

# SECURING SKILLS IN CONSTRUCTION



## Introduction

The construction sector employs 3.1 million people, which is 1 in 10 of the UK workforce, and has the largest share of self-employed people across the economy at 19%. As a dynamic industry with a transient workforce, construction has a range of challenges in recruiting, training and retaining the skills it needs now and in the future.

Build UK has carried out a survey of its members to understand current trends in employment and training and the level of awareness of the expiry of CSCS cards achieved via Industry Accreditation.

## Key Findings

- 56% of respondents expect to increase direct employment levels over the next 12 months, compared to 50% in September 2022
- 52% expect to increase the number of apprentices they employ over the next 12 months
- On average, 82% of apprentices employed by respondents complete their apprenticeship
- Despite budget and time constraints, 82% of companies are continuing to train and develop their workforce
- 87% are aware of the changes to Industry Accreditation cards but only 53% have a plan in place to transition their workforce

## Employment Levels

Construction needs to recruit almost **45,000 new entrants** every year for the next five years in order to maintain output and there are currently **41,000 job vacancies** in the industry.

The average size of the workforce of Contractor members was 2,621, with 82% directly employed. This represents a 5% increase in the size of the workforce and a 3% rise in the rate of direct employment when compared to Build UK's previous survey of members in September 2022.

47% of Contractor members expect to increase direct employment levels over the next 12 months, compared to 54% in September 2022.

Specialist Contractors had an average sized workforce of 153, 74% of which were directly employed. 59% of Specialist Contractors expect direct employment to increase over the next 12 months.

The average number of job vacancies across Contractor members is 143, whilst Specialist Contractors have an average of 8 vacancies, which is 5% of the workforce.

## Apprenticeships and Training

There were a record **35,000 apprenticeship starts** in construction in 2021/22, 5,000 more than the average over the previous five years. However, CITB estimates this will need to at least double to meet current recruitment requirements.

