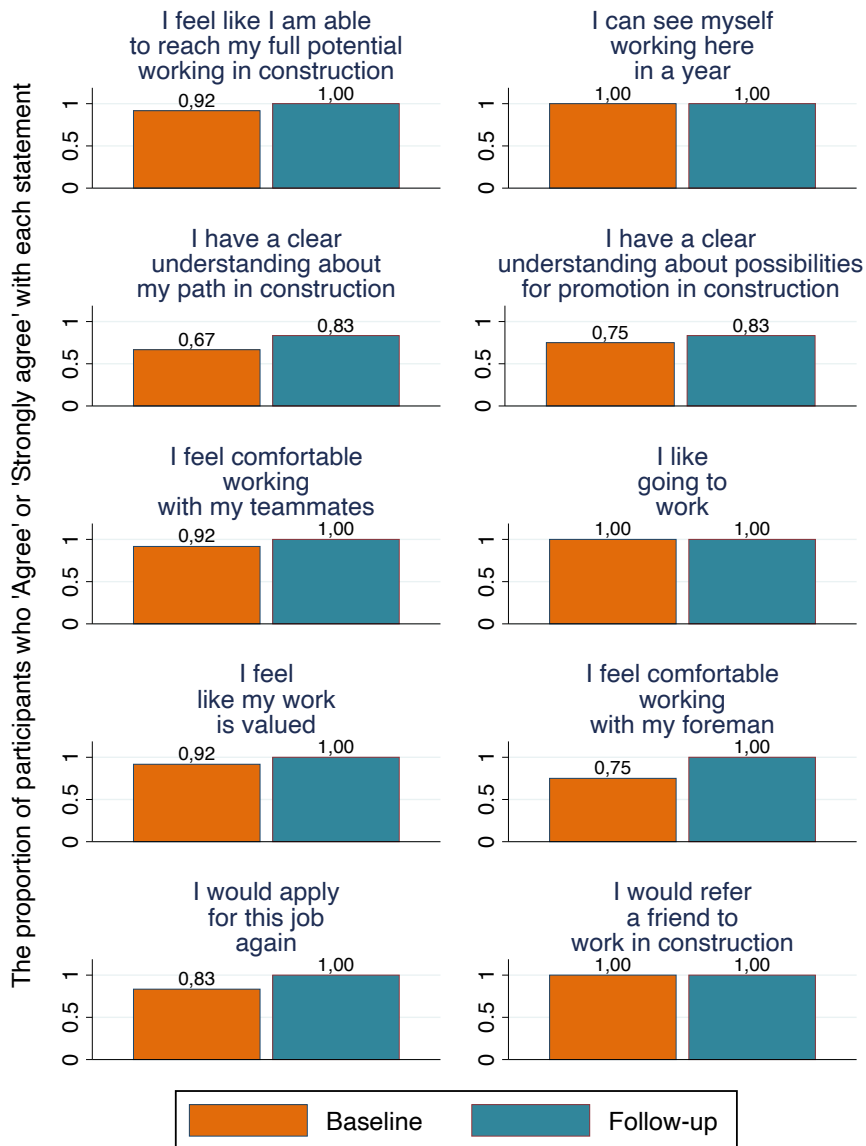
Figure 16a details the results showing the proportions of participants' who agreed or strongly agreed with wanting a career in the industry. The results show no change over the course of the project given that maximum scores are reached at baseline. If we only look at those who strongly agreed with the two statements (Figure 16b) we find that there was small decrease between baseline and follow-up in participants saying they want to build a career in construction. The difference is small and lacks statistical significance, as such, it should be treated with caution.

Finally, we test how decided participants are in staying in the construction industry (Figure 17). The results suggest a slight increase, but due to sample size, this is not statistically significant.

When measures are stable, they are so because they are already at their maximum in the baseline. We identified two potential reasons for this. First, the sample of participants is self-selected from among new entrants who are already more likely to have more positive experience of the sector and be more willing to remain. We discuss this in more detail in the following section.

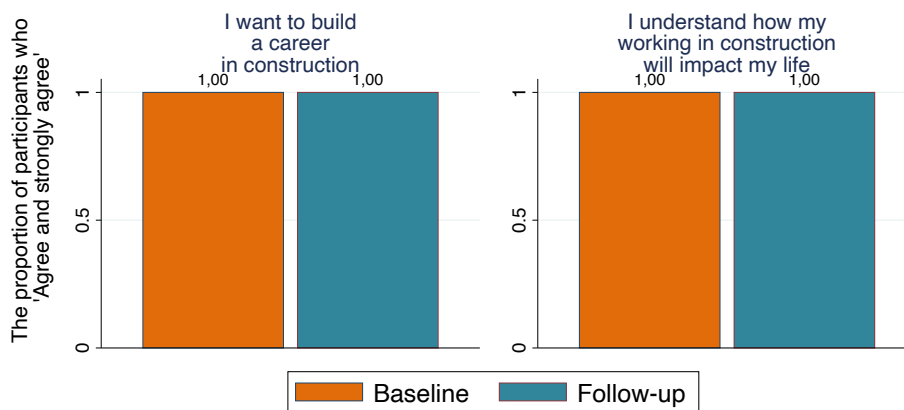
Second, a cognitive effect sometimes found in survey responses, named satisficing, could have artificially increased the level of these variable. Satisficing occurs when respondents feel the need to provide answers that they think the interviewer is expecting to see. Contrary to our original plan (that called for surveys to be carried out online), the questionnaires were filled in during training with the trainer present which could have induced such an effect. Although, this effect should be constant across the two waves and should not affect evaluation.

Figure 15: Comparison of retention indicators between baseline and follow-up for the Breakfast Club participants



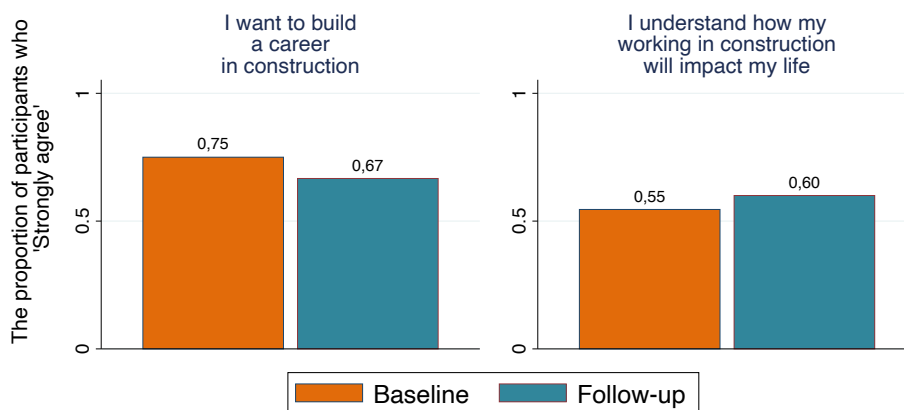
Base: Participants in cohorts 3 and 4 who have completed both baseline and follow-up surveys.  
 Sample size: 12 participants.

