

## Construction:

This information sheet will give you different craft-level jobs available in the construction industry. For many of these careers you don't need particular academic qualifications for entry to training, although some GCSEs (or equivalent) are always helpful and preferred by some employers.

The construction industry is important to the UK's economy and is also one of the biggest areas of employment. The latest Construction Skills Network forecast report estimates that between now and 2027, around 45,000 extra construction workers will be needed each year.

### What it takes:

There's a lot of satisfaction in seeing a finished building that you helped to construct. A wide variety of skills is required to complete a building project. In the construction industry, multiskilling (i.e. being trained in more than one construction occupation) is common, and also improves your chances of finding work. Jobs are becoming more technical and workers need to develop their skills accordingly.

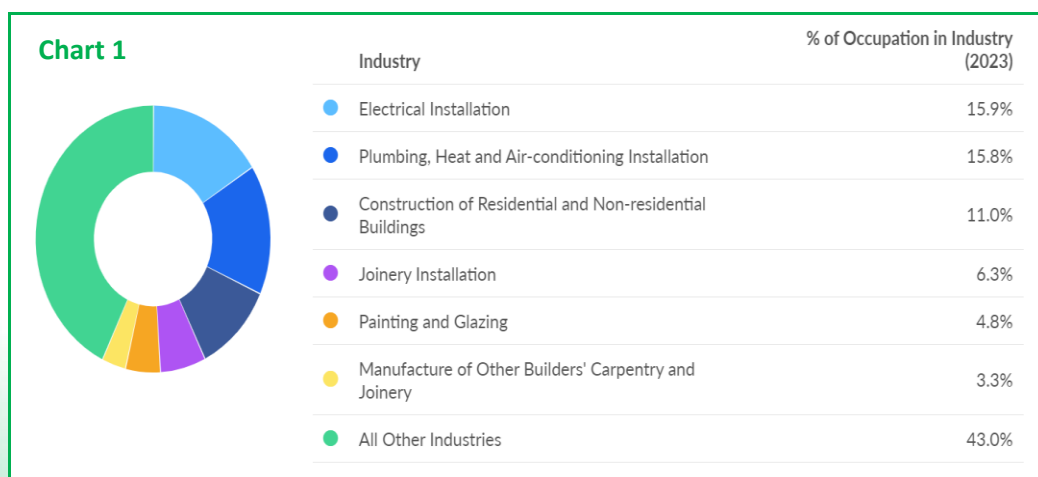
There's been a growth in prefabrication - making parts of a building offsite and assembling it on site - which also requires skilled workers.

For most practical construction work, apart from being keen to learn about building techniques, you need to be:

- good with your hands, and enjoy using tools and equipment
- able to work as part of a team
- able to read drawings and measure accurately
- a quick and careful worker
- prepared to travel to different places to do your job; in certain jobs you may have to live away from home for periods of time
- fit and healthy
- responsible and safety conscious - building sites can be dangerous places.

In some jobs you need to be prepared to work outside - enjoyable in the summer, maybe, but not so good when the weather's bad! If you have a trade with scope for indoor work, your earnings are less likely to be affected by the weather.

**Chart 1 shows you which industry has the highest percentage of occupations:**



## Opportunities:

Although most construction workers are skilled, there are opportunities for labourers to do the general, unskilled work on building sites, such as lifting and carrying materials and equipment. Labouring jobs can pay well, but are often only temporary. In strenuous jobs you may find it difficult to continue working if you get an injury or develop a health condition. There are so many different craft-level construction jobs to choose from, making a career decision can be difficult - and there are some roles you may never have heard of! When trying to decide between different trades, the sort of things you should consider include:

- the opportunities available in your area
- where your interests lie - some jobs require mechanical ability or artistic flair, for instance
- what qualifications are required for entry to training
- the opportunities there are to develop your skills
- whether or not you have a head for heights - some jobs involve working on roofs, scaffolds etc
- whether you want to mainly work indoors or outdoors.

The list below will give you some idea as to the range of roles available. You can find details on most of these careers in the leaflets listed in the Related Leaflets section. You could train as an:

**Asphalter** - this is a very physical job involving laying asphalt (a mixture of aggregates and bitumen) on drives, car parks, playgrounds, road surfaces and so on; you may work on large contracts, e.g. for local authorities, or for a small firm doing domestic jobs.

### Bricklayer

**Ceiling fixer** - erecting ceilings in large buildings, such as offices, shops and factories, to hide wiring, ducts and piping.

### Demolition worker

**Dry-lining operative** - putting up the finished surfaces of interior walls; there are also opportunities in related interior systems - access flooring and partitioning.

### Electrician

**Fence erector** - putting up fences (usually made of wood, wire or metal panels) to enclose or separate areas in locations ranging from airports to building sites and domestic properties; the work can involve reading plans, preparing the site and levelling the ground, so skills in a range of building tasks are required.

