

## Introduction

In the wake of the Grenfell fire, the Hackitt review highlighted a fragmented approach to assuring the competence of those working on buildings as a major flaw in the current regulatory system. The Building Safety Act, and related legislation, mean that individuals will be required to prove that they are competent to do the job they are undertaking. The construction sector as a whole is therefore working to develop competence frameworks to ensure competence is defined for all relevant construction roles. Competence frameworks will be made up of:

- Mechanism for communicating key requirements about competence in a specific role or group of connected roles
- A definition of what competence is for a given role via Skills, Knowledge, Experience and Behaviours statements (SKEB)
- Arrangements for assessing and evidencing competence of relevant individuals

**Please see here for further information about the development of industry competence frameworks:** [Competence – Construction Leadership Council](#)

## Purpose of the Skills and Knowledge Statements for working in heritage construction

These statements have been designed primarily for non-heritage trades working on older and traditional buildings, and are intended to:

- cover the core Skills and Knowledge required of non-heritage specialists when working on historic buildings;
- be embedded within trade-specific Industry Competence Steering Group competence frameworks developed by Super Sector groups for installation and maintenance;
- supplement trade-specific SKEB;
- be of wider use for standards and qualifications.

Traditionally constructed buildings were often made with materials that manage moisture by absorbing and releasing it slowly, so the skills needed to repair, maintain and adapt them for the future can differ from modern buildings. These skills are important for anyone working in a traditional building to understand, not just those working on historic buildings which have some form of heritage protection.

Where appropriate, the Skills and Knowledge statements may be used in competence frameworks for sector occupations at all levels (see the list below, for indicative examples). It is for each Super Sector group to identify and use the heritage construction Skills and Knowledge statements that are suitable for each competence framework.

- |                                |                                |
|--------------------------------|--------------------------------|
| ▪ Trainee                      | ▪ Construction site supervisor |
| ▪ Skilled operative            | ▪ Construction site manager    |
| ▪ Team leader                  | ▪ Contracts manager            |
| ▪ Site supervisor              | ▪ Project manager              |
| ▪ Manager/technical supervisor | ▪ Technical specialist         |
| ▪ Construction supervisor      |                                |

We would encourage each Super Sector group to carefully consider including content on traditional buildings in their competence frameworks, where the role may involve working on traditional and historic buildings.

N.B. Though they have been designed primarily with the construction sector in mind, these statements will also be of relevance to wider built environment roles, including, for example, domestic energy assessors and retrofit assessors.

#### **A note on version 1.5, September 2026**

The original role-based level descriptions included in Version 1, published in February 2026, have been simplified into three indicative levels to make the statements easier to interpret and apply across different competence frameworks.

The column heading “Level/role” has been changed to “Indicative Level” to emphasise that these terms are intended as guidance for mapping the statements into relevant competence frameworks, rather than fixed role requirements.

- Aware replaces Level 1 Trainee and above.
- Proficient replaces Level 3 Skilled operative and above.
- Expert replaces Level 5 Manager/Technical Supervisor and above and Level 6 Construction Site Manager and above.

For ease of use, we have moved some of the information about the scope, process of development and implementation to the end of the document, and produced an excel version.

Cells highlighted in green denote new statements. All others have been taken from existing products; sources are referenced in the appropriate places. Some have been edited slightly in response to stakeholder feedback.

| Health and Safety |                               |                                                                                                  |
|-------------------|-------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Indicative Level  | Skills<br>You must be able to | Knowledge<br>You must know and understand                                                        |
| Aware             |                               | Possible hazards in older buildings, including asbestos, and the importance of reporting hazards |

