

Focus on Construction

Oxfordshire Labour Market Information, Winter 2016
Produced by Oxfordshire Local Enterprise Partnership



With heavy investment in our infrastructure and the need for 5,000 new houses per year¹, the Construction sector in Oxfordshire should see some real growth over the next decade with, on average, 1,730 new jobs predicted each year for the next five years in the South East².

Oxfordshire has several large construction developments underway and more to come. The West End of Oxford is undergoing redevelopment of the forty year old Westgate Centre, to include over a hundred new stores, 25 restaurants, a cinema and roof top terrace and parking. Bicester town is almost doubling in size, plus thousands of new homes are being built at Barton Park Estate in Oxford and Great Western Park in Didcot with many other projects to extend and build new schools, community centres and leisure facilities improving lives of Oxfordshire residents. Over the next couple of years, our county alone will need over 20,000 additional construction workers³

Did you know?

The Oxfordshire Construction industry contributed £1.3 billion to the national purse in 2014. Our total contribution was £20.5 billion.

Source: ONS GVA (income approach) at current basic prices, 2014

¹ Strategic Housing Market Assessment, Key findings on housing need, March 2014

² CITB Construction Skills Network report, Jan 2016 – this is below the national average

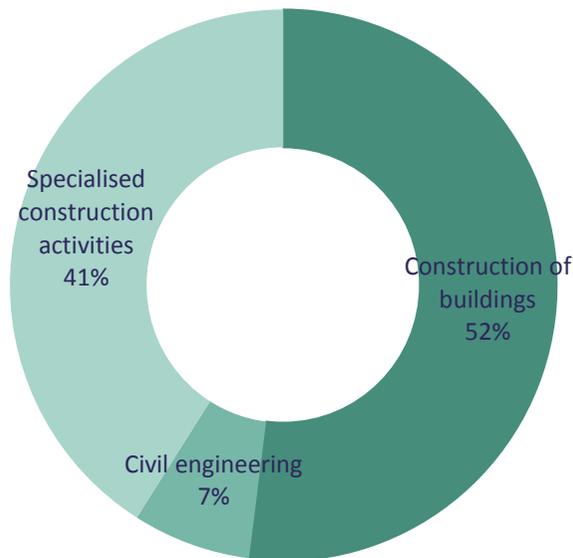
³ The Oxford Times, 2014

There are 17,250 people employed in construction jobs in Oxfordshire, 4.8 per cent of the working age population, compared to 6.4% in England⁴. They work for one of the 3,520 construction businesses in the county⁵. 93 per cent of construction businesses are micro-sized employing 0-9 employees. Over a third of construction workers are based in Oxford City.

Construction continues to be a male dominated sector. 9 out of 10 workers are men. Moreover, women in this sector are likely to be in administrative or secretarial support roles⁶. Only 1 per cent of female workers work on a construction site.

About half of construction workers in Oxfordshire are involved in the construction of domestic buildings, as opposed to commercial or infrastructure construction⁷.

Oxfordshire's construction workforce by percentage of employees, 2015⁸



⁴ BRES, 2016

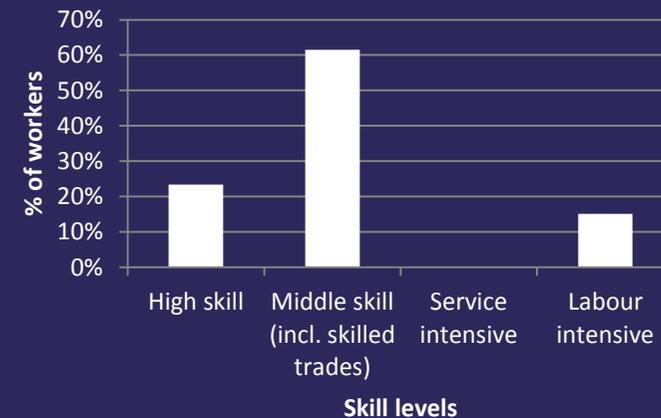
⁵ Business activity, 2016

⁶ Annual population survey, workplace analysis 2016

⁷ BRES, (4-digit SIC) 2015

Did you know?