Figure 16a: Comparison of career indicators between baseline and follow-up for the Breakfast Club participants (*agree and strongly agree*)



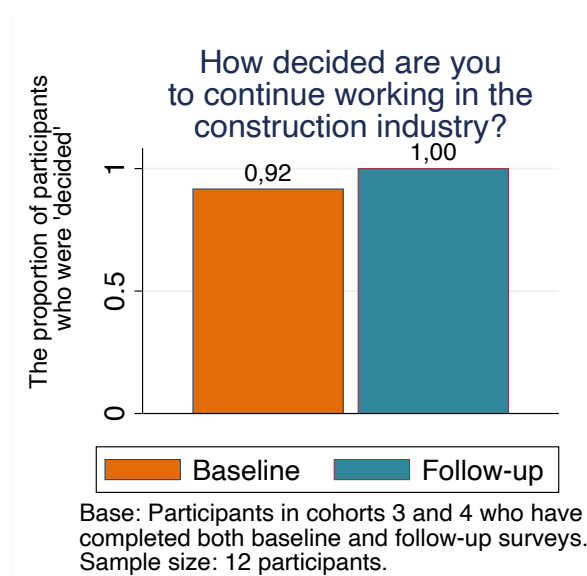
Base: Participants in cohorts 3 and 4 who have completed both baseline and follow-up surveys.  
 Sample size: 12 participants.

Figure 16b: Comparison of career indicators between baseline and follow-up for the Breakfast Club participants (*strongly agree*)



Base: Participants in cohorts 3 and 4 who have completed both baseline and follow-up surveys.  
 Sample size: 12 participants.

Figure 17: Comparison of how decided participants were to remain in the industry between baseline and follow-up for the Breakfast Club participants



### Mentoring for the Construction Industry (MiCI) – Mentor awareness 1 day trainings

We measured the retention indicators for the Level 1 apprentices who participated in the mentoring awareness training. The results are positive and suggest improvements in the outlook towards the construction industry across the board.

Given the more substantial differences and large sample size compared to the Breakfast Club, several of the findings attain statistical significance. The proportion of participants who agree or strongly agree that they are comfortable working with teammates significantly increases from 70% to 96%. Similarly, feeling comfortable working with the foreman increases from 46% to 92%.

Finally, participants appear to increase their perception of work as a significantly higher proportion mention that they like going to work in the follow-up (100%) compared to the baseline (67%). Participants also say they will apply for the position they are in again in the follow-up at a higher rate compared to the baseline (92% versus 54%).

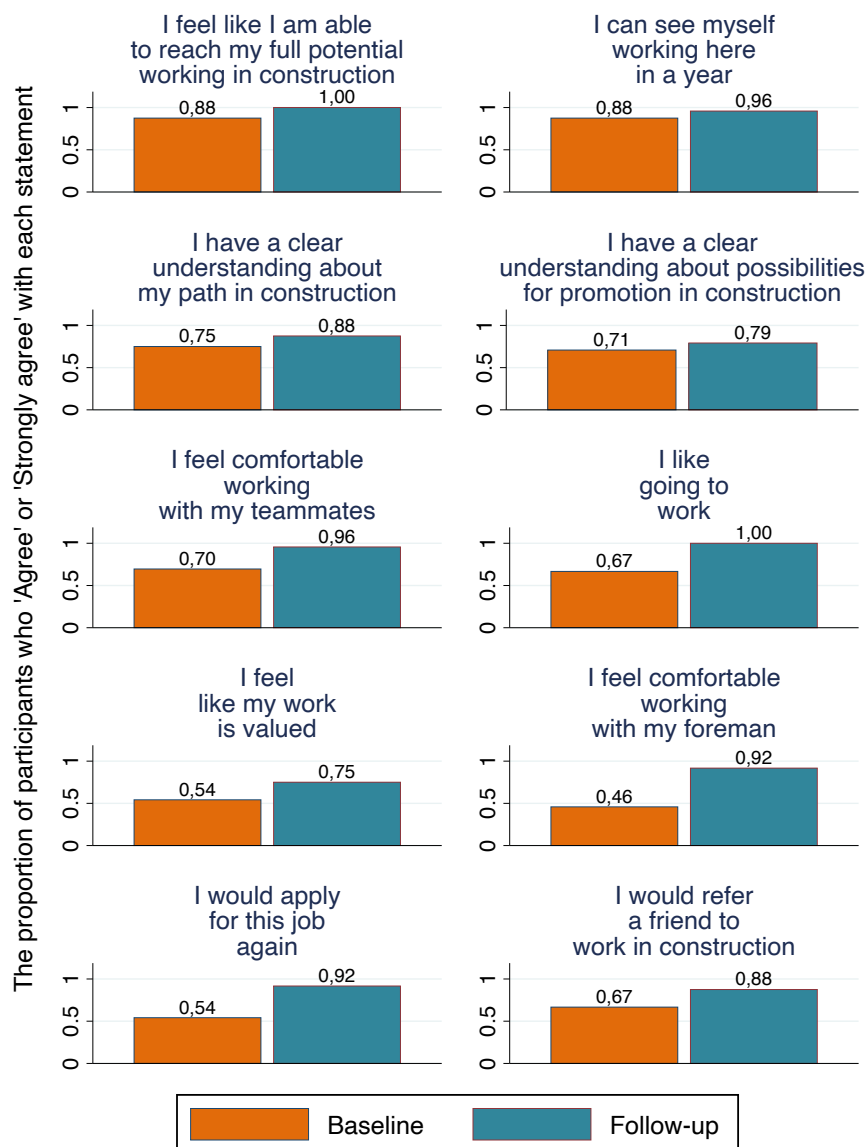
There is a slight, non-significant, increase in the proportion of participants who *agree or strongly agree* that they would like to build a career in construction (Figure 19a). No difference is registered on their understanding of how working in construction will impact their life. However, if we move the locus of analysis and focus only on those



who say they strongly agree, more sizable difference emerge. We present these in Figure 19b.

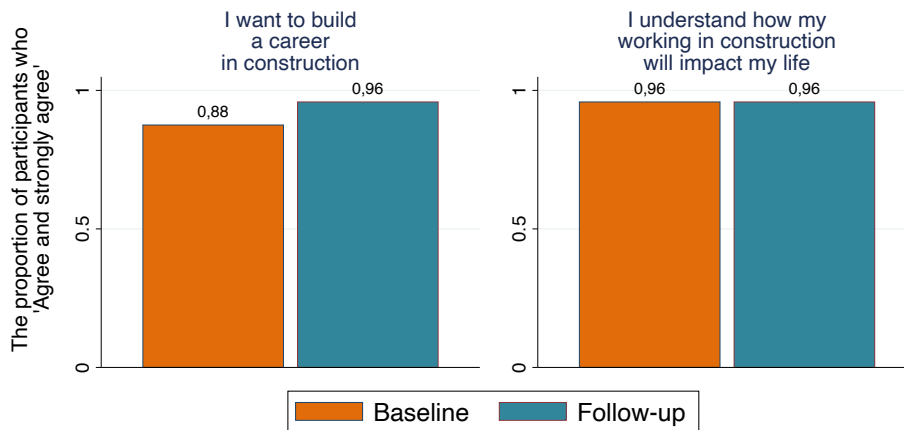
Similarly, there is a small increase in how decided participants were to remain in the construction industry (Figure 20).

