

CONSTRUCTION INDUSTRY FACT SHEET – NORTHERN IRELAND

OVERVIEW AND PROSPECTS



There are now over 80,000 people working in the NI Construction industry. Over the next five years the industry will need an average of 1,000 new workers each year. There is a huge range of careers to choose from, ranging from trades such as bricklayers and joiners to professional occupations including architects and civil engineers. The majority of trades within the industry require a minimum NVQ Level 2 or above and professional occupations normally require at least a degree level qualification or equivalent.

OCCUPATIONS WITHIN THE INDUSTRY

	Total Employment		Annual Recruitment Requirement
	Actual	Forecast	
	2007	2013	2009-2013
Senior, Executive and Business Process Managers	1,840	1,600	Under 50
Construction Managers	4,750	3,870	Under 50
Other Professional, Technical, IT e.g. IT Technicians, Management Accountants	7,040	6,310	Under 50
Wood Trades and Interior Fit-out	12,520	11,290	150
Bricklayers	5,960	5,300	130
Building Envelope Specialists e.g. Cladders, Curtain Wallers	3,790	2,900	Under 50
Painters and Decorators	3,810	3,420	Under 50
Plasterers and Dry Liners	3,210	3,020	Under 50
Roofers	2,140	1,970	Under 50
Floorers	470	390	Under 50
Glaziers	1,110	1,030	Under 50
Specialist Building Operatives nec*	2,460	2,350	Under 50
Scaffolders	300	310	Under 50
Plant Operatives	3,070	2,830	Under 50
Plant Mechanics/Fitters	850	760	Under 50
Steel Erectors/Structural	590	380	Under 50
Labourers nec*	4,720	4,700	Under 50
Electrical Trades and Installation	6,690	5,780	60
Plumbing and Heating, Ventilation & Air Conditioning Trades	6,720	6,440	110
Logistics e.g. Heavy Goods Vehicle Drivers	730	300	Under 50
Civil Engineering Operatives nec*	1,390	1,340	Under 50
Non-Construction Operatives	1,290	1,020	
Civil Engineers	2,330	2,470	50
Other Construction Professionals and Technical Staff e.g. Mechanical, Electrical, Chemical, Design and Development Engineers and Technicians	1,770	1,710	Under 50
Architects	1,380	1,260	Under 50
Surveyors	880	810	Under 50
Total	81,810	73,560	900

Source: ONS, CSN, Experian

*not elsewhere classified

SKILLS AND ENTRY REQUIREMENTS

There are various routes for people wanting to get into the construction industry. The skills and qualifications needed vary by occupation and range from apprenticeships and NVQs to HNDs, degrees and professional qualifications. For further information on the skills and qualifications needed for different occupations within the construction industry go to www.bconstructive.co.uk or www.careersserviceni.com.

CURRENT VACANCIES AND SKILL SHORTAGES

In 2006, 31% of construction firms surveyed had experienced difficulties recruiting during the previous 12 months. General labourers, followed by wood trades (e.g. joiners), plasterers and bricklayers were mentioned as the main occupations that respondents had difficulty recruiting new staff into. A lack of applicants with the required skills was reported as the main reason for the recruitment problems experienced.

Almost half of all construction professional services firms¹ surveyed in 2007 had experienced recruitment difficulties during the previous year, with difficulties experienced across all professional disciplines. Both contractors and professional services firms reported technical/ practical or job-specific skills as the main skills lacking in applicants.

DID YOU KNOW THAT IN NORTHERN IRELAND...

- the average gross weekly earnings for a construction tradesperson was £471 in 2008²
- in 2008 there were 36 schools providing a GCSE in construction and over 30 training providers/colleges offering construction related apprenticeship programmes
- almost 2,000 people enrolled on construction related apprenticeship programmes in 2008
- over 1,600 people enrolled on construction related higher education courses in 2008
- government plans to deliver almost £20 billion of new infrastructure (including major investment in roads, schools and hospitals) over the next 10 years which will benefit the current and future workload of the local construction industry.

USEFUL LINKS

Careers Service NI	Provides an impartial all-age careers information, advice and guidance service: www.careersserviceni.com
ConstructionSkills	The Sector Skills Council (SSC) for the UK construction industry: www.constructionskillsni.org.uk
bConstructive	Provides information on careers in construction, including case-studies, entry criteria and qualifications: www.bconstructive.co.uk
JobCentre Online	Contains vacancies currently notified to Jobs and Benefit offices: www.jobcentreonline.com
Construction Industry Training Board (CITB)	Promoting and encouraging training standards and career progression www.citbni.org.uk

Information in this fact sheet is provided by ConstructionSkills in NI. Last updated March 2009. To check that this is the most up-to-date fact sheet go to www.careersserviceni.com

¹ Architectural, Building Services Engineering, Civil and Structural Engineering, and Quantity Surveyors are examples of some of the main activities of construction professional services firms.

² NI Construction Bulletin