| Materials and techniques |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          |                                                                                                                                                     |
|--------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Indicative Level         | Skills<br>You must be able to                                                                                                                                                                                                                                            | Knowledge<br>You must know and understand                                                                                                           |
| Aware                    |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          | That older and traditional buildings and modern construction use different materials and techniques                                                 |
| Proficient               | Identify the types of construction of older and traditional buildings and the materials used, including local and regional variations<br><a href="#">Recognising the Age Nature Characteristics of Older Traditional Buildings - v2.pdf</a>                              | The types of construction of older and traditional buildings and the materials used, including local and regional variations                        |
| Proficient               | No equivalent skills – this is from a knowledge unit:<br><a href="#">Evaluating the options for introducing energy to older and traditional buildings - v2.pdf</a>                                                                                                       | The range of materials and construction techniques appropriate to carrying out repair and maintenance on older and traditional buildings            |
| Proficient               | No equivalent skills – this is from a knowledge unit: <a href="#">Y/503/4822, Understanding Repair and Maintenance of Traditional Pre-1919 Buildings - NOCN</a>                                                                                                          | The main problems which may occur from using materials that are incompatible with the original materials and method of construction and application |
| Expert                   | Engage in the selection and recommendation of appropriate materials and construction techniques for conservation, maintenance, repair, alteration and renovation of older and traditional buildings<br><a href="#">Heritage construction specialist / Skills England</a> | Traditional and historic construction materials, techniques and practices used to build older and traditional buildings                             |
| Expert                   | Evaluate, select and recommend construction materials, techniques and practices used in work on older and traditional buildings<br><a href="#">Heritage construction specialist / Skills England</a>                                                                     | Construction materials, techniques and practices used to repair, maintain, adapt, retrofit and conserve older and traditional buildings             |
| Expert                   | Assess the risks of modern techniques, materials, practices and interventions on older and traditional buildings, and mitigate the impact on current and future heritage construction works<br><a href="#">Heritage construction specialist / Skills England</a>         | The risks of using modern materials, practices and interventions on older and traditional buildings and how to mitigate the impact                  |

## Developing competence statements for working in heritage construction

| Building performance |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               |                                                                                                                                                                                    |
|----------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Indicative Level     | Skills<br>You must be able to                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 | Knowledge<br>You must know and understand                                                                                                                                          |
| Aware                |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               | That materials and techniques used cause older and traditional buildings and modern construction to perform differently                                                            |
| Proficient           | No equivalent skills – this is from a knowledge unit: <a href="#">Y/503/4822, Understanding Repair and Maintenance of Traditional Pre-1919 Buildings - NOCN</a>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               | The performance characteristics of older and traditional buildings compared to those of modern construction                                                                        |
| Proficient           | No equivalent skills – this is from a knowledge unit: <a href="#">Recognising the Age Nature Characteristics of Older Traditional Buildings - v2.pdf</a>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      | How alterations to the original construction affect the performance of the building                                                                                                |
| Proficient           | No equivalent skills – this is from a knowledge unit: <a href="#">Recognising the Age Nature Characteristics of Older Traditional Buildings - v2.pdf</a>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      | The effects of geographical location, climate, aspect, orientation, and the differing exposure of individual elevations on the way older and traditional buildings perform         |
| Expert               | No directly equivalent skill, but this most closely matches to:<br>Engage in the selection and recommendation of appropriate materials and construction techniques for conservation, maintenance, repair, alteration and renovation of older and traditional buildings<br><a href="#">Heritage construction specialist / Skills England</a><br>This performance statement also maps to the following statement under ‘materials and techniques’:<br><br>‘Traditional and historic construction materials, techniques and practices used to build heritage property or assets’ | The performance of older and traditional buildings, how this differs to modern buildings, and the impact this has on the selection of construction, repair and maintenance methods |