Figure 18: Comparison of retention indicators between baseline and follow-up for the MFCI Level 1 apprentice participants



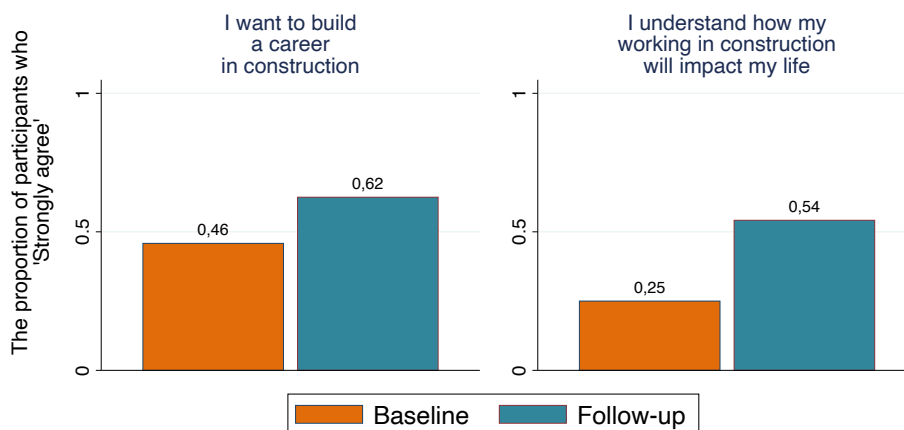
Base: Mentee participants who have completed both baseline and follow-up surveys.  
 Sample size: 24 participants.

Figure 19a: Comparison of career indicators between baseline and follow-up for the MFCI Level 1 apprentice participants (*agree and strongly agree*)



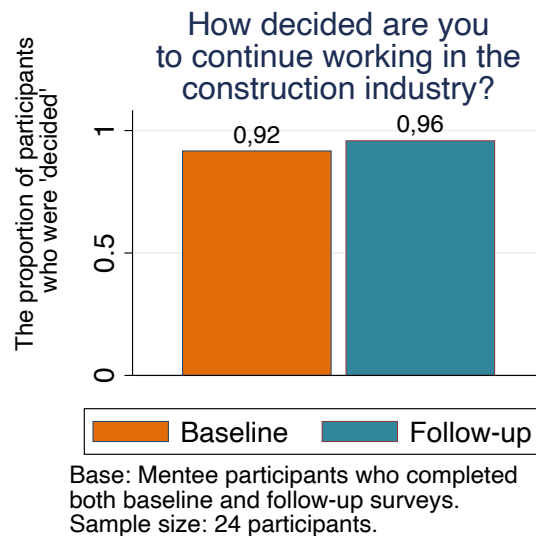
Base: Mentee participants who have completed both baseline and follow-up surveys.  
Sample size: 24 participants.

Figure 19b: Comparison of career indicators between baseline and follow-up for the MFCI Level 1 apprentice participants (*strongly agree*)



Base: Mentee participants who have completed both baseline and follow-up surveys.  
Sample size: 24 participants.

Figure 20: Comparison of how decided participants were to remain in the industry between baseline and follow-up for the MFCI Level 1 apprentice participants



#### 4.1.2 Attributing change to the projects

To be able to measure additionality one would first have to show that any changes found in the treatment group are attributable to the project. In the absence of an experimental design this could be achieved by using a comparison group.

##### The Breakfast Club

An individual-level comparison group was not initially included in the project plans. Following discussions with the project it was agreed that a comparison group will be drawn from new entrants who qualified for the Breakfast Club but did not participate.

There were two distinct comparison groups possible, with key logistical distinctions between them:

- New entrants who are direct employees of BeOnsite who are then assigned to work for different contractors on site. The project team had access to the contact details of this group and it would have been possible for them to contact such staff and ask them to participate in the control group.
- New entrants who are direct employees of contractors. The project team did not have direct access to this group. However, steps were taken to identify individuals, obtaining contact details by relying on the good will of participating contractors.

The plan called for baseline measures and follow-up measures be taken with a six month interval from both groups.

The baseline was measured in the autumn of 2019 and include six participants. However, the follow-up was not collected due to a confluence of events. First, some members of this comparison groups changed employment (possibly remaining in the industry) and became uncontactable. Second, the Covid crisis meant the project staff was furloughed and unable to contact the remaining members of the group. This unfortunately makes any individual-level comparison impossible.

### **Mentoring for the Construction Industry (MfCI)**

In its submission to CITB, the project does not propose the use of a comparison group. We engaged in discussions with CCTAL to understand whether a comparison group for mentees could be drawn from Level 1 apprentices that did not take the training. This did not appear to be feasible and data on a comparison group was not collected.

#### **4.2 Outcomes: behaviour**

We made a distinction between measuring behaviour and measuring attitudes based on the likely locus and timing of impact.

While it is reasonable to expect that the project can change attitudes and that this change is observable upon completion of the project, the change in behaviour is not automatic and might not be detectable until well after the completion of the project.

First, attitude change might actually not induce behaviour change. As such, if we observe attitude change, but there is a lack of a behaviour change, it would not necessarily mean that the project did not have an impact, there could have been contextual factors that precluded the behavioural impact occurring.

Second, behaviour change cannot be measured at the time of completion. By definition, the behavioural outcome of the project is increased retention (in excess of 2 years). To be able to test this, measurements would need to be taken in the future.

Third, measuring behaviour change should be accomplished by using aggregate retention data (and not individual-level data). The paragraphs below detail the proposed approaches.

### **The Breakfast Club**

The Breakfast Club was designed with the idea of aggregate comparison embedded. This was to occur by comparing retention rates in the participant group with those across the BeOnsite and contractors. Such a comparison was to be included in the project's quarterly M&E submissions.

However, given the difficulties in recruitment faced by the project as a result of having had to change partners, the validity of comparison is not assured. Selection bias and self-selection are likely to affect the participant group. This means that the two groups ('treatment' and comparison) might not be similar on key confounders. As we explain below, the differences that are found could be a manifestation of the factors that affected selection and not a result of the project. Essentially, it could be argued that the new entrants who were more likely to want to stay in the industry and already had a more positive experience are the ones who participated in the project.

The project is populated by new entrants to the construction industry (past 12 months) from two sources: BeOnsite and Lendlease contractors that work on the Elephant Park development. In practice, there is no random assignment mechanism to the project. Participation in the project is fully determined by two factors: interest on the part of the participant and the willingness on the part of the contractor to allow the employee to participate on full pay. As such, participation is self-selected and constrained / moderated by the attitude of the contractor and interest of the new entrant.

This might introduce bias into the comparison group given that the experience of the members of this group will likely be affected by the context they work in. It might be that the participating contractors (by virtue of their attitude towards staff) are already stimulating retention, compared to other contractors. This situation is likely to increase the likelihood of Type I errors, meaning that it would more likely to find a positive impact, yet we would not be sure if the impact we find is due to the project itself or due to the fact that the participants joining the projects are already more likely to have a more positive experience.

