

Workforce Mobility and Skills in the UK Construction Sector 2022

South East Report - May 2023



Study prepared by BMG Research from a commission by CITB.

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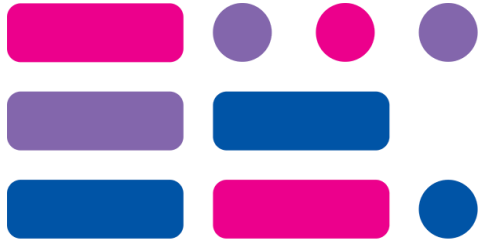
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Executive summary

CITB commissioned BMG Research to undertake the 2022 Construction Workforce Mobility Survey, which builds on previous surveys conducted in 2018/19, 2015, 2012, 2007, and 2005. Face-to-face interviews were conducted with 3,005 construction workers undertaking manual roles on sites across the UK and 283 interviews were conducted with construction workers in the South East region.

Profile of the sample

All construction workers in manual roles interviewed in the South East are male, as compared to the UK average of 97%.

Within the South East, the age profile has remained stable over time, with the youngest age group (16 to 24 year olds) accounting for 16% of construction workers, those aged 25 to 44 accounting for 52%, those aged 45 to 59 accounting for 24% and those aged 60 or over for 7%. This is very much in line with the UK average.

In terms of ethnicity, the majority of construction workers in the South East continue to be of White origin (87% compared to 90% in 2018/19 and 2015, and 95% in 2012).

At 11%, the proportion of construction workers of ethnic minority origin is second highest after London (19%), as has been the case in previous iterations of the survey. This is very much in line with the South East working age population (12%), and the South East is the only region where this can really be said to be the case.

At 18%, the proportion coming from outside of the UK has reduced since 2018/19 (25%), such that the South East is now in line with the UK average (17%). Nevertheless, only London (59%) and the East of England (22%) have higher proportions of non-UK national workers.

Reflecting the findings above, around one in ten (11%) of construction workers in the South East hold a passport for another country, down on 17% in 2018/19, and fewer than the 2022 UK average of 13%. The majority hold a UK passport (78%), with a further 8% reporting that they do not have a passport.

More than three quarters (77%) of construction workers in the South East have lived in the UK all their lives, in line with 2018/19 (73%), and the UK average of 80%. While nearly a quarter (23%) have not lived in the UK all their lives, the majority of this group (16% of all) have lived in the UK for more than five years.

Amongst all construction workers in the South East, 2% report that they have a long-term illness, health problem, or disability which limits the type of work they can do (as compared to 3% in 2018/19), in line with the UK average of 3%.

As in the 2018/19 and 2015 surveys, labourers/general operatives account for the highest proportion of construction workers in the South East, (15%, compared to 14% in 2018/19 and 19% in 2015), in line with the UK average (18%). Carpenters/joiners, bricklayers and site managers each account for around one in ten construction workers (9% in each instance), as do plant/machine operatives (8%). Again, these are largely in line with the UK average.

Close to three in ten (29%) of all construction workers in the South East say they perform a supervisory or management role on their site (compared to 34% in 2018/19 and 29% in 2015), in line with the UK average (28%).

Around half (47%) of construction workers in the South East are self-employed, in line with 2018/19 (44%) and 2015 (53%), and somewhat higher than the national average of 42%. At 41%, fewer are employed directly compared with 2018/19 (45%), and this is a lower proportion than the 2022 UK average (48%). There has been a corresponding increase in the proportion who report being directly employed, from 36% to 44%, but this remains below the national average of 48%. One in eight (12%) report working for an employment agency, higher than the UK average (9%).

A third (32%) of construction workers in the South East are employed on a temporary, rather than a permanent basis (68%), very much in line with 2018/19 (34% and 66% respectively), and the UK average (29%).

Construction workers in the South East, as across the UK as a whole, are most likely to report that they work between 40 and 49 hours per week (59% in both instances), while 21% work more than 50 hours a week, down on 2018/19 (30%), but in line with the UK average of 19%.

Work history

Time in the sector

A third (34%) of construction workers in the South East have worked in the construction industry for over 20 years, in line with 2018/19 (32%), and the UK average (30%). Over half (54%) have worked in the industry for at least 10 years, again in line with 2018/19 (57%) and the UK average (52%).

There has been an increase in the proportion of construction workers in the South East who have worked pretty much continuously in the industry, from 55% in 2018/19 to 63% in the latest survey, placing the South East in line with the UK average in this respect (61%). Consequently, the proportion who have only ever worked in construction has also increased, from 62% in 2018/19 to 71% in the latest survey.

Previous non-construction jobs

Overall, 18% of construction workers in the South East say that their first job after full-time education was not in construction and that they moved into the industry after working in other sorts of jobs/sectors. This is a decline since 2018/19 (29%), but the same as the 2022 UK average (18%).

The most common sectors in which construction workers had started their careers were wholesale and retail trade (18%) and manufacturing (13%). The pattern of response largely reflects that in the UK, with a decline in those who started in manufacturing.

In terms of the job roles that respondents have held in other sectors, the highest proportions were in associate, professional and technical occupations (18%), skilled trades occupations (18%), sales and customer service occupations (17%) and elementary administration and service occupations (17%).

Occupational switching within the construction sector

Overall, a third (35%) of all construction workers in the South East have worked in more than one construction trade or occupation whilst working in the construction industry, lower than in 2018/19 (46%), but the same as the 2022 UK average (35%). Amongst the 35% of all South East construction workers that had worked in at least one other role/occupation, 24% had worked in 1 previous role, 44% had worked in 2 previous roles, 27% had worked in 3 roles/occupations and 5% had worked in 4 roles/occupations.

Workers are most likely to have previously worked as a labourer/general operative (29%), while 16% had previously worked as a carpenter/joiner, 11% as a bricklayer and 10% as a plant/machine operative.

Over four in five (81%) construction workers in the South East would like to carry on in the same trade or occupation, in line with 2018/19 (84%) and the UK average of 80%. Close to one in ten (8%) would like to change their trade/occupation (as in 2018/19) and similarly to the 2022 UK average (7%). The remainder would like to leave construction (5%) or were unsure (6%).

Qualifications and skills

Skills cards/certificates

While over nine in ten (93%) of all construction workers in the South East report holding a skill card or certificate (e.g. CSCS or CSR), this is a reduction on the 98% who did so in previous surveys. This reflects the UK picture, which has seen a similar decline, from 97% to 93%. Correspondingly, the proportion who have no cards has risen from 2% in 2018/19, to 5% in the latest survey.

In terms of the type of skill card or certificate held by construction workers in the South East, the CSCS (Construction Skills Certification Scheme (GB) is the most commonly held

(78%), but to a lesser extent than 2018/19 (87%) and 2015 (91%). Close to two in five (18%) hold the CPCS (Construction Plant Competence Scheme, up on 2018/19 (10%), and 5% hold the CISRS (Construction Industry Scaffolders Record Scheme).

Overall, 9% of CSCS card holders have Red cards, three in ten (32%) have Green cards, and a third (33%) have Blue cards. One in six (16%) have Gold cards and one in twenty (6%) hold Black cards, with other types of card held by less than 5%.

Construction-specific qualifications

Overall, close to half (45%) of construction workers in the South East report having no construction-related qualifications when they started their first job. This is significantly lower than the 79% who reported this in 2018/19, and the 70% who did so in 2015. In 2022 the South East is in line with the UK average (47%), which has also seen a significant decrease since 2018/19 (72%).

Overall, two thirds (67%) of construction workers in the South East report holding a construction-related qualification, a significant decline on the 77% who did so in 2018/19. This is in line with the UK-wide picture, where there has also been a decrease in the proportion of workers holding a qualification, from 72% in 2018/19 to 69% in the latest survey.

As in previous years, the qualifications most likely to be held by construction workers in the South East are NVQ/SVQ qualifications (78%), but to a greater extent than 2018/19 (61%). One in five (17%) construction workers with qualifications hold City & Guilds qualifications, up on 2018/19 (13%) and returning this to the levels seen in 2015 (17%). Around one in twenty construction workers with qualifications hold an apprenticeship (7%), HNC/HND/BTEC Higher (5%), or a degree (5%).

Current study for qualifications

Overall, 10% of all construction workers in the South East are currently working towards formal qualifications relevant to the construction industry (excluding supervisory or managerial qualifications). This is lower than the UK average (13%), and compared with 2018/19 in the region (15%).

Supervisory/managerial qualifications and training

Amongst those who do not currently perform supervisory/management roles and have not had this role before, 13% want to become a supervisor or manager in the future, fewer than the 30% who did so in 2018/19, and less than one in ten (8%) previously held the role and want to return to that status (in line with 8% in 2018/19). Three in five (60%) are certain that they do not want to, up on the 43% who felt this in 2018/19, and one in five (19%) are unsure. These results are much in line with the UK average.

Close to two in five (38%) of all construction workers in the South East have received formal training designed to improve managerial or supervisory knowledge or skills, in line with

2018/19 (39%), but lower than the UK average of 33%. Among those who have or have had some form of supervisory or management responsibilities, four in five (80%) have received formal training, in line with 2018/19 (81%) and 2015 (73%), and with the UK average (80%).

In terms of the types of supervisory/managerial training undertaken, SMSTS (Site Manager Safety Training Scheme) is most frequently mentioned by those who have undertaken any training (33%), followed by Site Safety Supervisors Courses (28%) and in-house training (21%). These were also the top three most mentioned types of supervisory training in 2018/19, 2015 and 2012.

Basic skills needs

Overall, one in five (20%) construction workers in the South East believe they would benefit from some form of training in basic skills (compared to 10% in 2018/19, 14% in 2015 and 20% in 2012). This is a similar proportion to the UK average (19%), which has also seen an increase since 2018/19 (11%).

Overall skill levels

As in previous years, the vast majority (98%) of construction workers in the South East have a construction-related qualification and/or skills card/certificate (or were working towards a qualification at the point of interview): only 2% of those interviewed could not say that they were at least working towards obtaining a CSCS card (or similar) or construction qualification. The pattern of response is largely consistent with previous years, and with the UK average.

Overall, nearly three in five (57%) construction workers in the South East have qualifications equivalent to Level 2 or above, fewer than the 63% who did in 2018/19, and compared to the 2022 UK average of 61%.

Geographic mobility

Work history in the region/nation

All workers were asked what made them decide to work in the region/nation that they are currently working in. The pattern of results is somewhat different to 2018/19, with an increase in the proportion who grew up there, from 33% in 2018/19 to 47% in the latest survey, such that this is now the main reason for being in the region. There has been a corresponding decrease in the proportion who say that their employer sent them there, from 53% in 2018/19 to 42% in the latest survey. Consequently, the pattern of response is now more in line with the UK average.

Approaching half (47%) of construction workers in the South East have worked within their current region for their whole career, an increase on previous years (32% in 2018/19 and 35% in 2015), such that this is now in line with the UK average (49%). A further third (33%) have worked in their current region for most of their career, meaning that 81% have

remained in the South East for all or most of their career, significantly higher than 2018/19 (61%), and in line with the UK average (83%).

Similarly to 2018/19, construction workers in the South East are among the least likely to state that their last site was in the same region (66%), with one in ten (12%) reporting that it was in London.

Worker origins

Again, similarly to 2018/19 and 2015, construction workers in the South East are among the least likely to be interviewed in the same region/nation in which they were living when they started their construction career (64%), although this proportion is higher than 2018/19 (51%) and 2015 (55%).

The majority (76%) of construction workers in the South East were interviewed on a site that was located within the same region/nation as their permanent home, a significant uplift on 2018/19 (55%) and 2015 (58%). However, this remains somewhat lower than the average across all regions of 85%.

Of the 24% who travel outside of their region to their current site, almost all (17%) are from a neighbouring region, as this is the pattern for most other regions.

Travel to site

A third (33%) of construction workers in the South East have worked no more than 20 miles away, continuing an upward trend since 2015 (16%) and 2018/19 (19%), and placing this in line with the UK average of 33%. A further two in five (40%) have worked between 21 and 50 miles away, up on 2018/19 (33%) and 2015 (27%), and on the UK average of 34%.

This leaves more than a quarter (27%) who have worked more than 50 miles away from their permanent or current home – which is lower than the UK average (32%) – including 9% who have worked more than 100 miles away (compared to a UK average of 12%). This compares to 48% and 17% respectively in 2018/19, so there has been a reduction in the proportion who have travelled over 100 miles (41% and 17% respectively in 2018/19 across the UK).

The average furthest distance travelled is 43 miles in the South East, in line with the UK average of 46 miles.

The average (mean) distance from workers' current residence (taking into account temporary residences) to their current site is 16 miles, a significantly shorter distance than in 2018/19 and 2015 (both 27 miles), and compared to the UK average of 23 miles.

This upward trend is in contrast to the national picture, where the average distance is 17 miles, down on 18 miles in 2018/19, 22 miles in 2015 and 28 miles in 2012.

Three in ten (30%) of those providing a response travel less than 10 miles to work, in line with 2018/19 (29%), half (54%) travel between 10 and 49 miles (compared to 54% in 2018/19), and the remaining 16% travel further than this (compared to 17% in 2018/19).