### Floorlayer/carpet fitter

**Glazier** - this involves fitting new panes of glass in windows and doors, removing old or broken panes, possibly cutting panes to make them fit perfectly and applying sealing materials; some glaziers are based in workshops, preparing the glass for fitting by on-site glaziers

**Insulation/damp-proof coursing worker** - putting down loft insulation, injecting cavity wall insulation or damp proofing walls; in order to prevent heat loss, ladders use insulating material such as fibreglass, cork or foam, to cover pipes, ducts and boilers; you need to be able to cope with heights for this sort of work and wear protective clothing.

**Lightning conductor operative** - installing lightning protection and earthing systems to protect tall buildings.

### Painter and Decorator

**Plant worker** - on construction sites, plant operators drive and operate a wide range of heavy equipment and plant mechanics keep the equipment running smoothly.

**Plasterer** - solid plasterers apply a wet finish to walls and other surfaces in buildings, where as fibrous plasterers make ornamental mouldings.

**Plumber** (some also train as registered gas fitters)

**Roofer** - they normally specialise in a particular type of roofing, e.g. slating and tiling, or sheeting and cladding.

### Scaffolder

**Shopfitter** - turning a designer's plans and instructions into reality, to fit out the interiors of shops, restaurants, banks, hotels etc

**Steel erector/reinforced concrete frame worker** - laying decking, and erecting and fixing together the girders or beams that make a building's framework (i.e. where the framework is constructed from steel or reinforced concrete)

**Steeplejack** - working on towers and other high structures such as factory chimneys

**Stonemason** - banker masons cut and prepare stone and are usually based in a workshop, and fixer masons work on site

### Wall/floor tiler

**Woodworker** - bench joiners make doors, window frames and other items, where as site carpenters cut and fit the woodwork on site.

**Chart 2 shows you different starting roles in Construction:**

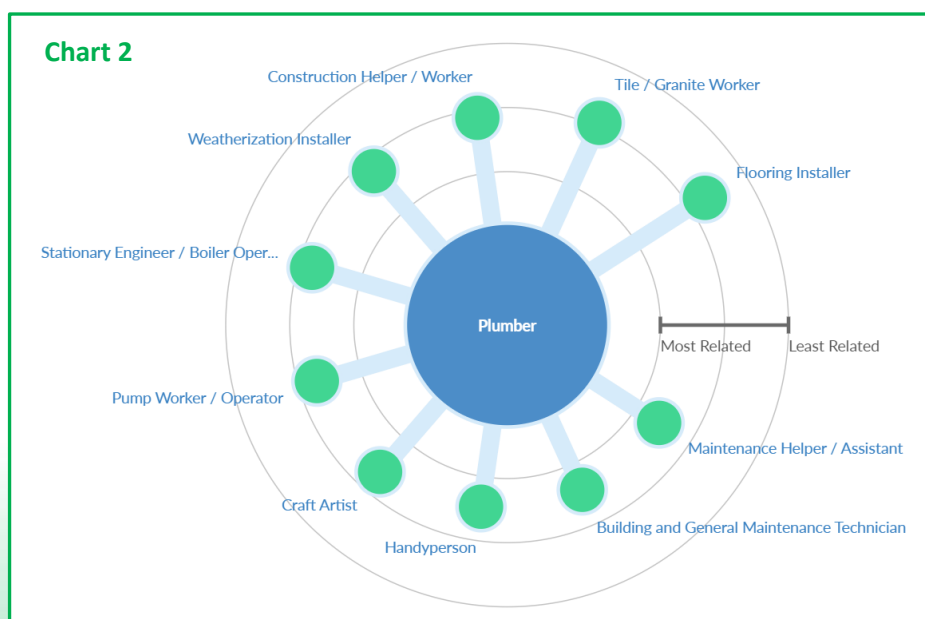
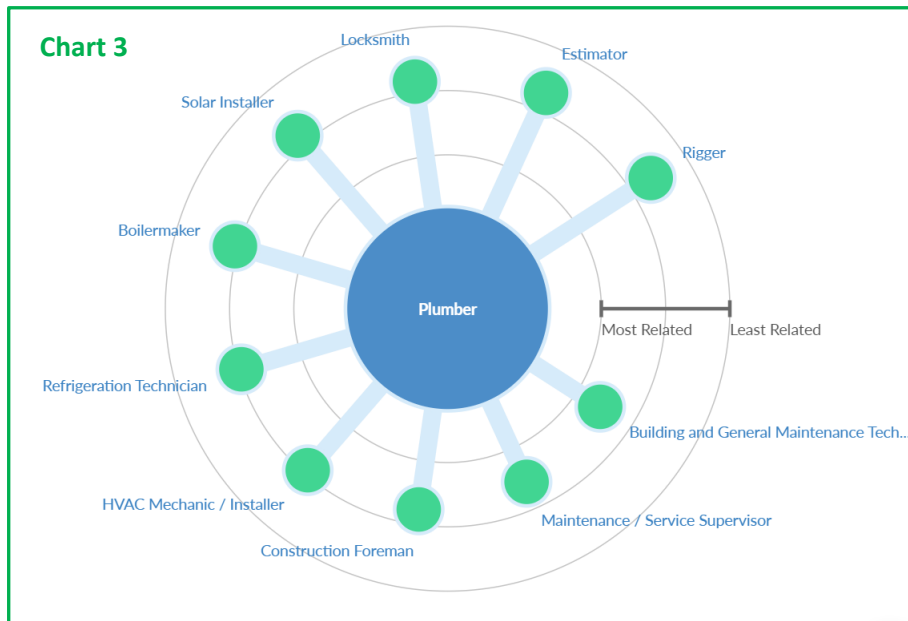