This bias could have theoretically been (partially) controlled through matching between control and treatment participants. However, the sample sizes achieved did not allow for this.

### **Mentoring for the Construction Industry (MfCI)**

Upon developing the evaluation plans we suggested carrying out an over-time geographical comparison. We suggested to compute current and historic retention rates for the areas where the project is implemented. However, this approach was not feasible given that the project did not actually implement the mentoring component.

Nonetheless, even if mentoring would have been implemented, it would have still been difficult to carry out such comparisons. In our understanding, mentoring in the construction industry in the region has been in place for several years and this project is an outcome of the local industry and contractors believing in the usefulness of mentoring. As such, we must be guarded in our expectations of clear impact in such an analysis. If indeed mentoring has been slowly implemented over the past decade its effect will be have likely been incremental and it is likely to reach a ceiling at one point. If that ceiling has already been reached, it might be the case that the effect of this project might not be distinguishable in the aggregate figures.

## Section 5: Beneficiary and stakeholder perspectives on impact

In addition to the insights drawn from the quantitative research, we rely on qualitative in-depth interviews to further assess the direct and indirect impact of the project. The qualitative research strand was designed to complement the quantitative surveys and was delivered in line with the research plan.

### The Breakfast Club

This section sets out the findings from contributions made by contractors and new entrants that participated in the training sessions.

#### *The contractor perspective*

Of those that provided a detailed answer, the contractors spoke of the **challenges of retention** and related these to the expectations and behaviours of new entrants. One respondent highlighted the challenge of finding people that correctly understand what is required from a working day and then work to this level day after day. This consistent with the assumptions discussed in the project proposal and summarised in the theory of change. It is also directly linked to the reasons contractors cited in favour of participation.

**Reasons for participating** in the project included offering reward and recognition with the intention of encouraging more interest in work, and facilitating progression and development. It was felt by contractors we interviewed that it would be beneficial for employees to discuss any problems they may have with external people and groups, and to participate in activities where training can take place in an environment with peers. Employers that released staff on full pay to participate in the project hoped that this structured programme would help to re-enforce time-keeping and increase understanding of site rules and generate a wider scope of understanding of the sector and working environments as a basis for career progression.

From employer's point of view the most important **benefit of the project** was that the trainings provided opportunities for participants to put their views across and to discuss any problems with peers.

In addition, contractors also considered the project to have been a direct benefit to them by enabling them to get together with other colleagues on-site. It was mentioned that the project provided of a forum with peers where issues could be discussed.

Referring to their staff that participated in the Breakfast Club, the contractors we interviewed reported **improvements** in attitude towards work and teammates as well as timekeeping. This reinforces the quantitative findings presented earlier that suggest increases in participants knowledge of how to interact with teammates and their foreman. Further, it was noted that there are examples of employees being more informed and involved and being less daunted by job-related issues.

The financial management and communication skills elements of the course were considered to be good life lessons for new entrants. As is shown later, these were parts of the course that were also particularly well received by the participants. In addition, one employer mentioned that the first aid training was very useful. None of the contractors mentioned any negative changes.

Thinking specifically about **retention** in the industry we asked contractors to tell us if they think the programme can help new entrants in the industry remain in construction. There was general agreement that this is the case. For example, one contractor mentioned that the

*“(...) training programme can provide motivation and improve their knowledge, and by explaining to them how to improve their knowledge, they can achieve promotion to higher level, which will keep people in the industry”*

When contractors were asked what they would **change about the project** several suggestions were offered. These included changing the name of the project, stopping offering biscuits (we assume this refers to breakfast more broadly) and changing the day it is held on (i.e. moving from a Friday). With respect to the day of delivery, we presume that this might be because it may be more challenging to motivate staff to work after attending a session on a Friday morning as it already feels like wind down time. It was thought that this may be less of an issue if delivered during the week.

All contractors consulted reported that they would **recommend** the programme to other contractors and the following provides the statements provided by employers with respect to recommending the Breakfast Club:

*“There are good workers coming through this programme – we have experienced this and I can recommend this to other firms”*

*“All training and routes of assistance are beneficial to the person and the company”*



*“This programme gives a broader perspective on the world of work which will be beneficial to attendees in the long-term”*

*“I would recommend this programme to all employers who want to help support and retain people who are new to the industry and / or the job market”*

To exemplify contractors' views, the following provides a case study developed from a conversation with one contractor that had staff attend the Breakfast Club.

#### **Case study: contractor's view**

Retention was not really an issue for this contractor / employer, rather the issue was young people entering the industry for the first time were not as likely to see it through, be less resilient and have fewer life skills. Some people have issues from outside the work environment that can affect performance at work.

Participation in the programme was seen as an 'enrichment' activity, helping to build people up and maybe to work on some of the issues that people have from outside work. The key benefits that were envisaged from participation included personal development and making work more interesting. The provision of breakfast was a key incentive making participation more attractive.

Feedback from those involved indicates that the experience was generally positive and the financial literacy programme was particularly useful. The fact that the programme was delivered over several weeks on a set day helped participants to reflect on previous activities and engagements. It was suggested that the content was less important than regular contact and structure that this provided. The programme has potentially developed a sense of achievement within participants and it was beneficial that this was re-enforced with a certificate.

No negative comments were made about the programme.

The company's participation in the programme was included in their newsletter. At a company level, participation in the programme has provided soft benefits in terms of being seen to take part in projects that benefit staff. This can potentially enrich and add value to the brand value of the company.

The benefits of participation 'absolutely' outweighed the 'costs' of participation.

It is not clear if the programme aided retention as there are so many factors that would influence an individual's view and decisions.

### *The participant perspective*

This section provides case studies of the experiences and views expressed by participants in the training sessions. In some cases, some considerable time had passed between participating in the training programme and contributing to this research. This allows us to try and capture longer term impacts of the project. We present the results in the form of case studies followed by a summary of the main findings.

#### **Case Study 1: participant's view**

Prior to taking part in the training, the participant was keen to participate, to stay in the construction industry and to earn new or extra qualifications.

When asked what sessions the participant can recall, he/she mentioned the Health and Safety training, the financial training session that was delivered in collaboration with a bank, sessions delivered on-site and the general talks delivered on a range of subjects (without being more specific).

The training was seen as an important way to gain further experience and qualifications which would help to get a better job. The Health and Safety session was considered to be most useful as it was indicated that not a lot of people have this skill and the participant now has Level 3 qualification which is quite high. It was further stated that all parts of the training were useful. Although no parts were not useful, the general talks were considered to be less useful than the more practical Health and Safety and the financial planning sessions.

The training has helped with general life lessons, including budgeting and raising awareness of the different ways that money can be managed and saved. This training and learning has been useful outside work. It was also suggested that sessions such as Choices Plus and Positive Conflict, have helped in day-to-day life, however specific examples of this were not possible to identify.

The training did change the way that the participant thought about their career and future opportunities, however the training had no impact on satisfaction with going to work. With respect to social interactions at work, the training was reported to have encouraged the participant to 'get on with it' when at work, even if you don't get on / like the people you are working with / alongside.