Use of temporary accommodation

Both nationally and in the South East, one in twenty (5% and 6% respectively) construction workers report that they are currently staying in temporary accommodation while working at their site, in line with previous years (5% in 2018/19, and 6% in 2015).

Site duration and change

All workers in the South East who are currently employed on a temporary basis (29% of all construction workers) were asked how much longer they expect to be working for the company/person/agency paying them.

Responses range from 1% who expect to work for the rest of the week, 9% expecting another one to four weeks, a quarter (25%) one to six months, 16% six to twelve months, and one in ten (11%) more than a year. Close to two in five (37%) do not know how much longer they expect to be working, in line with 2018/19 (43%), and the UK average (32%). A quarter (27%) do not know how much longer they expect to be working, somewhat lower than 2018/19 (31%), and the UK average (32%).

Overall, 15% of all construction workers in the South East do not expect to work on that site for more than a month, compared to 11% in 2018/19 (20%). Just 3% believe they will be there for less than a week (compared to 3% in 2018/19). Half (50%) anticipate being on site for more than a month but less than a year, in line with 2018/19 (57%) and the UK average of 53%. One in ten (14%) expect to be on site for more than a year, continuing a downward trend on this measure, from 29% in 2015, to 24% in 2018/19. This compares with the UK average of 13%.

One in five (21%) are uncertain in this regard, significantly higher than 2018/19 (9%), and approaching 2015 levels (22%), although in line with the UK average of 22%.

While a majority (66%) of all construction workers in the South East are confident that when they finish this job they will get a job that allows them to travel from their permanent home to work on a daily basis, this is significantly lower than the 90% who did so in 2018/19, and more in line with 2015 (77%) and 2012 (69%), and the UK average (69%).

The proportion who are sure that this will not be the case has increased (8% compared to 3% in 2018/19), while the proportion who say it depends where the work is has increased, from 3% in 2018/19 to 22% in the latest survey, as is the case across the UK overall (from 8% in 2018/19 to 20% in 2022).

Sub-sector and sector mobility

Sub-sector mobility

New housing continues to be the most common type of construction work undertaken in the South East (83%, compared to 81% in 2018/19), followed by housing repair and maintenance (42%, compared to 54%), commercial work (39%, compared to 59%), private industrial work is also down on 2018/19 (35%, compared to 54%), and public non-housing work (34% compared to 60%), while infrastructure work has remained relatively consistent to 2018/19 (28% compared to 31%).

Compared with the UK as a whole the South East had significantly higher than average levels of housing repair and maintenance, commercial, private industrial, public and infrastructure building work.

Leaving the sector

Four in five (80%) construction workers in the South East think it is likely that they will still want to do so, including 41% who say they definitely will be, and 26% who think it is very likely. This is in line with the UK average of 82%.

One in ten (10%) say it is unlikely that they will still want to work in construction in five years' time, and while this is in line with the UK average of 7%, one in twenty (4%) say they will definitely not be, higher than the UK average of 2%.

Introduction

Aims and objectives

Following on from previous surveys conducted for CITB in 2018/19, 2015, 2012, 2007 and 2005, BMG Research was commissioned to undertake a UK-wide survey of the mobility and skills of UK construction workers in 2022.

The primary aim of this project is to provide robust and reliable information from site-based workers across the UK construction industry on their qualification levels and the extent of their occupational and geographic mobility. This work enhances the evidence-base for skills planning, particularly in respect of profiling the existing workforce and identifying where skills gaps might emerge as a result of occupational and geographic movement. The findings will assist the industry, government, training providers and others with responsibility for industry skills development to direct their work with greater accuracy and effect.

The specific objectives of this research project are to:

- Examine the qualification levels of the construction industry workforce in the UK and analyse what part qualifications have played in career progression.
- Identify, quantify and analyse the extent to which the workforce in each region/nation within the UK comprises workers originating or living in other parts of the UK (or further afield) and mobility and travel to work.
- Examine the occupations and qualification levels of the mobile UK-origin workforce and of that part of the workforce with overseas origins.
- Examine the scale and extent of occupational mobility within the construction workforce to see how workers in construction occupations change their occupations over time, both within construction and in relation to other sectors, and, related to this, the extent to which managers and supervisors have received training specifically to enhance their managerial skills.

The focus of the survey is on site-based physical delivery of construction projects and, therefore, excludes associated clerical and sales occupations and professionals such as architects, surveyors and office-based managers.

This report discusses the findings within the South East region.

Method

The 2022 Construction Workforce Mobility Survey followed a similar methodology to that used in the last wave of this research in 2018/19. Overall, 3,005 interviews with construction workers in site-based roles across the UK were required, split between the 12 standard regions/nations. In total, 283 interviews were conducted in the South East.

Sampling

This sub-section provides an overview of the sampling methodology employed for the survey. Further detail is provided in the technical report that accompanies this analytical report.

Although this survey focuses on the mobility of individual workers, the sampling strategy was to select construction projects (generally referred to in this report as 'sites') with sufficient workers on-site each day to enable a minimum of 10 interviews. This site-based approach was employed to ensure cost-effective face-to-face interviewing, comparable to that used in previous editions of the survey.

Also as in previous surveys, the commercially produced 'Glenigan' database of construction projects was used as the sampling frame.

Project eligibility criteria were:

- value: £250,000+
- contract stage: 'start on site'; 'contract awarded' or 'bills called' only
- site start date/end date: Active throughout planned fieldwork period

Where sites met these criteria, they were deemed eligible to participate. A target of 30 sites per English region and in each of Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland was set in order to achieve a sufficient number of interviews in each. However, in some instances this target was not achievable due to site refusals to take part, some sites not meeting the eligibility criteria on further screening, or lower than expected numbers of on-site workers being available. In some regions, more than 30 sites were recruited to compensate.

Telephone-based site recruitment

BMG's research team recruited sites that were eligible and willing to support the research by allowing an interviewer to visit the site to interview at least 10 workers who were mainly in manual trades/roles. A recruitment questionnaire (reproduced in the technical report) was used to check the eligibility of the site and to collect important operational information that would be required by the interviewer visiting the site. The majority of recruitment was undertaken with individual site managers, but in a number of cases the recruiters also spoke with local, regional or national managers (often dependent upon the size of the company). At this stage recruiters booked a convenient time and appointment date for an interviewer

to visit the site and a confirmation email was sent to the relevant individual. Confirmation calls were made ahead of site visits to ensure recall of the visit.

Site visits

In the majority of cases, interviewers were allocated space to conduct interviews in the offices or canteen area. However, on some sites interviewers worked 'on-the-hoof' in active parts of the site (with or without a 'chaperone'). All interviewers had completed the CSCS Health & Safety Test for Operatives immediately prior to fieldwork and had a PPE (Personal Protective Equipment) kit to comply with site requirements.

Interviews were completed using Computer Assisted Personal Interviewing (CAPI) techniques as well as self-completion techniques. They were undertaken between May and December 2022

Further detail on the interviewing process is provided in the technical report.

The following table shows the number of interviews achieved in each region/nation. In order to obtain strong bases for regional/national analysis, a quota of 200 completed questionnaires per region/nation was set, with an allowance of +/- 50 interviews per region/nation. However, at the analysis stage, weighting factors were applied to survey data to ensure that, for national analysis, regions/nations were represented in their correct proportions according to the size of the construction workforce per region/nation as reported in the government's Annual Population Survey of economically active adults aged 16 and over.

Figure 1: Number of interviews in the weighted sample by region/nation

	Interviews	Weighted percentage
North East	206	3.3
North West	271	11.2
Yorkshire and the Humber	200	8.1
East Midlands	232	7.1
West Midlands	306	7.0
East of England	202	11.2
London	443	13.6
South East	283	15.5
South West	201	8.9
Scotland	233	8.2
Wales	202	4.0
Northern Ireland	226	2.5
UK	3,005	100.0

*Source Annual Population Survey via Nomis: Economically Active adults aged 16+, Oct 2021-Sep 2022; note that total percentage does not add exactly to 100 because of rounding
Further information on sampling and the sites included can be found in the technical report.

Methodological points to note

In discussing findings from this 2022 survey of mobility and skills in the UK's construction industry workforce, a number of methodological points are relevant, as follows.

Sampling variation (for example, random differences in the composition of the samples in different editions of the survey or in the different regional sub-samples within this year's survey) may induce apparent differences or exaggerate actual differences in survey findings over time or between regions which owe more to these sampling effects than to real world change. This effect is particularly likely when considering smaller sub-sets of data where such effects have the potential to have a proportionately greater impact. The point is not that differences in findings for different groups or over time are necessarily unreal but that a degree of care needs to be applied in interpreting the findings such that their consistency with other related data and with extraneous knowledge of the environment in which the survey took place is taken into account.

Further, on this question of interpretation, it is evident that a broad survey, as here, of large numbers of respondents using a structured questionnaire, produces statements of fact (as far as best survey practice can estimate 'fact') but does not necessarily explain the reason for a particular statistic or its change over time.

Notes on reading this report

A number of conventions have been employed within this report to assist with the concise presentation of numeric data and with brevity within text.

The base for statistics is described under each figure (table or graph) heading, with the base counts (unweighted) on dedicated rows of tables. Where tables include statistics on many different bases, the unweighted bases for 2022 data are shown in brackets.

All tables and graphs present percentages (unless otherwise stated) calculated upon the bases shown. Where 'mean' averages are shown, these are calculated upon the stated base, minus any responses 'not stated' or choosing a 'don't know/not applicable' response.

Tables and graphs are all labelled with a simple sequential 'Figure Number' and title. All tables and graphs have clearly labelled base sizes (for all sub-groups) and textual definitions of bases. The total of percentages shown in a table may vary slightly from 100% due to rounding to the nearest percentage point.

'**' is used to denote a statistic of less than 0.5% but greater than 0.

Analysis by region/nation should be read with caution because of their limited sub-sample sizes. Unweighted bases are shown throughout for guidance on this point.

Profile of construction site workers

This first section of the report provides a profile of construction site workers interviewed in the survey and where possible makes comparisons with previous years' surveys. The section examines: *personal demographics*, including gender, age, ethnicity, nationality (including length of time that workers have been resident in the UK) and disability; *current occupation*; *employment status* i.e. whether employed directly, self-employed or by an agency; and *employment contract basis* i.e. whether working on a temporary or permanent basis.

The section then moves on to examine career histories, including: the number of years respondents have worked in the construction industry, pre-construction employment histories, occupational switching, and progression within the construction sector.

Personal demographics

Figures 2 to 5 detail the demographic profile (gender, age, ethnicity, nationality and disability) of the 2022 sample of construction workers, compared with the 2018/19 and 2015 surveys and official statistics from the Annual Population Survey (where comparisons are possible).

Gender

All construction workers in manual roles interviewed in the South East are male, as compared to the UK average of 97%.

As in previous years of the survey, male dominance is greater in the survey sample than in the UK construction workforce as a whole as this survey does not include those in office-based roles within the construction industry (either administrative or professional, where the incidence of female workers is higher) and interviews were conducted on relatively large construction sites (valued at £250,000+, with at least 10 workers), thereby excluding female construction workers on small building sites and in maintenance and repair (an industry segment in which women, for example in some small all-female businesses, may be slightly more frequent). More detail is shown in the following figure.

Figure 2: Gender profile of the sample compared with the UK profile and the Annual Population Survey*Base: All respondents*

	SE 2022 %	UK 2022 %	UK Workforce* %
Male	100	97	52
Female	0	2	48
Transgender	0	<0.5	-
Non-binary	0	<0.5	-
Prefer not to say	0	<0.5	-
Unweighted bases	283	3,005	33,808,600

Q43 *Source Annual Population Survey via Nomis: Economically Active adults aged 16+ Oct 2021-Sep 2022

Age

Within the South East, the age profile has remained stable over time, with the youngest age group (16 to 24 year olds) accounting for 16% of construction workers, those aged 25 to 44 accounting for 52%, those aged 45 to 59 accounting for 24% and those aged 60 or over for 7%. This is very much on line with the UK average.

Figure 3: Age profile of the sample compared with 2018/19, 2015 and 2012 and the Annual Population Survey*Base: All respondents*

	SE 2022 %	SE 2018/9 %	SE 2015 %	SE 2012 %	UK 2022 %		UK Workforce* %
16 to 19 years	3	4	3	5	6	16 to 19 years	4
20 to 24 years	13	13	13	14	13	20 to 24 years	9
25 to 34 years	28	28	34	30	26	25 to 34 years	23
35 to 44 years	24	24	23	23	24	35 to 49 years	33
45 to 54 years	16	19	17	16	17	50 to 64 years	28
55 to 59 years	8	7	5	11	8		
60+ years	7	5	4		6	65+ years	4
Unweighted bases	283	403	439	420	3,005		33,808,600

Q44 *Source Annual Population Survey via Nomis: Economically Active adults aged 16+ Oct 2021-Sep 2022

Ethnicity

In terms of ethnicity, the majority of construction workers in the South East continue to be of White origin (87% compared to 90% in 2018/19 and 2015, and 95% in 2012).

