

Skills Provision Committee: Executive Summary - A Picture of UK Training Provision for the Construction Industry.

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Executive Summary

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The Skills Provision Committee (SPC) was established to provide ConstructionSkills with an authoritative view of the adequacy and sufficiency of skills provision in ConstructionSkills' Sector Skills Council footprint to gain an enhanced understanding of supply side activity, specifically the level and detail of skills provision in the UK at both Higher Education (HE) and Further Education (FE) levels.

Aims

The main aims of the work are to:

- Provide stakeholders with a clear and robust view on the number of people available to enter the construction industry through accredited¹ training and education
- Identify the skills that they have
- Identify steps to improve the quality and relevance of education and training.

Activity

The initial focus of the work to date has been on building the clear and robust view on the number of people available to enter the UK construction industry and their occupational skills. This has been particularly challenging for FE because:

- The range of organisations involved in skills funding and data acquisition across the UK;
- There are different qualification structures and funding streams operate in England, Northern Ireland, Scotland and Wales;
- FE data tends to be based on qualifications rather than people;
- Achieving a qualification does not guarantee entry into the construction industry;
- Construction related skills and qualifications are used in other industries;
- Whilst publicly funded training records exist and are reported, privately funded training data is not readily available in the same format.

The analysis and reporting that has been undertaken for the SPC sets out the current state of skills provision for the construction sector, demonstrating the size of the supply, and outlines future work that is planned to extend and develop this view. Report also captures several cross-cutting themes and priority issues emerging from the analysis.

Key Findings

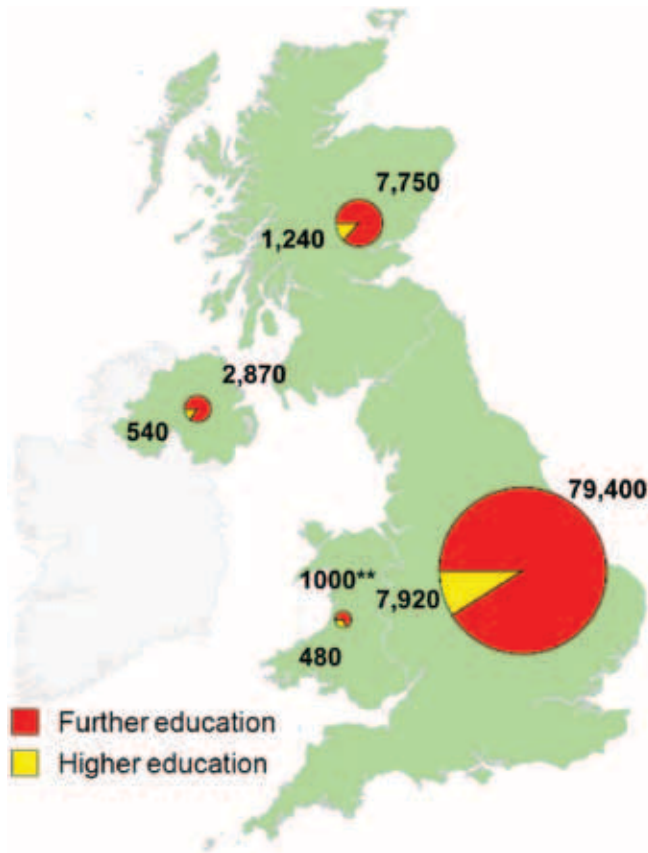
In terms of headline findings the analysis of data shows that:

- Training and education covers a wide range of qualification types and levels ranging from National Vocational Qualifications (NVQs), Scottish Vocational Qualifications (SVQs), and Vocationally Related Qualifications (VRQs e.g. Certificates or Diplomas), through to University degrees and masters qualifications.
- There is a substantial volume of training taking place, even during recession. Chart 1 indicates the overall numbers of NVQ, SVQ and degree qualifications achieved in the 2008-2009 academic year across the UK.
- The majority of training is focused at Level 2. Chart 2 illustrates the different level of NVQ, SVQ and higher level qualifications achieved in the 2008-2009 academic year across the UK.
- Train to Gain has had a significant effect on publicly funded training and the qualifications being achieved across England, supporting achievement of nearly 50,000 construction related Level 2 NVQs in 2008-09.
- Level 3 qualification achievement is less prevalent in England and more prevalent in Scotland.
- Northern Ireland and Scotland have higher proportions of Level 4 and Level 5 qualifications delivered in FE rather than HE.
- Wales is the only nation to show a decrease in degree level achievements between 2007/08 and 2008/09.