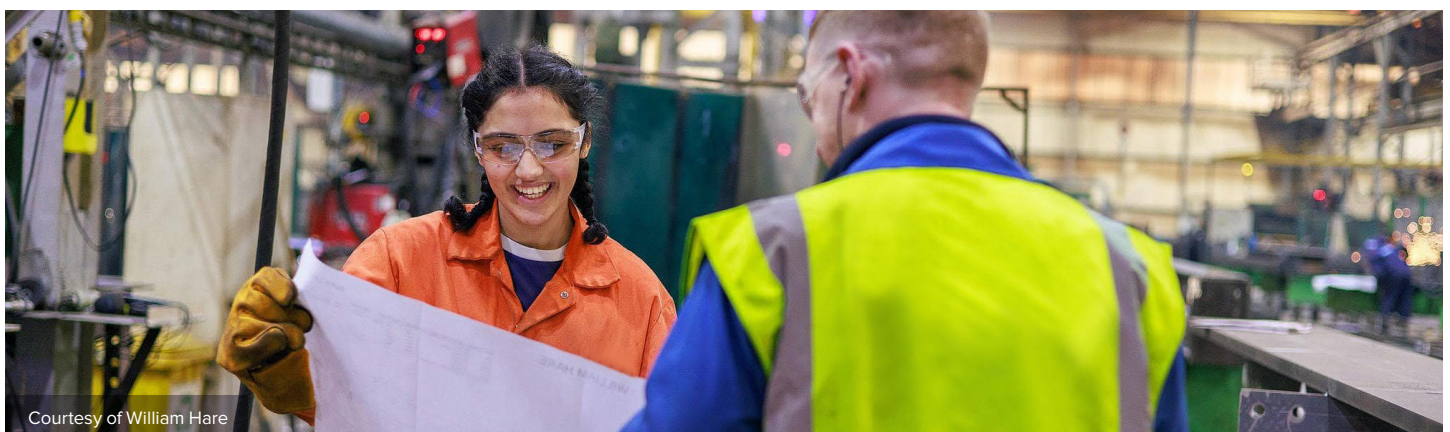
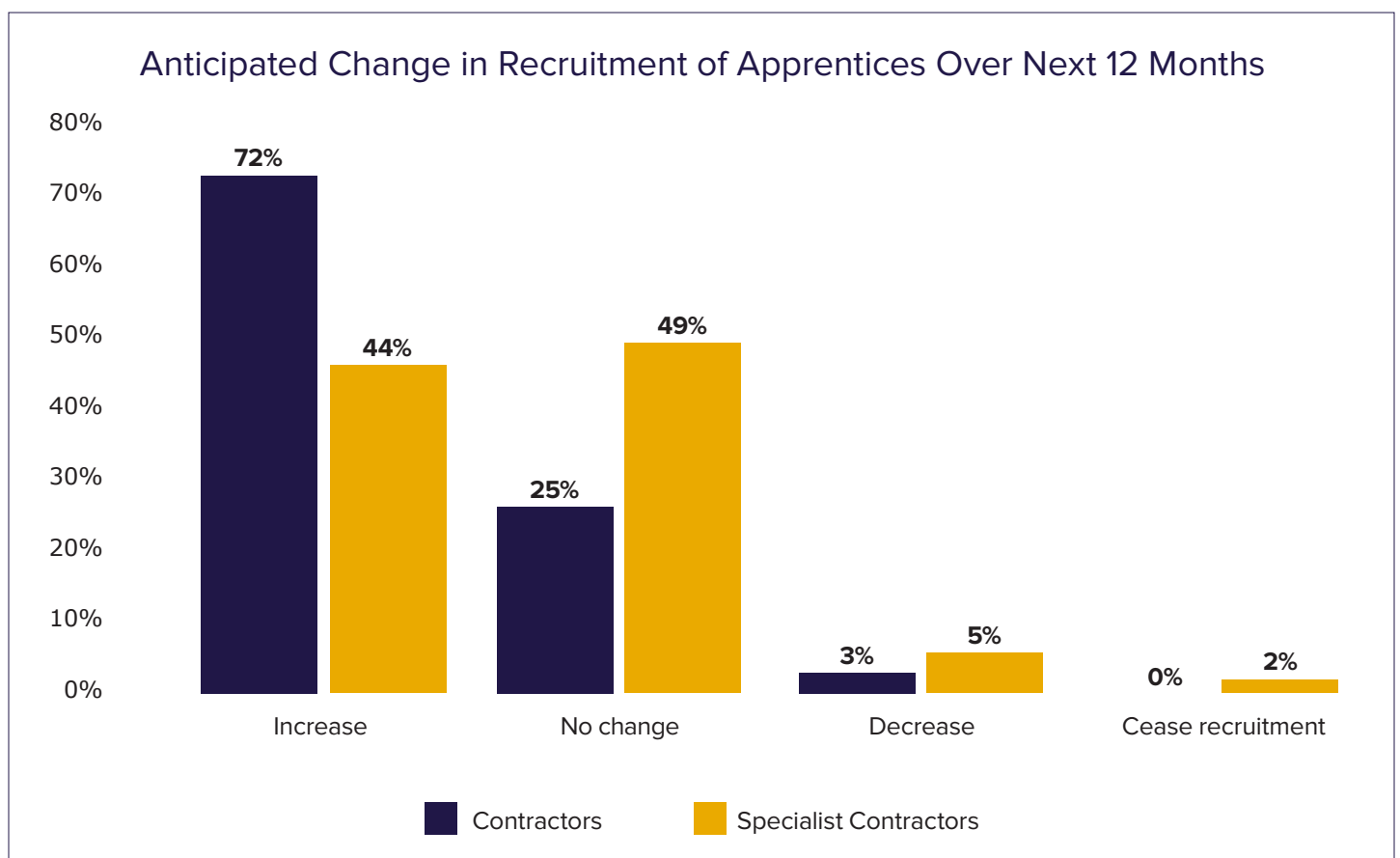
4% of the workforce across all respondents were apprentices.

Of those respondents that employ apprentices, only 3% are 'very' or 'somewhat' likely to make them redundant.

52% of companies expect to increase the number of apprentices they employ over the next 12 months. It is higher for Contractor members (72%), compared to Specialist Contractors (44%), compounding the shortage of specialist skills within the industry.

On average, 82% of apprentices employed by respondents complete their apprenticeship and this is similar for both Contractor members (81%) and Specialist Contractors (83%). It is significantly higher than the **average completion rate** of 65% for construction apprentices as a whole.

86% of Contractor members are continuing to train and develop their workforce, compared to 80% of Specialist Contractors. For those that have not continued training, the most common reasons cited were lack of time and limited budget.