### Case Study 2: participant's view

Prior to undertaking the interview, the participant indicated that they were involved in the project a long time ago and may not remember everything but would do their best to help. Unprompted, they were able to identify the First Aid session, the financial session and the activity that focused on developing positive relationships.

Taking part in the training was unexpected and they were surprised to be asked to take part and they were excited to be involved. They 'loved it' and felt the sessions provided a space where they could 'speak openly without hurting anyone's feelings'. On beginning the training sessions they didn't know what to expect, but entered the training with an open mind, and as a result have learned a number of new skills, including First Aid which has developed awareness of what to do in an emergency, and the financial skills session has helped with a number of things including understanding and checking payslips etc. The three best things about the training were that: it was in a group setting and not one-to-one; people could say anything – encouraged to not be shy and that there were no wrong answers; lots of opportunities became apparent and lots of skills to potentially develop.

The First Aid training and financial matters training were considered to be most useful. It was also noted that the provision of refreshments at the start of training sessions was particularly welcome. Everything was at it should have been and there were no areas that were not useful. It was good to explore some issues in more depth than the participant thought would be done.

Working in the construction industry was 'something to keep me busy', however it has grown on the participant and over time more and more opportunities have opened up. Being given opportunities to take part in the Breakfast Club has made the participant 'feel wanted and needed', and 'not useless'.

The training has made the participant 'wiser' (a word they used), and as an example it was indicated that they are now better equipped to handle situations and specifically has encouraged them to not argue with people on-site (which can create bad relationships that can be a problem if on the same site for a long time.) Training has helped to identify what to look out for to build positive relationships.

The training helped to develop an understanding of how other people felt about their jobs through discussion sessions and this helped to better understand their own job and any issues they may be experiencing.

### Case Study 3: participant's view

Prior to taking part in the training, the participant was “pretty committed to staying in the construction industry” and when informed that they would be taking part in the training were ‘ok about it’ although not completely clear why they were involved.

The First Aid course, finance course and team building exercises were recalled and these were considered to be the most useful parts of the training. In particular, the team building training has assisted in developing communication skills when working with others. It was indicated that all parts of the training were useful but that the sessions noted above were particularly useful.

The participant has a clear plan and aspiration for what they would like to achieve in the industry and as such the training did not have an impact on their view on staying in the industry or the range of opportunities and jobs open to them.

The only way in which the training programme could be improved would be providing more practical sessions on team building and other related activities.

The training course would be recommended to colleagues or work mates, and it was suggested that it may be of greater use and benefit to general labourers with no particular specialism and new starts in the construction industry as the content may be of greatest use of them. The team building part of the course was considered to be of greatest use and this would be flagged up in any recommendations to others to take part.

### Case Study 4: participant's view

This participant sent feedback on the programme by email. Comments provided are included below:

“Overall the Breakfast Club was a great experience, coming together as an assemble from different backgrounds and sharing past experiences and routes to where they are today which was a personal benefit as it uplifted my thoughts.”

“I particularly enjoyed the Choices plus module as being decisive can be difficult for entrants into their careers and not did this only support my job role but outside of it as well; the interaction was great and it made me realise every individual is unique we just all view things differently.”

The data collected through the qualitative research element and summarised in the previous paragraphs points to a several key findings.

First, there was near unanimous agreement that the practical training sessions in life skills that can be applied to work, such as the health and safety and financial management trainings were most useful and valued. This is consistent with the insight suggested by the quantitative measures of output.

Second, a clear agreement across contractors and employees emerges with respect to the usefulness of the communication and conflict management sessions. Participants cite an increased understanding of how to communicate with peer and managers and sensitivity towards others. Conflict and lack of communication were seen as key drivers working against retention and the results presented here show that the project was successful in facilitating attitudinal change. Again, this is consistent with the quantitative findings that suggested the trainings increased outputs related to knowing how to manage conflict but also intermediary (attitudinal) outcomes pertaining to communication with peers and foremen.

Third, the results are less clear when it comes to retention. Retention did not seem to be a prime and direct concern for either contractors or employees. This could be because of the complex factors that determine whether a person leaves a job or not. One contractor noted that *"it is not clear if the programme aided retention as there are so many factors that would influence an individual's view and decisions"*. However, it also becomes apparent that some interviewees were already determined to stay in the industry and participating in the project served to increase their understanding of the opportunities for career growth and direction within the industry. Moreover, as suggested in a participant case study and the quantitative data, not all participants were new entrants, some having spent a high number of years in the industry.

Finally, it is important to note that the project appears to have had two key unintended consequences. First, increasing confidence, drive and motivation and, second, increasing mental wellbeing and psychological balance. (e.g. feeling useful). Both these effects likely originate from the ability of participants to meet, interact and talk to peers freely in an environment that is perceived to be safe and non-judgemental. The ability to discuss work problems and negative (or positive) situations likely contributes to the attitudinal changes we discussed above by enabling participants to seek advice and reassurance. The project did not set out to purposefully achieve this, but rather this emerged as a side effect on account of how the sessions were organised. It is not possible to disentangle the effect of the formal trainings from the effect of this informal peer-group effect. Nonetheless, this finding suggests that in addition to formal trainings, a semi-formal 'club' for new entrants where they could seek advice from peers should be considered.

## Mentoring for the Construction Industry (MfCI)

In this section we set out the analysis of participant interviews conducted by members of the project delivery team at CCTAL using the tools developed by the evaluation team.

### *Level 1 apprentice perspective (Mentoring awareness training)*

Seven new entrants that completed the mentee part of the programme participated in the qualitative research phase. Six of the seven respondents indicated that they were committed to working in the industry at the time of participating in the training and one reported that they had recently joined the industry and they didn't know what their future would look like but that they enjoyed working in the industry. Similarly, five out of seven respondents indicated that the training contributed to increasing or enhancing job satisfaction (one person indicated that this was due to improving or increasing their confidence, and the other noted that this was more likely once the training was used)

All participants indicated that they intended to stay in the industry with some aiming to have their own business, others to secure permanent employment and others to become tutors in the future.

All respondents with the exception of one person noted that prior to taking part in the training, they were **excited and keen to be involved**. Two people noted that they weren't sure what to expect but as the sessions unfolded they enjoyed it and 'started to look at things in a different way'. It also became apparent to one person that their actions could have a knock on effect on others around them and in the future. One person noted that:

*"It felt it very appropriate because you had a chance to speak about issues and I probably spoke the most out of everyone on the course. I really enjoyed the chats as people went through the same thing."*

Although, a different person noted that they weren't excited and they *"didn't know what it had to do with me"*.

When asked about the **subjects approached in the training**, there was good recall of subjects and topics. It was mentioned that the session focused on what a mentor is, the role of mentoring, working with others and what a mentor should expect from a mentee. Recall of sessions also related to bullying and associated issues.

The **training raised awareness** of what a mentor is, and their role, with one person noting that they *"didn't realise how important a mentor can be, but through experience has realised the value of this"*. Another person mentioned that the

training made them think and realise that mentors are there to help, *“instead of bossing me around”*. It was hoped that the training would help people understand what to expect when going on-site and how to seek advice if required.