¹ The term 'accredited' in this context refers to officially recognised UK based qualifications that are listed on the National Database of Accredited Qualifications (NDAQ)

Chart 1 Overview of people achieving qualifications in 2008/09 by FE or HE

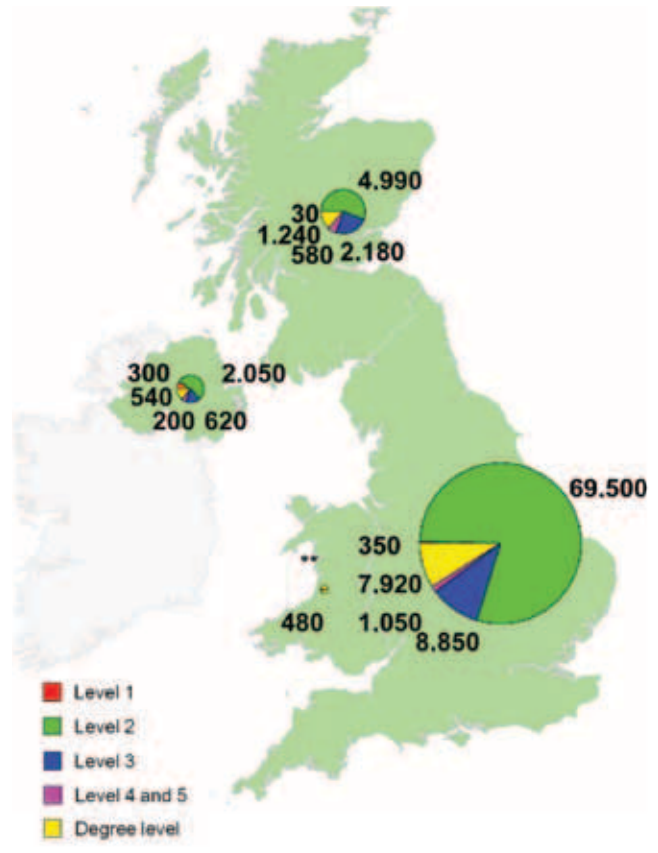
Note: details are based on S/NVQ, HNC/HND and Degree level qualifications at Level 2 and above, sourced from The Data Service, DCELLS, DELNI, HESA and SQA.



Note: ** 2008/09 FE achievement figure for Wales is an estimate

Chart 2 Overview of people achieving qualifications in 2008/09 by qualification Level

Note: details are based on NVQ, HNC/HND and Degree level qualifications at Level 1 and above, sourced from The Data Service, DCELLS, DELNI, HESA and SQA.



Note: ** 2008/09 FE data by Level was not available for Wales

The analysis also highlights gaps in current knowledge such as:

- For some qualifications such as plant operator or supervisory NVQs there is a risk of double counting due to the nature of employment in these areas, i.e. one person achieving more than one qualification; further work is necessary to fully resolve this.
- For all nations further work with other Sector Skills Councils is required if the supply picture is to be aligned with the demand side view produced by the Construction Skills Network. This particularly applies to for electrical and plumbing occupations.
- In Northern Ireland details around Level 2 NVQs and Apprenticeships need further work to improve the occupational breakdown.
- For Wales further investigation is required to verify NVQ and VRQ details.
- There also appears to be a gap in being able to identify Level 4 or Level 5 qualification achievements in Wales.

Recommendations and Actions

As a result of our work there are six main recommendations that the SPC have agreed. These are:

1. **Continue the work of the Skills Provision Committee:** Producing an authoritative view on current levels of skills provision is a key element to inform future decisions that will equip the construction industry with the skilled workforce that it requires in future years.
2. **Research into pathways and progression routes:** The routes that people take into, through and out of training and into work are important because understanding how people enter the industry is ultimately more important than the number considered as being available to enter. At the moment it is not immediately possible to understand this aspect from the available data sources.

3. **Improve the comparability of data:** Work so far has highlighted the differences in FE data across the four nations due to differing qualifications, funding structures, data collection, currency and access. Improved comparability of data would be essential for robust benchmarking.
4. **Develop the view to cover broader analysis of Built Environment:** There is clearly a need to understand the built environment as a whole, not least because employers do not see or understand the legal boundaries within which skills organisations operate. While initial work has been based on the ConstructionSkills Sector Skills Council's footprint there is a need for future work to include related occupations and sectors.
5. **Overcome lags in data availability:** There will be delays in when data is provided as time is required to gather and collate learner achievement details. At the moment it is only possible to present the situation up to 2008-2009 on a UK basis, although some nations have more current data. Incorporating a view on numbers starting qualifications and linking into ConstructionSkills' wider research programme may reduce the effect of data lag.
6. **Begin structured dissemination and communication of details:** It is recognised that dissemination of this work must be done strategically with consideration given to ensure that the content and messages are appropriate for the particular audience.

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Note: About the Skills Provision Committee

Members of the Skills Provision Committee (SPC) have a detailed understanding of the education and training sector and are able to effectively challenge both research proposals and data analysis.

The SPC is chaired by a member of ConstructionSkills' Strategic Partnership Panel, with the contributing members representing;

- Further Education ensuring appropriate representation across the four home nations;
- Higher Education, ensuring appropriate representation across the four home nations;
- Professional bodies such as Civil Engineering; Architects; and Surveyors
- Specialist Schools and Academies Trust working with the Construction and Built Environment Diploma
- Private Learning Providers
- Employers

The group will also consult with other bodies as required.

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