## Conservation

| Indicative Level | Skills<br>You must be able to                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      | Knowledge<br>You must know and understand                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          |
|------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Aware            | Retain as much of the original structure and features of traditional buildings as possible when repairing and maintaining                                                                                                                                                          | That it is important to retain as much of the original structure and features of older and traditional buildings as possible when repairing and maintaining                                                                                                                                                                                        |
| Proficient       | No equivalent skills – this is from a knowledge unit: <a href="#">Y/503/4822, Understanding Repair and Maintenance of Traditional Pre-1919 Buildings - NOCN</a>                                                                                                                    | Reasons for retaining as much of the original structure and features of older and traditional buildings as possible when repairing and maintaining                                                                                                                                                                                                 |
| Proficient       | No equivalent skills – this is from a knowledge unit: <a href="#">Y/503/4822, Understanding Repair and Maintenance of Traditional Pre-1919 Buildings - NOCN</a>                                                                                                                    | The reasons for integrating existing and new constructional components or finishes in older and traditional buildings                                                                                                                                                                                                                              |
| Proficient       | No equivalent skills – this is from a knowledge unit: <a href="#">A/504/3321, Know how to Conserve, Restore and Repair Historic and Contemporary Timber Based Fixtures and Fittings - NOCN</a>                                                                                     | How to identify and match features, materials and techniques when repairing and maintaining older traditional buildings, whilst ensuring they are distinguishable from the original                                                                                                                                                                |
| Expert           | Identify and assess defects, faults and issues, recommend and implement corrective action which conforms to safe working methods and practices.<br><a href="#">F/618/8807, Supervising Activities to Traditional and Heritage Buildings and Structures in the Workplace - NOCN</a> | How to identify and assess defects, faults and other issues for older and traditional buildings and structures related to issues such as non-compliance with legislation and official guidance related to built heritage, previous incorrect maintenance, previous selection of inappropriate materials and construction methods, poor workmanship |

**Legislation and standards**

## Developing competence statements for working in heritage construction

| Indicative Level | Skills<br>You must be able to                                                                                                                          | Knowledge<br>You must know and understand                                                                                                                          |
|------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Proficient       |                                                                                                                                                        | Work on buildings with heritage protection requires different consents and permissions than work on buildings without protection                                   |
| Proficient       | Source legislation and official guidance relating to older and traditional buildings                                                                   | Where to source information about the range of legislation and official guidance relating to buildings with heritage protection, and when this might be necessary. |
| Expert           | Ensure work practices comply with appropriate legal and contractual requirements.<br><a href="#">Heritage construction specialist / Skills England</a> | Statutory, quality and policy standards and legislation applicable to work on older and traditional                                                                |

| Sources of information |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                   |                                                                                                                                                                                       |
|------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Indicative Level       | Skills<br>You must be able to                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     | Knowledge<br>You must know and understand                                                                                                                                             |
| Proficient             | Be able to establish the age of a building, to identify a building of traditional construction<br><a href="#">D/650/448, Recognising the Age, Nature and Characteristics of Older and Traditional Buildings - NOCN</a>                                            | Sources of information to help establish the age of older and traditional buildings.                                                                                                  |
| Expert                 | Work to the principles, philosophy and ethics of conservation to ensure best-practice on heritage construction projects<br><a href="#">Heritage construction specialist / Skills England</a>                                                                      | Documentation required during projects on older and traditional buildings, for example statements of significance, condition surveys and other heritage statements and specifications |
| Expert                 | Confirm the project requirements against the information supplied when planning activities for traditional and heritage buildings<br><a href="#">M/618/8818, Planning Activities to Traditional and Heritage Buildings and Structures in the Workplace - NOCN</a> | Why information from a range of sources must be used when planning activities to older and traditional building project requirements                                                  |

| Significance     |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     |                                                                                                                                                            |
|------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Indicative Level | Skills<br>You must be able to                                                                                                                                                                                                       | Knowledge<br>You must know and understand                                                                                                                  |
| Expert           | Carry out supervision activities which will minimise disruption and maintain optimum performance<br><a href="#">F/618/8807, Supervising Activities to Traditional and Heritage Buildings and Structures in the Workplace - NOCN</a> | The following terms and concepts relevant to older and traditional buildings: heritage values; significance; principles of conservation                    |
| Expert           | Agree and recommend work methods and inform stakeholders<br><a href="#">L/618/8714, Assessing and Agreeing Work Methods in the Workplace - NOCN</a>                                                                                 | Any specific requirements for buildings and structures of older or traditional construction or of architectural, historical or archaeological significance |
| Expert           | Implement specified checks to ensure that work conforms to the design requirements and the agreed quality standards<br><a href="#">D/618/8779, Controlling Work Against Agreed Quality Standards in the Workplace - NOCN</a>        | The potential risks of works impacting on the cultural significance of the historic environment                                                            |

