

JCTNEWS

THE JCT CONTRACTS UPDATE FOR THE CONSTRUCTION PROFESSIONAL

THE SWANNERY, BRISTOL

Youth-led design and the JCT Minor Works Building Contract in action

BAREFOOT ARCHITECTS



The Swannery, Bristol



© Barefoot Architects, Wellspring Settlement, and project collaborators.

A former pub in Bristol's Barton Hill has been transformed into a vibrant youth-led community hub, demonstrating how collaborative design and the **JCT Minor Works Building Contract with contractors design (MWD)** can successfully deliver socially impactful, flexible projects.

The Swannery, completed in October 2024, is a retrofit of *The Swan*—a disused public house that has been reimagined as a thriving youth club. Designed by Barefoot Architects for Wellspring Settlement, the project stands as a compelling case study in community-driven architecture, procurement under MWD, and the long-term value of engaging end users directly in the design and delivery process.

A contract supporting collaboration and flexibility

The choice of the **JCT MWD contract** was instrumental in enabling a streamlined procurement route while accommodating elements of contractor-led design. **The contract used was JCT Minor Works Building**

Contract with a contractor's designed portion covering the detailed mechanical and electrical systems installation.

This approach proved particularly suited to a project where:

- **Design evolved through ongoing user engagement**, especially with young people
- **Practical buildability and cost certainty** were key considerations
- **Collaboration between architect, client, and contractor** needed to remain fluid

With a modest construction value of **£675,000** and a gross internal area of **275m²**, the project required efficiency without compromising quality or ambition. The MWD contract provided a clear framework for responsibilities while allowing the contractor to contribute to technical design—particularly for building services—supporting a coordinated and efficient delivery.

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From disused pub to community asset

When The Swan closed during the pandemic, the local community asked Wellspring Settlement to take on the building and reinstate youth provision. The result is a **highly insulated, open-plan facility** with:

- Flexible activity spaces
- A dedicated kitchen for cooking and social interaction
- Acoustic treatments and durable, natural finishes
- A bold external identity, including a bespoke mural reflecting local heritage

The building's transformation balances **technical performance**—through improved fabric insulation and environmental upgrades—with a strong sense of identity and ownership.

Co-design as a delivery method

A defining feature of The Swannery is its **youth-led design process**, which directly informed both design outcomes and procurement decisions.

Young people, working alongside youth organisations and the project team, were involved in:

- Developing the initial brief
- Participating in contractor interviews
- Reviewing tender proposals
- Selecting materials, finishes, and equipment

This process not only ensured the building met real user needs but also introduced participants to construction processes, procurement, and decision-making frameworks typically reserved for professionals.

As project architect Maria Krupa noted, once the young participants understood their input would genuinely shape the project, they engaged critically with topics such as value, sourcing, and contractor selection—key considerations within any JCT procurement route.

Designing for real use

The resulting design reflects practical, user-informed decisions:

- **Durable orange flooring** and **dark green walls** chosen for longevity and character
- **Acoustic ceiling panels** to manage noise in active spaces

- A layout that avoids institutional feel, prioritising comfort and flexibility

The inclusion of a kitchen—identified as essential by the young users—demonstrates how co-design can challenge initial assumptions and broaden project scope to deliver deeper social value.

Social value and measurable impact

The Swannery now welcomes around **100 young people per week**, offering structured and informal activities in a safe, inclusive environment.

Its impact extends beyond the building itself:

- Increased **confidence, skills, and social connection** among participants
- Engagement with wider programmes such as sports and mental health initiatives
- Opportunities for **civic participation**, including youth representation and local consultation

In an area facing economic and social challenges—including high youth unemployment and child poverty—the project provides a vital “third space” that supports wellbeing and development.

Recognition and wider relevance

The project's success has been recognised through shortlisting for the **Inspiring Future Generations Award**, celebrating excellence in participatory design.

For JCT users, The Swannery highlights:

- The adaptability of the **Minor Works Building Contract with contractor's design** in community-led projects
- The importance of early and ongoing stakeholder engagement
- The potential for small-scale projects to deliver significant social impact

Conclusion

The Swannery demonstrates how the JCT MWD contract can underpin a **collaborative, flexible, and socially responsive delivery process**. By combining clear contractual structure with genuine user engagement, the project achieves both technical excellence and lasting community impact—offering a valuable model for similar initiatives across the UK construction sector.

