SKILLS NEEDS/STAFF DEVELOPMENT SURVEY
Spring 2000

Introduction

The aim of the survey is to establish the existence of skill shortages on a regional basis as well as the type and severity of such shortages.

The survey was carried out by CITB Training Advisors on behalf of the Research Department at Bircham Newton. A total of 450 questionnaires we sent out, 50 to each CITB area. The response rate varied from over 100% for North West to 40% for the Southern Counties. This resulted in a total of 346 returned questionnaires.

Summary of results

The questionnaire is divided into four main sections: skill shortages, skill gaps, future workload and staff development. Questions on skill shortages were filled in by most respondents. We were therefore able to carry out an analysis by region. For the other questions there were too many gaps. The analysis is therefore carried out at the level of Great Britain only.

Table B1 shows the percentage of all participating employers experiencing some difficulties in recruiting skilled staff as well as their expectations on changes in workload over the next six months.

According to the survey's results, the region with the lowest skill shortages is Yorkshire & the Humber (56%). At the opposite extreme come the Southern Counties where 98% of employers reported experiencing some difficulty in recruiting skilled staff. As regards future workload, the majority of employers (over 60%) in most regions expect their workload to increase. Exceptions are Wales (49%) and the North West (52%).

Table B1: Skills shortages and expected workload

	Percentage of employers experiencing difficulties in recruiting skilled staff	Percentage of employers expecting workload to increase over near future
	%	%
Scotland	81	64
Wales	86	49
North East/Cumbria	80	76
North West	78	52
Yorkshire/Humber	56	*
Midlands	88	66
Southern Counties	98	63
Greater London	82	74
East	84	71
South West	85	60
Great Britain	82	66

*The response to this question was insufficient to allow an analysis of results

Table B2 shows the percentage of employers experiencing difficulties in recruiting skilled staff by occupation. For Great Britain, the figures in the table show that Carpenters & Joiners and Bricklayers were skills in shortest supply with 34% and 31% of participating employers experiencing difficulties in recruitment. Managers, Professionals, Plasterers and General Operatives (including civil engineering Operatives) were other main occupations for which more than 10% of employers experienced difficulties in recruiting adequately skilled staff.

A similar pattern emerges from the regional figures. There are some exceptions. For example in the South West, the shortage of Bricklayers (52%) is considerably higher than the shortage for Carpenters & Joiners (26%).

Questions 5 to 10 in the questionnaire aim to establish whether by offering higher wages employers are able to attract skilled staff. The responses to these questions suggest that approximately half of the employers participating in the survey agreed that offering higher wages helped them to solve their recruitment problems with the other half disagreeing. On the other hand 40% of employers reported having to reject a contract because of skill shortages. The analysis is for Great Britain only.

Questions 11 to 14 deal with 'skill gaps' when employees may fail to perform to the standard expected by the employers. The majority of employers (80%) were satisfied with their existing employees and did not report skill gaps. The percentage decreased to 46% for new employees with 54% reporting shortcomings in the skills of new employees. Again the analysis is at the level of Great Britain only.

Questions 18 to 26 deal with succession within the company. Results from the survey indicate that the majority of companies (68) train and promote existing employees to managerial level. For professional staff the percentage decline to 58%.

At the operative level, 62% of skilled staff are trained and promoted from within, 36% are recruited from other construction companies and only 2% come from outside the industry.

Table B2: Percentage of employers experiencing difficulties in recruiting skilled staff, Spring 2000

	Scotland	Wales	North East & Cumbria	North West	North West	Midlands	Southern Counties	East	Greater London	South West	Great Britain
	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
Managers	18	19	13	13	4	9	16	19	13	19	15
Professionals	18	19	16	10	15	9	12	18	22	22	16
Carpenters & Joiners	41	45	37	19	22	41	40	40	35	26	34
Bricklayers	46	38	23	16	18	34	28	31	30	52	31
Painters & Decorators	0	2	10	26	6	22	8	9	4	7	9
Plasterers	5	30	16	10	6	19	12	18	22	15	15
Roofers	5	9	3	10	4	13	20	7	9	0	8
Floorers	0	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Glaziers	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Scaffolders	0	6	0	0	2	3	4	8	22	0	5
Plant Operatives	14	6	16	0	6	9	0	10	13	7	7
Plant Mechanics	14	4	0	0	0	3	4	6	4	11	5
General Operatives	18	11	7	7	18	16	8	17	22	11	14
Electricians	0	4	3	0	0	3	0	4	13	11	3
Plumbers	5	15	3	7	2	19	8	6	4	19	9

ENGLAND

Regional Development Agency Areas

London: all boroughs

South East: Hampshire, West Sussex, East Sussex, Kent, Surrey, Berkshire, Oxfordshire, Buckinghamshire, Isle of Wight

Eastern: Cambridgeshire, Norfolk, Suffolk, Essex, Hertfordshire, Bedfordshire

South West: Cornwall, Devon, Somerset, Dorset, Avon, Wiltshire, Gloucestershire

East Midlands: Northamptonshire, Leicestershire, Nottinghamshire, Derbyshire, Lincolnshire

West Midlands: Hereford and Worcester, Warwickshire, West Midlands, Staffordshire, Shropshire

North West: Lancashire, Greater Manchester, Cheshire, Merseyside, Cumbria

**Yorkshire and   North Yorkshire, Humberside, West Yorkshire, South Yorkshire
The Humber:**

North East: Durham, Tyne and Wear, Northumberland, Cleveland

SCOTLAND: all counties

WALES: all counties

CITB Areas

Greater London	All London Boroughs
Southern Counties	Dorset, Wiltshire, Oxfordshire, Bucks, Berkshire, Hampshire, Surrey, East Sussex, West Sussex, Kent
Eastern	Northampton, Cambridgeshire, Bedford, Hertfordshire, Essex, Suffolk, Norfolk
South West	Cornwall, Devon, Somerset, Gloucestershire
Wales	All Welsh Counties
Midlands	Hereford and Worcester, Warwickshire, West Midlands, Shropshire, Staffordshire, Leicestershire, Derbyshire, Nottinghamshire, Lincolnshire
North West	Cheshire, Greater Manchester, Lancashire
Yorkshire and the Humber	North Yorkshire, West Yorkshire, South Yorkshire, Humberside
North East and Cumbria	Cumbria, Northumberland, Tyne and Wear, Durham, Cleveland
Scotland	All Scottish Counties