The **most useful parts of the training** were considered to be:

- *‘What a mentor is’ and what it takes to become one;*
- *“How to be a mentee was the most useful, because it showed me how I needed to conduct myself on site”*
- *“The talk about depression, recognising stress, anxieties, etc.”*
- *“Getting told who can help and who you can speak to because a lot of people don’t know who to turn to. This has been an issue with me in the past”*

The only negative comment about the training was that the ‘Working with others’ section was not as useful but because the respondent had previously covered this type of content.

Asking about **areas for improvement**, two people noted that nothing needed to change, whilst it was suggested that more one-to-one exercises and smaller group exercises would be good, as would having more people from industry to talk to the groups. It was also noted that ensuring that everyone contributed to discussions on courses may increase the value to all.

We sought to identify the **impact of the training**: if, and how, the training created a range of potential benefits for participants. The participants mentioned several areas of impact which we grouped under the following headings:

- **New skills and knowledge:** Participants mentioned gaining new knowledge that will be useful in the future when engaging in mentoring. A key point raised was better understating how to interact with mentors and realising that they too might be under pressure. Several participants mentioned increasing their respect for mentors and understanding the need to listen to and how to communicate with them. At least one participant mentioned that the session was not useful at all.

Moreover, respondents also mentioned that they have a better understanding of what is needed from a mentor, but highlighted, that they themselves still see themselves as mentees.

- **Motivation:** The vast majority of participants said that the training did not affect their level of motivation as they were already motivated. A single person mentioned that:



*“Gave me a boost because I know if there are any issues which I have had I can speak to the Cyfle<sup>7</sup> team. I have even mentioned this to my supervisor on site too.”*

An additional person mentioned that the training motivated them to *“want to be a good mentor in the future.”*

- *Changes in attitude:* The training is overwhelmingly seen to have induced confidence in participants, particularly to ask for help when needed, both on site and in college. More confidence is expressed also in relation to trying new tasks that the participant might not feel ready for. It has also changed attitudes towards others and working with others. For example, one person said *“I am more mindful of what’s said on site etc. Think of others feelings”*.
- *Impact outside of work:* Two participants mention that the training was useful in life outside work. One suggests that they are a better mentor to his/her children, while a second now understands that he can be there for *“others in my life if they need help or someone to talk to”*. Although most participants mentioned that the training was not useful outside of work.

Overall, it appears that the training has raised awareness of and respect for mentoring and the benefits of engaging with mentors while also developing communication and teamwork skills. In most instances, the training has enhanced confidence by highlighting that support exists if it is needed. It appears to have also instilled an understanding that asking for help (on site or in college) is positive and beneficial. Finally, as seen for the Breakfast Club, taking part in group sessions and discussions with peer is seen as having been beneficial in boosting confidence. This is because the sessions made it clear that others are experiencing similar issues.

All respondents indicated that they would **recommend** the course to colleagues. It was argued that the training helps apprentices *“have some knowledge of what to expect of them on site, and how to conduct themselves”*. Others mention changes in how they would treat people or to learn new skills.

One participant would not recommend the training stating that *“I wouldn’t recommend it to workmates as it had no relevance to me”*.

### *Level 3 apprentice perspective (Training on being a mentor)*

Five people that completed the 2-day training took part in the research. All were, and continue to be, committed to working in the construction industry. Prior to taking part in the training there was enthusiasm to participate, with one person mentioning that it is ‘good to learn new skills’ and another commenting that they were *“looking forward to participating and learning the benefits of being a mentor”*.

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<sup>7</sup> This is one of the organisations involved in the delivery of the project.



All five respondents noted that their satisfaction with their job increased on completion of the training programme. Further, all participants intend to continue to work in the industry with the majority aiming to have their own business at some point. With regard to thinking about their individual futures in the industry, the training made one person more aware of helping younger apprentices and developed confidence in another to be a mentor.

Participants were asked to indicate the **themes or topics of sessions** delivered during the training programme, to test if the core concept / content had been retained. Respondents noted that sessions including ‘What is a mentor?’, ‘Roles of a mentor’, ‘How to help a mentee if they are struggling’, ‘Getting to know mentees’, ‘Dealing with problems and situations in the workplace’ and ‘Personal benefits from being a mentor / mentee’ were all noted. Mental health and safeguarding was also mentioned. Only one respondent out of 5 indicated that they couldn’t remember any subjects.

Respondents were asked to note how they thought **taking part in the training could assist them**. Participants mentioned that it helped them understand what it is like being a young person on site and how they can help and support them. It has also help increase understanding of how to deal with certain situations such as safeguarding and mental health of mentees. For example, one person mentioned that *“it would better help me to help people struggling with life’s issues or, people struggling with aspects of the job”*. Another person also mentioned the power of collaboration: *“the training taught me to achieve goals by working together, and also appreciate helping other people out with advice”*.

The **most useful parts** of the course were identified as the mental health course which was the *“part where most people contributed!”*. In addition, the session on techniques for goal setting was also mentioned.

The only negative comments on course content was that the ‘getting to know your mentee’ part would just come about naturally and as such discussion on this was less necessary.

We also elicited participants’ views as to **improvements** that can be brought to the course. The following suggestions were made:

- Vary content between mentee (1 day) and mentor (2 day) courses;
- Extend the training (more session and more time);
- Diversify speakers (more industry representative, better balance of gender).

To capture the perceived **impact of the training**, respondents were asked to indicate if the training had developed any new skills or knowledge and how this had been used in practice. Responses included a better understanding of how to approach people that may be struggling, improved people skills generally, including communication used daily at work. Other responses also mentioned being better

able to recognise mental health challenges, how to deal with them, how to help others achieve their targets, and the importance of working as a team. One participant noted that they are now more open about their mental health whilst another observed that it has made them have a different attitude to different situations outside work and how to deal with them.

Comments were invited on the extent to which the training had influenced their **attitude to work** and issues related to this. Responses included becoming more considerate and highlighting the importance of teamwork in the workplace, being more open about mental health at work and home; highlighting the qualities and effort required to become a good mentor. The training appears to have developed a greater sense of empathy in some with one person noting that they no longer “*take people at face value as there may be underlying issues*”. One other person noted that they have achieved productivity benefits and now work more efficiently.

We were interested to understand if the training had assisted with **work on-site** and one person noted that from their perspective it had definitely helped with their motivation to work harder and to help other colleagues. Two people noted it hadn't helped yet and one said that they were already doing a lot of elements of mentoring already.

Some of the training elements are transferable to general **day-to-day life** and respondents were asked to comment on any use of the training activities beyond the work environment. One person noted that the training has helped them be more confident in coming forward if they have issues. Other respondents indicated that they have not used the skills developed from training in general life situations.

In line with project objectives and outcomes, respondents were asked to comment on any **impact on self-confidence / self-esteem** resulting from participation in the programme. Three respondents noted that confidence was increased in relation to mentoring, speaking and in general. One person noted that they have always been confident and as such the training did not develop this.

