

The Construction and Built Environment Sector

As the economy recovers, new jobs and opportunities will emerge. The basic skills required for many of these jobs are expected to rise – it is estimated that by 2010 around 95% of all new jobs will be at Level 2 or above. These fact sheets have been designed to support people in making informed choices about future employment and / or training to make the best of these new opportunities.

The North East Construction and Built Environment sector

The Construction and Built Environment sector is well established and offers a huge variety of job roles. It covers a broad range of areas including house building (public and private), developing infrastructure (roads, railways and utilities such as underground pipes and power stations), skilled crafts, interior redecoration, architecture and civil engineering, plumbing, and constructing industrial and commercial buildings for the private and public sector. It also includes demolition.

Job roles across the sector are varied and include labourers, skilled craftspersons, bricklayers, scaffolders, roofers, glazers, surveyors, plumbers, civil engineers, professional and site managers, plant operatives, architects and office-based support roles.

Businesses in the Construction and the Built Environment Sector are currently facing difficult conditions as a result of the recession.

However, the industry has always been closely tied to the performance of the UK economy so when the economic upturn comes there should be a rebound in the strength of the sector.

Regionally, employment in this sector is predicted to reach around 118,000 in 2014 – around 5% up on 2010, but still 6% below its 2008 peak. In the North East, the annual recruitment requirement (ARR) predicts that just over 3,000 people will be required between 2010 and 2014. The largest ARR's in the North East are for bricklayers, labourers and floorers

Nationally, the occupations within the industry which are forecast to see the greatest increases over the 2010-14 period are labourers, civil engineering operatives and plant operatives.

There are a number of Government initiatives which are likely to boost the sector. The government wants all social housing to be brought up to the Decent Homes standard by 2010, which will create further jobs. The 2009 Budget set aside £600 million to increase housing supply, including an extension to the Homebuy Direct scheme, again increasing job opportunities. The Government aims to improve homes and business premises in an effort to reduce carbon emissions which means a demand for 'greener' housing and 'green' improvements – and a boost to those jobs related to this work including installing insulation and fitting solar panels work.



Skills required in the Construction and Built Environment sector

The skills required in the Construction and the Built Environment sector are typically 'hands on' trade skills. However, people with office-based skills such as administration, planning and management experience are also very highly valued.

Employers in the North East Construction and the Built Environment sector look for skills including:



- Project management
- Ability to work to tight deadlines
- Appreciation and knowledge of health and safety legislation
- Literacy and numeracy
- Technical skills –for example, linked to civil engineering, glazing, fitted interiors, roofing and plumbing
- Specialist skills related to conservation of heritage buildings / pre-19 homes

The skilled trades focus in the sector means that employers value work-based learning qualifications, such as Apprenticeships and NVQs, very highly. Qualifications which are common in the Construction and the Built Environment sector therefore include Apprenticeships in Bricklaying, Painting and Decorating, Electrical Installation, and Wood Occupations such as Bench Joinery.

However, useful qualifications are not all based on manual work – Management, Customer Service, Administration and Sales qualifications are also important, and can be gained through NVQs, Certificates, Diplomas and Degrees. They have the added benefit of being transferable across other sectors.

Skills needed in the sector are changing in a number of ways. As noted above, there is an ongoing move towards greener construction, this means building using sustainable materials, and making sure that buildings are energy efficient. Construction workers, including roofers, plumbers and bricklayers, will increasingly need to be able to install energy efficient technologies, for instance, Microgenerators, to address fuel poverty and efficiency and fitting solar panels in new-build and existing homes and connecting them to the National Grid

Training provision for people interested in the Construction and the Built Environment sector is varied in the North East as there are many opportunities to develop skills which will be in demand in the future.

For more information about the Construction and the Built Environment sector please see the following websites:

- Engineering Construction Industry Training Board www.ecitb.org.uk
- Construction Skills – www.constructionskills.net
- Construction Skills Network – www.cskills.org
- North of England Civic Trust – www.nect.org.uk
- Asset Skills www.assetskills.org.uk
- Energy & Utility Skills www.euskills.co.uk
- Summit Skills – the Sector Skills Council for Building Services Engineering www.summitskills.org.uk