On this basis, 11% are of Black, Asian or Mixed origin, higher than the UK average (7%), and the working age population (12%).

Figure 4: Ethnic profile of the sample compared with previous surveys and the UK population

Base: All respondents

	SE 2022 %	SE 2018/9 %	SE 2015 %	SE 2012 %	UK 2022 %	UK population aged 16 to 64* %
White	87	90	90	95	91	84
Black	2	4	2	1	2	4
Asian	4	3	2	1	2	6
Mixed	2	2	-	-	1	2
Other/Not stated	2	<0.5	6	3	3	4
Unweighted bases	283	403	439	420	3,005	41,439,500

*Q49 *Source Annual population Survey via Nomis: UK population aged 16-64 Oct 2021-Sep 2022*

Figure 5 (overleaf) summarises the proportion of construction workers of non-white (ethnic minority) origin overall and within each region/nation and compares the profile with construction workers from the 2018/19, 2015 and 2012 surveys and with the population (aged 16-64) of each region/nation as a whole.

At 11%, the proportion of construction workers of ethnic minority origin is second highest after London (19%), as has been the case in previous iterations of the survey. This is very much in line with the South East working age population (12%), and the South East is the only region where this can really be said to be the case.

Figure 5: Proportion of construction workers of ethnic minority (Non-White) origin*Base: All respondents*

	UK 2022 %	UK 2018/9 %	UK 2015 %	UK 2012 %	Non-white (ethnic minority) population aged 16-64* %
UK	7	6	4	4	14
East Midlands	3	2	2	2	14
East of England	5	5	3	4	12
London	19	15	15	12	41
North East	2	<0.5	<0.5	<0.5	6
North West	1	3	1	2	13
South East	11	10	8	3	12
South West	3	5	2	1	6
West Midlands	7	7	5	9	22
Yorkshire and the Humber	5	5	2	1	12
Wales	3	2	2	<0.5	5
Scotland	3	1	2	1	6
Northern Ireland	1	1	1	<0.5	4
Unweighted bases	3,005	4,048	4,771	4,933	41,439,500

Q49 *Source Annual population Survey via Nomis: UK Population aged 16-64 by ethnicity Oct 2021-Sep 2022

Country of origin

For the first time in 2018/19, construction workers were asked for details about their nationality and country of origin. The table below focuses on the non-UK nationalities that are most frequent in the 2022 survey.

At 18%, the proportion coming from outside of the UK has reduced since 2018/19 (25%), such that the South East is now in line with the UK average (17%). Nevertheless, only London (59%) and the East of England (22%) have higher proportions of non-UK national workers.

Figure 6: Country of origin of non-UK national construction workers in the UK by region/nation as a percentage of the total workforce

Base: All respondents

Row percentages	<i>Unweighted bases</i>	EU %	Non-EU %	Albania %	Romania %	Lithuania %
UK	3,005	9	8	1	5	1
East Midlands	232	5	8	1	2	1
East of England	202	16	6	1	8	5
London	443	30	29	5	19	2
North East	206	2	1	0	<0.5	0
North West	271	2	2	0	1	0
South East	283	11	7	1	6	1
South West	201	2	2	<0.5	1	0
West Midlands	306	2	6	0	<0.5	<0.5
Yorkshire and the Humber	200	6	3	0	1	1
Wales	202	3	3	0	1	0
Scotland	233	4	2	<0.5	0	0
Northern Ireland	226	4	2	0	0	0

Q45 Note: Romania and Lithuania are included in the EU proportion. Albania is included in the non-EU proportion. In neither case, therefore, are these individual country proportions additional to the respective EU/non-EU proportions

Holding of passports

Reflecting the findings above, around one in ten (11%) of construction workers in the South East hold a passport for another country, down on 17% in 2018/19, and in line with a UK average of 13%. The majority hold a UK passport (78%), with a further 8% reporting that they do not have a passport.

Length of time living in the UK

More than three quarters (77%) of construction workers in the South East have lived in the UK all their lives, in line with 2018/19 (73%), and the UK average of 80%.

While a quarter (23%) have not lived in the UK all their lives, the majority of this group (16%) have lived in the UK for more than five years.

Figure 7: Length of time that construction workers have lived in the UK by region/nation

Base: All respondents

Row percentages	<i>Unweighted bases</i>	All their lives %	Up to 5 years %	More than 5 years %
UK	3,005	80	5	14
East Midlands	232	83	3	13
East of England	202	74	2	22
London	443	39	16	39
North East	206	96	<0.5	4
North West	271	93	<0.5	6
South East	283	77	7	16
South West	201	87	1	8
West Midlands	306	91	1	7
Yorkshire and the Humber	200	91	0	9
Wales	202	90	2	6
Scotland	233	92	5	3
Northern Ireland	226	92	2	5

Q39

Disability

Amongst all construction workers in the South East, 2% report that they have a long-term illness, health problem, or disability which limits the type of work they can do (as compared to 3% in 2018/19), in line with the UK average of 3%.

Occupational profile

Current job role

All workers were asked what their current trade or occupation is at their site. Respondents in a supervisory role were asked to detail their trade/occupation background, as their supervisory roles would be asked about later in the survey. Figure 8 summarises all the trades/occupations mentioned by at least 2% of the sample and compares this with the occupational profile from the 2018/19 and 2015 surveys.

As in the 2018/19 and 2015 surveys, labourers/general operatives account for the highest proportion of construction workers in the South East, (15%, compared to 14% in 2018/19 and 19% in 2015), in line with the UK average (18%).

Carpenters/joiners, bricklayers and site managers each account for around one in ten construction workers (9% in each instance), as do plant/machine operatives (8%). Again, these are largely in line with the UK average.

Figure 8: Occupational profile

Base: All respondents. Mentions 2%+

	SE 2022 %	SE 2018/19 %	SE 2015 %	UK 2022 %
Labourer/General operative	15	14	19	18
Carpenter/joiner	9	11	7	9
Bricklayer	9	6	13	10
Site manager	9	12	9	9
Plant/machine operative (e.g. Fork lift/JCB)	8	8	7	9
Scaffolder	7	5	5	3
Ground worker	6	6	3	5
Plumber	4	2	5	3
Technical e.g. surveyor, maintenance technician	4	4	2	3
Roofer	4	1	2	3
Electrician	3	8	4	5
Supervisor/foreman	3	1	2	2
Banksman/Banksperson	3	1	1	2
Dryliner	2	4	5	3
Painter/decorator	2	3	3	1
Unweighted bases	283	403	439	3,005

Q5

Supervisory roles

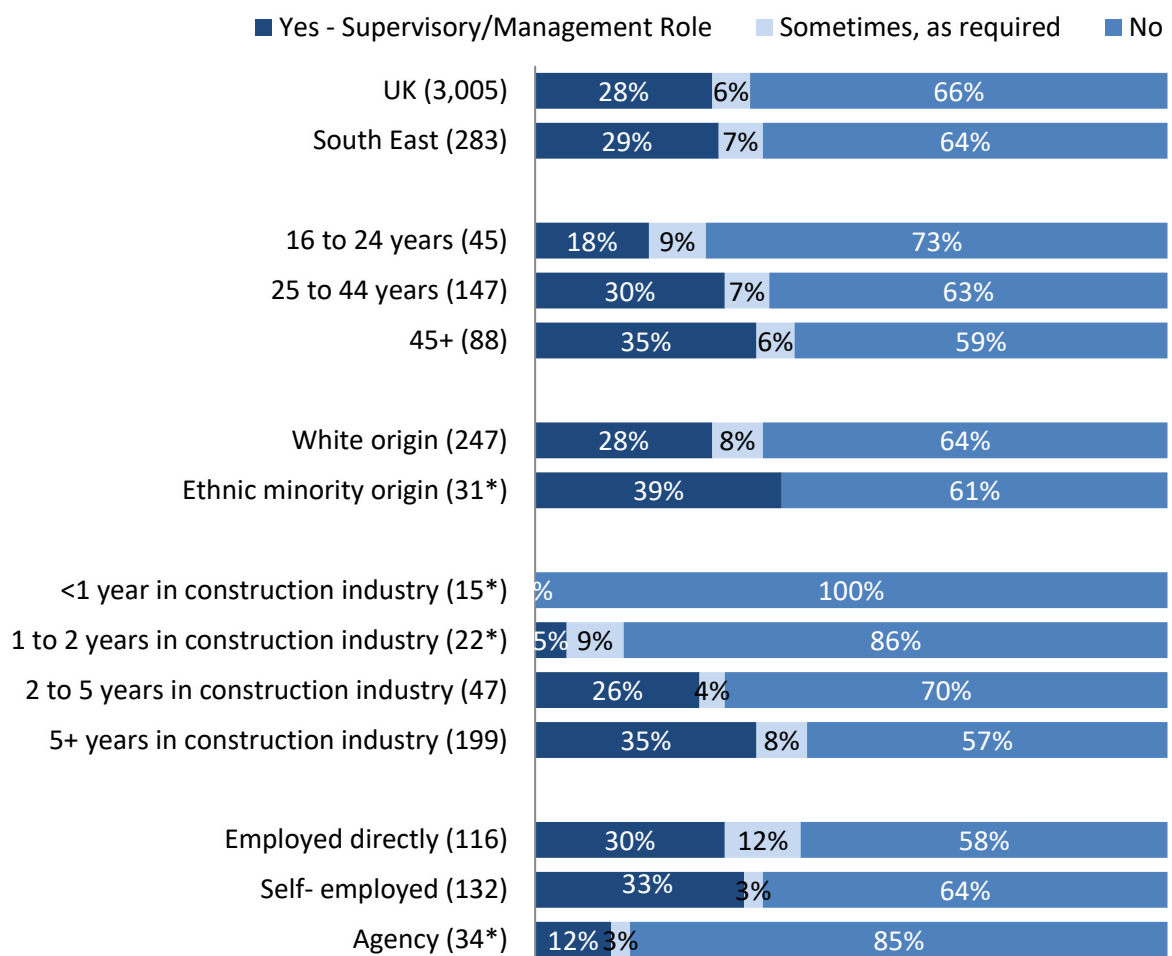
Close to three in ten (29%) construction workers in the South East say they perform a supervisory or management role on their site (compared to 34% in 2018/19 and 29% in 2015), in line with the UK average (28%).

The proportion who work in supervisory roles increases with time in the industry, to 35% of those in the construction industry for more than 5 years, and is lower among agency (12%) and temporary (20%) staff.

These differences are summarised in the following figure.

Figure 9: Whether respondents perform a supervisory or management role

Base: All respondents



Q8. Unweighted bases in parentheses

* Caution: low base

Employment status

Around half (47%) of construction workers in the South East are self-employed, in line with 2018/19 (44%) and 2015 (53%), and somewhat higher than the national average of 42%.

At 41%, the proportion who are employed directly is also in line with 2018/19 (45%), but lower than the UK average of 48%.

Around one in ten (12%) report working for an employment agency, higher than the UK average (9%).

The proportion of workers who are self-employed increases with the length of time worked in the industry, to 50% of those in the sector for over five years.

Figure 10: Employment status

Base: All respondents

	SE 2022 %	SE 2018/19 %	SE 2015 %	UK 2022 %	Years working in construction %			
					<1	1-2	2-5	5+
Self-employed	47	44	53	42	33	41	38	50
Employed directly by a company (contractor or sub- contractor)	41	45	38	48	13	41	43	43
Working for an employment agency	12	9	8	9	53	18	19	7
Working on some other basis	<0.5	1	1	1	0	0	0	1
Unweighted bases	283	403	439	3,005	15*	22*	47	199

Q20

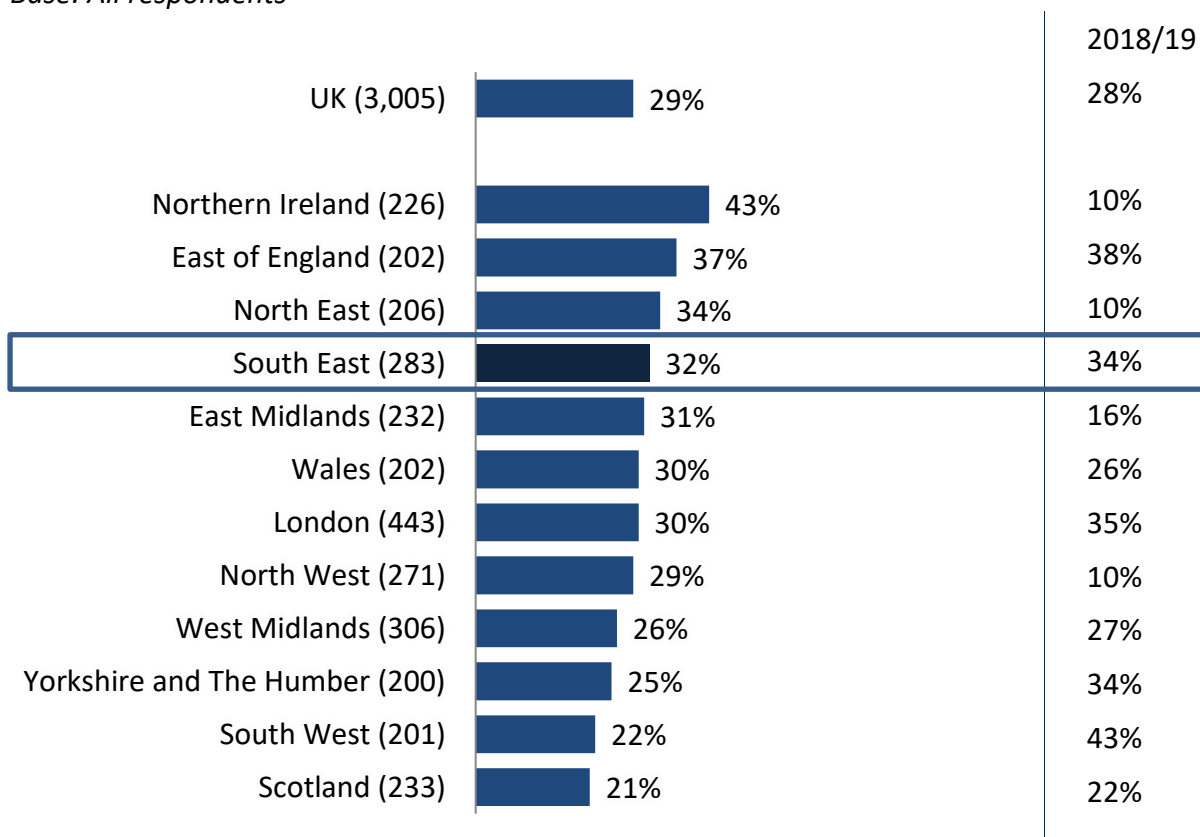
* *Caution: low base*

Employment contract basis

A third (32%) of construction workers in the South East are employed on a temporary, rather than a permanent basis (68%), very much in line with 2018/19 (34% and 66% respectively), and the UK average (29%).