It is no surprise that the majority of workers in the Construction industry are middle-skilled with the majority of these being in the skilled trade occupational group.



Source: Annual population survey, workplace analysis 2016

Of all occupation types, Oxfordshire employers find it hardest to recruit to the skilled trades with a fifth of employers with vacancies saying this is a problem due to skills shortages. This is significantly above national average (15%).

Demand for electricians and plumbers are particular high in Oxfordshire although there are skills shortages across a range of roles such as joiners, carpenters, surveyors, plasterers and bricklayers. This demand has caused the going rate for skilled trades to rise.

Apprenticeships are the traditional route into a career in construction and Oxfordshire's largest three training providers are CITB, Activate Learning and A-C-E training delivering construction apprenticeships in joinery and other wood crafts, plastering, bricklaying, flooring, cladding and roofing. Five per cent of apprenticeship starts in 2015/16 were in construction, up a per cent on the previous year. Apprenticeships numbers have remained stable over the last four years. This is an attractive route for young people who wish to meet the increasing demands for construction skills.

Typical baseline skills requested by employers in order of importance⁸ for construction jobs (aside from specialist skills) are:

- organisational skills
- communication skills
- planning
- meeting deadlines
- detail oriented
- team work
- problem solving
- quality control

⁸ Baseline skills taken from job postings for construction industry jobs from period of July 2015-July 2016

Vacancies, 2016	No. of postings
Electricians and electrical fitters	306
Plumbers and heating and ventilating engineers	256
Carpenters and joiners	173
Quantity surveyors	28
Bricklayers and masons	26
Elementary construction occupations	22
Electrical and electronic trades	20
Construction and building trades	19

Source: Burning Glass Technologies, Labour Insights
 N.B Online job vacancies listed only. Many jobs are advertised informally and so the number of postings is not a true representation of all jobs but nevertheless gives an indication of demand.

Did you know?

Some of our biggest employers in Oxfordshire are part of the supply chain to the Construction industry. Grafton Merchanting GB are Builders and Plumbers Merchants and HR Wallingford are a large Civil Engineering consultancy company.

Source: Top 100 Employers in Oxfordshire, Oxford Times 2012

Bricklayer

Working from plans and specifications to create or repair walls, arches or other structures with bricks and mortar, a bricklayer will work outdoors at any height (on scaffolding or in tunnels), usually with a bricklaying 'gang'. Bricklayers also seal foundations using damp course. Bricklayers must be very flexible as they could work on a range of projects in any location. They must be fit and strong, have good organisation skills and be able to read from plans. They must also hold a Construction Skills Certification Scheme (CSCS) card and take a health and safety test as site safety is paramount. 'Brickies' could expect to earn between £16,000 to £30,000 but this is dependent on the type of job, location and demand.

Electrician and electrical fitter

Electricians are always in demand. They install, inspect, repair and test any type of electrical equipment to rigorously high standards to meet very strict safety regulations. Therefore this role involves a high level of responsibility and electricians should ensure they are constantly up-to-date with new electrical legislation.

Some electricians specialise. An installation electrician puts power, lighting, fire protection, security and data-network systems into buildings. A maintenance electrician checks systems to ensure they keep working efficiently and safely.

Electricians typically start on £14,000 rising to over £30,000 with experience. However this is dependent on the type of job, location and demand.

Joiner

Joiners usually work in factories or workshops to create bespoke or mass production structures using wood, such as kitchen units, staircases, frames, furniture, doors and shelving. They can use a range of tools from traditional saws, chisels, lathes and planers to computer aided design technology and wood cutting machinery. The starting salary is typically £14,000 rising to over £30,000 with experience.

Building Control Surveyor

This type of surveyor usually works for a private company or local authority alongside construction companies to ensure the construction project follows health and safety regulations making regular inspections to ensure building guidelines are followed. They may be on-call to survey damaged buildings to assess their safety. With a starting salary of over £20,000, Surveyors can earn up to £40,000.