2018

Trades and Apprenticeships Skills Survey: the Employers Perspective

Eoghan Ó Murchadha
Technological University Dublin, d10125115@mytudublin.ie

Roisin Murphy
Technological University Dublin, roisin.murphy@tudublin.ie

Recommended Citation

Ó Murchadha, Eoghan & Murphy, Róisin. (2018). *Trades & apprenticeships skills survey*. Dublin: Construction Industry Federation. doi:10.21427/t2cr-p007

A survey undertaken within the Dublin Institute of Technology for the
Construction Industry Federation

Eoghan Ó Murchadha & Dr. Róisín Murphy

February 2018

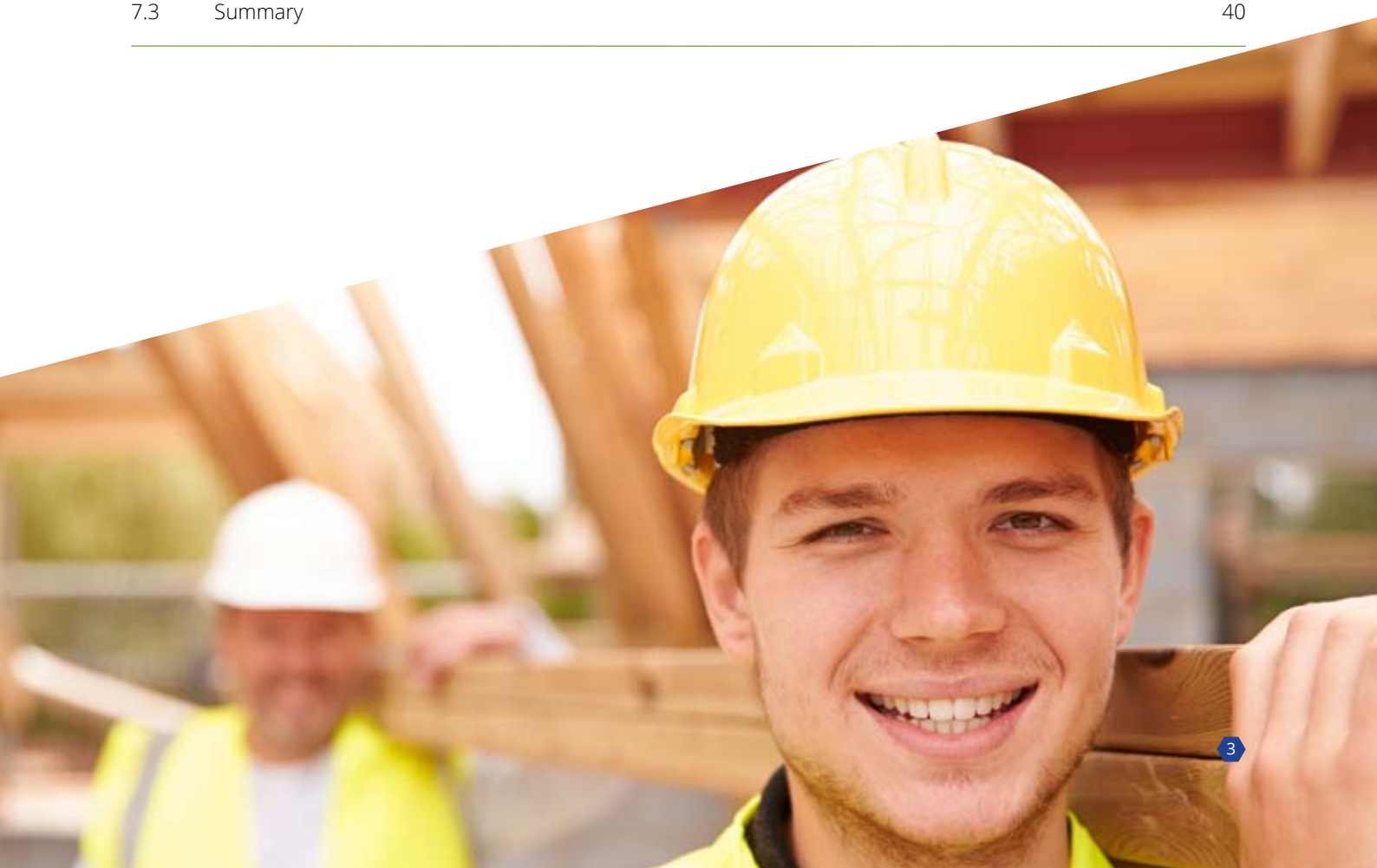
TRADES & APPRENTICESHIPS SKILLS SURVEY

The Employers Perspective

CONSTRUCTION INDUSTRY FEDERATION

DUBLIN INSTITUTE OF TECHNOLOGY · INSTITIÚID TEICNEOLAÍOCHTA ÁTHA CLIATH · D·I·T

Contents



Foreword

Apprentices are essential to the sustainability of the construction industry. Many of today's industry leaders have come through an apprenticeship and now lead global companies. Hundreds of managers and thousands of our workers have also come through the system.

As such, apprentices play a vital role in the evolution of our industry. We need a fully functional apprenticeship system that benefits the apprentice, the company and, of course, the State. Due to the increasing demand for construction output over the next decade, increasing apprenticeship numbers is critical so our companies can:

- deliver the €116 billion capital investment announced in the National Development Programme
- reshape Ireland over the lifetime of the National Planning Framework up to 2040
- increase the housing output per annum from around 15,000 to 35,000 by 2020 as set out in 'Rebuilding Ireland'
- through world class construction technology deliver the specialist buildings required by global companies choosing Ireland as a destination for investment
- rebuild and sustain our capacity to deliver quality construction and provide quality careers for a generation of young Irish people

The pipeline for construction activity is very strong with predictions of between 9 and 14% annual growth for the coming years. Now is an ideal time to address any shortcomings and to ensure that the system is delivering for the triumvirate of stakeholders; the apprentice, industry, and the State.

Whilst construction employment has grown by 50,000 since the nadir of 2013, apprenticeship numbers have in some trades failed to record significant improvements and declined in some important sub-sectors, such as the wet-trades – bricklaying, plastering, painting and decorating and tiling. This survey shows that for many companies, particularly the SME cohort, (about 99% of the industry) taking on an apprentice is beyond their financial capacity. In other words, a gap has emerged between industry and the apprentice in trades that are critical to the delivery of the housing and infrastructure which our society and economy requires.

Closing this gap will need to be a collaborative effort with the State. Significant investment in the education, training and apprenticeship system is required if we are to expand the capacity of the industry to deliver infrastructure and resolve the housing crisis whilst also equipping the next generation with construction skills. Relying upon importing mobile labour to meet demand is not sustainable. Moreover, it is at the expense of growing indigenous talent and, thus a wasted opportunity. Rather, with investment, and targeted measures, the State can deliver necessary construction whilst enabling industry to providing thousands of quality careers to people.

We need a fully functional apprenticeship system that benefits the apprentice, the company and, of course, the State

We must act quickly and with efficacy to translate the findings of this report into actions. Where apprenticeships are declining, the State must intervene to make it viable for companies to get involved in training again. The CIF will work closely with SOLAS, the Department of Education and Skills and other stakeholders to ensure that labour supply meets demand through a range of initiatives in the coming years including the launch of an online skills-forecasting portal for construction.

This research study, which was conducted independently of the CIF, presents for the first time, new knowledge regarding trends in the construction labour market. The study is a first of its kind investigation and as such, helps bridge the existing gap in our understanding of trades and apprenticeship skills utilisation within the Irish construction industry.

We therefore believe that the recommendations of this report can and should be implemented promptly to ensure that the barriers identified by this survey are addressed.

Tom Parlon
Director General

Construction Industry Federation
February 2018

This document was prepared by
Mr. Eoghan Ó Murchadha and Dr. Róisín Murphy.

Executive Summary and Key Findings

Background

The construction sector in Ireland has gone through a period of extremes in the last decade, from an exceptionally high growth to deep and prolonged recession. The backdrop to this report, however, is one of favourable economic and industry conditions. Economic growth is positive, exchequer balances are improving, unemployment continues to decline and sentiment within the construction industry is strong across most sub-sectors.

The construction labour market however, remains in a state of disequilibrium. The severe recession had devastating consequences on construction firms in Ireland resulting in company closures, redundancy and mass emigration. At the same time the number of new registrations onto construction education and training programmes plummeted as the industry was characterised as having uncertain career opportunities.

While the economy and the construction sector are currently in a growth cycle, there remain two legacy issues within the construction labour market that may hamper the ability of the sector to reach full potential. Firstly, for some companies, the threat of entering into another recession in the future may act as a deterrent to staff recruitment, most notably apprentices. In addition, due to the reduction in registrations on apprenticeship programmes for several years, there now lacks the requisite number of trained construction workers to meet demand for construction output across all sectors.

The *Demand for Skills in Construction* to 2020 report published by the CIF/DKM Economic Consultants in 2016 highlighted the need to increase the number of skilled construction workers to ensure the industry had the ability to meet future demand. The need is even more pronounced in light of the proposed €115bn expenditure as part of the National Development Plan (NDP). It is essential that the construction labour market has the capacity to deliver the priorities therein in a viable and timely manner.

The purpose of this report is to acquire construction labour market insight directly from employers with specific focus on employment trends, enablers and barriers.