## End of Industry Accreditation

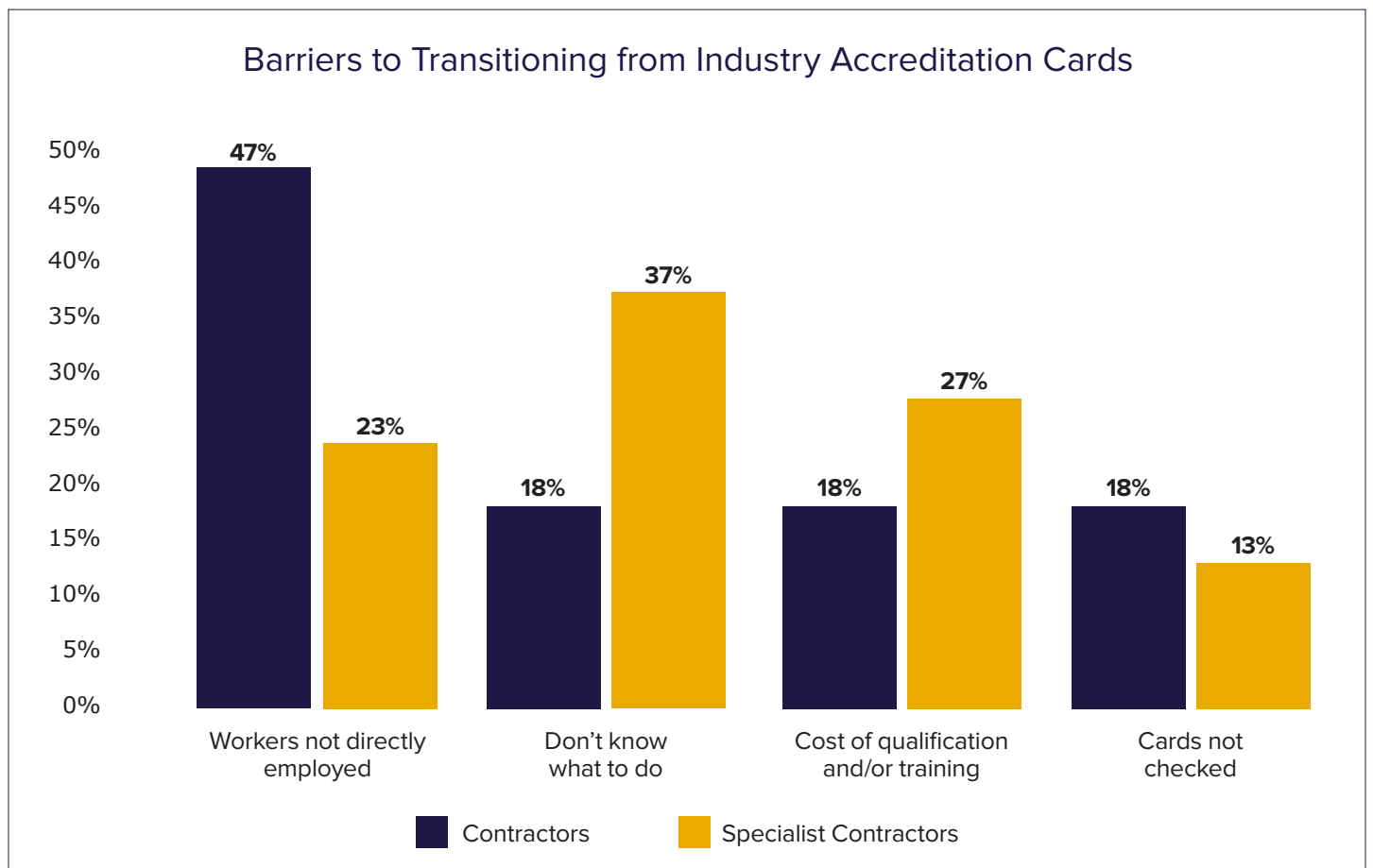
It is estimated that there are 60,000 CSCS and Partner Scheme cards awarded via [Industry Accreditation](#) which will expire by 31 December 2024.

87% of respondents are aware of the upcoming changes to Industry Accreditation cards. However, only 53% have a plan in place to transition all their workers onto an appropriate card before the deadline. Contractor members are more aware of the changes (97%) and more likely to have a plan in place (66%) than Specialist Contractors (82% and 42% respectively).

Of those that are aware of the changes, 83% know how many of their workers hold Industry Accreditation cards. 33% of Contractors do not know how many workers are holding such cards compared to just 8% of Specialist Contractors.

The most common barriers identified to moving Industry Accreditation cardholders onto an appropriate card included not directly employing the relevant workers and not knowing what to do.

Across all respondents, 40% of Industry Accreditation cards were Black Manager cards, 24% were Gold Skilled Worker or Supervisory cards and 36% were Blue Skilled Worker cards. For Contractor members, the most common Industry Accreditation card held was the Black Manager card (58%), whereas for Specialist Contractors it was the Blue Skilled Worker card (70%).



### Recruiting, Training and Retaining Talent

Build UK is committed to securing the right skills for the industry, now and in the future, and this report is part of our strategic priority to recruit, train and retain talent in the industry.

**Recruit** a diverse workforce across all roles.

**Train** individuals with the skills and qualifications required to develop and progress their careers.

**Retain** people in the sector by providing a fair and inclusive working environment with flexible working opportunities.