



FEDERATION OF
**MASTER
BUILDERS**

Growth from the ground up

The Builders' Manifesto for Scotland 2026



Foreword

“Scotland’s local building companies are the backbone of our construction and built environment sector. We take pride in delivering high quality work and we invest in recruiting and training apprentices. We are proud to be part of an industry that generates £2.94 in economic value for every £1 spent.

With the right backing, local builders can play a leading role in building a better future for Scotland—through the delivery of new, high-quality homes and the upgrading of existing homes and buildings across the nation.”

Pam Wilson
President, FMB Scotland

Image courtesy of Q Build Ltd.

Introduction

With over 47,000 businesses contributing £10 billion to Scotland's Gross Value Added (GVA), the construction industry stands as a cornerstone of the Scottish economy.

FMB's members are well placed to support the next Scottish Government's ambitions on net-zero, housebuilding and other key policy objectives to drive inclusive economic growth.

The FMB will continue to engage positively with the next Scottish Government, and MSPs at Holyrood. To ensure the construction industry receives focused attention, we urge the next Scottish Government to appoint a dedicated minister responsible for all aspects of construction.

We are calling on the next Scottish Government to focus on five key areas.



Image courtesy of Spey Building and Joinery Ltd

'Scotland's construction industry needs an extra 3,590 workers per year.'

Skills

Over 200,000 people work directly in Scotland's construction industry but we have a growing skills crisis with stagnant apprenticeship funding and rising employer costs. According to the CITB, Scotland's construction industry needs an extra 3,590 workers per year between 2025-2029.

The next Scottish Government must work with the industry to attract more people into construction, otherwise we won't build the new homes we need or retrofit existing homes to meet our net zero targets.



KEY ASKS:

- Prioritise skills and training funding for the construction industry: which is a critical industry for Scotland's prosperity.
- To engage with industry and colleges to produce a robust plan that boosts recruitment and training of tradespeople.

Standards and licensing

Currently, anyone can legally carry out construction work without demonstrating competence. This poses risks to safety and quality. Builders are the last in the chain of regulated practices but are the most exposed sector to bad practice. With 86% of FMB members supporting a licensing scheme, we urge the Scottish Government to collaborate with the UK

Government to boost standards and competency within the industry.

KEY ASK:

- For the next Scottish Government to work with the UK Government to plan and implement a licensing scheme for building firms operating in the repair, maintenance and improvement (RMI) sector.

'Anyone can legally carry out construction work without demonstrating competence. This poses risks to safety and quality.'



Retrofit and Energy Efficiency

Upgrading Scotland's homes and buildings by installing insulation and low carbon heating systems will reduce their heat demand and associated carbon emissions. Retrofit projects provide an economic stimulus for contractors and help to create local jobs. In order to meet Scotland's climate change targets, retrofit projects need to accelerate.

KEY ASKS:

- To develop clear policies and targets for industry and consumers that support the delivery of retrofit.
- Reform the funding schemes that incentivise retrofit projects through government grants and loans.

Planning and housebuilding

There is a housing crisis in Scotland with estimates suggesting a shortfall of nearly 100,000 homes. This risks having a generation without their own homes. The increasingly complex planning environment isn't helping small housebuilders who are delivering a fraction of the homes in Scotland compared to 30 years ago.

KEY ASKS

- Planning and related regulations in Scotland need to be revamped to reduce the costs and complexity for small housebuilders.
- Work with the Scottish National Investment Bank to develop more equitable funding and finance to support small housebuilders.

'Scotland will have a shortfall of nearly 100,000 homes.'



Image courtesy of Spey Building and Joinery Ltd

Public sector contracts

Scottish public sector spend on construction, accounts for more than £4 billion on buildings and infrastructure: about 50% of the total spend. We need more small and local contractors to access this marketplace to boost local economies and communities across Scotland. However the complexity of pre-qualification questionnaires acts as a disincentive for small contractors to bid for and deliver public sector works.

KEY ASK

- To work with contracting authorities to simplify the tendering process to make public sector construction contracts more accessible for SMEs.



FEDERATION OF
**MASTER
BUILDERS**

Founded in 1941, the Federation of Master Builders (FMB) is the largest trade association in the UK construction industry representing the interests of micro, small and medium-sized building companies. The FMB is independent and non-profit making, lobbying for members' interests at both national and local level. The FMB is a source of knowledge, professional advice, and support for its members, providing a range of modern and relevant business building services to help them succeed.

Please visit **fmb.org.uk**