

Your Chances in Construction

What is construction?

Construction is building. Building houses, roads, bridges, shops, factories, hospitals and all the walls, fences, driveways and paths that go around them. Lots of people start to work in construction by learning a trade. You'll have heard of jobs like joiner and bricklayer but why not consider more unusual jobs like demolition operative, stonemason, mastic asphalter or sheeter? If you like physical work, being outdoors and working out how to make things then a job in construction could be right for you.

What's my chance of getting a job?

The construction industry employs around 6,000 people in Northumberland of which over 5,000 are men. About 92% of the workforce is employed on a full-time basis. Most construction companies in Northumberland are small with 85% employing less than five people and 3% employing between 25-49 workers. More people are employed in the construction industry in the Morpeth, Wansbeck and Blyth areas. If you live in Tynedale, Alnwick or Berwick-upon-Tweed you may have to travel to find work.

New building projects are fairly unusual so it's not easy to find an employer who'll offer you a placement. Work experience or a full-time college course will improve your chances of getting a job or apprenticeship. Alternatively, broaden your

ideas to include jobs where there are more opportunities, e.g. the fitting of windows, doors and skylights.

What qualifications do I need?

If you decide to train for an NVQ through an apprenticeship there are **no formal entry qualifications for most construction trades**. Work based learning providers will ask you to sit an entry test to help you find out if construction is right for you.

As a construction worker you need to be registered and hold a **Construction Skills Certification Scheme (CSCS) card**. This card shows you are qualified to do your job and that you have the necessary health and safety certificates to work on a building site.

Some work based learning providers may require GCSE passes at grade C or above if you want to train as an electrician or a plumber. Useful subjects include **English, maths, science and design technology**.

A new qualification is being introduced into schools and colleges called a **Diploma**. A **Diploma in Construction and the Built Environment** will be available at Ponteland Community High School, Prudhoe Community High School, Queen Elizabeth High School and Haydon Bridge Community School from September 2009. Local colleges will be offering the Diploma at different levels.

Colleges and schools offer a variety of full-time courses but these may change every year so always **check details with your Connexions PA**.

Girls

In Northumberland only 700 women work in the industry but more and more are being encouraged to apply. Employers are looking for people capable of learning the right skills and you could be one of them.



So if I need experience and training how will I get that in Northumberland?

You could train for an NVQ Level 2 as an apprentice and possibly progress to NVQ level 3 through an Advanced Apprenticeship. Usually there are no formal entry requirements but it helps to have GCSE grades in English, maths and design technology. You will have to take an entry test to assess your level of literacy, numeracy and dexterity.

Local colleges offer a wide range of construction courses at different levels:

- Foundation Construction Award — no entry requirements
- Intermediate Construction Award — 3 or 4 GCSEs at grades D-G
- National Diploma in Construction — 4 or more GCSEs at grades A*-C

e2e (Entry2Employment) can provide you with tasters in construction whilst helping you get ready for an Apprenticeship.

Where will I find vacancies?

Work based learning providers will expect you to find your own employer placement. Most apprentices successfully find an employer through family contacts. Many firms, especially in rural areas, are family businesses or are run by one person, so make good use of people you know who might hear of opportunities.

Approach construction firms directly and if you are offered work experience show the employer how good you can be. Your local Connexions Centre will also hold vacancies, but when jobs do come up there are always lots of applicants.

Pay

Your rate of pay may vary depending upon your trade and your employer but you can expect to earn £95 per week (from August 2009) as an apprentice. Some employers may be willing to pay you a bonus or offer you the chance to earn more by working overtime.

Improving your chances of getting a job in Northumberland.

Work based learning providers will be more likely to take you on if they see that you are committed to a career in the industry. Work experience or a college course will improve your prospects.

Contact local building firms directly and be willing to travel. Broaden your ideas; trades such as a ceiling fixer, dry liner, partitioner and kitchen fitter will offer better job opportunities than other more obvious job titles.

Finding a job in construction is quite a challenge at the moment so start looking before you leave school, apply early for vacancies and be persistent.

Useful contacts for more information

Connexions Northumberland Tel: 01670 798 180

www.connexions-northumberland.org.uk

Northumberland College Tel: (01670) 841 200 www.northland.ac.uk

Newcastle College Tel: (0191) 200 4000 www.ncl-coll.ac.uk

Tyne Metropolitan College Tel: (0191) 229 5000 www.tynemet.ac.uk

Construction Skills Tel: 0844 844 0046 www.cskills.org

Northumberland Adult Learning Services

Contact: Mike Smith Tel: (01670) 854 372

North East Chamber of Commerce

Contact: Paul Livingstone Tel: 0800 195 7373 www.necc.co.uk

bconstructive - good for information on jobs in construction

www.bconstructive.co.uk

The Northumberland Business Directory - good for lists of local employers

www.inorthumberland.co.uk

Yell.com - good for lists of local employers. www.yell.com