Workforce Mobility and Skills in the UK Construction Sector

East of England Report

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Prepared for:

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Table of Contents

1 Background, Objectives and Methodology

1.1 Introduction

ConstructionSkills commissioned BMRB to undertake a survey of construction workers to provide reliable data on the nature of the workforce in the UK and the Republic of Ireland (ROI) with regard to their competence/qualification levels and the extent of occupational and geographic mobility within the workforce. This report presents the results of the survey conducted in the East of England.

A separate technical appendix is available which includes a full technical report and a copy of the questionnaire used.

Where available, results from the 2007 survey have been compared with those from similar previous research conducted by IFF Research in 2004[1].

1.2 Key objectives of the research

The overall aim of the study was to provide reliable data on the nature of the construction workforce in regard to their competence/qualification levels and the extent of occupational and geographic mobility within the workforce. More specifically, the key objectives of the research were to examine:

- the qualification and skill levels of the construction workforce in the UK and ROI
- the extent to which the workforce in each region is constituted of workers originating or living in other parts of the UK (or further afield), and general mobility and travel to work issues
- the nature of the mobile workforce/'imported' workforce in terms of their occupations and their competence/qualification levels
- the scale and extent of occupational mobility within the construction workforce to see how workers in construction occupations change or keep their occupations over time, and related to this the extent to which managers have received training specifically to enhance their managerial skills.

The focus for the survey was on site-based manual occupations, thus excluding associated clerical and sales occupations and professions such as architects, surveyors and engineers.

[1] Comparative findings should be treated as indicative only due to key differences in the types of sites visited in 2004 and 2007. The profile of sites visited showing differences by size and category are included in the technical report.

1.3 Methodology

The key elements of the research approach were as follows:

1.3.1 Desk research

Prior to undertaking primary research a period of exploratory desk-based research was undertaken to examine the scope of information currently available; to identify other surveys and consultations to ascertain what can be learnt from these, and to ensure that any subsequent fieldwork was relevant and informed. The conclusions drawn from the desk research exercise were:

- there are studies covering similar issues to this study, however the target respondents of these studies tended to be employers

- the Labour Force Survey (LFS) is conducted among workers and covers similar issues as this study, however it is not specific to the construction industry

- there is little reliable information on the mobility of workers. The only exception is the LFS but it does not cover certain issues relevant to the construction workforce such as temporary accommodation, or where workers received training

- the desk research confirmed the need for detailed information from construction workers and for more information on workforce mobility in the UK and ROI.

A copy of the presentation summarising the desk research exercise can be found in the technical appendix.

1.3.2 Sampling

For the UK sample a list of current construction projects over £250,000 in value was drawn from Glenigan, an Emap service detailing current and forthcoming construction projects in the UK.

From the projects identified as being eligible for inclusion in the survey (the steps taken to select eligible records from Glenigan are detailed in the technical report), a stratified random sample of 99 postcode districts (e.g. NR2) was drawn to produce a representative sample of locations across the UK. For each selected district six eligible projects were identified. Projects were selected on the basis of value, 35% of sites with a value of less than £1million and 65% of sites with a value of more than £1 million. In 2004, the survey focused on sites valued at over £1 million and the sampling process aimed to ensure a mix of sites by stage of development (first six months, midway, last six months). In 2007 the requirement was to also sample sites under £1 million, so this criterion needed to be reconsidered in that light. The 2004 definition of stage of development clearly assumed quite large, lengthy projects, appropriate for sites with minimum value of £1 million. With the introduction of smaller sites, some would be completely finished in six months. Therefore it was decided that an appropriate alternative definition would be to select according to value.

Quotas were set on the target number of sites for each region and by value. The target sample profile is described in the technical report.

1.3.3 Telephone survey

A telephone willingness stage was conducted in order to recruit construction projects selected from Glenigan to take part in the research. Interviewers were instructed to identify the best person to speak to about arranging a visit to the construction site and to collect some headline information about the site. Full details of the information collected and number of interviews achieved is included in the technical report.

1.3.4 Site visits

Once permission had been sought to interview at the particular site, the information was forwarded to a local face-to-face interviewer who contacted the site representative to arrange a date to visit. Interviews with construction workers were then conducted face-to-face on site. Interviewing normally took place in a canteen or site office during workers' break periods. In around one in ten cases interviewers were only able to visit the site if they supplied their own personal protective equipment.

A selection of interviewers' experiences of contacting and visiting sites is shown in the technical report.

1.3.5 Challenges

Given the complex nature of this research project a number of challenges arose during the life of the project. Each issue is discussed in detail in the technical report.