With respect to participating in all aspects of work or seeking out mentoring, one respondent indicated that they were in a placement with no mentor and the training made them realise that this was important and that they should transfer to a company where they would have one to support their apprenticeship. In another case, it was noted that the programme has encouraged them to be more of a team player when working on projects together in work, asking other mentors for advice and helping each other out.

All respondents indicated that they would **recommend** the course to colleagues.

*Industry representative perspective (Training on being a mentor)*

Finally, consideration is given to the views of the three industry representatives that participated in the research. Two participants were keen to take part in the training with one observing that mentoring is *“an integral part of working life”*, whilst the remaining person noted that they weren’t sure how it would be relevant. When asked to indicate the subjects that could be recalled, one mentioned the *“benefits of mentoring and what makes a good mentor”* and the other *“how to deal with problems and situations in the workplace, importance of mentoring and mindfulness”*. The last participant mentioned *“mental health and wellbeing, what is mentoring and benefits of being a mentor”*.

All participants have worked in the industry for some time and plan to continue to do so. By participating in the training it was hoped that it would *“help them care for and support people in the industry”*, whilst the other participant indicated that they *“weren’t sure what to expect or whether they would be able to put the learning into practice in their job”*. Training helped participants realise how important mentoring was for new starts in the industry.

As for other groups that took part in this project we ask which parts of the training were most useful. The following provides the participants’ views:

- Participant 1: *“I found the listening activity to be a very good activity as I find I don’t always listen and if I were to listen more accurately and ask the right questions then a mentee would interact better with me and build a good relationship between us”*
- Participant 2: *“Making me realise how I can be of help to a mentee to support and work together to ensure that the mentee is having the appropriate support and guidance on site, and also how to deal with mental health issues should I come across a mentee/mentor struggling with some issues”*
- Participant 3: *“How I should interact with a mentee, how my body language can be a barrier as an apprentice might think twice before approaching me for help and guidance”*

Asked which parts of the training were least useful, the respondents noted:

- Participant 1: *“The body language part of the programme, I personally felt that I was aware of what I needed to look for when interacting with an employee”*
- Participant 2: *“As I have been in the construction industry for quite some years, some parts of the programme was something I was already aware of”*
- Participant 3: *“I enjoyed the whole programme and felt it was all useful as I had no prior knowledge”*

When asked how the training could be **improved**, one participant noted that for the level of qualification the training was sufficient, and if anything was to be added / changed, they would add a little more on mental health. The other respondent noted that the interactive side was enjoyed and in particular working in groups, and as such a little more interaction would be welcomed.

Respondents indicated that the programme has helped to **develop skills and knowledge** around compassion and dealing with challenges that arise during the working day, and has also encouraged one participant to be more understanding and supportive of mentees and as a result they *“now take the time to encourage people to support these new apprentices”*. The following statement made by one employer is telling:

*“I found the whole programme useful as I had no prior knowledge of mentoring and was totally green to the subject, but taking part in the programme made me realise that I do already mentor but was totally unaware that I was actually doing it in my everyday working life.”*

One participant indicated that the mentoring programme has encouraged them to advance their **knowledge** on mentoring and they have looked into a higher level of learning, and it was stated that the training has had a *“strong influence on me wanting to learn more on mentoring”*.

With respect **to work on-site**, the mentoring has helped develop a better understanding of the individuals’ own potential and assistance that they can offer whilst on-site. It was also indicated that the training has helped a respondent deal with issues that new entrants on site can experience by being more supportive. Interestingly, one person noted:

*“I have a family of three young children and the mentoring has helped me within my personal life as well as work, helping me with life skills and dealing with people with respect”*

Another participant noted that they have used what they have learnt during the training programme at work and in their personal life. One participant noted that *“I like to think that I am even more approachable now on site since I have been on the mentoring course”*. They went on to say:

*“Being trained as a mentor has helped in work and social life i.e:*

- *I listen more*
- *I don’t jump to conclusions*
- *I have more understanding of people*
- *I feel more confident in talking to others and giving advice*
- *I don’t judge people like I used to”*

The training programme provided the participants with the **confidence** to be able to help and support people as they are now more likely to spot the signs that somebody needs assistance. They are also more aware of where to signpost people too. The participants noted that there are benefits with respect to being more aware of people's mindfulness and wellbeing. Interestingly, the training has encouraged one person to be a mentor in day-to-day life too such as with social groups they assist (e.g. dance and gymnastics), and another person to *"support other managers/supervisors to participate more in mentoring and to see the benefits of the programme"*.

Finally we asked the respondents if they would recommend the training. The following provides the comments made by participants:

- Participant 1: *"Yes I would recommend the training programme to work mates, inviting them to attend to 'see for themselves'"*
- Participant 2: *"I would recommend the training to my colleagues and friends and to go to the training with an open mind as it certainly makes you think how I do actually mentor at home and the workplace without really realising it"*
- Participant 3: *"Yes I would recommend the training. If I enjoyed the training and felt I benefited from it then they would too"*

Overall, connecting the evidence outlined in the previous sections suggests that while the Mentoring in the Construction Industry project does appear to achieve a positive impact on participants' life in general, it falls short of producing a measurable impact on retention of new entrants. As was discussed, Mentoring in the Construction Industry, did not put in place a formal mentoring programme that training participants would engage in. Logistically, this means that there is no impact that we could have measured, as the key link in the chain was missing. In the absence of a formalised mentoring programme the link between mentoring trainings and retention is broken. All we can measure is the impact the training had on the participants. In this regard we find clear signs that the projects contributes positively to a person's development.

The two trainings approach the issue of mentoring for two sides: making new entrants aware of the usefulness of mentoring while also providing potential mentors with the tools they would need to engage in mentoring. As the results suggest, the project provides knowledge and makes positive changes both in their attitudes to work issues, but also more generally in life.

The results are somewhat stronger for the participants in the two day training compared to level 1 apprentices who participated in the one day mentor awareness trainings. There is a slight mismatch between the quantitative and qualitative results

as they pertain to this group, with qualitative results being slightly more positive. It is possible that there was a (self-)selection bias in identifying and including participants for the qualitative interviews.

As also seen for the Breakfast Club, the main effect of the trainings appears to be the improvement in the ability and understanding of how to communicate with peers and well as better understanding of differences between people.

The project is particularly successful in increasing confidence in asking for help for new entrants while at the same time instilling the view that help needs to be provided when asked for in people with experience in the construction industry. Additionally, the project draws potential mentor's attention to the issue of mental health and how this can directly affect new entrants (or others onsite).

As with the Breakfast Club this project appears to induce a very similar unintended effect. At least part of the increase in confidence, drive and motivation are linked with the ability of new entrants to meet, interact and talk to peers freely in an environment that is perceived to be safe.

## Section 6: Conclusions and recommendations

This report starts by setting out the context of the research, the evaluation framework and methodology that were used to measure impact. Following these introductory sections we devoted the subsequent three sections to provide answers to the three objectives set by CITB:

- Whether the project achieved their activities and outputs;
- What is the additionality of the projects;
- What is the impact of the projects.