Methodology

The CIF Apprenticeship Working Group authorised this research as part of an ongoing PhD project currently being undertaken in DIT. The report is an independent investigation offering unique insight gained directly from construction employers in two phases as follows:

Phase 1: Widespread survey of CIF member firms

A single senior member of each CIF member firm was identified and asked to voluntary complete an anonymous online questionnaire. Targeting a single senior person ensured that participants were of sufficiently high level to be able to speak with authority as to that firm's engagement with trades and apprentices.

A usable response from 229 CIF member firms was obtained equating to a 21% response rate.

Phase 2: Non-CIF member firms

The second phase involved administering the same survey to a sample of non-CIF construction firms to determine, where possible, if similar issues arose. Results indicated that the sentiment across non-CIF member firms was similar to that of CIF member firms.

The overall participation across both phases obtained responses from **all over Ireland** thus incorporating regional trends.

Additionally, firms operated across the full range of construction sub-sectors (civil engineering to small residential refurbishment) participated in the survey ensuring as wide a variety of perspectives were analysed.

The majority of respondent firms are Small and Medium Enterprises (SME's); in fact **52% of respondent firms employ fewer than 10 people**. Findings from the research thus provide critical information pertaining to the factors shaping the demand for labour within small enterprises which constitute the majority of construction companies.

A critical discovery from the research is that 86% of respondent companies note that there is an inadequate supply of qualified tradespeople, and this figure increases to 94% of large respondent firms.

Key findings

As noted, most firms employing tradespeople are main general construction contractors that employ fewer than 10 people in total. The majority of respondents currently employing tradespeople are employing those skilled in *Carpentry and Joinery*, *Brick and Stone laying* and *Plastering*; however, the largest number in terms of overall employment are in the *Electrical* trade explained by the number of electricians currently employed in significant numbers by large organisations, including semi-state bodies.

A critical discovery from the research is that **86% of respondent companies note that there is an inadequate supply of qualified tradespeople**, and this figure increases to 94% of large respondent firms. This is an alarming discovery given the well documented growth in the construction sector and future expenditure under the NDP.

Skills gaps have emerged across the full range of construction trades and are most pronounced in the "wet" trades (e.g. *Plastering*). The shortage is so severe that there exists the potential for long term problems, such as is the case of *Floor and Wall Tiling*, where no new apprentices have been registered in the last number of years.

As a mechanism to determine why some companies do not employ tradespeople the top three **barriers to employing tradespeople** were identified as being:

1. Discontinuous demand for work

2. Onerous legislative obligations

3. Costs of direct employment of construction trades

In terms of employing apprentices, only **29% of respondent companies currently employ apprentices**. Most commonly employed apprentices are *Carpentry & Joinery* followed by *Electrician* and *Plumbing*. However, the most common apprentice by number employed remains *Electrician* followed by *Plumbing* then *Carpentry and Joinery*.

It may be concluded from the low number of firms engaging apprentices that **residual uncertainty remains within the industry**, consequently a reluctance to employ apprentices for up to four years.

When asked to identify barriers to engaging in apprentice training, respondents noted the following as the three **key barriers to employing apprentices**:

1. Cost of releasing apprentices to off-the-job training

2. Lack of incentives from Government

3. Legislative obligations are too onerous

Many firms in the past employed apprentices, however, currently do not due to firm downsizing, lack of government incentives and onerous legislative obligations. The legacy of the severe recession, discontinuous demand for construction output and increased reliance on sub-contract and agency labour are some of the key factors contributing to this trend.

Perhaps the most important reason cited as to why firms are currently not employing apprentices was the **lack of available candidates for apprenticeship**. The number of new registrations onto construction apprenticeship programmes nationwide plummeted following the economic downturn, and currently accounts for approximately 25% of the annual intake of new apprentices.

Should the construction industry continue to grow as predicted, the lack of new construction apprenticeship registrations since 2013 will have a long term impact on the ability of the construction sector to reach potential output. In addition to putting upward pressure on labour costs, it is also possible that some trades (in particular "wet" trades) will be left with a void of available skills unless the issue is addressed soon.

Respondents were asked to identify factors which they believe would act as **enablers to engage in apprenticeship training**. The three key enabling factors were identified as being:

1. Incentives from Government

2. Better marketing of apprenticeships

3. Tax incentives for apprentices

Construction firms are acutely aware of the difficulties in attracting people into careers in construction employment, and strongly believe that a targeted attempt must be made by all stakeholders to address the identified skills shortage.

There is a shortage of qualified construction tradespeople across the family of construction trades and apprenticeships.

Recommendations

Findings from the research provide a unique insight into the current labour market issues faced by CIF member firms.

The evidence confirms that construction firms are experiencing a **shortage of qualified construction tradespeople across the family of construction trades and apprenticeships**.

Of critical importance however, is the huge reduction in registrations in construction apprenticeships which may have a longer term consequence of stifling the industry in reaching its full potential output.

It is on this basis that the following recommendations have been made as a consequence of the findings of the widespread survey of CIF member firms:

1. Targeted use of the **National Training Fund (NTF)**, e.g. a waiver for NTF contributions for those firms that engage apprentices.

2. Zero-rate **employers PRSI contributions** for those engaging apprentices in trades in need of stimulus.

3. Reintroduce the statutory **employer redundancy rebate** as an incentive to employment.

4. Review the **duration and sequence of off-the-job apprenticeship phases**, to be undertaken as part of a planned initiative to improve employer engagement.

5. Introduce an apprenticeship **trainee grant** for a limited time until the shortage of construction apprenticeships has been addressed.

6. Implement a **"Visiting Assessor Scheme"** to relieve the onus of assessment from employers yet ensuring a commitment to standards and quality across companies.

7. Promotion of **shared apprenticeship training** between companies.

8. Increased **apprenticeship engagement by State and semi-state bodies** as employers.

9. Establish a collaborative forum (involving all stakeholders) to actively and collectively **market the construction industry** as a viable and diverse career choice.

10. Development of an **"Approved Apprenticeship Employer"** marketing initiative as a mechanism to promote and certify companies that employ apprentices.

1

Introduction to the report

1.1 Background

The Irish construction industry is in recovery following the worst recession in living memory. Construction employment is increasing year on year since 2013, yet there has been a distinct lag in the increase in apprentices joining the labour market during that period.

The Construction Industry Federation (CIF) authorised a research study of its membership to better understand the use of apprenticeships within the industry. The report, undertaken as part of a PhD research project within DIT, is thus an independent study of CIF members which was conducted in Q3 2017 by means of a survey of CIF member firms.

The study is a first of its kind investigation into the sentiment of employer firms within the construction industry. As such, it represents new knowledge which will bridge the existing gap in knowledge pertaining to trades and apprenticeship skills utilisation within the Irish construction industry.

The following report presents the findings of the study.

Note

It is acknowledged that the CIF has a focus upon all aspects of Apprenticeships. These issues are determined by the CIF Apprenticeship Working Group and are detailed in the 'CIF Apprenticeship Strategy'.

As those issues are being pursued separately by the CIF, they are not included in the scope of this survey which focuses mainly upon employment trends, enablers and barriers.

1.2 Membership

Membership of the CIF is made up of firms of varying sizes and not individual persons. The CIF accepts all sizes of construction company as a member and is therefore representative of the size and scope of the wider construction industry.

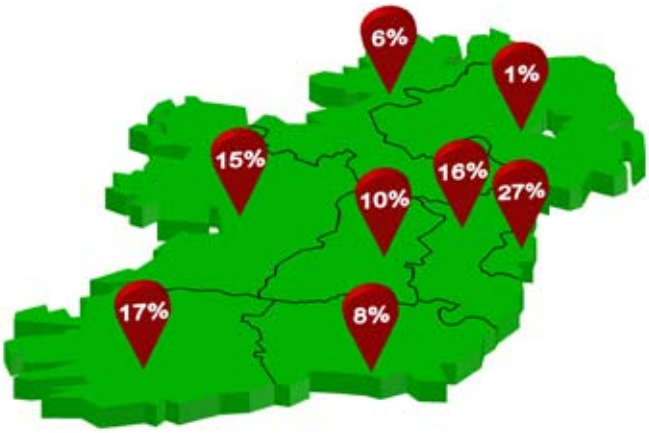


Figure 1: Indicative spread of CIF membership by region

At the time of publication, the membership base of the CIF, excluding corporate partners, was 1,255 firms. These companies, of varying size, are located throughout the island of Ireland.

The location with the highest number of registered members is Dublin with more than a quarter of the membership body reporting head offices there.

Position	County	Percentage of Membership
1	Dublin	27.5
2	Cork	12
3	Galway	7.5

Figure 2: Top three locations of CIF member head offices

Construction employment is increasing since 2013, yet there has been a distinct lag in the increase in apprentices joining the labour market during that period.

1.3 Structure of the report

The main driver of this report is the unsettling lack of apprentice registrations in relation to the positive output of the construction industry. In particular, there is considerable concern over the diminished capacity of the wet trades (e.g. *Plastering, Painting & Decorating*). Prior to the research, only anecdotal evidence existed as to the reasons behind the lack of apprentices, be it employer or societally led.

To that end, the CIF, through its Apprenticeship Working Group, authorised a research study of their own membership for the purposes of assessing engagement in trades and apprenticeship training.

Therefore, the scope of this report is focussed upon the trends of construction industry firms regarding their engagement in trades and apprenticeship skills. The emphasis of the report lies primarily on CIF member firms.