Figure 11: Proportion of workers employed on a temporary basis, by region/nation (including fixed-term contracts)

Base: All respondents



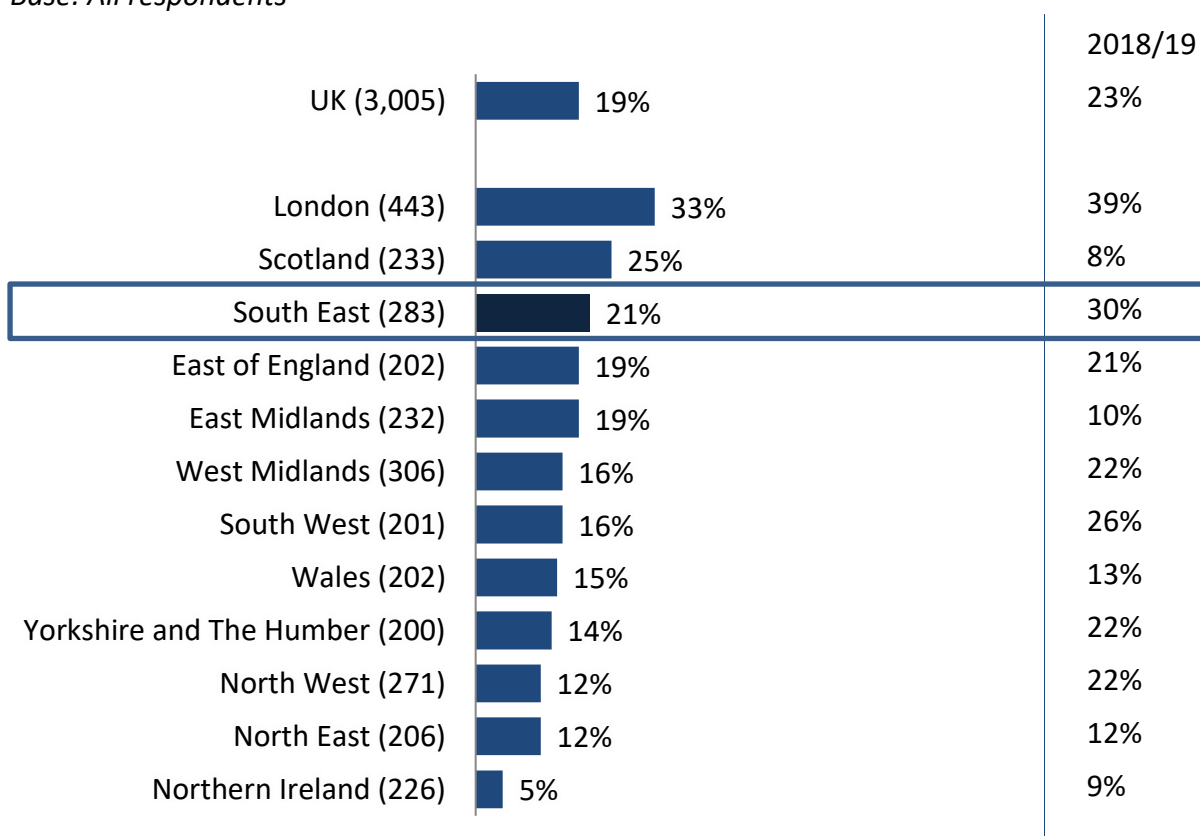
Q21. Unweighted bases in parentheses

Hours worked

Construction workers in the South East, as across the UK as a whole, are most likely to report that they work between 40 and 49 hours per week (59% in both instances), while 21% work more than 50 hours a week, down on 2018/19 (30%), but in line with the UK average of 19%.

Figure 12: Proportion of workers that typically work 50 or more hours per week, by region/nation

Base: All respondents



Q22. Unweighted bases in parentheses

Work histories

Time in the sector

A third (34%) of construction workers in the South East have worked in the construction industry for over 20 years, in line with 2018/19 (32%), and the UK average (30%). Over half (54%) have worked in the industry for at least 10 years, again in line with 2018/19 (57%) and the UK average (52%).

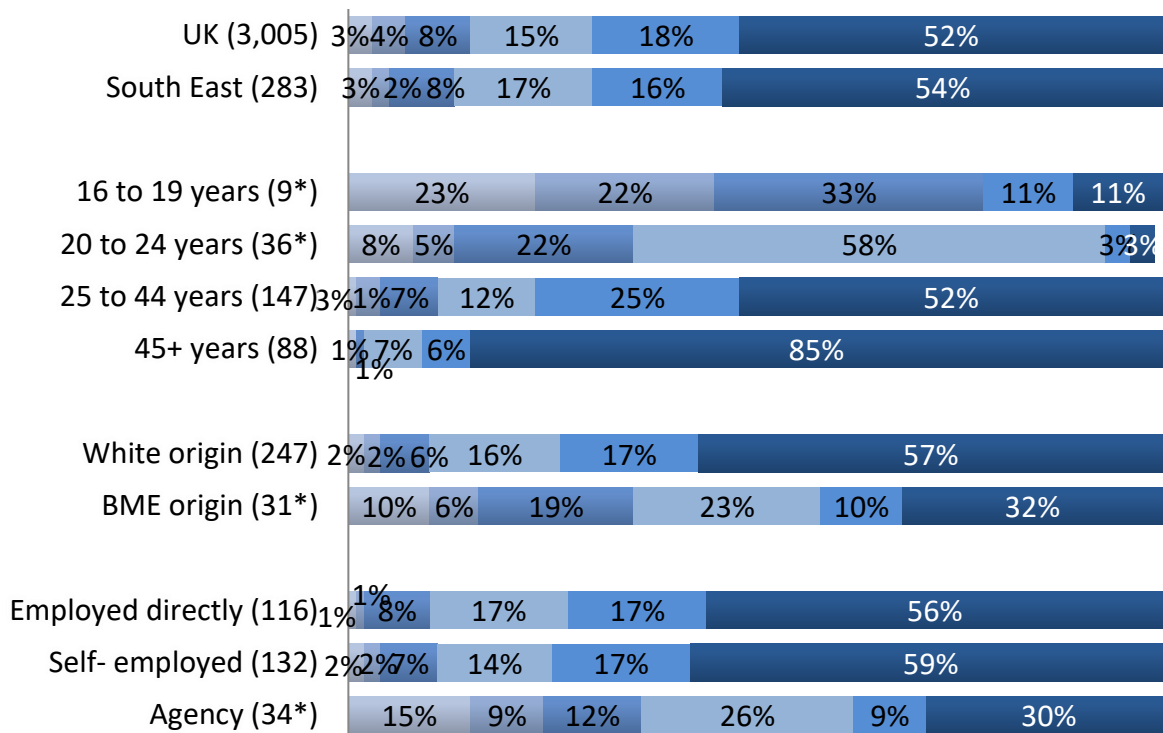
As would be expected, the length of experience in the industry increases with age, with three-quarters of all construction workers aged 45 and over having more than 20 years' experience of working in the sector (78%, compared to 80% in 2018/19).

Workers of ethnic minority origin are over twice as likely to have been in the industry less than five years than workers of White origin (58% compared to 26%). This proportion increases to 62% of agency staff, and stands at 44% for temporary workers.

Figure 13: Years spent working in the construction sector

Base: All respondents

■ < 6 months ■ 6 months to a year ■ 1 - 2 years ■ 2 - 5 years ■ 5 - 10 years ■ 10+ years



Q1. Unweighted bases in parentheses

* Caution: low base

Compared with previous years, Figure 14 shows a relatively consistent picture over time in the South East, and one that is largely consistent with the UK.

Figure 14: Years spent working in the construction sector (cumulative)

Base: All respondents

	SE 2022 %	SE 2018/19 %	SE 2015 %	UK 2022 %
Less than 6 months	3	3	3	3
Up to a year	5	5	8	7
Up to 2 years	13	13	16	14
Up to 5 years	30	28	28	29
Up to 10 years	46	43	49	48
Up to 20 years	6	68	71	70
More than 20 years	34	32	28	30
Unweighted bases	283	403	439	3,005

Q1

Pre-construction employment histories

There has been an increase in the proportion of construction workers in the South East who have worked pretty much continuously in the industry, from 55% in 2018/19 to 63% in the latest survey, placing the South East in line with the UK average in this respect (61%).

Consequently, the proportion who have only ever worked in construction has also increased, from 62% in 2018/19 to 71% in the latest survey.

The proportion who have worked in the industry pretty much continuously increases to 73% of those aged 45 or over.

Figure 15: Statement that best describes respondents' work histories since leaving full time education and starting their first job in construction.

All respondents

	SE 2022 %	SE 2018/19 %	SE 2015 %	UK 2022 %	Age %			
					16 - 19	20 - 24	25 - 44	45+
I've worked in construction pretty much continuously (and not worked in any other industry)	63	55	52	61	56	64	57	73
I have only worked in construction jobs but have had spells of being out of work	4	3	5	6	0	6	5	2
My first job was in construction but I've also worked in other sorts of jobs in one or more other industries	8	7	8	8	0	8	10	6
My first job after full time education was NOT in construction. I moved into the industry after working in other sort(s) of jobs	18	29	23	18	11	17	21	15
This is my first job. I haven't worked in any other industry.	4	3	8	4	33	3	3	3
This is my first job in construction but I have worked in other sorts of jobs in one or more other industries	3	2	2	4	0	3	4	1
Unweighted bases	283	403	439	3,005	9*	36*	147	88

Q2

* Caution: low base

Overall, 18% of construction workers in the South East say that their first job after full-time education was not in construction and that they moved into the industry after working in other sorts of jobs/sectors. This is a decline since 2018/19 (29%), and more in line with 2015 (23%) and the UK average (18%).

Those who had worked in other sectors before starting their construction careers were asked to give details of what they were doing immediately before they started working in construction. The most common sectors in which construction workers had started their careers were wholesale and retail trade (18%) and manufacturing (13%). The pattern of response largely reflects that in the UK, with a decline in those who started in manufacturing.