1.4 Details of sites covered in the research

The survey results presented in this report are based on fieldwork conducted in the East of England from February to July 2007. This consisted of a total of 314 face-to-face interviews with site-based workers obtained across 24 sites.

At the analysis stage, weighting was applied to the data to ensure each nation/region was represented in its correct proportions based on the relative size of the construction workforce. Labour Force Survey figures were used for UK regions/areas, (average profiles from the period October 2006 – June 2007). Unless otherwise stated, with the exception of base totals, the figures in this report are based on weighted data. Weighted, East of England accounted for approximately ten percent of the UK/ROI workforce.

Figures from the site managers interviewed at the telephone fieldwork stage indicated that there were 897 workers across the 24 sites. Using this figure it would appear that around 35% of the potential workforce took part in the research, however it should be noted that there were instances where on the day the site was visited many fewer workers were present than indicated by the site manager when first contacted. This was due to a number of factors, for example the site may have entered into another phase of the project by the time the interviewer was able to visit it.

The proportion of workers interviewed varied greatly, at some sites we interviewed all workers present, on other sites particularly where interviewing only occurred during short break times only a small proportion of workers were interviewed.

1.5 Structure of the report

The report is structured as follows:

Chapter 1 Background, Objectives and Methodology

Chapter 2 Management Summary

Chapter 3 Profile, Work Status and Work Histories of the Construction Workforce

Chapter 4 Qualification and Skills

Chapter 5 Mobility

A separate technical report has been produced.

1.6 Notes on tables

Where respondents can give multiple responses to a question, the sum of the individual responses may be greater than 100 per cent.

Also the percentages in the tables do not always sum to 100 per cent due to rounding, and where percentages in the text differ to the sum of percentages in the tables, this too will be due to rounding.

An asterisk (*) in a table signifies a percentage that is greater than 0 but less than 0.5.

A dash (-) signifies a cell where data has not been included due to too small a base size.

N/A in a table signifies where we are unable to make a comparison with previous years as either the question wasn't asked or the data wasn't available.

With the exception of base totals the figures referred to are weighted.

The report contains some tables showing findings based on relatively small numbers of respondents (less than 70). Such low base sizes carry a greater risk of these figures being unrepresentative of the population in question and should, therefore, be treated as indicative only. Consistent with the 2004 report, only results based on 15 workers or more have been referenced in either tables or the text.

2 Management Summary

ConstructionSkills commissioned BMRB to undertake a survey of construction workers to provide reliable data on the nature of the workforce in the UK and the Republic of Ireland (ROI) with regard to their competence/qualification levels and the extent of occupational and geographic mobility within the workforce.

The survey results presented in this summary are based on fieldwork conducted in the East of England from February to July 2007. This consisted of a total of 314 face-to-face interviews with site based workers obtained across 24 sites.

This summary highlights the key findings for each of the major themes covered. Where available, results from the 2007 survey have been compared with those from similar previous research conducted by IFF Research in 2004[2].

Detailed results are available in the body of the full report, and a full technical report is available containing full details of sampling and methodology.

2.1 The profile of the workforce

A wide range of occupations was covered in the research, though in the East of England plant/machine operatives (20%), bricklayers (11%) and labourers/ general operatives (10%) accounted for two-fifths of the total workforce.

Around two-thirds (65%) of workers interviewed were employed directly by a company. Three in ten (31%) were self-employed and just 4% worked for an agency. This is very similar to the overall UK/ROI profile, but represents a shift towards direct employment since 2004 (from 56%), largely at the expense of agencies (16% in 2004).

The level of self-employment varied enormously by occupation being particularly high among roofers, bricklayers, carpenters and plasterers.

Almost four-fifths (82%) of workers were employed on a permanent basis.

The East of England had an older and more experienced workforce than in 2004, bringing the region into line with the UK/ROI overall: 13% were aged 55 plus (compared with 5% in 2004) and half (53%) had worked in the industry 10 years or less (compared with 40% in 2004).

2.2 Qualifications and skills

The site-based workforce in the East of England is better qualified than the UK/ROI as a whole, fewer having no qualifications (13% v 22%). This is largely due to a marked improvement in the proportion of unqualified workers in the region, halving from 27% in 2004.

Four-fifths (81%) of the East of England workforce have a construction skills card or certificate. This compares favourably with the UK/ROI average (68%), and is also an improvement on 2004 (65%). Across all occupational groups the majority of workers hold a skill card or certificate, with the exception of roofers (only 33% of whom hold a skill card/certificate).

Just under half (46%) of all site-based workers in the East hold a construction related qualification (other than a skill card or certificate), which is comparable with the UK/ROI average (48%), and unchanged since 2004. Workers with five or more years experience in the industry were nearly twice as likely as those with two years or less experience to hold a relevant qualification (52% cf. 27%). NVQs/SVQs have overtaken City and Guilds since 2004 to become the most commonly held qualifications.