The report aims to address the lack of empirical evidence regarding training engagement in an Irish context. The analysis focusses on the drivers and barriers to investing in apprenticeship training from the perspective of the employer.

The subsequent report is structured in the following form.

Methodology

The rationale for the study and the methodology employed are detailed therein. As such, the type of survey undertaken is described along with sample size, response rates and interpretation explained.

Background to the study

For context, the performance of the construction industry is examined both economically and as a provider of employment. Particular focus is paid to the levels of trade and apprenticeship employment.

Analysis - Trades

An analysis of the utilisation of trades by CIF member employers is described here. Analysis includes the identification of barriers to trade employment and the emergence of skills gaps.

Analysis - Apprentices

The engagement of CIF employers in apprenticeship training is examined here. Potential barriers and enablers are identified, and the level of future apprenticeship engagement explored.

Analysis – Non-CIF members

To fully explore the sentiment within the wider industry, the level of engagement of a sample of non-CIF member firms in apprenticeship training is detailed. In addition, the level of future potential engagement is explored.

Conclusions and Recommendations

A synopsis of the report is outlined, highlighting key findings. Finally, tangible measures achievable by stakeholders are identified and described.

2

Methodology

2.1 Introduction

The research study conducted was a two-phase quantitative investigation. Phase 1 of the study involved CIF members only and was aimed at identifying involvement in apprenticeship training, the use of trades in construction and the barriers to member firms engaging apprenticeships. As part of this phase, respondents were asked to identify other contractors, engaged by them, who may be willing to participate in the study.

The list of contractors identified constituted the target population of phase 2 of the research study. This phase built on the findings of Phase 1 by engaging those firms identified, thereby extending the parameters of the research study to include a sample of non-CIF member firms.

This study also forms part of current PhD research. Respondents were informed of the nature of the research, assured of confidentiality of data and guaranteed that no respondent would be identified in the publication of findings nor in further research.

2.2 Quantitative Study Phase 1 – CIF member firms

Identification was made of key individuals responsible for employment and engagement in each of the CIF member companies. Targeting a key individual within each member firm ensured that participants were of a sufficiently high level to be able to speak with authority as to that firm's engagement with trades and apprentices. Moreover, by selecting one target individual per firm, the study endeavoured to generate as high a response rate as possible while at the same time reducing the possibility of double-counting.

Member companies of the CIF received an invitation via email to engage with the research. The invitation to the survey, conducted online, was accompanied by an explanation as to the purpose of the research, in addition to guaranteeing confidentiality and anonymity of responses.

Although 23% of the target population responded, some responses were unusable due to the level of incomplete data provided. When these unusable responses are removed the final response rate was 22%, representing 229 individual firms. It is this cohort of viable respondents whose data forms the basis of this report.

The study was aimed at identifying involvement in apprenticeship training, the use of trades in construction and the barriers to member firms engaging apprenticeships

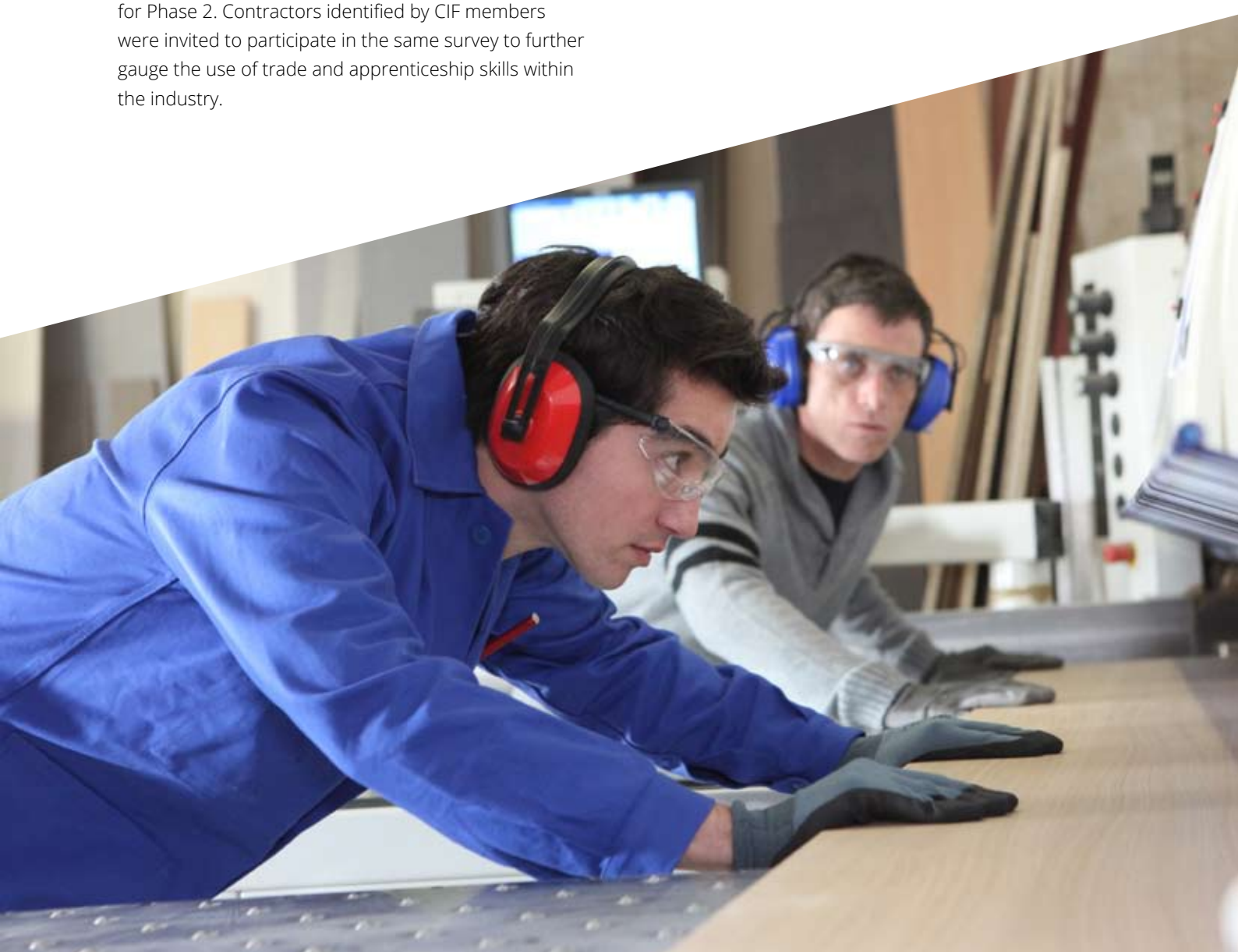
Given that respondents occupy senior management roles within their respective firms, the data is expected to be sound and reliable. Consequently, the report is satisfactorily representative of employer sentiment.

2.3 Quantitative Study Phase 2 – Non-CIF member firms

The Irish construction industry is so diverse that there are more than 40,000 companies who identify as being construction industry firms. It was therefore deemed important to extend the survey where possible to include representative firms of the industry who are not CIF members.

The findings of Phase 1 informed the respondent list for Phase 2. Contractors identified by CIF members were invited to participate in the same survey to further gauge the use of trade and apprenticeship skills within the industry.

In a manner like that of Phase 1, where possible, identification was made of key individuals responsible for employment and engagement in each of these sub-contracting firms to ensure as high a response rate as possible to the research study. However, the results present within this report cannot be considered generalisable to the 40,000 population but are indicative of sentiment within the sector.



3

Background to the study

3.1 Economic Background

The construction industry is in a strong recovery phase. Output and employment have all increased steadily since 2013 and short to medium term outlooks predict that the industry is to continue to grow. However, the current construction environment is very different from both the highs of the economic boom and the lows of the recession.

Figure 3: Key construction indicator – value of construction industry output 2007

At its peak in 2007, the construction industry in Ireland was worth approximately 24% of the country's total GNP. In terms of value of output, this was in the region of €38.6 billion. Though a major provider of employment and revenue, the construction industry had overshot all reasonable levels of sustainability.

Consequently, the industry contracted in tandem with the economic downturn of the mid 2000s. For five consecutive years, construction output declined until marginal growth occurred in 2013.

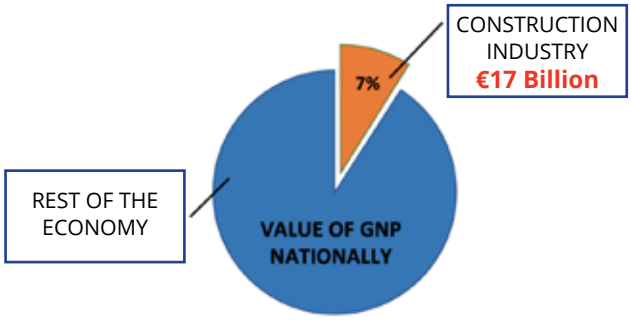


Figure 4: Key construction indicator – value of construction industry output 2017

Today, construction output stands at roughly 7% of GNP (2017) and while this is a welcome improvement from the trough of the recessionary period, it is still below a comfortably sustainable level. Accepted norms for the output of the industry in a country such as Ireland is 10 to 12 % of GNP. Consequently, Ireland's construction sector can be said to be operating at approximately 60% capacity.