In summary, we find evidence that the projects induce positive perceptual and attitudinal changes that are beneficial to both work and life situations. Some of the attitudinal changes we see can be argued to be precursors of the behavioural changes that need to occur to see increased retention rates. However, we were not able to conclusively link the activities of either project with actual increases in retention rates.

### 6.1 Activities and outputs

The Breakfast Club carried out the *activities* as were presented in the funding proposal.

The Mentoring in the Construction Industry project made some changes to the project after its start. Their funding proposal proposed to train potential mentees, raising their awareness of mentoring, while also training potential mentors. This was designed to happen within a formalised mentoring programme where a 'buddy system' would be put in place to connect mentees with mentors. This buddy system was not realised and mentoring activities were not implemented, solely the training component was executed.

Both projects struggled to train the number of participants they proposed they would. This was for different reasons. The Breakfast Club was designed a collaborative project between BeOnsite (Lendlease) and contractors to be implemented on the Elephant Park site in London. The contractors that collaborated on designing this project did not end up being commissioned by Lendlease to work on the site. As such, new contractor collaborators had to be identifying and brought onboard. The main road-block was the requirement for contractors to release their staff to take part in the project on full pay. Following a learning curve the project staff adapted their approach and identified new ways of engaging with contractors which enabled them to reach the proposed numbers by cohort 4.

The Mentoring in the Construction Industry project also struggled with engaging a sufficient number of participants, particularly for the 2-day mentoring trainings. By



February 2020 only 65% of the 200 participant target for the 2-day mentor trainings was reached. This compares to 83% for the 1-day mentoring awareness course. The project invested in marketing activities but their attendance rates were still affected by no-shows (people who have confirmed participation but did not turn up). This might suggest that there was a lower level of interest in the local construction community for mentoring compared to what was assumed in the proposal. It is also possible that just undergoing a training without it being part of a broader formalised mentoring project (as was proposed) was not seen as useful.

We measured the *outputs* of each project based on the retrospective Theory of Change we developed as part of the evaluation. We defined outputs as direct consequences of activities (e.g. the output of participating in a first aid training is that the person is feels more confident in giving first aid).

The results show that both projects produced positive changes in participants' perception of their confidence or knowledge in the areas that were covered in the trainings.

Finally, we asked the participants in both projects to *evaluate* the projects based on how useful they thought they were and to indicated their satisfaction. Both project received good scores overall. However, it is noteworthy that less positive results were obtained for the 1-day mentor awareness trainings for Level 1 apprentices. The results suggested a moderate level of satisfaction.

## 6.2 Additionality and attribution

To measure additionality in the outcomes of a project we would need to establish what would have happened had a project not occurred. This is done by answering two questions: Did the project induce any relevant changes? and, second, Can these changes be attributed to the project?

As we discuss in section 4, there are two types of outcomes we can examine: intermediary outcomes and the final outcome. The intermediary outcomes are operationalised by the attitudinal changes the project can induce. For example, increased motivation to remain in the construction industry. The final outcome of the project (and funding stream) is the increased retention of new entrants. This can be measured behaviourally, by looking at whether new entrants actually remain in the industry. The intermediary outcomes are linked with the final outcome: the behaviour change (retention) cannot happen without attitudinal change. However, attitudinal change is not sufficient for behavioural change to occur, as this is also affected by the context (e.g. the state of the economy) which was outside the control of either project.

We first tested whether the project can induce the expected *changes in the intermediary outcomes*. The results showed this to be the case. However, we were



not able to clearly attribute the changes we observe due to the lack of a comparison group. A comparison group was planned to be used for the Breakfast Club but due to Covid-19 the measurements were not completed. For MiCI collection of data from a comparison group was not deemed to be feasible.

Finally, this evaluation was not able to measure behavioural effects. This is due to the time lag required for behavioural effects to manifest themselves. However, we are successful in showing that there is reason to believe that the projects were successful in inducing the types of attitudinal change that, under the right external circumstance, could lead to behavioural change and increase retention rates.

### 6.3 Perceived impact

To generate more in-depth insight into how impact was manifested, we carried in-depth interviews with project participants and stakeholders.

The results show that the Breakfast Club was particularly useful in improving communication and aiding conflict management. Participants cite an increased understanding of how to communicate with peers and managers and increased sensitivity towards others. Conflict and lack of communication were seen as key drivers working against retention and the results presented here show that the project was successful in facilitating attitudinal change.

The project also had an important unintended consequences. It is mentioned that the project increased confidence, drive and motivation by enabling participants to meet, interact and talk to peers freely in an environment that was perceived to be safe and non-judgemental. The ability to discuss work problems and negative (or positive) situations likely contributes to the attitudinal changes we discussed above by enabling participants to seek advice and reassurance. This finding suggests that in addition to formal trainings, a semi-formal 'club' for new entrants where they could seek advice from peers should be considered.

The Mentoring in the Construction Industry project appears to achieve a positive impact on participants' life in general, however it we were as not able to connect this to retention as the formal mentoring programme was not implemented.

Nonetheless, the trainings do achieve positive outcomes. The two trainings approach the issue of mentoring for two sides: making new entrants aware of the usefulness of mentoring while also making providing potential mentors with the tools they would need to engage in mentoring. As the results suggest, the project provide knowledge and makes positive changes both in their attitudes to work issues, but also more generally in life.

As also seen for the Breakfast Club, the main effect of the trainings appears to be the improvement in the ability and understanding of how to communicate with peers as well as better understanding of differences between people. The project is

particularly successful in increasing confidence in asking for help for new entrants while at the same time instilling the view that help needs to be provided when asked for in people with experience in the construction industry.

Once again, similarly to the Breakfast Club this project appears to induce an unintended effect: at least part of the increase in confidence, drive and motivation are linked with the ability of new entrants to meet, interact and talk to peers freely in an environment that is perceived to be safe.

#### 6.4 Recommendations to CITB

Having been engaged in this evaluation process for 24 months we offer the following recommendations that we feel might help improve future evaluation in the sector:

- This evaluation was commissioned four months after the start of the projects. We would encourage CITB to commission evaluations before the start of projects with sufficient time for the evaluator to be able to have input into the design and embedding of evaluation tools.
- There were difficulties with the engagement of one of the project to work with the evaluation team which led to delays in data collection. This situation primarily stemmed from the project not being fully aware of the function of the external evaluator. Moreover each project was carrying out their own M&E efforts and it was not clear how these should interact with the external evaluation. It would be useful if more clarity is provided to projects at the outset of their funding. If an external evaluator is appointed at the outset of the project, we would recommend that the project only submit quarterly monitoring (and not evaluation) reports with the entire evaluation function being placed in the care of the external evaluator. This will go some way to making division of labour clearer.

In this context we would also recommend that the funds that would otherwise be assigned to projects to carry out their evaluation be made available to the external evaluator.

- Finally, we would encourage CITB to develop (jointly with the projects it funds) the evaluation plans soon after the inception of the projects. In this context we suggest building Theories of Change to operationalise the desired impact of a funding stream and then work with projects to ensure their activities are able to feed into the desired outcomes.

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