A fifth of workers said they had managerial or supervisory duties at the site. Just over half of these workers (56%) said that they had ever received any training designed to improve their managerial or supervisory knowledge or skills, which is similar to 2004 and continues to compare favourably with the national average (40%). That said, the most common form of management/supervisory training continues to be in-house as opposed to more formal industry-recognised training.

In 2004 the East of England was the UK region with the lowest proportion of its workforce (10%) currently working towards a construction qualification, but a marked improvement in this proportion (to 24% in 2007) now puts the region ahead of the UK/ROI as a whole (the UK/ROI average is 17%). Half of those working towards a qualification do not currently hold one. This suggests that the region's relatively well-qualified workforce should be sustained, if not improved further in coming years. The most common qualification being worked towards were NVQs/SVQs.

Some upskilling may be demand-led by workers, although the potential remains limited if improving slightly. Seven in ten workers (69%) believe they have all the skills they require for their current job, although a fifth (19%) say they need more training or qualifications with 10% needing more experience. Younger workers were the most likely to say they needed more training and qualifications (45% of 16–19 year olds). This assessment accords with the overall UK/ROI picture, and is broadly in line with 2004, although there appears to be a slightly greater desire for more training and qualifications in 2007.

Workers with no qualifications and not working towards any were no more likely than average to see the need for more training or qualifications, so education and information is still required to reach these people.

Overall, a quarter (25%) expressed a need for basic skills training, with broadly equal demand for reading, writing, maths and speaking English, although language skills were together deemed more necessary than maths. Demand was greater amongst workers with less than a year's experience (46%) and in particular if they were not a UK/ROI national (75%). Not surprisingly the latter most wanted language skills, most notably help to speak English (71% of all non-UK/ROI nationals).

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[2] Comparative findings should be treated as indicative only due to key differences in the types of sites visited in 2004 and 2007. The profile of sites visited showing differences by size and category are included in the technical report.

Overall 14% say they want to change the work they do, which may necessitate further training. This is somewhat less than the 24% in 2004, but average for the UK/ROI in 2007. Three-quarters of these (75%) say that to achieve this aim they will need further training and qualifications. This represents 10% of all workers interviewed.

One challenge to delivering training to site-based workers is the relatively short time that workers stay at one site as well as the uncertainty that exists about how long the work will last.

Only around a third of workers (35%) expected to be on site for more than six months and one in five (21%) expected their work on site to last over a year. A further 16% were uncertain as to how long they'd be on site for. This very much reflects the UK/ROI picture. However, this appears to be an improvement on 2004, when only 16% of East of England workers expected to be on site for more than six months.

2.3 Mobility

The East of England has a relatively mobile workforce, with a high level of importing of labour.

Nearly three-fifths (57%) of those currently working in the East of England originate from the region, making it one of the regions with fewest "home grown" workers. London is the most likely external source of workers (13%), followed by workers from outside the UK/ROI (8%).

Nonetheless the majority of construction workers in the East of England have residences (both permanent and current) in the region, as is true of all nations/regions. Four-fifths of workers in the region have a permanent address in the East of England. The remainder (17%) almost exclusively have a permanent address in a neighbouring region so journeys may well be over short distances only, and reflect more general commuting patterns across regional boundaries. Overall 20% of respondents working in the East of England are working outside the nation/region where they have their permanent address and 18% are working outside the nation/region of their current residence.

The mean average number of miles travelled to work (each way) was 37 miles (31 miles in 2004), which is somewhat higher than the UK/ROI average (24 miles), as it was in 2004. Almost one-quarter (24%) were travelling over fifty miles each way to work, which is substantially higher than the UK/ROI average (10%). This of course will be affected by the geographical size and population density of the regions.

3 Profile, Work Status and Work Histories of the Construction Workforce

In this chapter we look at the demographic details of the construction workers interviewed in terms of age, ethnicity and gender. We also look at the proportion working directly for a company, self-employed or for an agency, and the extent to which they are working on a permanent or temporary basis. We also look at the occupational profile of the sample and examine career histories in terms of how many years they have worked in construction and the previous roles workers have had within the sector.

3.1 Demographic profile of the sample

The following table shows the demographic profile of our sample of construction workers in the East of England and compares this to the profile in 2004 and the overall workforce interviewed in the survey.