PROJECT TEAM AND DATA:

**ARCHITECT, CONTRACT ADMINISTRATOR
AND LEAD DESIGNER:** Barefoot Architects
PROJECT ARCHITECT: Maria Krupa
CLIENT: Wellspring Settlement
STRUCTURAL ENGINEER: Goss Structural

MAIN CONTRACTOR: CW Duke
CONTRACT: JCT Minor Works Building Contract with contractor's design (MWD)
COMPLETION: October 2024
COST: £675,000
AREA: 275m² GIA

RETENTION REFORM AND THE FUTURE OF CONSTRUCTION PAYMENT PRACTICES

CHIARA PIERI — SENIOR ASSOCIATE, CMS CAMERON MCKENNA NABARRO OLSWANG LLP

"There must be a 'cash flow' in the building trade. It is the very lifeblood of the enterprise." So observed Lord Denning MR over fifty years ago in *Dawnays Ltd v F.G. Minter Ltd* [1971] 1 WLR 1205 – words as pertinent today as then. It is precisely the issue of cash flow and its systematic disruption by late payment practices that the Government's reforms now seek to address.

In March 2026, the Government published its response to the 2025 late payment consultation under the title *Time to Pay Up*, confirming what it describes as the most significant late payment legislation in over 25 years, addressing the pervasive problem of late payments. For the construction industry, which contributed 238 of the 867 consultation responses received, the headline is unmistakable: the Government promises to fix the problem of late payment, which includes the proposal to ban retention payments. As they say: "It's time to pay up". That proposal, together with the broader reform package, has the potential to reshape how the sector manages cash flow, risk, and contractual relationships but as this article explores, the gap between stated ambition and legislative reality may yet prove considerable. This article examines the key outcomes of the consultation, the history of the retention debate, and what the proposed reforms would mean in practice for the construction industry.

Retention payments: a long-running debate

Before turning to the consultation itself, it is worth recalling that retention reform is far from a new concept. Retentions originated in the UK during the construction of the railway system in the 1840s, when railway companies withheld a minimum of 20% of contractors' payments as security against completion costs. The practice evolved to become standard across the sector, providing assurance of project completion and protection against defects.

Calls for reform have followed at regular intervals, including:

- The Banwell Report (1964) first recommended the abolition of retentions, concluding they were outdated and economically damaging. Despite this, retentions remained common.
- Sir Michael Latham's 1994 report, *Constructing the Team*, recommended replacing retentions with retention bonds or, alternatively, holding cash retentions in a secure trust fund.
- The *Housing Grants, Construction and Regeneration Act 1996* (the "*Construction Act*") introduced payment and adjudication protections but stopped short of abolishing retentions.
- The 2017 BEIS-commissioned Pye Tait report confirmed that retentions were frequently subject to unjustified late, partial, or non-payment, disproportionately burdening SMEs and those lower in the supply chain. A need for further investigation was identified.
- The 2011 amendments to the *Construction Act* provided that construction contracts could no longer link the release of retention to events under another contract, known as conditional payments.

- The subsequent Construction (Retention Deposit Schemes) Bill 2017-19 (the "Aldous Bill") sought to introduce compulsory retention deposit schemes but was never enacted.

In short, successive Governments over the last three decades have recognised the problem but, to date, there appears not to have been sufficient political will to act.

The consultation and the key reforms

The 2025 *Time to Pay Up* public consultation ran from 31 July to 23 October 2025, attracting over 850 responses. Its centrepiece is a hard cap of 60 days' maximum payment terms between UK businesses, with limited exemptions. Implementation is expected by 2027. Two-thirds of respondents supported this measure, though some raised concerns that 60 days might become the default rather than the ceiling.

Beyond this, the key proposals and reforms include:

- Mandatory statutory interest: 8% above the Bank of England base rate on all late payments, with no ability to contract out. This would extend the current *Late Payment of Commercial Debts (Interest) Act 1998* regime which provides for interest at this level but as a default in the absence of a "substantial contractual remedy for late payment of the debt". Currently standard form construction contracts have rates of 3 – 5% over base;
- Deadline for disputing invoices: a statutory time limit to curtail tactical disputes, with separate measures proposed to align with the provisions for construction contracts under the 1996 Act;
- Board-level scrutiny and reporting: requirements to report on interest payments as one mechanism to identify poor payment practices with audit committees of persistently late-paying companies being required to publish explanatory commentary and fines linked to the scale of unpaid interest;
- Expanded Small Business Commissioner powers: investigation, adjudication, and financial penalties.