Figure 16: Industry worked in before starting work in the construction sector

Base: Where first job was not in construction Sectors mentioned by >5% of respondents

	SE 2022 %	SE 2018/19 %	SE 2015 %	UK 2022 %
G – Wholesale and retail trade; repair of motor vehicles and motorcycles	18	29	25	22
C – Manufacturing	13	33	13	20
I – Accommodation	8	-	-	10
R – Arts, entertainment and recreation	7	-	-	3
H – Transportation and storage	5	3	12	10
Unweighted bases	60	117	110	624

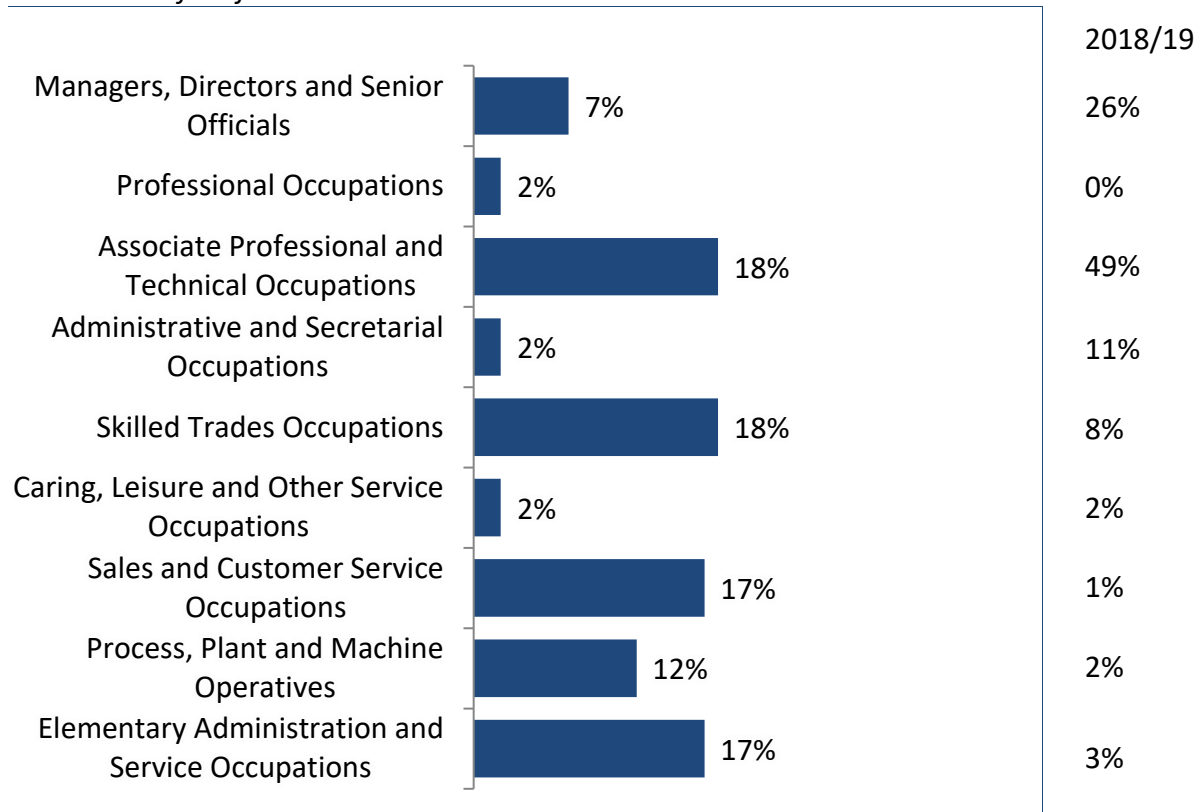
Q3

* *Caution: low base*

In terms of the job roles that respondents have held in other sectors, the highest proportions were in associate, professional and technical occupations (18%), skilled trades occupations (18%), sales and customer service occupations (17%) and elementary administration and service occupations (17%).

Figure 17: Job roles undertaken in other sectors in 2022 compared with 2018/2019

Base: Where first job was not in construction



Q3. Unweighted base (60)

Occupational switching and progression within construction

All workers were asked whether they have worked in differing construction roles or occupations whilst working in the construction industry.

Overall, a third (35%) of all construction workers in the South East have worked in more than one construction trade or occupation whilst working in the construction industry, a decline on 2018/19 (46%), and more in line with 2015 (37%) and the UK average (35%).

Naturally, the proportion of workers who have had more than one role increases with the length of time respondents have worked in construction, from 13% of those with up to a year's experience to 39% amongst those with 5 or more years of experience.

Amongst the 35% of all South East construction workers that had worked in at least one other role/occupation, 18% had worked in 1 previous role, 53% had worked in 2 previous roles, 21% had worked in 3 roles/occupations and 7% had worked in 4 roles/occupations.

Workers are most likely to have previously worked as a labourer/general operative (29%), while 16% had previously worked as a carpenter/joiner, 11% as a bricklayer and 10% as a plant/machine operative.

Figure 18: Previous occupations/trades in the construction sector

Base: Workers that have switched occupations within construction

Occupation	SE 2022 %	UK 2022 %
Labourer/General operative	29	39
Carpenter/joiner	16	15
Bricklayer	11	12
Plant/machine operative (e.g. Fork lift/JCB)	10	10
Dryliner	4	5
Plasterer	7	5
Roofer	5	4
Painter/decorator	3	4
Banksman/Banksperson	9	7
Ceiling fixer	3	3
Electrician	3	2
Plumber	4	3
Site manager	4	4
Floorer	4	4
Pipe fitter	3	2
Scaffolder	3	2
Steel erector/rigger	3	2
Technical e.g. surveyor, maintenance technician	2	2
Mechanical fitter	2	2
Insulation specialist	2	2
Other	10	10
Unweighted base	100	1,082

Future career plans

Over four in five (81%) construction workers in the South East would like to carry on in the same trade or occupation, in line with 2018/19 (84%) and the UK average of 80%.

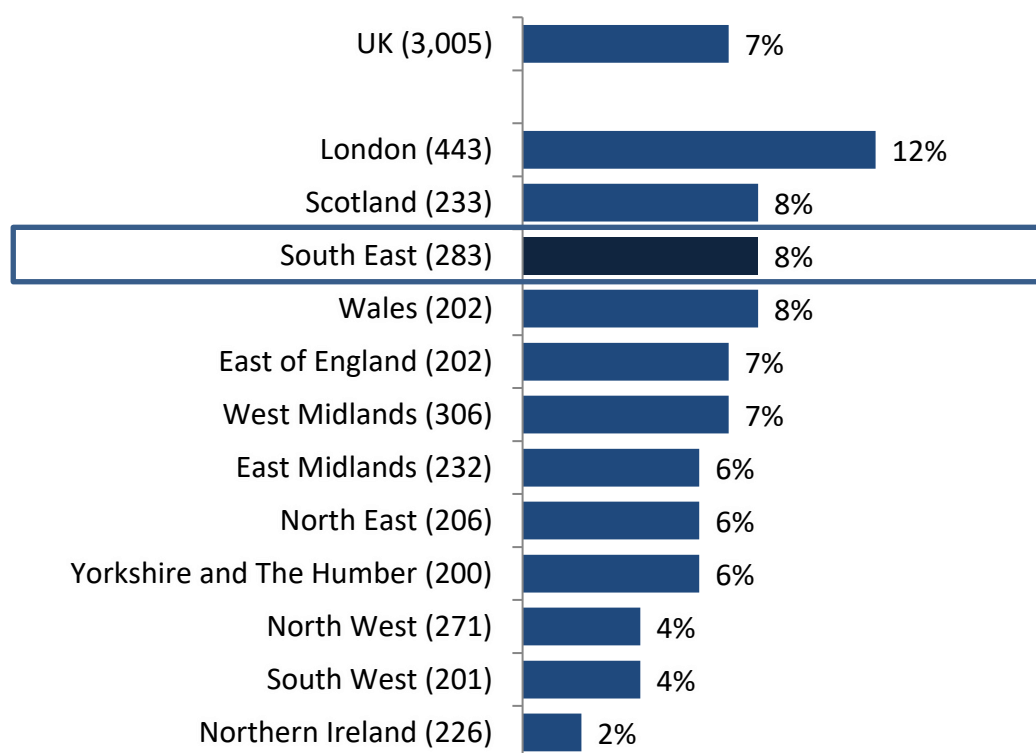
Close to one in ten (8%) would like to change their trade/occupation, again in line with 2018/19 (8%) and the UK average (7%). The remainder would like to leave construction (5%) or were unsure (6%).

Construction workers of ethnic minority origin are more likely than those of White origin to wish to leave the sector (16% compared to 4%). Agency (21%) workers are more likely than those employed directly (2%) or those who are self-employed (5%).

Labourers/general operatives are also more likely than average to wish to leave the sector (17%).

Figure 19: Proportion of construction workers who would like to change their trade or occupation within the construction sector, by region/nation

Base: All respondents



Q33. Unweighted bases in parentheses

Qualifications and skills

This section of the report explores construction workers' qualification levels and other accreditations, examining differences by key variables such as region/nation, occupation and length of experience. The issues covered in this section include:

- the range of skill cards and certificates held by workers
- construction-related qualifications: gained before starting work in the construction sector; since starting work in the sector; and being worked towards
- workers' self-perceived need for additional training in basic skills

Construction skill cards and certificates

While over nine in ten (93%) of all construction workers in the South East report holding a skill card or certificate (e.g. CSCS or CSR), this is a reduction on the 98% who did so in previous surveys. This reflects the UK picture, which has seen a similar decline, from 97% to 93%.

Correspondingly, the proportion who have no cards has risen from 2% in 2018/19, to 6% in the latest survey.

Figure 20: Proportion of workers who have a skill card/certificate, by region/nation

Base: All respondents

	2022 %	2018/19 %	2015 %	2012 %
UK Total (3,005)	93	97	96	97
South West (201)	97	97	96	97
Northern Ireland (226)	97	97	90	100
North East (206)	97	94	96	99
Wales (202)	95	92	92	92
Yorkshire and the Humber (200)	94	98	97	97
South East (283)	93	98	98	96
London (443)	92	98	98	96
West Midlands (306)	91	99	98	100
Scotland (233)	91	99	88	98
North West (271)	91	98	97	99
East of England (202)	91	97	96	98
East Midlands (232)	90	93	93	99
Unweighted bases for 2022 in parentheses				

Q12

In terms of the type of skill card or certificate held by construction workers in the South East, the CSCS (Construction Skills Certification Scheme (GB) is the most commonly held (78%), but to a lesser extent than 2018/19 (87%) and 2015 (91%).

One in six (18%) hold the CPCS (Construction Plant Competence Scheme, up on 2018/19 (10%), and 5% hold the CISRS (Construction Industry Scaffolders Record Scheme).

Figure 21: Type of skill card/certificate held

Base: All respondents

	SE 2022 %	SE 2018/19 %	SE 2015 %
CSCS (Construction Skills Certification Scheme) (GB)	78	87	91
CSR (Construction Skills Register) (NI)	3	0	<0.5
CISRS (Construction Industry Scaffolders Record Scheme)	5	6	5
CPCS (Construction Plant Competence Scheme)	18	10	13
Other	5	7	3
Unweighted bases	283	403	439

Q12

Workers who hold a CSCS card were asked what colour their cards are. Overall 9% of CSCS card holders have Red cards, a third (32%) have Green cards, and another third (33%) have Blue cards. One in six (16%) have Gold cards and one in twenty (6%) hold Black cards, with other types of card held by less than 5%.

Figure 22: Colour of CSCS card held

Base: Where CSCS card is held

	SE 2022 %	SE 2018/19 %
Red – Trainee	5	4
Red – Experienced worker card	4	5
Green – construction site operative card for general site workers	32	37
Blue – skilled	33	27
Gold – supervisor card	8	7
Gold – Advanced craft/skilled worker	8	7
Black – contracts manager card	6	7
Academically Qualified Persons Card	1	3
Other	1	2
Unsure	3	0
Unweighted bases	220	351

Q13

Construction qualifications held

Respondents were asked about the qualifications they held after leaving full-time education and starting their first proper job in construction.

Overall, close to half (45%) of construction workers in the South East report having no construction-related qualifications when they started their first job. This is significantly lower than the 79% who reported this in 2018/19, and the 70% who did so in 2015 and in line with the UK average (47%), which has also seen a significant decrease since 2018/19 (72%).

Those employed via agencies are more likely than average to report having no qualifications (65%), as are those working as labourers/general operatives (60%).

After being asked about the qualifications they had when they first started their career, all workers were asked what other formal qualifications relevant to construction they have gained since starting in the industry. By combining the responses to both these questions the highest level of construction qualification held at the time of interview (including the type of qualification, the subject of the qualification, and its level) is derived.

Overall, two thirds (67%) of construction workers in the South East report holding a construction-related qualification, a significant decline on the 77% who did so in 2018/19. This is in line with the UK-wide picture, where there has also been a decrease in the proportion of workers holding a qualification, from 72% in 2018/19 to 69% in the latest survey.

The proportion of workers in the South East who have a construction-related qualification increases with length of time in the industry, to 72% of those with five or more years of experience. It is lower than average among agency staff (35%).

Figure 23: Proportion of workers that hold any construction-specific qualification*Base: All respondents*

		SE 2022 %	SE 2018/19 %	SE 2015 %	SE 2012 %	UK 2022 %
Total (283)		67	77	58	62	69
Age	16 to 19 years (9*)	67	30	42	-	54
	20 to 24 years (36*)	58	52	62	58	64
	25 to 44 years (147)	68	61	63	53	72
	45+ years (88)	69	61	64	71	69
Length of time in construction	<1 year (15*)	40	22	9	25	46
	1 to 2 years (22*)	50	43	33	28	43
	2 to 5 years (47)	62	59	63	43	62
	5+ years (199)	72	64	68	66	75
Current contract type	Employed directly (116)	70	66	69	59	69
	Self-employed (132)	72	55	62	60	74
	Agency (34*)	35	29	40	50	50
Unweighted bases for 2022 in parentheses						

Q15/Q16

* *Caution: low base*

Type of construction qualifications held

Based on the qualifications that workers had when they first started working in the construction industry and any they have gained since, Figure 26 summarises the types of qualifications that workers hold and compares the figures to previous surveys (amongst those who have any qualifications and who provided a response).

As in previous years, the qualifications most likely to be held by construction workers in the South East are NVQ/SVQ qualifications (78%), but to a greater extent than 2018/19 (61%).