Figure 5: Construction Output v Optimum Output @ 12% GNP

Several recent reports have indicated the capacity of the construction industry to thrive in the coming years.[1] [2] It is thus an opportune time to examine the extent to which the industry has the requisite expertise available to meet the domestic infrastructural and housebuilding needs in addition to the requirements of ongoing foreign investment, particularly considering potential investment opportunities created by Brexit.

3.2 Employment

The construction industry is a major provider of employment nationally. In 2007, 18% of total national employment was driven directly or indirectly by construction related activity.

In terms of people, this equated to in excess of 270,000 individuals directly employed by construction firms. When indirect employment (created through construction related activity) is included, the total level of employment was almost 380,000 people.

The single largest sector of construction output has traditionally been housing. Accordingly, there is a direct correlation statistically between residential completions and direct construction employment.

3.3 Construction Trades

The original trades which represented apprenticeship training in Ireland, prior to the government's recent expansion of apprenticeship are separated in to *families*. At the time this research study was undertaken, the *Construction* family constituted the following trades.

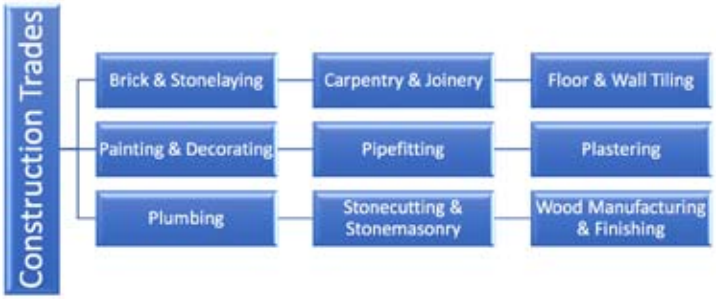


Figure 7: ***Construction Family of Trades***

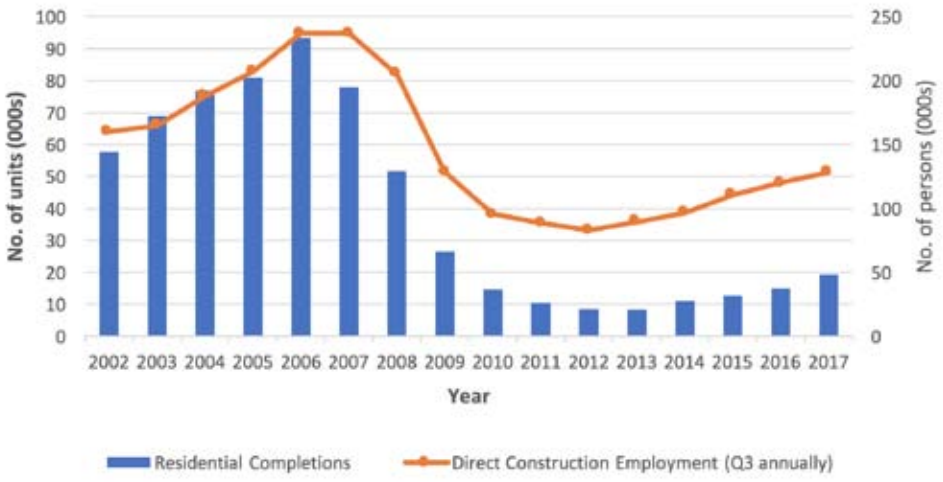


Figure 6: ***Correlation between residential completions and direct construction employment***

[1] *Demand for Skills in Construction to 2020, DKM, October 2016, p25-28*
[2] *Ireland Annual Review 2017, AECOM, January 2017, p6-11*

In addition to the *Construction* family in Figure 7, many other trades, crucial to the operation of the construction industry, are to be found in other families of trades, namely, the *Electrical*, *Engineering* and *Motor* families. Such trades are, for example, but not limited to:

- Electrical
- Metal Fabrication
- Construction Plant Fitting

3.4 Apprenticeship Structure

The current model of apprenticeship training in Ireland for the traditional craft trades is called the Standards Based System (SBS) and has been in operation since its inception in 1991. A model of dual based training, the SBS divides an apprenticeship into phases of *on-the-job* and *off-the-job* training.[3]

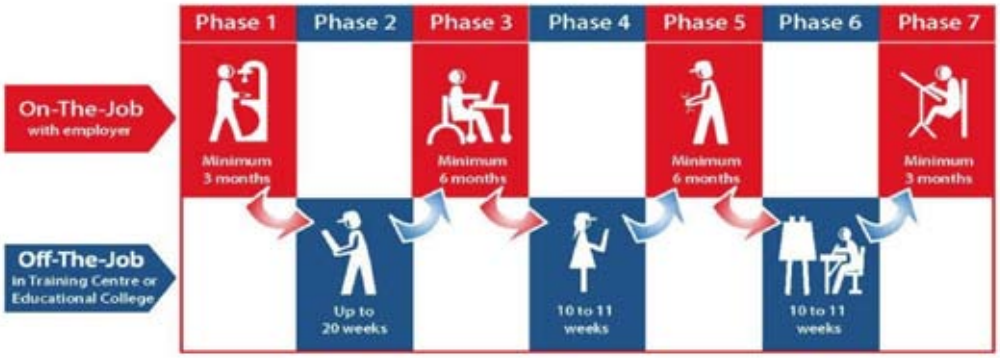


Figure 8: ***Structure of SBS Apprenticeship Model***

This form of training, known as an 'employer-led' model, is the most common form of apprenticeship training in Europe and is the primary feature of a 'dual based' training system due to its capacity to deliver blended learning.

Unfortunately, in Ireland, the SBS training system was shown to be over-reliant upon employer engagement. During the economic downturn of the 2000s, the apprenticeship system was thrown into disarray with no back-up plan in place to deal with the lack of employer engagement.

3.5 Construction skills

Direct construction employment peaked in Q2 2007 at 273,900 people. Apprentices, as employees, are part of the direct construction employee cohort. Employer engagement in apprenticeship training can be measured by examining the numbers of new apprentice registrations annually.

New apprentice registrations peaked in 2006 with 8,306 new apprentices hired. The level of intake had been steadily recording figures in excess of 8,000 for three years. Apprentice population levels peaked earlier in 2005. At that time, the number of apprentices was 30,319. This remained stable in 2006 (30,016) but began to decrease in 2007 (28,506).[4]

During the economic downturn of the 2000s, the apprenticeship system was thrown into disarray with no back-up plan in place to deal with the lack of employer engagement.

[3] *Apprenticeship Phases, SOLAS, September 2017*
[4] *Apprenticeship data, SOLAS, September 2017*

All three employment indicators measured here contracted in 2008.

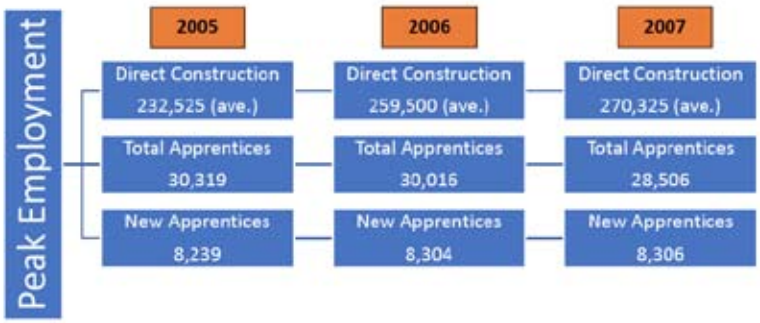


Figure 9: Direct construction and apprentice levels 2005 to 2007

Investment in apprentice training was reduced considerably during the economic downturn as construction firms downsized to remain solvent. It is reported that 24% of all construction firms became insolvent during the economic downturn. This is further endorsed by the CSO statistics on enterprise deaths (company closures) during the same period. It was not until 2012 that the number of construction insolvencies began to stabilise.

A catastrophic collapse of the entire apprenticeship system was averted by the intervention of the then national training authority, FÁS, through the implementation of such initiatives as the *Competency Determination Mechanism.* This system allowed unemployed apprentices to complete their training and qualify under certain conditions.

Figure 10: ***Number of new enterprises compared to enterprise closures, annually in the construction industry (2006 - 2014)***[5]

The insolvencies of employers and the reduction in employment had a devastating impact upon apprenticeship training. By 2010 there were more unemployed apprentices than employed apprentices in Ireland and by 2013 the apprenticeship system had plummeted to just 7% of direct construction employment.[6]

Additionally, new apprentice registrations declined by more than 80% by 2010. The impact upon the construction apprenticeships was more severe, with a 95% decline in new registrations by 2012 when compared to its 2005 peak.

Investment in apprentice training was reduced considerably during the economic downturn as construction firms downsized to remain solvent.

[5] *Business Demographics (Enterprise Births and Deaths), CSO, October 2017*
[6] *Apprenticeship data, SOLAS, September 2017*

3.6 Current trends in training

The decrease in investment in training can clearly be seen from the current levels of new apprentices annually. From 2003 until the downturn in 2007, the *Construction* family of trades was responsible for more than half of all new registrations. By 2012, this group accounted for less than 15% of the intake of new apprentices. Today, the construction family of trades is recovering slowly and accounts for 26% of the annual intake of new apprentices.