The proposed retention ban

The Government consulted on two options, which would involve amending Part 2 of the 1996 Act:

- A. Prohibit use of retention clauses entirely, making it unlawful for payers to deduct/withhold retention sums; and
- B. A protection mechanism requiring segregation or guarantee of retained sums.

Of those who responded on retention reform, 87% favoured change, and 62% agreed that an outright ban would be effective.

The Government has confirmed it will work with the Construction Leadership Council and financial services sector to develop practical approaches to minimising defects and expanding the surety market – sensible commitments that underscore how much ground remains to be covered before legislative change to give effect to any retention ban takes effect.

Will this reform deliver meaningful change?

Those who have been around for long enough in the construction sector may be forgiven a degree of scepticism about whether meaningful change will materialise and if so, when. Three points merit particular attention.

First, the Government's consultation response contains an important caveat: "However, given the ambition of the policy, we will consult further with interested parties on the impact of this measure before taking a final decision on implementation." In practice, this means a further consultation, followed by primary legislation through Parliament. No imminent change should be anticipated; the industry should continue to operate on the basis that retention clauses remain lawful for the time being.

Second, the further consultation is likely to prove contentious. The 2017 Pye Tait report found that tier 1 contractors use retention monies as working capital in 37% of cases. Those are significant cashflow dependencies and the political will to override any resistance as a result will be tested.

Third, the quality assurance question is genuine and unresolved. Retentions act as a multi-purpose insurance policy and removing the mechanism without a credible alternative risks undermining client confidence. The UK surety and bond

market is not currently scaled to absorb the demand that a ban would create, and performance bond costs may prove prohibitive for smaller suppliers – the very firms the reform is designed to protect. However, where there is a demand created, the market is likely to respond and this may be an area where solutions could be forthcoming.

Conclusion

The *Time to Pay Up* consultation response represents the most significant statement of intent on payment practices in a generation. Yet intent and implementation are very different things. The further consultation process, alternative surety mechanisms to replace retention and passage of primary legislation all lie ahead, each presenting opportunities for dilution or delay.

Construction practitioners should be preparing now – mapping retention exposure, reviewing required standard form amendments and advising clients on transitional planning but should do so with a clear-eyed recognition that this reform, like those before it, will be tested by the commercial realities of an industry in which cashflow remains the bottom line.

Originally published in Construction Law, 1st May 2026



MICHELMORES' ANNA WOOD APPOINTED CHAIR OF JCT DRAFTING SUB-COMMITTEE

JCT has announced that Anna Wood, partner and head of construction, Michelmores, has been appointed chair of the JCT Drafting Sub-Committee.

Anna, whose appointment takes effect in July 2026, takes over from Victoria Peckett, partner, Clyde & Co, who stands down after 18 years in the role.

Anna Wood has extensive experience advising on both contentious and non-contentious construction matters. Leading Michelmores' construction team, she advises developers, employers, contractors and consultants on a broad range of projects across the UK.

Anna is recognised for her pragmatic, commercial approach and her ability to navigate complex legal issues within the built environment sector.

As chair of the JCT Drafting Sub-Committee, Anna will lead the group responsible for overseeing the development and updating of JCT's suite of standard form construction contracts.

Anna Wood said:

"I am delighted to take on the role of chair of the JCT Drafting Sub-Committee at a time when the construction industry continues to navigate significant legal, commercial and regulatory change.

"JCT contracts play a central role in supporting successful project delivery, and I look forward to working with the Drafting Sub-Committee to ensure that all contracts across the suite remain clear, relevant and fit for purpose."

CHAIR PAYS TRIBUTE TO JCT MEMBERS AND SUPPORTERS AT PARLIAMENTARY RECEPTION



JCT members and guests celebrating at the parliamentary reception.

JCT's Construction Industry Parliamentary Reception 2026, hosted at the House of Commons Terrace Pavilion, was an occasion for celebration and acknowledgement of the members, contributors, and supporters across the industry who play a vital role in JCT's success.

In her speech, JCT chair, Karen Kirkham, reflected both on her tenure in the role – which included the successful release of the JCT 2024 Edition – and paid tribute to all those involved, not just in producing the contracts, but in maintaining what makes JCT unique within the industry.

