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## 'What can your company do about this skills gap?'

Construction firms urged to help tackle impending shortage in talent

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COMPANIES are being urged to help tackle the skills shortage in the construction industry.

The issue was the focus of an "excellence breakfast" hosted by Hull law firm Gosschalks.

The event, organised by Constructing Excellence in Yorkshire & Humber (CEYH), was held amid growing fears there will not be sufficient talent within the country to fill the predicted 190,000 new jobs that will be created in construction by the end of 2018.

The industry is seen as one of the leading pillars of the UK economy and the lack of required skills could have a huge impact on economic recovery, according to CEYH.

The event saw more than 30 delegates from a range of contractors, councils, training groups and construction consultancies, in attendance.

Steve Savage, development director at Gosschalks, opened the proceedings and Tom Oulton, chairman of CEYH, gave an introduction in which he spoke about the Government's Construction Strategy for 2016 to 2020, which sets out to increase productivity in government construction to deliver £1.7bn efficiencies and support 20,000 apprenticeships over the period.

One of the speakers was Julie Deeley, operations manager for Futureworks Yorkshire, one of



**'OPENING YOUR MIND':** Julie Deeley, of Futureworks Yorkshire, and , below, Tom Oulton, of Turner & Townsend, speaking at the "excellence breakfast".  
Pictures: Richard Addison



the organisations working to tackle the skills deficit and nurture homegrown talent.

She offered insight into how Futureworks is working with construction companies, local organisations and communities across Yorkshire to offer increased apprenticeships and

work experience opportunities.

Ms Deeley said: "It is not about providing all the answers today, it is about opening your mind to what your company can do about meeting this skills shortage."

Futureworks is based in Hull and Rotherham and delivers the award-winning YORfuture scheme across the Yorkshire and Humber region.

It provides apprenticeships within the sector, including technical, trades, administration and manufacturing/distribution roles.

Ms Deeley told delegates that the YORfuture shared apprenticeship scheme provided a solution to apprenticeship recruitment when employers may not have the resources to take apprentices on a full-time basis.

Asked about the difficulty of encouraging schools to see the opportunities that exist in the industry, Ms Deeley said: "What we need to do is get out there as much as possible and put out the word on construction and what a good career it is."

"We need, as a sector, to get the message out that there are many different careers you can have in construction, in particular for females."

Another speaker was Angie Eardley, community investment adviser at Wates Group, a family-owned construction company that is currently helping to create an £80m housing development in Hull for people with care needs.

She spoke to the audience about the group's community investment commitments and its supply chain and social enterprise engagement.

The delegates heard the CITB, the national training organisation for construction in the UK, has reported that another 230,000 workers will be needed in the construction sector in the next five years – a figure that equates to 3,230 people each year in the Yorkshire and Humber region.

### Constructing Excellence Yorkshire & Humber

CONSTRUCTING Excellence Yorkshire & Humber (CEYH) is run by the Centre for Knowledge Exchange at Leeds Beckett University.

It delivers a programme of events to construction

professionals within the region, gathering together key figures to present how they achieve "excellence" in their work on topics as diverse as construction skills, project management and regulation.

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