



FEDERATION OF
**MASTER
BUILDERS**

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Rebuild Wales

**Federation of Master Builders
(FMB) Cymru Programme for
Welsh Government 2021 – 2026**

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The building industry will have a vital role to play in rebuilding a more prosperous and greener economy as we recover from the impact of the Covid pandemic.



Our communities depend on the sector to provide people with well-paid careers whilst society relies on builders to deliver projects that keep us safe, healthy, and prosperous. We are calling on the next Welsh Government to work with the industry to maximise the positive impact that construction has on Wales.

Deliver more homes through SMEs

The planning system must be reformed to provide SME builders with greater opportunities to build homes within their own communities. Doing so will result in an increase in affordable homes and provide a major boost to local economies. The planning process has become increasingly complex and costly which has led to a decline in the number and output from SME house builders. Welsh Government should:

- Impose a local rather than a national definition of 'major development' within planning policy. Designating a site as a 'major development' imposes a far greater degree of planning demands. 'Major development' is currently defined as any site that consists of 10 dwellings or more. A one-size-fits-all threshold fails to consider local housing needs and local market conditions.
- Increase resources for local planning authorities either through direct investment or by reorganising planning services across Wales.
- Provide pre-planning access to finance for SME house builders through the Development Bank of Wales.
- Be more mindful of the accumulative impact of regulations on SMEs by taking a more holistic approach to regulations that impact the sector.

Put SMEs at the heart of the green revolution

Housing is responsible for around a quarter of our carbon emissions. If we are to meet our obligation to become a net zero nation by 2050, our homes need to consume less energy and conserve energy more efficiently. Retrofit work will need to be carried out on 50,000 existing homes per annum which will create 12,000 new roles within the sector by 2028. This presents a huge challenge, but also a once-in-a-generation opportunity. To help SMEs maximise this opportunity, Welsh Government should:

- Develop a clear pipeline of work and communicate the opportunities clearly and concisely.
- Underpin the programme with stable, strong, and consistent policy and investment. This has been lacking in the past, leading to industry reluctance to embrace this new market and to reskill.
- Maintain high standards of work by mandating Welsh Government-recognised standards (such as PAS) along with TrustMark accreditation. SMEs must be provided with adequate support to achieve these standards.

Improve and increase the construction workforce

Construction has skills gaps in traditional trades along with a lack of uptake in "future" skills (e.g. digital, artificial Intelligence and modern methods of construction). The sector has an image problem, with a career in construction often seen as a last resort. Learners are unaware of the roles available and are not attracted to the sector, especially under-represented groups including women and our BAME communities. To help tackle these issues, Welsh Government should:

- Improve parity of esteem with academia by increasing funding for construction vocational education.
- Assess then address high-dropout rates from Further Education construction courses to construction jobs.
- Help improve industry awareness of opportunities that come from investment in "future" skills.
- Help diversify the sector by assessing and addressing the barriers to under-represented groups.



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The key asks made in this document are based on the results of a survey of FMB Cymru members conducted between 18 February and 2 March 2021.

About the FMB

The Federation of Master Builders (FMB) is the largest trade association in the UK construction industry representing thousands of firms in England, Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland. Established in 1941 to protect the interests of small and medium sized construction firms, the FMB is independent and non-profit making, lobbying for members' interests at both the national and local level.

For more information about the FMB please visit www.fmb.org.uk



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