Karen explained the loyalty that being part of the JCT community inspires, particularly because the familiarity of its contracts belies the hard work and talent of those involved:

"When asked by new clients to describe [a JCT contract], I can say, without reservation, just read it. It's a story with a beginning, a middle, and an end. It doesn't require a law degree or a dictionary. And when they do read it, they get it and are greatly encouraged."

"That's partly because like all great pieces of work JCT looks easy, obvious. But it isn't."

"A great many talented people, [the] staff, the members of Council, the Board, the Drafting Sub-Committee, make it what it is and work constantly and tirelessly to make sure it continuously evolves, improves, and responds to new situations, pressures, commercial trends, and legislation, [ensuring] that the 2024 launch was a triumph."

JCT's annual Construction Industry Parliamentary Reception is an exclusive occasion for its members and guests, and one of the highlights of the construction industry calendar.

Each year the event celebrates achievements in the built environment, raises awareness of important issues or new developments, and, in particular, recognises the work of members across all sectors of the industry that contribute to JCT.

The reception provides a welcome opportunity to meet colleagues and peers, form new connections, and socialise within the famous surroundings of the Houses of Parliament.

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JCT 2016: WITHDRAWAL AND TRANSITIONARY PERIOD EXPLAINED...

You will have read or heard that the JCT 2016 Edition of contracts has been withdrawn, but JCT 2016 contracts are still available to buy under a 'transitional period' until the end of 2026.

What does this mean?

As of 31 March 2026, the JCT 2016 Edition was officially withdrawn, superseded by the current JCT 2024 Edition. This means that the JCT 2016 Edition is now out of date.

For new projects, or schemes yet to go out for tender, JCT recommends using contracts from the JCT 2024 Edition at the earliest possible opportunity to ensure that your contract is up to date with current legislation, compliance, and best practice.

What about the transitional period?

JCT recognises that, whilst the 2016 Edition was withdrawn on 31 March, projects will have just started, or be in progress, on 2016 contracts. As well as the choice of main contract at Tier-1, it has a knock-on effect throughout the supply chain at Tier-2 and Tier-3, where if a JCT 2016 main contract is used, the corresponding JCT 2016 sub-contracts will also need to be adopted.

Therefore, the transitional period – set until 31 December 2026 – is designed to assist the industry to complete projects that have already started, or have been tendered on, JCT 2016 contracts.

What are my options?

JCT 2016 contracts will continue to be made available in hardcopy only whilst stocks last, and then digitally only thereafter – via *JCT On Demand* or *JCT Construct* – until the end of the transitional period.

JCT strongly advises that:

1. If your choice of procurement route/main contract has yet to be decided, you should use contracts from the 2024 Edition.
2. If you do require 2016 Edition contracts (main contracts or sub-contracts) for your project, you should purchase them as soon as possible, to make sure you have the required documents before the end of the transitional period.

Once the transitional period is over, JCT 2016 contracts will no longer be available to buy in any format. Subscribers to the *JCT Construct* service will be able to replicate and reuse contracts based on their existing 2016 boilerplates to start new projects, but will not be able to start any new projects based on blank 2016 templates.



**IMPORTANT
MESSAGE**

**The transitional period for accessing JCT 2016 contracts ends on 31/12/2026.
Make sure you get any JCT 2016 contracts you need before the deadline.**

Find out more www.jctltd.co.uk

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AUTUMN 2026 SERIES OF JCT TRAINING DATES ANNOUNCED



JCT has announced its course dates for the autumn 2026 series of JCT Training. The series includes a range of full-day in-person courses and 3-hour online webinar courses.

Scheduled to take place in October and November, the courses will focus on contract families from the JCT 2024 Edition of Contracts, as well as continuing our latest course, 'Working with JCT Contracts 2024 (The Legal Aspects)', an interactive session introducing the legal framework that underpins JCT contracts.

The sessions to take place and the dates are as follows:

In-person courses

Thursday, 8th October 2026

JCT Design and Build Contract 2024

Tuesday, 13th October 2026

Working with JCT Contracts 2024 (the Legal Aspects)

Thursday, 12th November 2026

JCT Intermediate Building Contract 2024

Online courses

Wednesday, 21st October 2026

JCT Minor Works Building Contract 2024

Wednesday, 4th November 2026

JCT Design and Build Contract 2024

The autumn courses are now open for booking at
www.jctltd.co.uk/jct-training/available-courses.