| Ecology          |                                                                              |                                                                                                     |
|------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Indicative Level | Skills<br>You must be able to                                                | Knowledge<br>You must know and understand                                                           |
| Aware            |                                                                              | Awareness that the identification of endangered and/or protected flora and fauna can impact on work |
| Proficient       | Report endangered and/or protected flora and fauna to the appropriate person | How to identify and report endangered and/or protected flora and fauna, and to whom                 |

| Recording        |                                                                                                                                                            |                                                                              |
|------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Indicative Level | Skills<br>You must be able to                                                                                                                              | Knowledge<br>You must know and understand                                    |
| Proficient       | No equivalent skills – this is from a knowledge unit:<br><a href="#">Y/504/3374, Know how to Conserve and Restore Vernacular Masonry Structures - NOCN</a> | The procedures to record work carried out (written, photographic or digital) |

| Protecting features |                                                                                                                                                                                                   |                                                                                                                                                |
|---------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Indicative Level    | Skills<br>You must be able to                                                                                                                                                                     | Knowledge<br>You must know and understand                                                                                                      |
| Proficient          | No equivalent skills – this is from a knowledge unit:<br><a href="#">A/504/3321, Know how to Conserve, Restore and Repair Historic and Contemporary Timber Based Fixtures and Fittings - NOCN</a> | How to protect the surrounding areas from damage                                                                                               |
| Proficient          | No equivalent skills – this is from a knowledge unit:<br><a href="#">L/504/3324, Knowledge of Working on Conservation and Restoration Projects - NOCN</a>                                         | How to validate appropriate ways in which the work should be carried out and stop work at the point when conjecture begins and report findings |

| Specialist skills |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                  |                                                                                                                                                     |
|-------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Indicative Level  | Skills<br>You must be able to                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    | Knowledge<br>You must know and understand                                                                                                           |
| Proficient        | No equivalent skills – this is from a knowledge unit:<br><a href="#">Recognising the Age Nature Characteristics of Older Traditional Buildings - v2.pdf</a>                                                                                                      | The range of specialists that are available to work on older and traditional buildings                                                              |
| Expert            | No directly equivalent skill<br><a href="#">Heritage construction specialist / Skills England</a>                                                                                                                                                                | The structure of teams who work on older and traditional buildings, including specialists and designers                                             |
| Expert            | Identify, assess and record the necessary resources for work activities for traditional and heritage buildings and structures<br><a href="#">F/618/8807, Supervising Activities to Traditional and Heritage Buildings and Structures in the Workplace - NOCN</a> | How to recognise and determine when specialist skills and knowledge are required for work on older and traditional buildings and report accordingly |

| Sustainability   |                                                                                                                                                                    |                                                                                                                  |
|------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Indicative Level | Skills<br>You must be able to                                                                                                                                      | Knowledge<br>You must know and understand                                                                        |
| Proficient       | No equivalent skills – this is from a knowledge unit:<br><a href="#">Y/503/4822, Understanding Repair and Maintenance of Traditional Pre-1919 Buildings - NOCN</a> | How the repair and maintenance of older and traditional buildings contribute to current sustainability practices |
| Expert           |                                                                                                                                                                    | The causes, and impacts on older and traditional buildings, of climate change                                    |

## **Scope of the Skills and Knowledge statements**

**Our approach to developing these Skills and Knowledge statements has concentrated on statements of knowledge/awareness and skills, only. This is why...**

### **1. Analysis of existing products suggests a gap in knowledge and awareness of working on historic buildings amongst non-heritage trades**

Initial scoping work identified that, although there are NOS for Heritage Skills (e.g. masonry, brickwork, thatching, façade preservation) and Stonemasonry, and an apprenticeship standard (for England) for Heritage Construction Specialists, specific content on heritage construction is limited in NOS and in existing competency-based training for other trades.

Analysis of specific courses covering heritage construction – typically short courses/qualifications and upskilling programmes – revealed that these focus on knowledge and awareness, suggesting gaps in existing competency-based qualifications for non-heritage trades.