One in five (17%) construction workers with qualifications hold City & Guilds qualifications, up on 2018/19 (13%) and returning this to the levels seen in 2015 (17%).

Around one in twenty construction workers with qualifications hold an apprenticeship (7%), HNC/HND/BTEC Higher (5%), or a degree (5%).

Figure 24: Main type of qualification held*Base: Workers with qualifications (valid responses)*

	SE 2022 %	SE 2018/19 %	SE 2015 %	SE 2012 %	UK 2022 %
NVQ/SVQ	78	61	67	68	69
City & Guilds	17	13	17	17	18
Construction Award	2	Na	Na	Na	3
Apprenticeship	7	3	25	1	11
HNC/HND/BTEC Higher	5	6	3	1	5
Degree	5	6	6	0	5
Other	6	21	8	3	12
Unweighted bases	189	287	196	173	2,093

Q15/Q16

Additional formal training

Self-assessment of basic skills needs

Given the need for construction workers to read instructions and record information it is important to ensure that the workforce has the skills required to perform these tasks. The survey therefore asked all workers whether or not they perceive the need for training in any of a list of specified basic skills to help with their work.

Overall, one in five (20%) construction workers in the South East believe they would benefit from some form of training in basic skills (compared to 10% in 2018/19, 14% in 2015 and 20% in 2012). This is a similar proportion to the UK average (19%), which has also seen an increase since 2018/19 (11%).

Construction workers from an ethnic minority group are more likely than those of White origin to identify a need for training in speaking English (26% compared to 8%), reading (23% compared to 8%) and writing (23% compared to 5%).

Figure 25: Self-assessed need for training in basic skills*Base: All respondents*

	SE 2022 %	SE 2018/19 %	SE 2015 %	SE 2012 %	UK 2022 %
ANY	20	10	14	20	19
Reading	10	5	6	9	9
Speaking English	10	8	8	8	9
Writing	7	5	6	8	7
Maths	4	3	3	9	6
Digital skills	5	Na	Na	Na	4
Unweighted bases	283	403	439	420	3,005

Q37

Current study for additional construction qualifications

Overall, 10% of all construction workers in the South East are currently working towards formal qualifications relevant to the construction industry (excluding supervisory or managerial qualifications). This slightly lower than the UK average (13%), and compares with 15% in 2018/19 and 10% in 2015.

As in previous surveys, the likelihood that workers are currently working towards qualifications is significantly higher amongst the youngest workers (24% of 16 to 24 year olds).

Figure 26: Proportion working towards additional construction qualifications

Base: All respondents

		SE 2022 %	SE 2018/19 %	SE 2015 %	UK 2022 %
Total (283)		10	15	10	13
Age	16 to 19 years (9*)	22	53	55	43
	20 to 24 years (36*)	25	24	21	24
	25 to 44 years (147)	10	14	8	11
	45+ years (88)	2	8	7	5
Length of time in construction	<1 year (15*)	20	41	24	28
	1 to 2 years (22*)	23	24	12	27
	2 to 5 years (47)	15	25	20	20
	5+ years (199)	7	10	7	8
Contract type	Employed directly (116)	14	19	14	15
	Self- employed (132)	8	12	7	10
	Agency (34*)	3	11	6	8
Highest qualification level	None (58)	12	11	10	11
	Level 1 (29*)	17	25	30	17
	Level 2 (74)	11	10	11	12
	Level 3 (54)	7	16	11	11
	Level 4+ (32*)	13	22	13	16
Unweighted bases for 2022 in parentheses					

Q18

* Caution: low base

Of the 28 construction workers in the South East¹ who are currently studying for a qualification (and who provided a response) half (57%) are studying for an NVQ/SVQ, one in six (18%) for an apprenticeship, less than one in ten (7%) for a City & Guilds, and fewer (4%) for a degree.

¹ Number of workers (unweighted)

Supervisory and managerial qualifications and training

As reported earlier, three in ten (29%) construction workers in the South East perform a supervisory or management role at their site.

Amongst those who do not currently perform supervisory/management roles and have not had this role before, 13% want to become a supervisor or manager in the future, fewer than the 30% who did so in 2018/19, and one in ten (8%) previously held the role and want to return to that status (in line with 8% in 2018/19). Three in five (60%) are certain that they do not want to, up on the 43% who felt this in 2018/19, and one in five (19%) are unsure.

These results are much in line with the UK average.

Figure 27: Whether those who are not currently supervisors want to be one in the future

Base: Where do not perform supervisor/management roles on site

		Yes, but have not done it before %	Yes and have done it before %	No %	Maybe/ depends %
2022 UK (1,982)		17	6	59	18
2022 South East (181)		13	8	60	19
Age	16 to 19 years (8*)	0	13	50	38
	20 to 24 years (25*)	32	0	28	40
	25 to 44 years (93)	14	8	62	16
	45+ years (52)	6	12	71	12
Length of time in construction	<1 year (15*)	27	0	60	13
	1 to 2 years (19*)	16	0	63	21
	2 to 5 years (33*)	24	0	42	33
	5+ years (114)	8	12	65	15
Contract type	Employed directly (67)	12	6	64	18
	Self-employed (85)	14	12	53	21
	Agency (29*)	14	0	72	14
Unweighted bases in parentheses					

Q9

* Caution: low base

Close to two in five (38%) construction workers in the South East have received formal training designed to improve managerial or supervisory knowledge or skills, in line with 2018/19 (39%), but lower than the 2022 UK average of 33%. Among those who have or have had some form of supervisory or management responsibilities, four in five (80%) have received formal training, in line with 2018/19 (81%) and 2015 (73%), and with the UK average (80%).

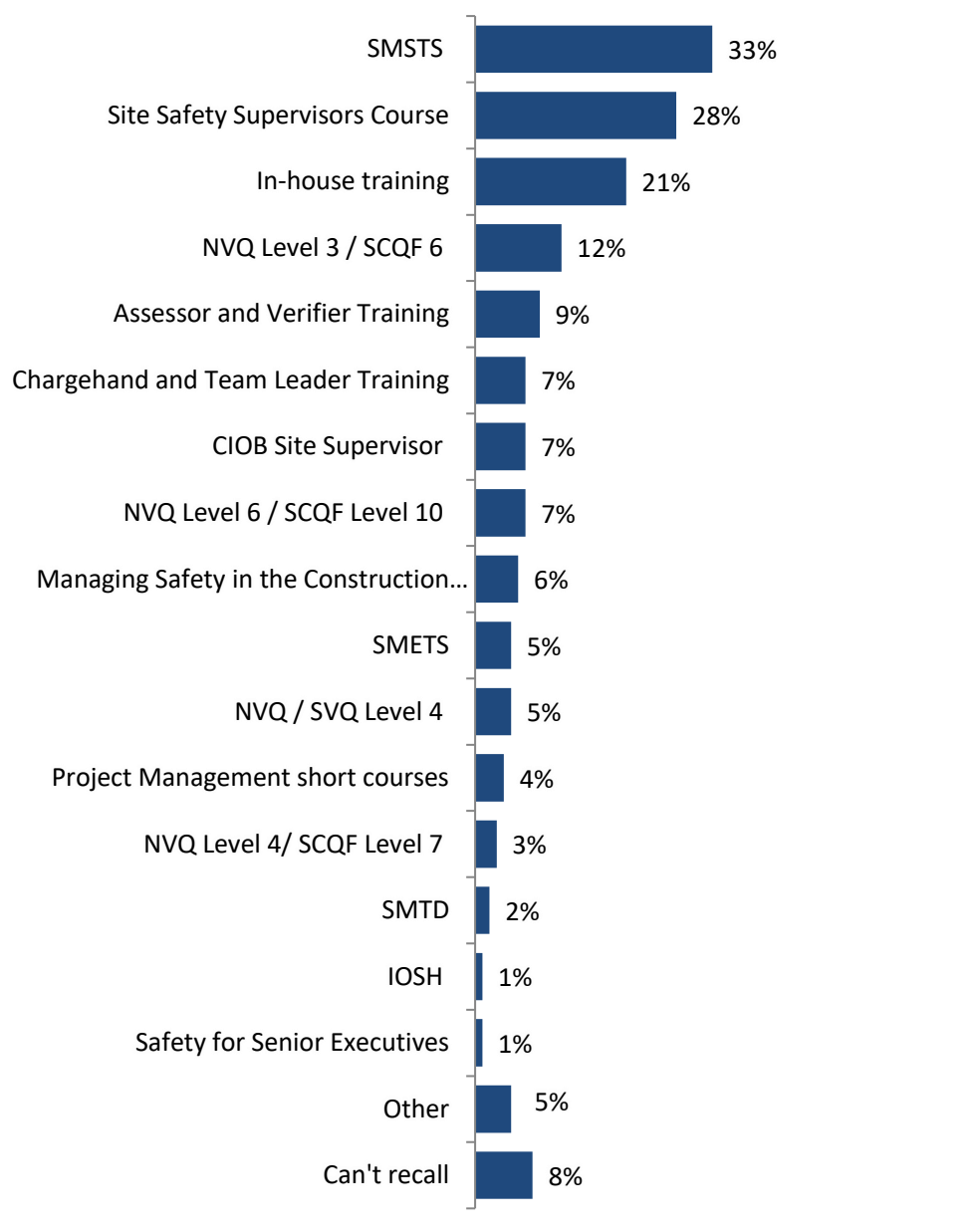
The proportion that has undertaken any managerial or supervisory training rises with length of time in the industry, from 7% who have worked in construction for less than a year, to 42% of those in the industry for five or more years.

Agency (85%) and temporary (69%) staff are more likely than average to report having received no such training.

In terms of the types of supervisory/managerial training undertaken, SMSTS (Site Manager Safety Training Scheme) is most frequently mentioned by those who have undertaken any training (33%), followed by Site Safety Supervisors Courses (28%) and in-house training (21%). These were also the top three most mentioned types of supervisory training in 2018/19, 2015 and 2012.

Figure 28: Types of managerial/supervisory training undertaken

Base: Where received formal training designed to improve managerial or supervisory knowledge or skills



Q11. Unweighted base = 107

Overall skill levels

An overview of the qualification and skill levels of construction workers surveyed has been derived by combining data from various separate measures and is presented in Figure 29 below.

As in previous years, the vast majority (98%) of construction workers in the South East have a construction-related qualification and/or skills card/certificate (or were working towards a qualification at the point of interview): only 2% of those interviewed could not say that they were at least working towards obtaining a CSCS card (or similar) or construction qualification.

The pattern of response is largely consistent with previous years, and with the UK average in 2022.

Figure 29: Qualification status summary

Base: All respondents

	SE 2022 %	SE 2018/19 %	SE 2015 %	SE 2012 %	UK 2022 %
Holds a formal construction qualification or a skills card/certificate or working towards a qualification	98	99	98	96	96
Holds a formal construction qualification or a skills card/certificate	97	99	98	96	96
Holds a skills card/certificate	93	98	98	96	93
Holds a skills card/certification but no other qualification	18	19	36	55	19
Working towards a qualification	10	15	10	9	13
Unweighted bases	283	403	439	420	3,005

Q12/Q15/Q16/Q18

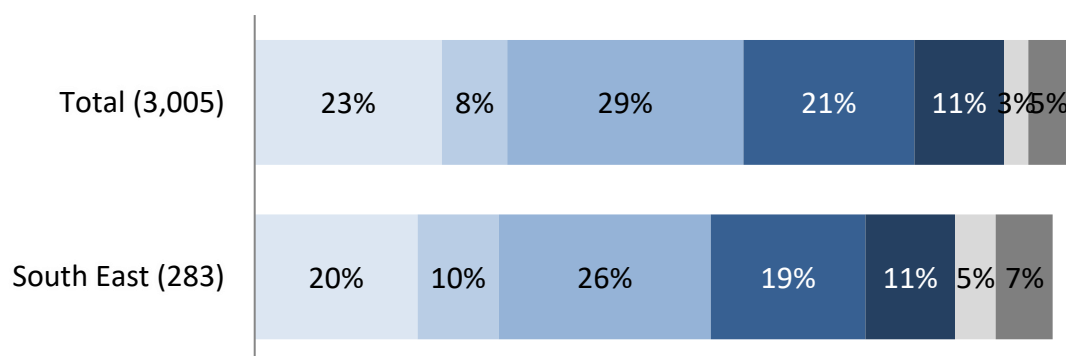
Based on all questions relating to qualifications it is possible to calculate each worker’s highest qualification level, and Figure 30 summarises construction workers’ highest level of qualification, overall and by occupation.

Overall, approaching three in five (57%) construction workers in the South East have qualifications equivalent to Level 2 or above, in line with the 63% who did in 2018/19, and the UK average of 61%.