Table 3.1 Demographic profile of the sample

	East Of England 2007 %	East of England 2004 %	Overall Workforce (UK/ROI) 2007 %
Age: 16–19	**11**	19	8
20–24	**18**		16
25–34	**21**	32	25
35–44	**25**	30	25
45–54	**12**	15	16
55+	**13**	5	10
Ethnicity: White	**96**	97	96
Black	**3**	N/A	2
Asian	**<1**	N/A	1
Other	**0**	2	1
Gender: Male	**99**	99	99
Female	**1**	1	<1

Base: East of England respondents (2007: 314; 2004: 651); Overall workforce (3,877)

There is a broad spread of construction workers by age, with just over a quarter (29%) aged under 25, and a further one in four (25%) aged 45+. This is very much in line with the overall UK/ROI profile, but a slightly older profile than that recorded in the East of England in 2004.

As may be expected the workforce interviewed was very male dominated, only 1% being female. This is also the picture across the UK/ROI as a whole, and is unchanged since 2004.

Similarly, the vast majority (96%) of those interviewed described themselves as white, which shows no significant deviation from the UK/ROI profile, or that of 2004.

3.2 Work status

Around two-thirds (65%) of workers interviewed were employed directly by a company. Three in ten (31%) were self-employed and just 4% worked for an agency. This is very similar to the overall UK/ROI profile, but represents a shift since 2004 towards direct employment (from 56%), largely at the expense of agencies (16% in 2004).

Although the trend is not so marked as at the overall UK/ROI level, nonetheless there is link in the East of England between time spent in the industry and the incidence of self-employment. Only a fifth of those who have been in the industry 1–2 years are self-employed, compared with a third of those who have been in construction for five or more years.

Table 3.2 Work status

	East of England 2007 %	Overall Workforce (UK/ROI) 2007 %	Years working in construction			
			<1 year %	1–2 %	3–4 %	5+ %
Employed by a company	**65**	64	62	64	73	64
Self-employed	**31**	29	30	20	21	33
Work for an agency	**4**	5	5	16	3	3

Base: East of England respondents (314); Overall workforce (3,877)

In terms of age, self-employment is most common amongst 25–44 year olds (38%), which is broadly in line with the UK/ROI overall. However, more notably, those workers originating from outside the UK/ROI are more likely to be self-employed than their UK/ROI counterparts – 54% and 28% respectively. This pattern can also be seen at an overall UK/ROI level, although is less marked than in the East of England. Across the whole of the UK/ROI 35% of workers originating from outside the UK/ROI are self-employed, compared with 28% of workers originating from within the UK/ROI.

There were also wide differences in the likelihood of being self-employed by occupation, as summarised in the following table.

Table 3.3 Level of self-employment by occupation			
High		Low	
2007	2004	**2007**	2004
Roofers (67%)	Scaffolders (60%)	**Pipe Fitters (12%)**	Plant/Machine Operatives (14%)
Bricklayers (59%)	Painters/Decorators (58%)	**Plant/Machine Operatives (13%)**	Groundworkers (14%)
Carpenters/Joiners (58%)	Bricklayers (51%)	**Supervisors (17%)**	Labourers/General Operatives (8%)
Plasterers/Dry-liners (50%)		**Labourers/General Operatives (22%)**	

Results are broadly comparable with the overall UK/ROI picture, with roofers most likely to be self-employed, and plant/machine operatives and labourers/general operatives unlikely to be self-employed. There are some similarities with the results from 2004 in the East of England, but small base sizes mean that some occupations have to be excluded from the analysis, so direct comparison is difficult.

Agency workers only accounted for 4% of those interviewed in the East of England. Agencies appear to be used mainly for labouring/general operative positions (19% of labourers are employed by an agency). This is very similar to the overall UK/ROI picture.

The vast majority of workers are employed on a permanent basis (82%). A permanent contract is almost universal for employees (95%), but less common for those who are self-employed (60%). A similar state of affairs is apparent at the UK/ROI level.

3.3 Occupational profile

Results showing how workers classified their current role or occupation are shown in table 3.4, which lists those occupations mentioned by 1% or more of the sample. Later in the report differences are discussed by occupation; not all occupations shown are used in those discussions, as bases less than 15 are too low to be reliable. The results are compared with those from 2004 in the third column and the final column on the table show comparative UK/ROI data.