### **2. Behaviours for non-heritage trades specified in existing competence frameworks are equally applicable to those working on heritage construction**

Analysis of existing competence frameworks identified that the statements of behaviour for non-heritage trades would be equally applicable when working on modern buildings and on heritage buildings. Examples of these statements of behaviour include: ‘consider requirements for different site environments compared to domestic environments’; ‘consider the environment and sustainability when using resources, materials and carrying out processes including reuse, recycle and safe disposal of waste’; ‘work within limits of own competence and seek advice from trusted sources when required’.

Consultations with stakeholders (further detail below) largely confirmed that working on heritage construction would not require any additional/different behaviours.

### **3. Experience is specified by each Super Sector group in their respective competence framework**

These Skills and Knowledge statements for working on heritage construction do not include experience, because this is to be determined by each Super Sector group, and some groups may choose not to develop experience statements for certain trades. For example, the SKEB for Bricklaying, 2024 (currently under review) do not contain statements of experience.

## **How the draft KSB statements were developed**

- a) Desk research was undertaken to identify and map statements of (predominantly) knowledge and awareness within existing products that could be used to address

competence requirements for those in non-heritage trades, working in traditional and historic buildings and contexts. These products include:

- National Occupational Standards (NOS)
- Apprenticeship Standards/Frameworks
- Competence qualifications (such as N/SVQs) and training
- Competence frameworks

The analysis of existing statements in these products focused on identifying common themes/subjects which may therefore suggest these are the areas of greatest need, or the greatest gap, amongst non-heritage trades. These areas themes/subjects include:

1. Building performance
2. Conservation
3. Materials and techniques
4. Terminology
5. Legislation and standards

- b) Two stakeholder workshops were held in September 2025 to review and discuss the outcomes of the desk research. Two further meetings were also held with those unable to attend the workshops. Contributors broadly agreed that the themes/subjects listed above (1-5) – and the examples of individual statements of knowledge/skills drawn from the analysis – were broadly appropriate in terms of content and level of detail.

The following additional subjects were identified as gaps:

- Ecology – how to recognise and deal with flora and fauna (e.g. bats)
- Asbestos awareness and silica dust
- How to deal with previous, incorrect repairs/dealing with defects
- Protection of features when carrying out work and the consequences of not doing this
- Sources of information, such as surveys and specialist reports
- Specialist skills that are available and when to call on them
- Sustainability, climate change and embodied carbon
- The importance of consents and the difference between them
- Record-keeping and handover

- c) Further desk-based research was then undertaken to identify existing Skills and Knowledge statements that would address these gaps, and new statements were drafted where necessary. The full suite of statements was then circulated to stakeholders for feedback. In summary, feedback suggested that further work was necessary to develop common terminology for the Skills and Knowledge statements; that trades and levels to which the statements apply should be made clearer; as well as some recommended changes to wording of the statements to introduce clarity and consistency. The feedback was addressed in the final versions of the Skills and Knowledge statements, below.

## Implementation

Super Sector Groups developing competence frameworks are encouraged to consider and select the most appropriate heritage construction Skills and Knowledge statements for their respective trade. Factors to consider when selecting the heritage construction Skills and Knowledge statements might include:

- Why do individuals need an awareness, or understanding (dependent on the level at which they are working) of the difference between working on modern and traditionally constructed buildings?
- What are the potential consequences – to the individual, to the building, and to their employer – of individuals not adapting materials and techniques to the needs of heritage construction
- Occupational competence for a role is specified in the respective competence framework. These SKEB are not intended to duplicate any trade-specific SKEB.
- Statements of experience are specified in the NOS and apprenticeship standard/framework for each respective trade.

During the development of these Skills and Knowledge statements, concerns were raised by those participating in workshops and meetings about implementation, specifically concerning:

- how new standards of competence (i.e. the Skills and Knowledge statements) would be embedded and enforced, and;
- the extent to which existing measures of competence might be made redundant.

These concerns will form the basis of on ongoing discussions around implementation.