



Collective Agreements: Turning the Government's priorities into delivery

The Joint Industry Board (JIB) collective agreement sits at the heart of a broader construction ecosystem, which is pivotal in driving economic growth, productivity and high-quality jobs and training opportunities.

Collective agreements like the JIB model embed competence, promote fair and secure work, and deliver improved outcomes for infrastructure projects: boosting productivity, safety and value for money.

The collective agreement already plays an important role with multi-year pay agreements stabilising labour costs and supporting workforce planning. Our sector and its skilled workforce underpin the delivery of critical national infrastructure, ranging from major transport to projects enabling the clean energy transition. There is now a timely opportunity for the Government and industry to capitalise on these benefits and embed collective agreements in the approach to economic growth and fair work.

Our impact is proven at scale:



The JIB covers **10,000+** directly employed workers on its agreed terms



The agreement has supported more than **500,000+** apprentices into qualified roles



100% of disputes resolved in recent years (95% within seven days)



ECS assures the competence of **2/3 of the UK workforce** with real-time verification



Our members include all of the **top 10** electrical contractors such as Dalkia, NG Bailey, Balfour Beatty, T Clarke while **90%** are SMEs

What are sectoral collective agreements and how do they operate?

What:	Why:	How:
Sector-level agreements between employers and trade unions representing directly employed workers, which set standards for pay, grading, welfare, training and dispute resolution.	By working alongside our peers in the construction sector, collective agreements such as the JIB's provide a coherent model that underpins a high quality, predictable and productive workforce and sector.	In the electrotechnical and construction sector, the JIB negotiates multi-year pay and conditions, while the ECS competence scheme verifies people on site with real-time checks. Disputes are settled independently and fast.

Why collective agreements matter to the Government

With the Government focused on driving growth through infrastructure, productivity and good work, collective agreements provide a quality guarantee and confidence that policy ambition will be matched by real-world results. The JIB model works in concert with other agreements and bodies across the sector. It ensures fair pay, welfare standards and also a verified and competent workforce, which is crucial to the timely and high-quality delivery of nationally significant projects.

High-quality jobs:	Growth & productivity:	Skills & opportunity:	Quality & safety:
Guaranteed earnings and benefits for workers, with evidence of higher retention and significantly fewer sick days due to access to healthcare.	A highly competent, directly employed workforce reduces workplace accidents and disputes, driving value and delivery certainty.	Sectoral agreements provide a best practice benchmark for pay, training, welfare and progression, which works in SME-heavy supply chains, and apprentice completions nearly double UK average.	Gold-standard ECS framework ensures workforce competence and safety, with direct employment showing a 32% improvement in higher technical skills for Approved Electricians.

What the Government should do now to protect and grow the model

As the Government translates economic ambition into delivery, collective agreements such as the JIB's offer an existing mechanism to drive growth, productivity and fair work. They ensure that major national investment, directed into infrastructure, supports skilled, directly employed workers and resilient local supply chains – proving good work and growth go hand in hand.

We are committed to working with policymakers to champion the JIB model and ensure that policy ambition is matched by practical delivery and impact on the ground. The following recommendations are aimed at delivering this ambition.

1

Embed collective agreements and extend the JIB model to other sectors

The Government should work with the JIB, unions and employer bodies to embed the collective agreement model through government policies and frameworks in other sectors, to support fair work, high-quality employment and productivity outcomes – for example as part of DESNZ's Clean Jobs Plan or the work of the Construction Skills Mission Board. Alongside fair pay, this should include key elements of the JIB model, including competence verification, structured skills progression, training pathways and core employment benefits.

2

Increase government and industry backing for the JIB model through procurement reform

The Government should establish and promote a clear, consistent and industry-designed approach to public procurement to ensure social value requirements support local supply chains, create high-quality jobs, and expand skills and training opportunities. This should draw on existing best practice, including the Private Sector Playbook and the Construction Leadership Council's Business Models and Fair Practices work.

3

Raise employment and competence standards across construction

The Government should commission a joint industry-government review of employment models in the built environment, feeding into wider employment status reform. This should establish clearer and enforceable legislative tests for when work should be treated as direct employment (e.g. where supervision, fixed hours or team integration applies) as well as the role of tax and National Insurance treatment.