Table 3.4 Occupational Profile			
	East of England 2007 % (No.)	East of England 2004 % (No.)	Overall Workforce (UK/ROI) 2007 % (No.)
Plant/Machine Operative	**20 (62)**	6 (36)	13 (502)
Bricklayer	**11 (34)**	8 (51)	13 (536)
Labourer/General Operative	**10 (32)**	18 (115)	17 (674)
Electrician	**9 (28)**	8 (49)	7 (247)
Plasterer/Dry-liner	**8 (24)**	4 (25)	5 (190)
Carpenter/Joiner	**6 (19)**	10 (62)	14 (559)
Supervisor	**6 (18)**	N/A	5 (192)
Pipe Fitter	**5 (17)**	4 (29)	3 (102)
Plumber	**5 (17)**	4 (28)	5 (183)
Roofer	**5 (15)**	6 (37)	4 (133)
Scaffolder	**4 (11)**	3 (20)	3 (112)
Manager	**3 (10)**	N/A	3 (111)
Civil Engineering Operatives	**3 (9)**	N/A	2 (75)
Glazier	**3 (9)**	N/A	1 (32)
Banksman/Banksperson	**2 (6)**	N/A	2 (81)
Technical	**2 (6)**	N/A	1 (38)
Painter/Decorator	**1 (4)**	7 (24)	2 (97)
Ceiling fixer	**1 (4)**	N/A	1 (33)
Welder	**1 (3)**	N/A	1 (32)
Steel Erector/Rigger	**1 (2)**	N/A	2 (75)
Base: East of England respondents (2007: 314; 2004: 651); Overall workforce (3,877)			

The occupational profile of the East of England workforce in 2007 is broadly in line with the overall UK/ROI profile, and the regional profile from 2004. However, plant machine operatives are more common in the East of England than previously, or the UK/ROI as a whole, whereas labourers are less common.

3.4 Years working in construction

The length of time spent working in construction ranges from one in ten (10%) of new entrants who have worked in the industry for less than a year, to three in ten (29%) who have worked in the industry for over 20 years. Table 3.5 summarises findings showing cumulative proportions. The results for the East of England vary little from the overall UK/ROI figures, but there was an increase in the mid-range of experience from 2004, when the regional profile was younger and less experienced than the UK/ROI average.

Table 3.5 Years spent working in construction (cumulative)			
	East of England 2007 %	East of England 2004 %	Overall Workforce (UK/ROI) 2007 %
Less than 6 months	**4**	7	5
A year or less	**10**	12	11
2 years or less	**18**	17	17
5 years or less	**33**	25	33
10 years or less	**53**	40	50
20 years or less	**71**	73	71
More than 20 years	**29**	26	27
Base: East of England respondents (2007: 314; 2004: 651); Overall workforce (3,877)			

Labourer/general operatives were much more likely to be recent recruits to the industry (31% had worked in the sector for two years or less), suggesting that people are likely to start out doing this type of work before moving on to more skilled occupations in the industry. However, there were still a considerable proportion of labourers/general operatives who had worked in the industry for many years (25% had worked in construction for over 20 years). This is also true at the UK/ROI level, and relatively unchanged from 2004.

3.4.1 Construction employment

Around two in five workers (41%) ended up in the construction industry after starting their working life in another field. This was higher for labourer/operatives (53%), whereas carpentry/joinery is more likely to attract workers straight after leaving education, as only around a fifth of workers with this occupation had started out working in another field. These levels of employment outside of construction accord with the UK/ROI as a whole.

Those who had worked in other fields before starting their construction careers were asked what their previous job had been. A diverse range of jobs was mentioned. In a large number of cases this was doing jobs for which construction seems like the natural progression (or indeed which are construction jobs but in other sectors).

Since starting their first job in construction, the vast majority had only ever worked in this sector, three quarters (74%) reported having worked in construction continuously and a further 10% had only worked in this sector though had had spells of being out of work[3]. Overall 12% had dipped in and out of the construction sector since their first construction job. This was most likely among labourers/general operatives (21%) and plant/machine operatives

[3] These results exclude workers whose first serious job is for their current employer.

(18%), indicating that this dipping in and out of the industry is more common among the relatively unskilled occupations.

3.4.2 Occupational switching and progression

An area of particular interest in the research was the extent of switching between occupations within construction. To this end workers were asked if they had always worked in their current role/occupation and if not what their previous occupation had been.

Three out of five workers (58%) said that they had always worked in the same occupational area as their current job, which is notably lower than in 2004 (84%). However, this is very much in line with the UK/ROI overall in 2007 (60%).

4 Qualifications and Skills

A key objective of this research was to measure the competence/qualification levels of the construction workforce. A number of questions were asked to ascertain this:

- whether any construction skill certificate or card was held and if so which and, in the case of CSCS and CSR cards, to what level

- what formal qualifications relevant to the construction industry they held or were working towards, if any

- those with managerial or supervisory duties were asked about any training specifically designed to improve their managerial or supervisory skills or knowledge.

We also asked workers to assess their own skills, including basic skills and whether they felt they needed more training to do their current job.