Figure 30: Current qualification level, by occupation

Base: All respondents who provided a valid response

■ No formal qualification ■ Level 1 ■ Level 2 ■ Level 3 ■ Level 4+ ■ Other ■ Don't know/unclear



Q15/Q16. Unweighted bases in parentheses

Geographic mobility

This section of the report on geographic mobility helps to identify which regions/nations of the UK are net 'importers' or 'exporters' of construction workers, as well as which elements of the construction workforce are the most mobile (based on region/nation of residence, region/nation of birth and type of contract). The measures included in this section are:

- reasons for working in current location
- comparisons of current location with workers' region/nation of origin
- proportion of construction workers' career that has been spent working in the current region/nation
- whether workers commute daily to their current site or whether temporary accommodation is used
- miles travelled to site each day
- whether their next site will be in commuting distance or will require temporary accommodation

Work history in the current region/nation

All workers were asked what made them decide to work in the region/nation that they are currently working in.

The pattern of results is somewhat different to 2018/19, with an increase in the proportion who grew up there, from 33% in 2018/19 to 47% in the latest survey, such that this is now the main reason for being in the region.

There has been a corresponding decrease in the proportion who say that their employer sent them there., from 53% in 2018/19 to 42% in the latest survey.

Consequently, the pattern of response is now more in line with the UK average.

Figure 31: Reasons for choosing to work in current location – prompted, multiple response

Base: All respondents

	SE 2022 %	SE 2018/19 %	SE 2015 %	UK 2022 %
You grew up here/have always lived here	47	33	45	46
Employer sent you here	42	53	44	47
Family reasons	5	5	5	5
Came to the area to take up this or another job	4	4	9	5
Construction work is better paid in this area	4	6	3	4
There are more jobs available in this area	4	7	6	3
Unweighted bases	283	403	439	3,005

Q28

Approaching half (47%) of construction workers in the South East have worked within their current region for their whole career, an increase on previous years (32% in 2018/19 and 35% in 2015), such that this is now in line with the UK average (49%).

A further third (33%) have worked in their current region for most of their career, meaning that 81% have remained in the South East for all or most of their career, significantly higher than 2018/19 (61%), and in line with the 2022 UK average (83%).

Figure 32: Proportion of construction workers' career worked in current region/nation

Base: All respondents

	SE 2022 %	SE 2018/19 %	SE 2015 %	SE 2012 %	UK 2022 %
All of your time	47	32	35	25	49
Most of it	33	29	37	33	34
Around half your time	13	14	11	12	8
A small proportion of your time	4	20	9	23	5
Only on this job (this is the first site you've been to in this region/nation)	<0.5	4	5	5	1
Don't know	2	<0.5	3	1	3
Unweighted bases	283	403	439	420	3,005

Q26/Q27

In the South East, two thirds of construction workers (69%) indicate their employer operates nationwide, with a third (27%) reporting that their employer operates in particular parts of the UK including the South East, while 4% are unsure.

These results are much in line with 2018/19.

Region/nation worked in before current site

Thinking about the last construction site they worked on before their current one, in the majority of cases, workers' last sites are in the same region/nation as they are working in now. However, the extent to which this is the case varies considerably by region/nation, as Figure 33 illustrates.

Similarly to 2018/19, construction workers in the South East are among the least likely to state that their last site was in the same region (66%), with one in ten (12%) reporting that it was in London.

Figure 33 Region/nation currently working in compared with the region/nation of workers' immediately previous construction sites

Base: Where had previous job(s) *denotes less than 0.5%

Region/nation of last site	Region/nation currently working in											
	EM %	EE %	GL %	NE %	NW %	NI %	SC %	SE %	SW %	WA %	WM %	YH %
East Midlands (EM)	51	6	*	6	1	0	0	1	0	1	9	5
East of England (EE)	5	66	1	0	*	0	*	5	2	1	6	2
London (GL)	3	10	81	1	1	0	0	12	1	2	4	2
North East (NE)	1	4	0	65	1	0	1	2	1	1	*	1
North West (NW)	2	0	1	8	87	0	*	4	0	0	8	13
South East (SE)	6	10	11	0	1	1	0	66	3	2	1	1
South West (SW)	*	2	1	0	0	0	0	5	84	6	0	1
West Midlands (SE)	13	1	0	10	5	0	0	5	1	3	66	3
Yorkshire & Humber (YH)	15	1	0	10	2	*	0	*	1	0	2	72
Northern Ireland (NI)	1	0	0	0	0	85	0	0	0	0	0	0
Scotland (SC)	1	0	*	0	0	1	98	0	0	0	1	0
Wales (WA)	0	1	0	0	*	0	0	*	3	84	1	1
Republic of Ireland	0	0	*	0	0	13	0	0	0	0	*	0
Other parts of Europe	0	0	1	0	1	0	*	*	0	0	0	0
Outside of Europe	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	*	1	0	0	0
Other / Unsure	1	0	3	0	*	0	0	1	5	1	2	1
Unweighted Bases	216	183	392	195	252	226	226	264	183	193	290	184

Q32

Worker origins

Workers were asked which region/nation they were living in just before they got their first job in construction in the UK.

Again, similarly to 2018/19 and 2015, construction workers in the South East are among the least likely to be interviewed in the same region/nation in which they were living when they started their construction career (64%), although this proportion is higher than 2018/19 (51%) and 2015 (55%).

Figure 34: Region/nation currently working in compared with workers' region/nation of residence prior to first starting work in construction

Base: All respondents *denotes less than 0.5%

Original home	Region/nation currently working in											
	EM %	EE %	GL %	NE %	NW %	NI %	SC %	SE %	SW %	WA %	WM %	YH %
East Midlands (EM)	53	5	1	7	*	0	0	1	*	1	5	5
East of England (EE)	7	67	5	0	0	0	0	3	1	*	6	1
London (GL)	2	13	64	1	*	1	0	14	3	1	1	4
North East (NE)	2	3	*	67	3	0	1	1	*	*	*	0
North West (NW)	1	0	1	6	89	0	0	4	*	1	6	13
South East (SE)	3	7	10	*	*	0	0	64	3	*	2	1
South West (SW)	*	*	1	*	0	*	0	5	81	3	*	0
West Midlands (SE)	13	1	1	8	4	*	0	4	*	0	74	1
Yorkshire & Humber (YH)	15	2	1	8	2	*	0	0	0	0	2	75
Northern Ireland (NI)	1	0	*	0	0	92	0	*	0	0	0	0
Scotland (SC)	1	0	1	1	*	0	94	1	*	0	1	1
Wales (WA)	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	*	5	90	2	0
Republic of Ireland	*	0	*	0	*	4	2	*	0	0	*	0
Other parts of Europe	1	0	7	*	*	2	3	2	*	1	*	0
Outside of Europe	0	1	3	*	0	*	*	*	*	0	*	1
Other / Unsure	*	0	2	0	0	0	0	0	2	0	0	0
Unweighted Bases	232	202	443	206	271	226	233	283	201	202	306	200

Q40

Travel to site

Location of current workplace in relation to the location of workers' current homes

The majority (76%) of construction workers in the South East were interviewed on a site that was located within the same region/nation as their permanent home, a significant uplift on 2018/19 (55%) and 2015 (58%). However, this remains somewhat lower than the average across all regions of 85%.

Of the 24% who travel outside of their region to their current site, some two thirds (17%) are from a neighbouring region, as is the pattern for most other regions.

Furthest distance worked in last 12 months

All workers were asked to indicate the furthest distance they have worked from their permanent or current home in the last 12 months.

A third (33%) of construction workers in the South East have worked no more than 20 miles away, continuing an upward trend since 2015 (16%) and 2018/19 (19%), and placing this in line with the UK average of 33%.

A further two in five (40%) have worked between 21 and 50 miles away, up on 2018/19 (33%) and 2015 (27%), and on the UK average of 34%.

This leaves more than a quarter (27%) who have worked more than 50 miles away from their permanent or current home – which is lower than the UK average (32%) – including 9% who have worked more than 100 miles away (compared to a UK average of 12%). This compares to 48% and 17% respectively in 2018/19, so there has been a reduction in the proportion who have travelled over 100 miles (41% and 17% respectively in 2018/19 across the UK).

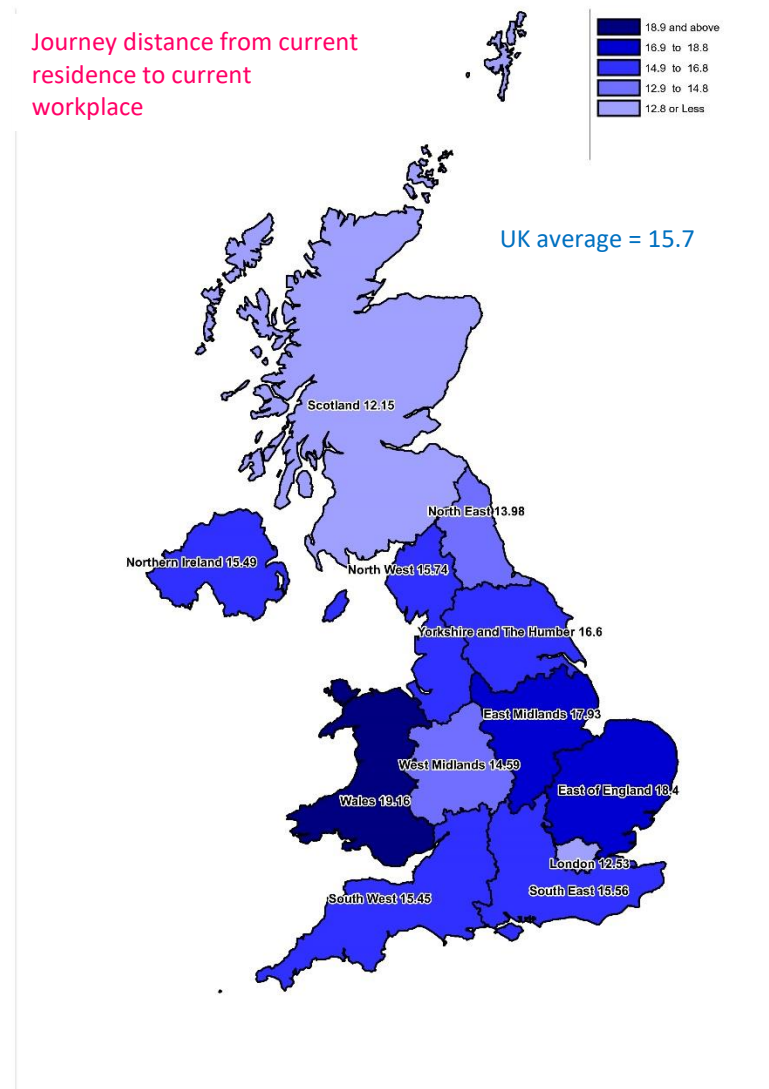
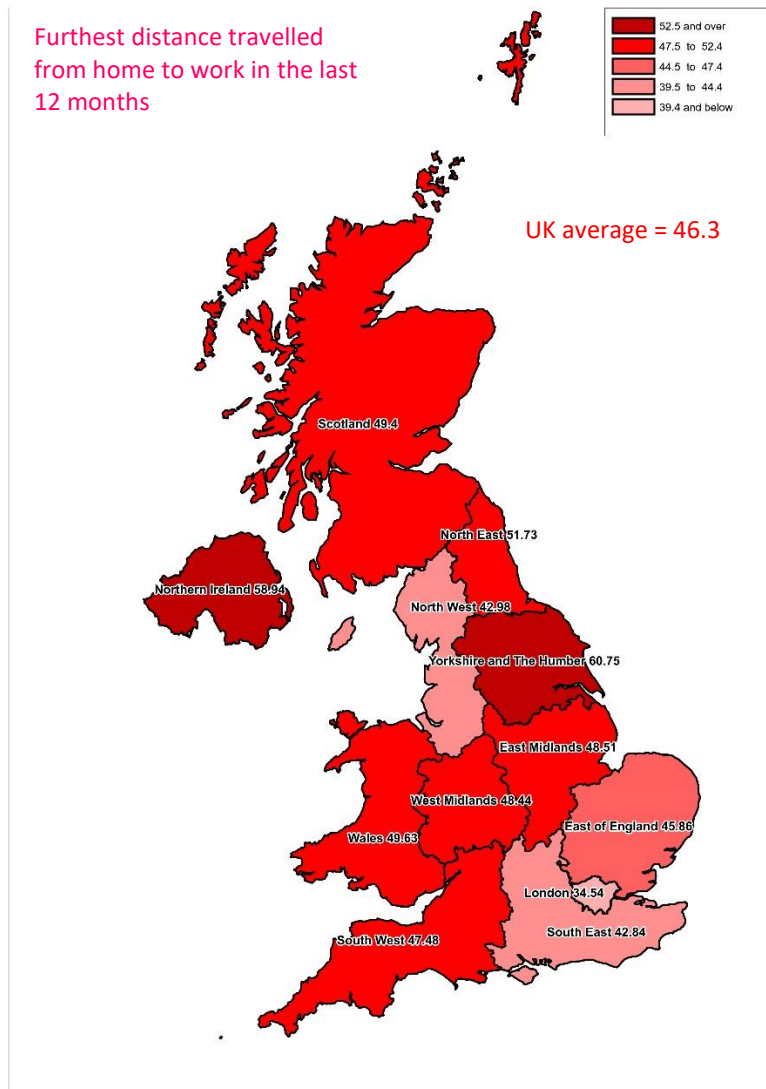
The average furthest distance travelled is 43 miles in the South East, in line with the UK average of 46 miles.