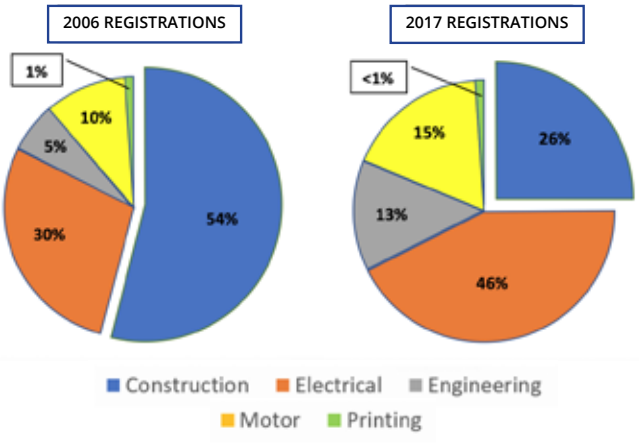


Figure 11: ***Comparison of 2006 and 2017 new apprentice registrations across the Families of Trades***

Within the *Construction* family of trades, the impact was felt worst by those referred to as 'wet trades'. The trade of *Floor and Wall Tiling* was so badly impacted that it has ceased to register any new apprentices since 2013 and as such has become a 'dead apprenticeship'.

The trades of *Painting and Decorating* and *Plastering* have also recorded troubling declines. As can be seen from their intake figures, these trades declined to just single digit figures of new entrants at their lowest levels.

Trade	Peak intake	Lowest level intake	Current intake
Brick & Stonelaying	679 (2004)	3 (2013)	60 (2017)
Painting & Decorating	161 (2006)	8 (2013)	44 (2017)
Plastering	310 (2004)	4 (2012)	34 (2017)

Figure 12: ***Performance of key 'wet' trades***[7]

The delayed reaction to construction growth is also felt in those trades referred to as 'wood trades'. The traditional backbone of the *Construction* trades, *Carpentry and Joinery*, is recording numbers for new entrants equivalent to just 21% of its pre-recession peak.

Worse still is the trend in the 'new' trade of *Wood Manufacturing and Finishing*. This trade is the result of a merger of the old trades of *Cabinetmaking* and *Wood Machining* and endeavoured to fortify the trades through amalgamation. However, registrations for 2017 were below the recorded registrations of 2008 for the old *Cabinetmaking* trade alone.

This lag in construction trades is despite the fact that the national economy is in recovery and construction output is recording stable, positive growth. Naturally, stakeholders are concerned that the same fate awaits these trades as *Floor and Wall Tiling*.

[7] *Apprenticeship data, SOLAS, September 2017*

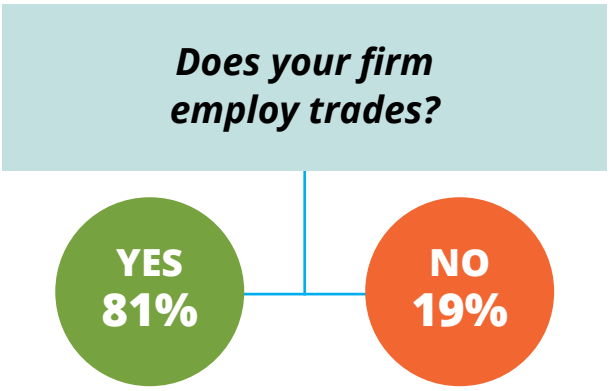
4

Analysis - Trades

4.1 Introduction

This section presents findings from the survey administered to CIF member firms.

The clear majority of CIF firms are engaged in the employment of tradespeople. This indicates that trades play a significant role in the makeup of the construction labour market.



Respondent firms that confirmed they employ trades, most commonly employ carpenters & joiners. However, there are a greater number of electricians employed overall as it tends to be the case that larger firms employ electricians in greater numbers.

Most common trades by employers		
Place	**Trade**	**Amount of respondents employing this trade**
1	Carpentry & Joinery	64%
2	Brick & Stonelaying	35%
3	Plastering	27%

Figure 14: Most commonly employed trades by number of respondents

Most common trades by employees		
Place	**Trade**	**Share of total trades employees**
1	Electrical	36%
2	Pipefitting	18%
3	Carpentry & Joinery	10%

Figure 15: Most prevalent trades by number of employees

4.2 Demography

When examining the respondents who indicated that they employ trades, it was found that the majority are main contractors operating in general construction. In addition, these firms are small, with almost half of the companies employing 10 people or less.

As these firms are small and indicate that they are main contractors, it would appear to be the case that these employers rely upon having the required skills in-house. Furthermore, most construction companies in Ireland are micro firms. It is likely then, that the majority group here (1 – 10 employees) are predominantly micro-firms. As a cohort, the majority here, can be expected to be engaged in single trade projects.

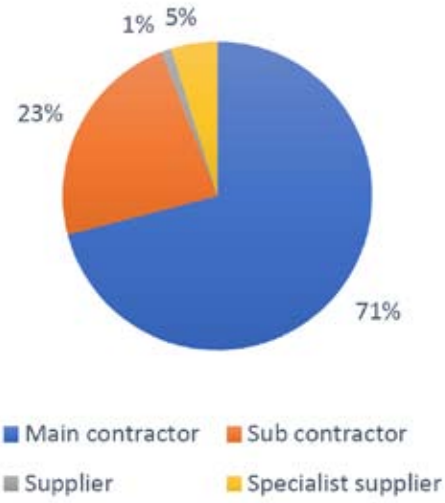


Figure 16: Make-up of trades employers

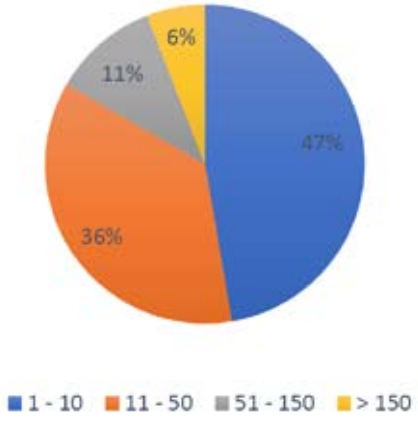


Figure 17: Size of trades employer firms

4.3 Barriers to employing trades

Those firms who replied that they did not employ trades were asked to identify the main barriers to them directly engaging this form of employment. The most prominent reasons cited were:

- **Discontinuous demand for trade work**
- **Onerous nature of legislative obligations**
- **Costs of direct employment of trades**
- **Lower cost of using sub-contractors and agencies**

From the response of firms, it is clear that the industry has not yet fully recovered from the recent downturn. Whilst this is evident from economic markers, it is reinforced here by the sentiment of employers. Specifically, a *'discontinuous demand for trade work'* indicates that firms are not yet sourcing significant amounts of work to drive confidence in the industry.

4.4 Existing skilled labour

Prior to this survey only anecdotal evidence existed regarding the availability of skilled labour. This report shows conclusively that most respondents feel that there is insufficient skilled labour at present in the construction sector. Those trades which were identified as having the lowest levels of available skills are predominantly wet trades.

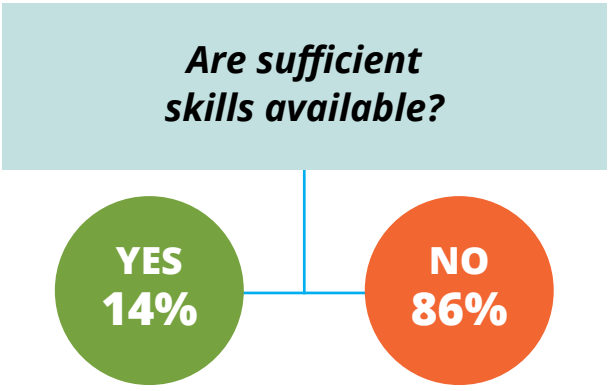


Figure 18: Responses to Question: Are there sufficient trade skills available currently in the construction industry?

A critical finding is that respondents indicated that skills gaps are emerging across the full range of construction skills. Those trades which are exhibiting the most occurrences of shortages are the trades with which the greatest concerns have already been raised in terms of sustainability of skills due to lagging rates of training.

Trades exhibiting skills shortages		
Place	**Trade**	**% of those indicating an extreme or significant shortage in this trade**
1	Brick & Stonelaying	68%
2	Carpentry & Joinery	60%
3	Plastering	57%
4	Plumbing	45%
5	Stonecutting & Stonemasonry	44%

Figure 19: Trades identified as having the most shortages of skilled labour

Respondents commented on a wide variety of issues affecting the availability of skilled labour. The most significant and recurring responses included:

Availability of foreign labour within the industry

Impact of emigration upon trades levels

Increased trade rates due to lack of available trades

Lack of apprentices supplementing skills levels

There would appear to be a void in skills availabilities, left vacant due to the emigration of Irish trades people during the economic downturn. This lack of skills appears to have been supplemented to some degree by the use of non-Irish labour. It is unclear whether these individuals are skilled or are simply being utilised for labour. Whether this is prevalent throughout all the industry is unknown, but it has been highlighted as a significant issue by respondents.

There would appear to be a void in skills availability, left vacant due to the emigration of Irish trades people during the economic downturn.

5

Analysis - Apprentices

5.1 Introduction

This section deals with the level of employment of apprentices by member firms. In addition, the extent to which construction trades are utilised is reported.

Most member firms are **not** engaged in apprentice training. This is an extremely worrying statistic for the future of trade skills.