4.1 Construction skill cards and certificates

There is a general move in the industry for all persons working on, or visiting, construction sites to have a construction skill card or certificate. Already, many sites won't let workers on without an appropriate card to prove their skills. And this is set to increase as the industry-wide deadline approaches for a fully qualified workforce by 2010.

Overall nearly four fifths (81%) of workers said they held a skill card or certificate of some description, which is an encouraging increase compared with the proportion who said they held a skill card or certificate in 2004 (65%), and also well above the UK/ROI average (68%).

Perhaps surprisingly age and time in the industry appear to have little impact on the likelihood of having a skill card or certificate. However, holding such a card or certificate is a little more likely amongst employees than amongst self-employed workers. This correlates with the greater incidence of skill cards/certificates amongst permanent workers (82% compared with 72% amongst temporary workers). Holding a card/certificate is also less likely amongst workers from outside the UK/ROI (71% compared with 81% amongst those originating from the UK/ROI).

Table 4.1 Whether have a skill card/certificate by other variables			
	East of England 2007 %	East of England 2004 %	Overall Workforce (UK/ROI) 2007 %
Overall	**81**	65	68
< 1 year in construction	**79**	14	39
1–2 years	**80**	56	60
3–4 years	**88**	N/A	65
5+ years	**82**	N/A	75
16–19	**76**	N/A	43
20–24	**85**	N/A	62
25–44	**79**	70	73
45+	**83**	76	72
Employed directly	**85**	65	70
Self-employed	**75**	73	69
Agency worker	**69**	53	62
Base: East of England respondents (2007: 314; 2004: 651); Overall workforce (3,877)			

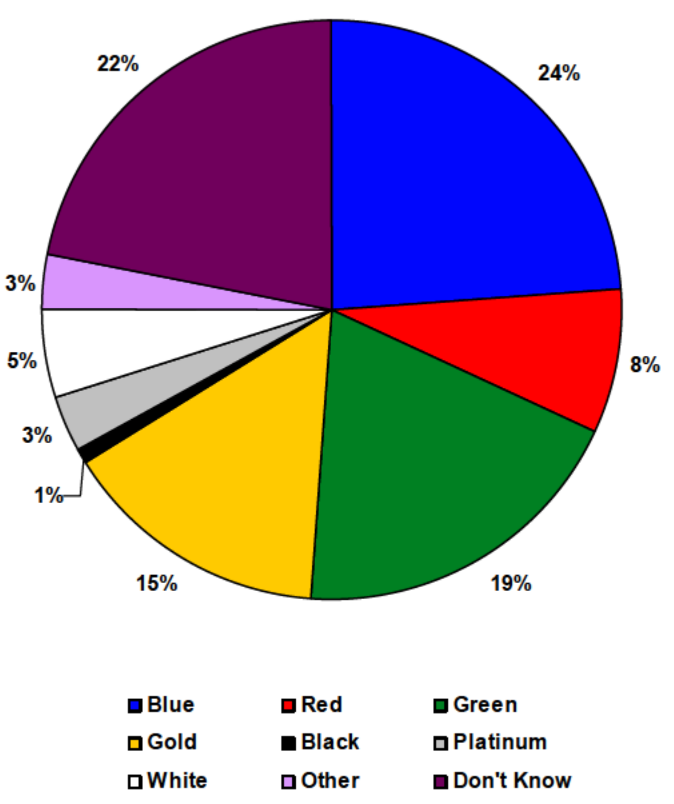
The main differences by occupation are shown in the following table that lists occupations with the highest and lowest penetrations from the 2004 and the 2007 surveys.

Table 4.2 Whether have a skill card/certificate by occupation			
***High** likelihood*		***Low** likelihood*	
2007	2004	**2007**	2004
Pipe Fitters (100%)	Scaffolders (100%)	**Roofers (33%)**	Labourers/General Operatives (28%)
Electricians (96%)	Carpenters/Joiners (85%)		Painters/Decorators (50%)
Plant/Machine Operatives (94%)	Pipe Fitters (83%)		
Supervisors (94%)			

The high overall likelihood of holding a skills card or certificate in the East of England means that incidence is high amongst most occupations, only roofers standing out in 2007 as unlikely to hold a card/certificate.

Workers with a CSCS/CSR skill card were asked its colour/level. A quarter (24%) held a blue, skilled construction/plant operative NVQ/SVQ Level 2 card, with one in five having a green, general site workers card (19%), and 15% possessing a gold, craft/supervisor NVQ/SVQ Level 3 card. Despite saying they held a CSR card, one in five (22%) were not sure what colour or level it was. Chart 4.1 shows the proportions of card-holders with each colour of card.

