

PRESS RELEASE

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Quality and numbers of professional recruits in decline warns Construction Industry Council

The Construction Industry Council (CIC) launched their Professional Services Survey yesterday at One Westminster Place. CIC Chief Executive Graham Watts introduced the event which was followed by presentations on the research findings and methodology; the event was attended by key industry stakeholders.

The UK CPS sector – which includes professions such as engineering, architecture and surveying - currently employs 270,000 people, and requires 12,000 competent new professionals to enter the industry every year to meet demand as major projects such as the Olympics gather speed. Added pressure is being put on the industry because 20% of current CPS professionals could retire in the next 10 years.

Parallel research by CIC revealed that that 70% of Construction Professional Services (CPS) firms believe that a shortage of recruits is the biggest problem facing the £13.9 billion industry. A worrying 74% of CPS firms have found that job applicants are likely to be lacking the necessary technical skills.

Over 50% of all CPS firms anticipate recruitment difficulties over the next year and with student numbers on Built Environment courses having dropped by 28% since 2003/4, the industry is struggling to attract high caliber young professionals into the sector.

The CIC research also found that:

- All CPS firms reported some difficulties in recruitment with between 40% and 53% reporting 'hard to fill' vacancies.
- The main cause of recruitment difficulties was a low number of applicants with required skills, resulting in the majority of firms having to increase workload for other staff.
- CPS employers believe that the quality of recruits who are either graduate level, part-qualified members of professional institutions or trained to other levels has declined.

The skills gap is most pronounced in Building Services Engineering firms



Mark Way, Director of Skills, CIC, commented: “This research demonstrates the value of the contribution made to the UK economy by Professional Services and emphasises the scale of the professional input necessary to support the current levels of UK construction activity. The lack of a whole range of key skills in recruits is of real concern; a problem compounded by a future shortage of potential recruits. “

END

Notes to Editors:

About the sector

- There are 27,950 professional firms in the UK
- UK professional services firms earned a total of £13.9 billion in the UK in 2005/6 including £2.5 billion from work overseas

About the research

The research is based upon two latest CIC surveys; the UK Construction Professional Services Survey and the Built Environment Professional Skills Survey, which analysed 800 CPS firms employing 45,000 fulltime employees and 357 CPS firms employing 7630 fulltime employees respectively.

CIC research into the Construction Professional Services (CPS) sector has been repeated on a regular basis since 1995.

The research and the methodology is available to purchase via the CIC shop, www.cicshop.co.uk and the Executive Summary is available to download free of charge from the CIC home page, www.cic.org.uk. Discounts are available for CIC members.

About CIC

The Construction Industry Council (CIC) is the representative forum for the professional bodies, research organisations and specialist business associations in the construction industry. It provides a single voice for professionals in all sectors of the built environment through its collective membership of 500,000 individual professionals and 25,000 firms of construction consultants.

About ConstructionSkills

ConstructionSkills is the Sector Skills Council for the construction industry. It is UK-wide and represents the whole industry from professional consultancies to major contractors and SMEs.



Established as a Sector Skills Council in 2003, ConstructionSkills is working to deliver a safe, professional and fully qualified construction workforce.

ConstructionSkills is a partnership between CIC, CITB NI and CITB-ConstructionSkills. All three partners are committed to working together to deliver industry-led skills and training solutions through the Sector Skills Agreement for construction. We work to negotiate the best partnership and funding deals for the construction industry to help raise standards and we develop the skills products and services employers need.

The construction sector is central to the UK economy, generating almost 9% of UK GDP and with a turnover of more than £110bn a year. It employs 2.5 million people and requires a further 87,600 new entrants per year to 2011, as forecast by our Construction Skills Network.

Contact the CIC Press Office on 020 7399 7407 or email press@cic.org.uk