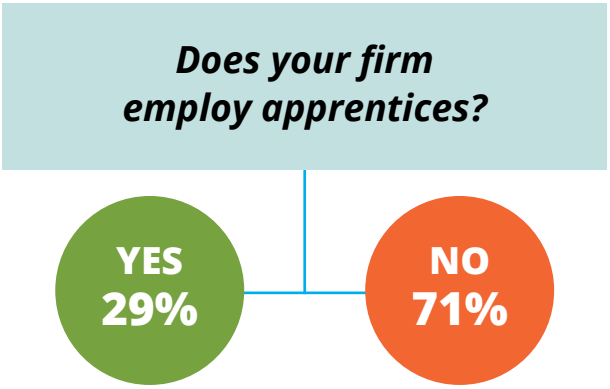


Figure 20: Responses to Question: Does your firm employ apprentices?

This finding affirms the current trend emerging that the rate of apprentice employment is lagging construction employment.

Of those employers who responded that they do employ apprentices, most indicate that they employ apprentice *Carpenters and Joiners*. As with the employment of trades, the most common trade by volume of apprentices employed is *Electricians*.

Most common trades by employers		
Place	**Trade**	**Amount of respondents employing apprentices in this trade**
1	Carpentry & Joinery	43%
2	Electrical	33%
3	Plumbing	25%

Figure 21: Most commonly employed trades by number of respondents

Most common apprentice trades by apprentices employed		
Place	**Trade**	**Share of total trades employees**
1	Electrical	56%
2	Plumbing	28%
3	Carpentry & Joinery	8%

Figure 22: Most commonly employed trades by number of apprentices

This trend is echoed in the number of new entrants. When the same grouping of trades is analysed for new registrations, the same three trades emerge as the most prevalent for new apprentices.

Most member firms are not engaged in apprentice training. This is an extremely worrying statistic for the future of trade skills

Most common apprentice trades by apprentice registrations (Year end 2017)		
Place	**Trade**	**Share of total trades employees**
1	Electrical	38%
2	Plumbing	12%
3	Carpentry & Joinery	10%

Figure 23: Most common apprentice trades by number of new registrations

5.2 Barriers to employing apprentices

Respondents who do not currently engage in training cited the following as the most significant reasons for not engaging:

Cost of releasing apprentices to off-the-job training
Lack of incentives from government
Legislative obligations are too onerous

These barriers highlight a range of issues for employers all of which are financial. This would seem to indicate a lack of faith within the industry to sustain investment in training. This is most likely predicated on the extent to which the economic downturn affected employer insolvency, output and employment.

The 71% of respondents who previously indicated that they do not train apprentices were asked if they previously engaged in training. Over half indicated that they have not.

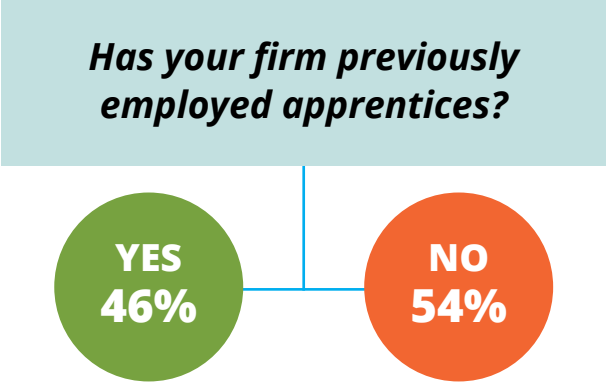


Figure 24: Responses to Question: Has your firm previously engaged in apprentice training?

This cohort cited the following as reasons for ceasing training:

- **Lack of available candidates for apprenticeships**
- **Downsizing of firms due to economic duress**
- **Lack of government incentives**

These reasons highlight a similar range of issues as those specified as *barriers to engaging in training*. Additionally, firms report that there is a lack of available candidates willing to engage in apprenticeships. This is an important finding given that both the economy and industry are in recovery. This issue would appear to be partly indicative of the lag in apprenticeship training. Consequently, it may be assumed that there is a reluctance by young individuals to choose construction related employment possibly as a result of career advice given to students in second level education. This issue demands attention by those stakeholders best suited to addressing the marketing of apprenticeships at second level.

Interestingly, potential employers do not feel that lower costs, achievable through the use of unskilled labour, is a reason to avoid training. The following were highlighted as negative determinants.

- **Lower costs by using unqualified labour**
- **Lower costs by using non-Irish labour**
- **Company's ability to train apprentices**
- **Overall length of apprenticeships**

To assess the future stability of apprenticeship training, current **trade employers** as a group, were asked if they currently employ apprentices. Almost two thirds do not.

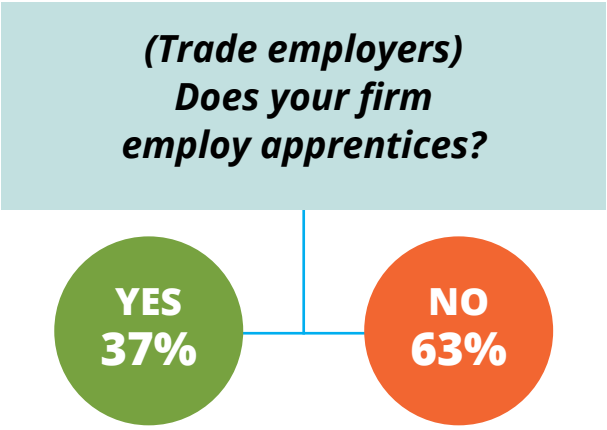


Figure 25: Responses to Question: Does your firm employ apprentices? (Trade Employers only)

Clearly, this is a development which bodes ill for an industry in recovery. Sustainable skills levels rely upon stable apprenticeship intake levels. Accordingly, this low level of employer engagement has the capacity to derail any recovery in construction skills. Particularly given that these respondents are current employers of trades, it is this cohort who are the key to stability in training levels. Specific attention should be paid as to why this group do not significantly engage in apprenticeship training.

Lack of incentives from government

Lower cost by using sub-contractors and agencies

Legislative obligations are too onerous

As costs are a significant factor for employers, the significance of 'a lack of incentives' as a barrier to train is understandable. Furthermore, the 'lower cost by using sub-contractors and agencies' exists specifically because of a lack of skills generally. Since this trend is unlikely to be reversed unless an increase in available skills emerges, it is even more important that employers engage in training. To that end, serious consideration should be given to mechanisms by which employers may avail of incentives to train.

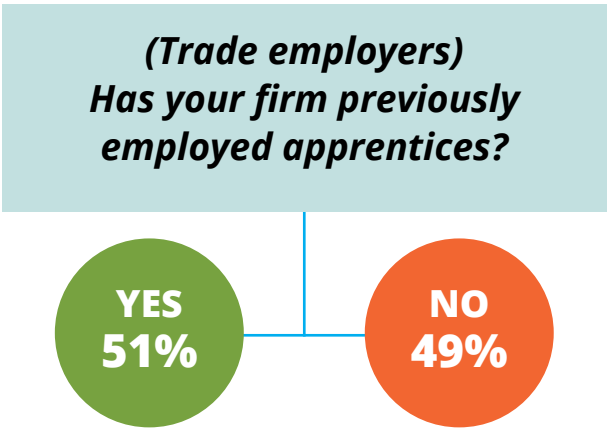


Figure 26: Responses to Question: Has your firm previously employed apprentices? (Trade Employers only)

As such a high proportion of trades employers are not currently employing apprentices, this cohort was asked if they previously engaged apprentices. Just over half (51%) indicated that they have done in the past.The specific reasons for ceasing to train apprentices are highlighted as:

Company downsized

Lack of incentives from government

Legislative obligations are too onerous

Lower cost of using sub-contractors and agencies

Cost of releasing apprentice to off-the-job training

As before, the barriers to training follow the same trend with financial decisions being paramount. In terms of companies downsizing as a reason to cease training, this would lead to tentative hope that in recovery these firms might re-engage in training.

In addition, this cohort made the following comments in relation to existing difficulties regarding training:

- lack of potential apprentices
- lack of sufficient work to support training

As previously stated, there is no evidence to suggest that young people have stopped wanting to work in construction. It is possible that there is a reluctance to encourage potential recruits towards construction related employment such as apprenticeships. This is having a negative effect on employers' capacity to recruit new trainees.

Undecided employers are willing to train but they need to be persuaded

Furthermore, the industry is not yet functioning at peak. Currently, the construction sector is operating at approximately 60% of its recommended output. This appears to be causing a lack of confidence in employers' ability to invest in apprentices.

Since confidence is a key issue, and the *'lack of sufficient work'* has been identified as a potential barrier, consideration should be given to mechanisms by which alternative delivery of employment and training may be achieved. This should include the possibility for shared delivery of training by employers, so as to limit the potential perceived risk by employers in relation to investment in training.

5.3 Future intention to train apprentices

To determine the stability of apprenticeship training in the short term, respondents were asked if they intended to engage in apprentice training in the next four years (approximate lifecycle of an apprenticeship). This would hopefully indicate whether members are confident of the industry in recovery being able to support investment in training.

Less than half of respondents intend to engage in apprenticeship training in the immediate future. The most significant finding of this question is the size of the cohort who responded that they are undecided. This is an extremely important issue – that of the future supply of trade skills. It may be concluded that this *'undecided'* cohort are technically willing to train, but they need to be persuaded. Only the government has the power to provide the appropriate enablers to these potential employers. It is therefore imperative to be cognisant of the potential drivers of engagement as indicated by this group of respondents.