Chart 4.1 Colour of CSCS/CSR skill card held



Base: East of England respondents who hold a CSCS/CSR card (219)

4.2 Construction qualifications held

Workers were also asked what other formal qualifications relevant to construction they held (excluding first aid certificates). As a relatively high proportion (11% in East of England; 8% overall) did not give an answer to this question in 2007, results in this section are based on those who gave an answer. Nearly half (46%) of workers who gave a response held a construction-specific qualification, which is comparable to 2004, and the UK/ROI as a whole.

As may be expected, there were differences by age and length of time worked in the industry. Workers with five or more years experience in the industry were nearly twice as likely as those with two years or less experience to hold a relevant qualification (52% cf. 27%).

Table 4.3 Hold any construction specific qualification			
	East of England 2007 %	East of England 2004 %	Overall Workforce (UK/ROI) 2007 %
Overall	**46**	46	48
< 1 year in construction	**23**	14	15
1–2 years	**27**	34	30
3–4 years	**41**	34	39
5+ years	**52**	54	57
16–19	**34**	N/A	30
20–24	**45**	N/A	40
25–44	**47**	48	54
45+	**56**	56	50
Employed directly	**47**	65	48
Self-employed	**46**	73	54
Agency worker	**31**	53	30
Base: East of England respondents who gave a response 2007 (278); All East of England respondents 2004 (651); All UK/ROI respondents who gave response (3,594)			

The likelihood of having a construction-related qualification rises with age, suggesting there is no upper age barrier beyond which workers do not consider obtaining qualifications. In respect of the influence of age and experience the East of England is comparable with 2004, but compared with the UK/ROI overall the likelihood of holding a qualification continues to rise steadily with age and experience. However, in contrast to 2004 and the UK/ROI as a whole, workers in the East of England are equally likely to hold a relevant qualification, be they an employee or self-employed.

There is also some indication that workers from outside of the UK/ROI are less likely than UK/ROI nationals to hold construction qualifications (26% cf. 47%).

As with skill cards/certificates, there was relatively little variation by occupation in the proportion of workers with a construction qualification. This is summarised in table 4.7, showing the occupations with highest proportions of workers with a qualification and the occupations with lowest relative proportions.

As in 2004 electricians and bricklayers are amongst the most likely to hold construction specific qualifications, and labourers/general operatives least likely to hold them. However, for most occupations, workers are fairly evenly split in terms of whether they hold such qualifications or not.

Table 4.4 Whether have construction qualifications			
***High** likelihood*		***Low** likelihood*	
2007	2004	**2007**	2004
Electricians (89%)	Electricians (76%)	**Labourers/General Operatives (7%)**	Labourers/General Operatives (8%)
Bricklayers (73%)	Carpenters/Joiners (71%)	**Plant/Machine Operatives (33%)**	Groundworkers (19%)
	Plumbers (68%)		Painters/Decorators (33%)
	Bricklayers (65%)		Floorers (38%)

Workers who said they had a construction qualification were asked what type of qualification they held. Where more than one response was given the highest qualification was recorded.

Table 4.5 Main type of highest qualification held			
	East of England 2007 %	East of England 2004 %	Overall Workforce (UK/ROI) 2007 %
NVQ/SVQ	**54**	21	50
City and Guilds	**35**	55	34
Construction Award	**4**	8	2
Apprenticeship	**2**	1	4
HNC/HND/BTEC higher	**1**	2	1
Degree	**1**	N/A	1
Base: East of England respondents with qualification (2007: 127; 2004: 302); All UK/ROI respondents who gave response (1,810)			

Half of workers (54%) had an NVQ/SVQ and a third (35%) had a City and Guilds qualification. Since 2004 there has been a switch towards NVQs/SVQs away from City and Guilds qualifications (previously 21% and 55% respectively). This movement from City and Guilds to NVQs/SVQs is also seen at the UK/ROI level, and the incidence of each qualification is also comparable.

Workers were also asked where their highest qualification was attained. For the majority of workers holding a construction qualification, 71%, this had been attained in the Eastern region. This is an improvement on 2004 (62%), such that the East of England is no longer the region with the lowest proportion of qualified site workers who gained that qualification within the same region. However, the region still has a relatively high reliance on its workforce being qualified in other regions (most commonly London – 11%). Mobility issues are discussed in chapter 5.

4.3 Working towards construction qualifications

A quarter of the workforce (24%) said they were working towards a construction qualification, which is notably higher than in 2004 (10%), and also higher than the UK/ROI average. Predictably this was much higher among younger workers and those who had been working in the industry for 1–5 years.