JCT Training Video Modules

Have you discovered the JCT Training Video Modules – covering contracts from the JCT 2024 Edition? The latest in our series, '**Introduction to JCT Sub-Contracts 2024**' provides an overview of the provisions found in JCT Sub-Contracts, using the Design and Build Sub-Contract 2024 as a main reference point.

You can also find video modules relating to a number of other contracts and contract-related issues.

Find out more at www.jctltd.co.uk/category/jct-training-videos.



JCT-BACKED RESEARCH REPORT HIGHLIGHTS MENTAL HEALTH CHALLENGES FOR YOUNG CONSTRUCTION WORKERS

A report, sponsored by JCT, and published by the Construction Leadership Council (CLC) as part of their Mental Health Project, has highlighted the mental health challenges facing young workers in the industry and makes several key recommendations to provide solutions and improvements.

"Understanding the wellbeing experiences of young construction workers in England: what are the challenges and what should the industry do about them?" was carried out by the University of Warwick and Mates in Mind, a registered charity set up to improve mental health in construction.

The report had three specific objectives:

1. To identify the key factors that young construction workers perceive as influencing their wellbeing at work.
2. To examine how they perceive the availability, accessibility and effectiveness of wellbeing related support in the industry.
3. To gather their suggestions for improving workplace wellbeing within the industry.

The research conducted interviews with 20 young construction workers (aged 18-25 years), with the data analysis formed into the following six themes:

1. Starting out: negotiating industry pressures as a young construction worker.
2. Challenges impacting mental health and wellbeing.
3. Consequences of industry pressures on young workers' lives.
4. Barriers to speaking up and seeking support.
5. What young workers appreciate: sources of support and positive workplace experiences.
6. Young workers' perspectives on how the industry can improve.

Key issues included workflow problems, long hours, low raise and recognition, learning on the job with limited support or training, age/experience hierarchies, discrimination and inequality on the basis of age, race, and gender.

The report also highlighted positive reports of good practice and workplace initiatives that benefited wellbeing.

Among the key suggestions for improvements, included ensuring young workers feel like valued members of the team, strengthening early career training for young workers (including for non-apprentices), reducing harmful work pressures, and tackling discrimination and building an inclusive workplace.

JCT's sponsorship of the research is part of their commitment to support the CLC's initiative regarding mental health in construction.

JCT chair, Karen Kirkham, said:

"JCT is delighted and proud to support this research which is an important step towards understanding, and therefore being able to address, the very real mental health issues in our industry today, particularly for young workers."

Dr Carla Toro, University of Warwick, said:

"It was an honour to work with JCT and Mates in Mind in this important research capturing the voice of new entrants to the construction industry."

"The findings offer significant guidance to supplement ongoing efforts to support young workers and recruit and retain the next generation of workers to the industry. These findings informed ongoing work to develop a Hierarchy of Controls and Joint Code of Practice for the industry, due for launch summer 2026."

The full report can now be read at via the University of Warwick website: <https://static1.squarespace.com/static/67cac5edde667717248046e5/t/69cc1d5071fa2c5e9d900df7/1774984528113/Young+construction+worker+report+V4+04.11.pdf>

The research report on young workers in the industry forms part of the wider initiative led by the CLC, which resulted in the publication of their Mental Health Joint Code of Practice (JCOP) on 15 June. The JCOP provides leaders and businesses, across the sector, with a framework to create an environment that fosters better mental health for their workforce.

More information about the JCOP can be found at: <https://www.constructionleadershipcouncil.co.uk/news/construction-leadership-council-publishes-its-mental-health-joint-code-of-practice/>



**JCT Network - keeping you informed
with updates about the JCT 2024 Edition.**

Sign up today corporate.jctltd.co.uk/jct-network/





JCT YPG Interviews

YPG founder member leader, Bailey Ellis

In this series we find out more about some of the key people who give their time to support the JCT Young Professionals Group (JCT YPG). We will look at our interviewees' background and how they got into the industry, the importance of their contribution to JCT YPG specifically, and gain their views on JCT's wider role within the industry.

Name: Bailey Ellis

Job Title: assistant building surveyor

Company: JLL

Short Bio: Working within JLL's central London building surveying team for occupier clients throughout the office relocation process, providing end-to-end services, including dilapidations, technical due diligence, and fit out project management.