Journey distance to work

The average (mean) distance from workers' current residence (taking into account temporary residences) to their current site is 16 miles, significantly shorter than 2018/19 and 2015 (both 27 miles).

Across the UK the average distance is 17 miles, down on 18 miles in 2018/19, 22 miles in 2015 and 28 miles in 2012.

Three in ten (30%) of those providing a response travel less than 10 miles to work, in line with 2018/19 (29%), more than half (54%) travel between 10 and 49 miles (compared to 54% in 2018/19), and the remaining 16% travel further than this (compared to 17% in 2018/19).



Use of temporary accommodation

Both nationally and in the South East, one in twenty (5% and 6% respectively) construction workers report that they are currently staying in temporary accommodation while working at their site, in line with previous years (5% in 2018/19, and 6% in 2015).

Expected site/phase duration

All the workers in the South East who are currently employed on a temporary basis (29% of all construction workers) were asked how much longer they expect to be working for the company/person/agency paying them.

Responses range from 1% who expect to work for the rest of the week, 9% expecting another one to four weeks, a quarter (25%) one to six months, 16% six to twelve months, and one in ten (11%) more than a year.

Close to two in five (37%) do not know how much longer they expect to be working, fewer than in 2018/19 (43%), and compared with the 2022 UK average (32%).

More than a quarter (27%) do not know how much longer they expect to be working, somewhat lower than 2018/19 (31%), and the UK average (32%).

In order to get a measure of workplace stability amongst all construction workers, all respondents, whether temporary or permanent, were asked to indicate how long in total they expect to work at that specific site during this phase.

Overall, 15% of construction workers in the South East do not expect to work on that site for more than a month, compared to 11% in 2018/19 (20%). Just 3% believe they will be there for less than a week (compared to 3% in 2018/19).

Half (50%) anticipate being on site for more than a month but less than a year, fewer than in 2018/19 (57%) and compared to the 2022 UK average of 53%.

One in seven (14%) expect to be on site for more than a year, continuing a downward trend on this measure, from 29% in 2015, to 24% in 2018/19. This compares with the UK average of 13%.

One in five (21%) are uncertain in this regard, significantly higher than 2018/19 (9%), and approaching 2015 levels (22%), although in line with the UK average of 22%.

Figure 35: Length of time workers expect to work at that specific site during current phase*Base: All respondents*

	SE 2022 %	SE 2018/19 %	UK 2022 %
Less than a week	3	3	2
1-2 weeks	4	4	3
2-3 weeks	3	1	3
3-4 weeks	6	2	4
1-3 months	10	13	11
3-6 months	18	15	17
6-12 months	22	29	25
More than a year	14	24	13
Don't know	21	9	22
Unweighted bases	283	403	3,005

Q24

Expected next site location

While a majority (66%) of all construction workers in the South East are confident that when they finish this job they will get a job that allows them to travel from their permanent home to work on a daily basis, this is significantly lower than the 90% who did so in 2018/19, but it is similar to the 2022 UK average (69%).

The proportion who are sure that this will not be the case has increased (8% compared to 3% in 2018/19), while the proportion who say it depends where the work is has increased, from 3% in 2018/19 to 22% in the latest survey, as is the case across the UK overall (from 8% in 2018/19 to 20% in 2022).

The remaining 4% do not know.

Sub-sector and sector mobility

This final section of the report explores sub-sector mobility (movement between project types within the construction sector) and how this varies between different groups of construction workers. Attitudes towards future employment in the sector are also examined.

Sub-sector mobility

All workers were asked which (if any) of six types of construction work they have undertaken for a continuous period of at least 3 months.

New housing continues to be the most common type of construction work undertaken in the South East (83%, compared to 81%), followed by housing repair and maintenance (42%) and commercial work (39%), both of which have seen declines since 2018/19 (from 54% and 59% respectively).

At 35%, private industrial work is also down on 2018/19 (54%), as is public non-housing work (34% compared to 60% in 2018/19), while infrastructure work has remained relatively consistent (28% compared to 31% in 2018/19).

This places the South East very much in line with the UK average in terms of types of work undertaken, as compared to 2018/19, where the South East had significantly higher than average levels of housing repair and maintenance, commercial, private industrial, public and infrastructure building work.

In terms of the number of types of work undertaken, the results are largely in line with the UK average, with 23% undertaking one type, 15% two types, 27% three or four types, and 35% more than this.

Figure 36: Type of projects on which workers have spent significant periods of time*Base: All respondents*

	SE 2022 %	SE 2018/19 %	SE 2015 %	SE 2012 %	UK 2022 %
New housing	83	81	84	82	78
Housing repair and maintenance including extensions/loft conversions	42	54	41	47	42
Commercial work such as shops, office, pubs etc	39	59	35	51	39
Private industrial work such as factories, warehousing, mechanical engineering, land reclamation	35	54	30	43	35
Public non-housing work such as schools, sports facilities, landscaping	34	60	33	60	32
Infrastructure building projects, such as road/rail/airport, sewerage/water treatment, power stations	28	31	21	32	23
Off-site manufacturing	5	Na	Na	Na	6
ONE TYPE ONLY	42	23	47	18	42
TWO TYPES	14	15	12	22	17
THREE TYPES	12	15	13	17	13
FOUR TYPES	10	12	6	13	9
FIVE TYPES	10	16	9	16	9
SIX TYPES	8	19	11	11	6
Unweighted bases	283	403	439	420	3,005

Q4

Leaving the sector

In order to assess the potential outflow from the sector in the next five years (led by worker preference), all workers were asked how likely it is that in 5 years' time they will still want to be working in construction.

Four in five (80%) construction workers in the South East think it is likely that they will still want to do so, including 41% who say they definitely will be, and 26% who think it is very likely. This is in line with the UK average of 82%.

One in ten (10%) say it is unlikely that they will still want to work in construction in five years' time, and while this is in line with the UK average of 7%, one in twenty (4%) say they will definitely not be, higher than the UK average of 2%.

Age is the predominant factor in this respect. Most obviously, the proportion that hopes to be retired in five years' time increases to 19% of construction workers aged 45 and over, and while this is in line with 2018/19 (19%), it is higher than the UK average for this age group of 13%.

Figure 37: Likelihood of construction workers still wanting to be working in the construction sector in five years' time

Base: All respondents

	All %	Age %			
		16 - 19	20 - 24	25 - 44	45+
Definitely will be	41	44	42	44	38
Very likely	26	22	33	27	23
Quite likely	13	0	11	17	8
Quite unlikely	2	11	6	2	1
Very unlikely	4	11	3	3	5
Definitely will not be	4	11	0	3	6
Hope to be retired	6	0	0	0	19
Don't know	4	0	6	5	1
Unweighted bases	283	9*	36*	147	88

Q38A

* Caution: low base

Excluding those aged 60 and over (as those over 60 may be assumed to be considering retirement in the next 5 years): 43% believe they will definitely want to be working in the construction sector, 27% believe it is very likely they will want to be working in the construction sector, and 14% believe it is quite likely they will want to be working in the construction sector. Overall 84% of this group are likely to some degree to want to be working in the sector, in line with 2018/19 (87%). One in ten (10%) of this age group think it unlikely they will want to be working in the construction sector in five years (compared with 6% in 2018/19).

The South East construction workforce 2022 summary

The UK construction industry

Across the UK, the survey findings point us towards the conclusion that the construction industry is not in a particularly dynamic phase.

Following the sharp dip in industry output in value terms during the worst months of the Covid pandemic, there was a very sharp recovery from April to June 2021 followed by more steady growth to a point where output is broadly at its pre-pandemic level. Low growth is anticipated in the near future, with a relatively high rate of inflation and increases in the base interest rate likely to increase costs and dampen demand.

Correspondingly, the industry's workforce which suffered minor decline in 2020/2021 is also anticipated to be fairly static in aggregate with the major labour and skills driver being a need to recruit around 200,000 new workers per year as a result of an industry 'churn rate', estimated at around 8% of a 2.6 million total workforce, rather than substantial change in the total workforce (*The Skills Construction Needs*, Construction Skills Network, CITB, January, 2023).

Stability within the construction industry in the South East

However, a substantial proportion of industry workers, as surveyed here, have been in the industry for lengthy periods. Across the UK, as in the South East, 70% of workers have worked in the industry for 5 years or more, and this reflect findings from previous surveys. Demographic and other characteristics of the workforce therefore change little overall, and with only 11% of workers (16% in the South East) expecting to leave construction in the next 5 years, changes to the demography of the workforce can occur only at the margin. A doubling of the percentage of female entrants would have only a minor effect on the overall structure of the workforce. However, it should be noted that the South East is the only region/nation where the proportion of workers of ethnic minority origin reflects the proportion in the wider working age population.

Nevertheless, the structure of the workforce remains – and is set to remain in the near future – very substantially white and male in its composition, particularly as, in this case, the 'workforce' was defined as comprising on-site and predominantly manual staffing, largely excluding clerical, administrative, technical, and professional construction occupations in which women, particularly, are more strongly represented.

The occupational profile of the workforce as identified by the survey also remains unchanged from previous years with labourers, carpenters, bricklayers, site managers and plant operatives remaining most frequent, followed by much lower levels of representation of other industry trades.

Where survey respondents reported that they had changed roles within the industry, the distribution of prior occupations broadly reflects the current distribution of occupations in

the workforce as a whole. Aspirations to a different future occupation are infrequent, as only 7% of workers across the UK (8% within the South East) want to change their occupation.

Some indicators of change

Across the UK a further area of observed stability includes broad measures of qualification and training. For example, around seven in ten workers hold a construction-related qualification, 13% are working towards a qualification and 33% have had supervisory or management training. All these figures are broadly similar to those observed in 2018/19, and are largely reflected in the South East.

There appears to be greater reticence in taking on more responsibility this year than previously, with fewer respondents certain they want to become a supervisor or manager in the future (23% across the UK; 21% in the South East, compared with 30% and 38% respectively in 2018/19), and fewer workers than in 2018/19 have had formal training in managerial or supervisory knowledge or skills, perhaps reflecting their lower level of interest this year in moving into management and supervisory posts, or perhaps lower levels of interest in these roles are due to less formal training being offered in this area?

While the proportion of workers in the South East holding industry Skills Cards is still high, it has fallen somewhat since 2018/19, from 98% to 93%. (97% to 93% across the UK over this period).

Overall, a higher proportion of construction workers in the South East in 2022 than in 2018/19 held construction-related qualifications prior to starting their first job in construction, with close to half (45%) of construction workers in the South East reporting that they had no construction-related qualifications when they started their first job, compared with 79% in 2018/19, and 70% in 2015.

At the time of interviewing, two thirds of construction workers in the South East reported holding a construction-related qualification (67%), which is a significant decrease on the 77% who did so in 2018/19. This is in line with the UK-wide picture, where there has also been a decrease, from 72% in 2018/19 to 69% in the latest survey.

Around half (47%) of construction workers in the South East are self-employed, in line with 2018/19 (44%) and 2015 (53%), and somewhat higher than the national average of 42%.

This high level of self-employment, always strong in the sector, is likely to positively impact both employers – enabling increased flexibility and cost control – and workers – increased independence, but may also have a negative impact, with greater uncertainty and insecurity in the industry for workers. Potentially, this change may result in lower levels of employer-led training, and attention to improving the skills of the workforce. Although a similar proportion of workers are working towards a qualification in 2022 as in previous studies (10% within the South East), this proportion has also not increased as we would perhaps like to see it increase, and is particularly low, and lower than previously, among the core

workforce age group of 25 to 44 (10% within the South East, compared with 14% in 2018/19).

Another area of change identified by the survey concerns working hours. The proportion of workers working more than 50 hours per week has decreased somewhat since 2018/19, from 30% to 21% in the South East (23% to 19% across the UK). The change raises interesting questions as to whether some technological changes are permitting fewer but more productive hours for some workers; or whether workforce culture, in line with general trends since Covid, is disposing some workers to put personal time ahead of overtime hours; or, simply, whether demand pressures in the industry are lower.

In the South East, the average (mean) distance from workers' current residence (taking into account temporary residences) to their current site is 16 miles, a significantly shorter distance than in 2018/19 and 2015 (both 27 miles), and compared with the UK average of 23 miles. This echoes the national picture, where the average distance is 17 miles, down on 18 miles in 2018/19, 22 miles in 2015 and 28 miles in 2012.

Focus on how the South East differs from the UK average

The South East largely reflects the UK picture, with few significant differences. These are summarised below:

- At 11%, the proportion of construction workers of ethnic minority origin is second highest after London (19%), as has been the case in previous iterations of the survey. This is very much in line with the South East working age population (12%), and the South East is the only region where this can really be said to be the case.
- Around half (47%) of construction workers in the South East are self-employed, in line with 2018/19 (44%) and 2015 (53%), and somewhat higher than the national average of 42%. At 41%, the proportion who are employed directly is also in line with 2018/19 (45%), but lower than the UK average of 48%. One in eight (12%) report working for an employment agency, higher than the UK average (9%).

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