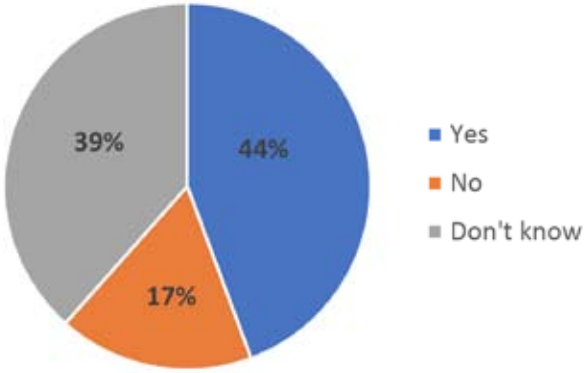


Figure 27: Response to Question: Does your firm intend employing apprentices in the future?

When asked to identify those factors which would act as enablers for them to engage in training, the following were unearthed:

- **Incentives from the government**
- **Financial training incentive from SOLAS**
- **Better marketing of apprenticeships**
- **Tax incentives for apprentices**

The same trend emerges here as, in one way or another, the barriers and enablers are related to costs. As before, employers need financial stability in terms of incentives to engage in training. Similarly, the enablers mentioned, equally highlight the need for financial investment by government for employers to train.

Furthermore, employers feel strongly about the need for better marketing of apprenticeships and to that end have highlighted the need for incentives for the apprentices themselves. Firms are acutely aware of the difficulties in attracting the right kinds of individual into construction employment and at present this is hampered by a reluctance of young people to engage apprenticeships. Firms feel that better marketing, particularly at second level education would help inform those involved in career advice of the wealth of career opportunities involved in the construction industry and, stimulate interest in young people to become involved.

As before, firms were asked to identify factors which would act as barriers to their engagement in training. The following were highlighted as extremely significant:

- **Legislative obligations are too onerous**
- **Lack of incentives from government**
- **Cost of releasing apprentices to off-the-job training**

The emerging trend is that in one way or another, barriers and enablers are related to costs

To gain insight into the extent to which members intend to train apprentices, those respondents who indicated that they **do** intend to train were asked to quantify this in terms of apprentices.

Most common apprentice trades by employers		
Place	**Trade**	**Amount of respondents who intend to train apprentices in this trade**
1	Carpentry & Joinery	21%
2	Electrical	17%
3	Pipefitting	15%

Figure 28: Most common apprentice trades by number of respondents (intention to train)

Most common apprentice trades by numbers of apprentices		
Place	**Trade**	**Share of total apprentices, members intend to train**
1	Electrical	46%
2	Pipefitting	13%
3	Carpentry & Joinery	12%

Figure 29: Most common apprentice trades by number of apprentices (intention to train)

It should be noted that there exists a significant outlier in the data in relation to the number of apprentices intended to train, hence the significant figure of 46% for *Electrical*. However, when this outlier is eliminated, the same three trades are represented as most prevalent.

A significant point is that the above tables do not include 'wet trades'. By their omission, this constitutes a worrying trend that there is a potential lack of investment in these trades. Coupled with the current training issues such as low registrations and the dormant state of Floor and Wall Tiling, this trend portentously indicates a future construction sector of lost skills.

The omission of 'wet trades' from firms intentions to train constitutes a worrying trend that there is a potential lack of investment in these trades

Firms are acutely aware of the difficulties in attracting the right kinds of individual into construction employment and at present this is hampered by a reluctance of young people to engage in construction apprenticeships

6

Analysis – Non-CIF member firms

6.1 Introduction

This section deals with the sentiment of non-CIF member firms along the same lines of inquiry as the previous analysis. Findings presented here were uncovered during phase 2 of the research study, which involved a sample of non-CIF members.

All the respondents reported that they were employers of trades. This is in keeping with the role of most of these firms as sub-contractors, thereby delivering a service to the main contractor. However, not all the respondents are employers of apprentices, with a third indicating that they do not.

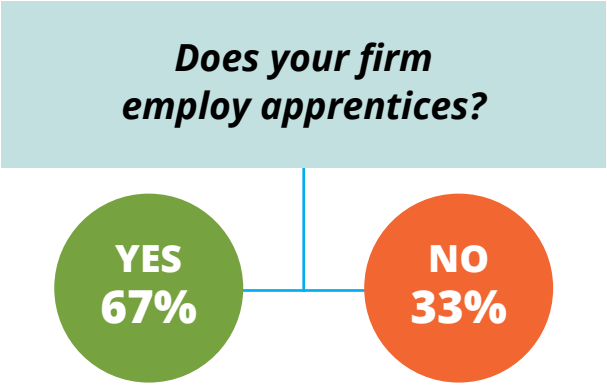


Figure 30: ***Responses to Question: Does your firm employ apprentices?***

The two most prevalent trades for the employment of apprentices were *Electrical* and *Plumbing*. This appears to be in line with data from SOLAS regarding new registrations of apprentices annually which shows these two trades as two of the top three construction related trades for numbers of new entrants annually. The surprising omission from the data uncovered from these firms was that of *Carpentry and Joinery*, which has the second highest level of registrations for construction related trades.

Most common apprentice trades by employers		
Place	**Trade**	**Amount of respondents employing apprentices in this trade**
1	Electrical	50%
2	Plumbing	25%

Figure 31: ***Most common apprentice trades by number of respondents***

6.2 Barriers to employing apprentices

Respondents who do not currently engage in training cited the following as the most significant reasons for not engaging:

- **Lack of incentives from government**
- **Legislative obligations are too onerous**
- **Lower cost by using sub-contractors and agencies**
- **Cost of releasing apprentices to off-the-job training**

These findings are a mirror of those of CIF member firms confirming the fact that the above issues are prevalent throughout the industry. Respondents revealed that they would need more work to be confident enough to invest in training. This further repeats the sentiment of employers that they are not yet confident in the recovery of the construction sector.

6.3 Future intention to train apprentices

As with CIF member firms, respondents were asked if they intended to engage in apprentice training in the next four years.

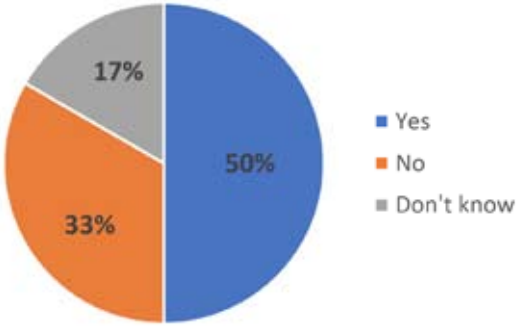


Figure 32: ***Response to Question: Does your firm intend employing apprentices in the future?***

Considering that 67% of these respondents are currently employing apprentices, the findings above show a reduction in the number of those certain to engage in training in the short term. When looking at those who do not intend to train apprentices, the figure is consistent at 33% which at least indicates that this cohort is not increasing in size.

These respondents feel that the following are measures which would significantly stimulate investment in apprenticeship training:

Financial training incentive from SOLAS

Tax incentives for apprentices

Tax incentive from the government

Better marketing of apprenticeships

As with CIF firms, the same possible enablers to engagement in training emerge, most prevalent of which is 'incentives'. It is worthy of note that these potential drivers are highlighted by employers whose diversity across the industry is extreme. All sizes of employers, engaged in all manner of project feel the same about the potential drivers to improving engagement in training.

A number of non-CIF employers revealed that they would need more work to be confident enough to invest in training

6.4 Available skilled labour

Respondents were asked as to their experiences of skills gaps at present within the industry. Most feel that there is insufficient skilled labour currently available in the construction sector.

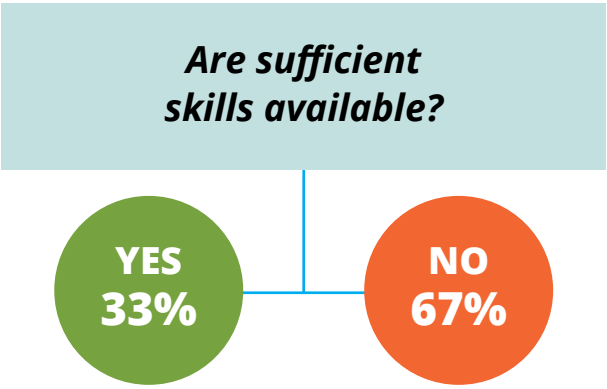


Figure 33: Responses to Question: Are there sufficient trade skills available currently in the construction industry?

A mixture of trades is highlighted as having shortages. Most surprisingly, is the inclusion of *Electrical*, which may be indicative of the size of the respondents' work, given that members of this cohort are generally small.

Trades exhibiting skills shortages		
Place	**Trade**	**% of those indicating an extreme or significant shortage in this trade**
1	Electrical	50%
2	Plumbing	33%
3	Brick & Stonelaying	17%

Figure 34: Trades identified as having the most shortages of skilled labour

It is also worthy of note that these employers are finding considerable shortages at present in the 'wet' trades. Apart from Electrical, the same trades were identified as exhibiting skills gaps by CIF member firms.

Most respondents feel that there is insufficient skilled labour currently in the construction sector.

7

Conclusions & Recommendations

7.1 Conclusion

This report presents findings from the first of a kind study of the membership of the Construction Industry Federation, providing new knowledge directly from employers in the industry today.

The majority of respondents are small to medium size enterprises employing fewer than 10 people and individually do not employ apprentices in large numbers. As a group, they represent the largest cohort within the industry and collectively employ more than any other subsection of the sector.