JCT: Tell us a bit about your background. What is your current role, and why did you decide on a career in the construction industry?

BE: My career began as an electrical engineering apprentice in Lincolnshire, where I specialised in automation and robotics solutions for the food, beverage, and agrotechnology sectors. This technical foundation gave me valuable hands-on experience with building services and systems. A couple of years later, I transitioned into local authority building control, which opened my eyes to the broader world of surveying and construction.

Recognising that I wanted to advance my career through formal education, I made the decision to leave employment and pursue a degree, becoming the first in my family to obtain higher education. After graduating in 2024, I initially joined Savills in Leeds before relocating to London, where I now work as a building surveyor within JLL's Central London Office Occupier Markets team.

In my current role, I focus on dilapidations, technical due diligence, contract administration, and project management.

I chose the construction industry because I've always been fascinated by architecture and the opportunity to work within exceptional buildings. Building surveying offers the perfect combination of technical analysis and practical problem-solving that keeps me engaged. What particularly excites me is working on high-end premium properties in London, from prestigious historic buildings to cutting-edge modern commercial developments. The opportunity to be immersed in these architectural environments is incredibly rewarding, and the geographical fluidity of the role opens up exciting possibilities to work globally in my future career.

JCT: How did you first come to be involved with JCT's Young Professionals Group? Why do you think it is important to be involved with the new focus group?

I became involved with JCT's Young Professionals Group through my interest in expanding my professional network and contributing

to industry development. As someone relatively early in my surveying career, I recognised the value of connecting with peers across different disciplines within the construction industry to gain a more comprehensive understanding of how various roles interconnect.

What I find particularly rewarding about being involved is helping to facilitate events and networking opportunities that bring together young professionals from diverse backgrounds. This involvement has allowed me to meet people from across the wider industry, providing me with a holistic view of the construction sector that extends well beyond my immediate role in building surveying. I believe it's crucial for young professionals to engage with groups like this because they offer invaluable opportunities to learn from different perspectives, understand industry challenges from multiple angles, and build relationships that can enhance both personal development and collaborative working throughout our careers.

JCT: Can you tell us about any specific work you're currently doing that has any association to JCT and its contracts (e.g. any case studies/webinars/podcasts/blogs/vlogs)?

A large part of my job is acting as contract administrator. I currently have three live projects being delivered under JCT contracts; two large Cat-B office fit-outs, and refurbishment works on a high-profile listed embassy building. Administering the contract provides me with invaluable hands-on experience with JCT contract administration procedures and direct insight into how excellent these contracts are to work with in practice.

My role working as contract administrator broadly involves managing the day-to-day administration of the JCT contract, including handling variations, coordinating between stakeholders, and ensuring compliance with contract terms. What I've found particularly impressive is how well-structured and clear the JCT contracts are, making them genuinely practical tools for

effective project delivery. These experiences have deepened my understanding of how JCT contracts facilitate effective project delivery and maintain clear lines of responsibility between all parties.

Additionally, I've been actively sharing knowledge about JCT contracts within JLL by delivering CPD training sessions to our graduates. These sessions have focused on the new Target Cost Contract and the 2024 suite of contracts, helping to ensure that emerging professionals understand the latest developments in JCT contract forms. This training work has not only reinforced my own understanding of the contracts but has also allowed me to contribute to the professional development of my colleagues, raise awareness of the new developments, and promote best practice in contract administration.

JCT: Do you have any personal career highlights so far?

I'm incredibly proud of how quickly I've been able to grow into my role at JLL, particularly given that I'm relatively early in my surveying career. The positive feedback I've received from colleagues, clients, and consultants has been enormously encouraging and has given me confidence to take on increasingly challenging work. One of my biggest highlights to date has been mostly leading on the assessment of a complex £24.2m dilapidations assessment for a premium office building in central London. Whilst I had support from senior colleagues, being entrusted with such a significant and technically demanding project was both challenging and rewarding. The complexity of the assessment required detailed technical analysis and careful consideration of various legal and practical factors. Successfully delivering this work has been a real confidence boost.

Another major milestone was running my first project as contract administrator through to practical completion. Managing the entire contract administration process from start to finish gave me invaluable experience and demonstrated how much I've developed since joining the industry. Outside my day-to-day role, I've also enjoyed competing in the Surveyor Sevens. It has been a fantastic way to connect with peers across the industry whilst doing something I'm passionate about and representing JLL on a national level.