Chart 3 below demonstrates progression opportunities in Construction from the roles in chart 2:



### Entry and training:

There are opportunities with different levels of qualification. You will need to demonstrate your interest in the building trade, so any relevant experience - e.g. through a work placement or even helping with DIY – is always useful when applying for training or jobs.

Maths, science, English, and design and technology are useful GCSE (or equivalent) subjects.

The usual way to get started in construction is through training with an employer. This normally means learning both on the job and at a college or training centre. Structured training in the workplace can be through a level 2 or 3 Apprenticeship. In England, Apprenticeships are available in many craft-level construction trades, from roofer to floorlayer.

For more details on Apprenticeships, see the websites (such as Talent view) under Further Information. Information on Apprenticeships in general can be found at: [www.apprenticeships.gov.uk](http://www.apprenticeships.gov.uk)

Other work-based training routes include:

**Specialist Applied-Skills Programmes (SAPs)** - these provide training in more specialist areas of work (such as asbestos removal or heritage crafts) or where Apprenticeship or other training may not be available - see <https://citb.co.uk/standards-and-delivering-training/national-specialist-accredited-centre/specialist-applied-skills-programmes/>

**Shared Apprenticeship Schemes** - flexible construction programmes whereby you train with a number of different employers; details are at: [www.citb.co.uk/courses-and-qualifications/citb-apprenticeships/take-on-an-apprentice/types-of-apprenticeships/shared-apprenticeship-scheme/apprentice-information/](http://www.citb.co.uk/courses-and-qualifications/citb-apprenticeships/take-on-an-apprentice/types-of-apprenticeships/shared-apprenticeship-scheme/apprentice-information/)

**Flexi-job Apprenticeships** - these are relatively new programmes available in England that also allow you to train with more than one employer. You can find information at: [www.goconstruct.org/why-choose-construction/whats-happening-in-construction/flexi-job-construction-apprenticeships-launched/](http://www.goconstruct.org/why-choose-construction/whats-happening-in-construction/flexi-job-construction-apprenticeships-launched/)

It's possible to start learning the skills of construction through a full-time college course. For example, many further education colleges offer programmes leading to work-related qualifications at levels 1-3 in specific trades including bricklaying, plastering, and carpentry and joinery. Some courses can be taken part time. Skills Bootcamps are flexible programmes for those aged 19+ to learn in-demand construction skills.

You can find out more and search for opportunities in construction through: <https://skillsforlife.campaign.gov.uk/courses/skills-bootcamps/>

Broad-based courses, such as those leading to a BTEC Level 1/Level 2 First or BTEC Level 3 National qualification in construction and the built environment, can provide an introduction to the building industry. In certain schools and colleges in England, you may be able to take a T level in onsite construction (which has options in plastering, carpentry and joinery, bricklaying, and painting and decorating) or in building services engineering (with a range of occupational specialisms including plumbing and heating engineering, and refrigeration and air conditioning). T levels are level 3 programmes that involve spending around 80% of your time in the classroom and the rest on placement. For information on courses, consult local college prospectuses or websites, or you can search for courses through:

<https://nationalcareers.service.gov.uk/find-a-course> (in England)

Most construction trades are covered by the Construction Skills Certification Scheme (CSCS) or a partner scheme. Holding a CSCS card proves that you have had the required training and are qualified for your particular trade and level of work. It also shows that you have health, safety and environmental awareness (you may need to do a test to demonstrate this). Although not a legal requirement, most major contractors and house builders require construction workers on their sites to hold a valid CSCS card. For information on the various types of card, see: [www.cscs.uk.com](http://www.cscs.uk.com)

### Pay and prospects:

Trained and qualified crafts people in construction earn around £17,000 - £30,000, but exact pay depends on the trade, and other factors such as your location, employer and expertise. Basic pay can often be increased by overtime payments and bonuses. With experience and responsibility income can rise in some trades to £40,000 or even £50,000+ in some cases.

Those who are self-employed set their own rates. Craftspeople can progress to supervisory levels, and with further training, experience, and possibly qualifications, enter management-level positions. There may be better opportunities for promotion in larger companies. Some crafts people move into teaching construction skills or spend some time working abroad. Self-employment is common in many trades. Some crafts people specialise in traditional building crafts and work on historic buildings.