Two critical findings emanate from the membership survey, which present serious implications for the construction industry labour force in Ireland, namely:

- 71% of member firms are currently not engaged in apprentice training.
- 63% of existing trades employers do not employ apprentices

These statistics raise serious concern for the future of the construction labour market particularly in light of the fact that members have confirmed the existence of a skills gap currently within the industry.

Furthermore, as can be seen from the analysis, the wet trades have been identified as being in the most critical condition. Any potential recovery within these trades is further impeded by the lag in new registrations of apprentices. Immediate action is thus required in order to avert a collapse of training in these trades.

Moreover it is possible for the deterioration of trades to continue to such an extent that they could suffer the same fate as *Floor and Wall Tiling* which has become a 'dead apprenticeship' due to the lack of new entrants since 2013.

The industry is currently operating at approximately 60% of its sustainable capacity and given the importance of the sector to the Irish economy as a whole, it is imperative that significant actions are taken to address labour supply shortages.

7.2 Recommendations

Ireland's apprentice training model is predicated upon a sufficient number of employers willing to engage in training. It is therefore vital to stimulate employer engagement in order to avert the previously stated potential skills crisis.

Member firms identified a number of barriers to the engagement of apprentices, thus the following recommendations specifically identify mechanisms by which the barriers identified could be addressed.

7.2.1 Incentivisation

A lack of incentives for employers to engage in training apprentices has emerged as the most significant barrier to respondent companies. It is important for legislators to be cognisant of the fact that a lack of incentives is comparable to disincentives.

RECOMMENDATION 1

Consideration should be given to the targeted use of the National Training Fund (NTF). Firms currently contribute 0.7% of reckonable income into the NTF which is set to increase to 1% by 2020. It is possible that this may result in a negative response by employers, who could perceive that no tangible benefit will be observed.

It is recommended that the government implement a waiver of NTF contributions for those firms which engage in apprenticeships. This would act as a significant enabler to training engagement. It should be noted that given the forecast economic growth, revenue for the government from the NTF would rise naturally in-line with an improving economy even without the intended increase to 1%.

7.2.2 Legislative obligations

Employers have indicated that the *onerous nature of legislative obligations* constitutes a significant barrier to training apprentices.

All employers are required legally, to calculate and deduct employees pay related social insurance contributions (PRSI). Many smaller employers, particularly those who are self-employed, are reluctant to engage an apprentice because of the onerous nature of PRSI contributions, and the responsibility this places upon them.

RECOMMENDATION 2

It is highly recommended that government initiate a scheme of 'zero-rating' employers PRSI contributions for those firms engaging apprentices in trades which are identified as being in dire need of stimulus. This measure would incentivise small employers particularly, through the removal of employers PRSI contributions for the duration of the training period.

Additionally the entire cost of redundancy rates is currently shouldered by the employer. This has become a significant factor for employers who see this as an added barrier to engaging employees generally, including apprentices.

RECOMMENDATION 3

It is recommended that the government re-introduce the statutory employer redundancy rebate as an incentive to employment generally.

7.2.3 Training Costs

There are significant costs associated with training provision which must be considered in order to encourage more construction firms to engage in apprenticeship training.

The duration of ***off-the-job*** training is a key issue raised by employers which has been highlighted by this report. *Phase 2* of an apprenticeship alone, results in an employer being without an apprentice for 20 weeks. This is an insurmountable barrier for many small employers where the apprentice is required to be present and productive for the employer, for the investment in training to be justified.

There is no panacea for this issue. Large contractors can bear the loss of an employee for long durations, but smaller employers cannot.

RECOMMENDATION 4

It is recommended that a review of the duration and sequence of off-the-job phases be undertaken as part of a planned initiative to improve employer engagement.

Another cost associated with training is student fees. By their very nature, these fees are inappropriate as apprentices are not students. However, under current regulations (introduced during the economic downturn as a revenue generating mechanism), apprentices must pay an exam fee equivalent to the portion of time present in the college where they attend *phase 4* and *phase 6* training. Evidence suggests that the fee is often unaffordable to apprentices and the employer incurs the cost.

RECOMMENDATION 5

It is recommended that a grant system be put in place, paid in full by the exchequer, for apprenticeship trainees for construction trades until such time as the shortage has been fully addressed.

7.2.4 Ensuring Quality

Under the *Apprenticeship Code of Practice for Employers and Apprentices*, employers must assign an individual to the role of *verifier*, including where appropriate, ensuring that this individual completes the SOLAS approved *Assessor/Verifier Programme*. For small contractors, this requirement represents a barrier to engaging apprentices as the training-up of an individual in a small company to the role of *verifier* is onerous.

RECOMMENDATION 6

It is recommended that a 'visiting assessor' scheme be established, where an assessor, responsible for a region, would visit the employer to conduct assessment when required. This further endorses a commitment to standards and quality assurance as this individual would be more likely to apply a standard across a range of companies rather than individual assessment practices.

7.2.5 Discontinuous demand

The *'discontinuous demand for work'* reported by members implies a lack of confidence in the construction sector. This, and the fact that the sector is only currently operating at 60% capacity, hinders growth in construction output and the legacy of company insolvency and redundancies through the economic downturn has resulted in a reluctance to engage apprentices. This issue directly hampers the ability of the current apprenticeship training model to thrive as the system is predicated upon the availability and engagement of employers in order to succeed.

It is possible to address this issue by initiating alternative methods of training delivery. For instance, where an employer is unwilling to invest due to discontinuous work, he/she may be willing to share the training of an apprentice where both contractors are better suited to provide the requisite work and training experience.

Part (g) of the Employer Obligations, of the *Apprenticeship Code of Practice for Employers and Apprentices* already allows for the delivery of training by an alternate approved employer where the registered employer has insufficient work to train the apprentice. All that would be required by legislators, would be to formalise this arrangement as a *Shared Responsibility Initiative*. Given the size of most firms, this would appear to be a positive solution to help stimulate engagement in training.

RECOMMENDATION 7

A "shared training" initiative should be facilitated, supported and promoted as a measure to stimulate engagement in training by firms, in particular SME's.

Another option to help overcome the issue of employer engagement is for the government to step in as an employer. By implementing a *State Sponsored Training Scheme*, the government could allow for the employment of apprentices and their utilisation in state sponsored projects. Furthermore, the state could place an apprentice full-time or part-time with a private sector employer as the need arises.

RECOMMENDATION 8

A more concerted effort should be made to engage in apprenticeship training by state and semi-state bodies. The implementation of a State Sponsored Training Scheme is highly recommended.

7.2.6 Marketing the Employment Opportunities and Career Diversity in Construction

Evidence from this report has determined the potentially serious consequences of a continued shortage of skills within the sector, and it is now essential that a collaborative approach is needed between all stakeholders to drive a targeted marketing campaign. During the economic recession the numbers enrolling on construction related training and education programmes plummeted as the perception of uncertain career opportunities prevailed. However, given the return of the industry to growth, career guidance needs to reappraise their assessment of the construction sector as a viable option for school leavers.

RECOMMENDATION 9

It is highly recommended that a collaborative forum (involving all stakeholders) for the marketing of construction as a viable career option is established as a matter of urgency.

The Employer's Suitability to Train certificate is required in order for employers to engage apprentices and deliver training in Ireland. However, it is possible that this could be used by companies as a marketing tool, perhaps by providing a list of registered companies, similar to that of a quality assurance badge (e.g. ISO 9000).

RECOMMENDATION 10

It is recommended that an Approved Apprenticeship Employer marketing initiative be developed. All approved apprenticeship employers should be given a registration number and logo/badge to be displayed on their company stationery and vehicles, similar to an ISO 9000 badge.

7.3 Summary

An improved apprenticeship system in Ireland can only be of benefit to everyone involved, not least because it increases employment, supplements revenue from taxes, and accordingly, lowers social welfare outlays. It also, however, helps improve the knowledge economy, makes industry more productive and helps strengthen the ability of the construction industry to deliver projects more cost effectively for society.

The importance of the construction industry to the economy cannot be overstated and the importance of skills to the industry is equally critical. If the current emerging skills gap is left unchecked, there exists the distinct possibility of a future skills loss in the medium to long term. This issue of insufficient skills has the capacity to derail the recovery of the construction sector if left unaddressed. Moreover, there is a threat to the economy generally, as an uncompetitive and inefficient construction sector risks the capacity of Ireland to attract foreign direct investment. Without the requisite skills to develop and build the requirements of investors, Ireland will be less competitive and less attractive as a centre for investment.

If the current emerging skills gap is left unchecked, there exists the distinct possibility of a future skills loss in the medium to long term.

Each individual measure for amelioration of the current training deficit represents an opportunity to protect future skills and the future economy by reinvigorating the construction labour workforce with new skills. It is, therefore, in the best interests of all stakeholders to apprenticeship that the recommendations contained in this report be considered for implementation.

Notes

CIF Headquarters

Construction House
Canal Road
Dublin 6

Phone 01 406 6000
Email info@cif.ie

CIF Cork

Construction House
4 Eastgate Avenue
Little Island
Cork

Phone 021 435 1410
Email Cork@cif.ie

CIF Galway

Construction House
8 Montpelier Terrace
The Crescent
Galway

Phone 091 502680
Email Galway@cif.ie

www.cif.ie
@CIF_Ireland