I have to say that working at JLL has been transformative. Being surrounded by the smartest people in the industry creates an environment where you're constantly learning and pushing yourself to higher standards. What's struck me most is the exceptional quality of people I've met throughout this journey. They're not only top-quality professionals who excel in their fields, but genuinely nice people who I am now friends with outside of work. The nature of my role, combined with involvement in groups like the JCT Young Professionals Group, has opened doors to meeting these remarkable individuals across the industry.

I must give enormous credit to all the people I've met along the way who have helped me achieve these highlights. The support, mentorship, and guidance from colleagues, clients, and industry contacts has been instrumental in my development, and I'm grateful for everyone who has invested their time in helping me grow professionally.

JCT: What are you most proud of about the construction industry as a whole and where do you think it most needs to improve?

What I'm most proud of about the construction industry is the exceptional quality of development I'm seeing, particularly in London. The standard of commercial developments is genuinely world-class, with buildings that seamlessly blend cutting-edge design with functionality and sustainability. I'm also impressed by the industry's increasing focus on regeneration projects that

breathe new life into former industrial areas, and the growing emphasis on creating buildings that prioritise occupant wellbeing and environmental performance. I'm particularly encouraged by the growth in apprenticeship programmes across the industry, which are providing excellent pathways for young people to enter construction and develop meaningful careers.

However, I believe the industry needs to improve in several areas.

Firstly, AI adoption in construction is happening much slower than in other industries. According to an ONS Business Insights report, the construction industry has one of the lowest AI adoption rates, with only 12% of businesses using these technologies, compared to 21% of UK businesses overall. We face barriers in developing AI tools specifically for construction use and, crucially, in getting people to invest the time to learn and implement these systems effectively in their daily practice.

Secondly, we have a significant recruitment challenge. The average age of the construction workforce is increasing, with projections showing it will rise from 42 years in 2023 to over 46 by 2050. We are struggling to attract fresh talent to address a major skills shortage, with estimates suggesting an extra 251,500 workers are needed by 2028 to meet demand. The industry needs to do much better at showcasing the exciting career opportunities available and demonstrating that construction offers genuine innovation and strong career progression.

We also need to close these skills gaps through genuine collaboration between industry, academia, and policymakers, championing digital transformation and sustainability across the built and natural environment.

Perhaps most frustratingly, our project delivery speeds can be slow compared to other world-leading countries. While some reports suggest the UK is poised for strong growth, studies have also shown that UK road and rail projects can have the highest absolute unit costs compared to a peer group of developed nations. Addressing these challenges while maintaining our high-quality standards is essential for the UK construction industry to truly lead the world.

JCT: Does JCT and the Young Professionals Group have a wider role to play in the industry beyond producing contracts?

Yes, absolutely. Whilst producing clear, practical contracts remains JCT's core function, both JCT and the Young Professionals Group play important wider roles.

JCT contracts themselves serve a collaborative purpose by providing standardised frameworks that everyone in the industry understands and can work with. This common language helps reduce disputes and keeps projects moving. The organisation also provides guidance, training, and resources that help practitioners actually use the contracts effectively in practice.

The Young Professionals Group has a crucial role in connecting emerging talent from across the industry. By bringing together people from different disciplines and backgrounds, it breaks down silos and creates networks that last throughout our careers. It provides a platform for young professionals to discuss industry challenges, share knowledge, and learn from each other's experiences. This is particularly valuable for addressing the recruitment and skills challenges I discussed earlier, as it demonstrates that construction offers genuine opportunities for professional development and career progression.

By fostering this community of engaged young professionals who understand how contracts work in practice and are committed to using them properly, both JCT and the Young Professionals Group contribute to better project outcomes and help ensure the next generation is equipped to deliver successfully.

Build and create your JCT contracts online

The system enables the editing of the JCT contract text itself, so that you can add your own amendments, clauses, or other customised text. This works alongside an intuitive Q&A process so that you can be guided through filling in your contract easily and comprehensively.

A conceptual image showing a person's hands typing on a laptop keyboard. Overlaid on the image is a network diagram with a central node labeled 'JCT' (Jawahar Education Technology) surrounded by various icons representing different fields of study and technology, including a pie chart, bar graph, target, handshake, globe, and circuitry.

Get started on your digital JCT contract today with *JCT Construct*.
Buy online: jctltd.co.uk/jct-construct