Table 4.6 Working towards a construction specific qualification			
	East of England 2007 %	East of England 2004 %	Overall Workforce (UK/ROI) 2007 %
Overall	**24**	10	17
< 1 year in construction	**12**	27	28
1–2 years	**60**	28	32
3–4 years	**36**	N/A	36
5+ years	**19**	N/A	11
16–19	**58**	N/A	47
20–24	**25**		27
25+	**21**	6	12
Base: East of England respondents (2007: 314; 2004: 651); Overall workforce (3,877)			

Over half of 16–19 year olds (58%) were working towards a qualification, dropping to one quarter (25%) among 20-24 year olds. Permanent (27%) and employed (29%) workers are more likely to be working towards a construction qualification than temporary and self-employed workers (both 11%).

Half of those working towards a qualification (49%) did not already have a construction qualification, representing 10% of the total workforce.

In terms of the type of qualifications being worked towards, NVQs/SVQs were the most likely, mentioned by 59% of those working towards a qualification. Just 12% were working towards a City and Guilds qualification and 1% were on an apprenticeship scheme.

4.4 Managerial qualifications

A further area of investigation in relation to training and qualifications was to look at the extent to which workers with managerial or supervisory duties have had training specifically designed to improve their managerial and supervisory skills.

A fifth of workers (20%) said they had supervisory or managerial duties on site, which is in line with the UK/ROI average. Time worked in the industry was a key indicator, a quarter (25%) of those with five or more years experience having managerial or supervisory duties on site compared with just 6% among those working in construction for less than five years.

Just over half (56%) of those with managerial and supervisory duties had received training designed to improve skills in this area. This is in line with 2004, and higher than across the UK/ROI as a whole (40%)

Those who had received some training were most likely to have undertaken in-house training rather than anything that was part of any accredited, industry-recognised programme, as is the case for the UK/ROI overall, and in 2004. The types of training undertaken are shown in table 4.7.

Table 4.7 Type of training received to improve management or supervisory skills

	East of England 2007 %	East of England 2004 %	Overall Workforce (UK/ROI) 2007 %
None/can't remember	**44**	46	47
In-house training	**35**	38	31
Chargehand and Team Leader Training	**13**	2	10
Assessor and Verifier Training	**8**	6	5
IOSH (Institute of Occupational Safety and Health)	**8**	N/A	3
Site Safety Supervisors Course (for CSR)	**6**	N/A	7
Project Management Short Courses	**6**	N/A	3
IOSH Managing Safely for Construction Managers	**6**	N/A	3
CIOB Site Management Education and Training Scheme (SMETS)	**6**	N/A	2
SMSTS (Site Manager Safety Training Scheme)	**5**	8	8
Managing Safely in the Construction Industry (for CSR)	**5**	N/A	3
Civil engineering Site Managers Scheme	**3**	2	3
Supervisory Management Training and Development	**3**	2	2
CIOB Site Supervisor (First Line Supervisor – FLS)	**3**	9	2
Institute of Supervision and Management Workshops	**3**	N/A	1
CSCS Training	**2**	N/A	1
CITB Training	**2**	N/A	3
Safety for Senior Executives (for CSR)	**2**	N/A	1

Base: All with management and supervisory duties East of England (2007: 62; 2004: 65); All UK/ROI respondents who gave response (678)

4.5 Summary of qualification and skills card status

Table 4.8 summarises the situation regarding qualifications and skill cards/certificates attained and working towards. The results for the East of England are compared with the results in 2004 and the overall results in 2007.

Table 4.8 Qualification status

	East of England 2007 %	East of England 2004 %	Overall Workforce (UK/ROI) 2007 %
Hold a formal construction qualification or a skills card/certificate or working towards a qualification	**89**	77	82
Hold a formal construction qualification or a skills card/certificate	**87**	73	78
Hold a skills card/certificate	**81**	65	68
Hold a skills card/certificate but no other construction qualification	**46**	27	33
Working towards a qualification	**24**	10	17

Base: East of England respondents (2007: 314; 2004: 651); Overall workforce (3,877)

As we have seen earlier in this report, the East of England outperforms the UK/ROI as a whole in terms of the qualifications, card and certificates currently held by construction site workers, and in terms of working towards such qualifications. The East of England has also improved on all these measures since 2004. The region performs notably better in terms of holding skills cards or certificates, both compared with the UK/ROI, and with 2004.

UK/ROI nationals are more likely to hold any kind of qualification or skills card/certificate (or being working towards one) than those from outside of the UK/ROI (91% compared with 75%).

4.6 Competence/qualification level of the construction workforce

Using the responses given by workers for qualifications and skill cards/certificates held and managerial training undertaken, the highest competence/qualification levels have been derived for each worker. The technical report shows the definitions of each level, which are largely the same as those used in the 2004 survey[4].

Chart 4.2 shows the results overall, and by occupation where base size allows.

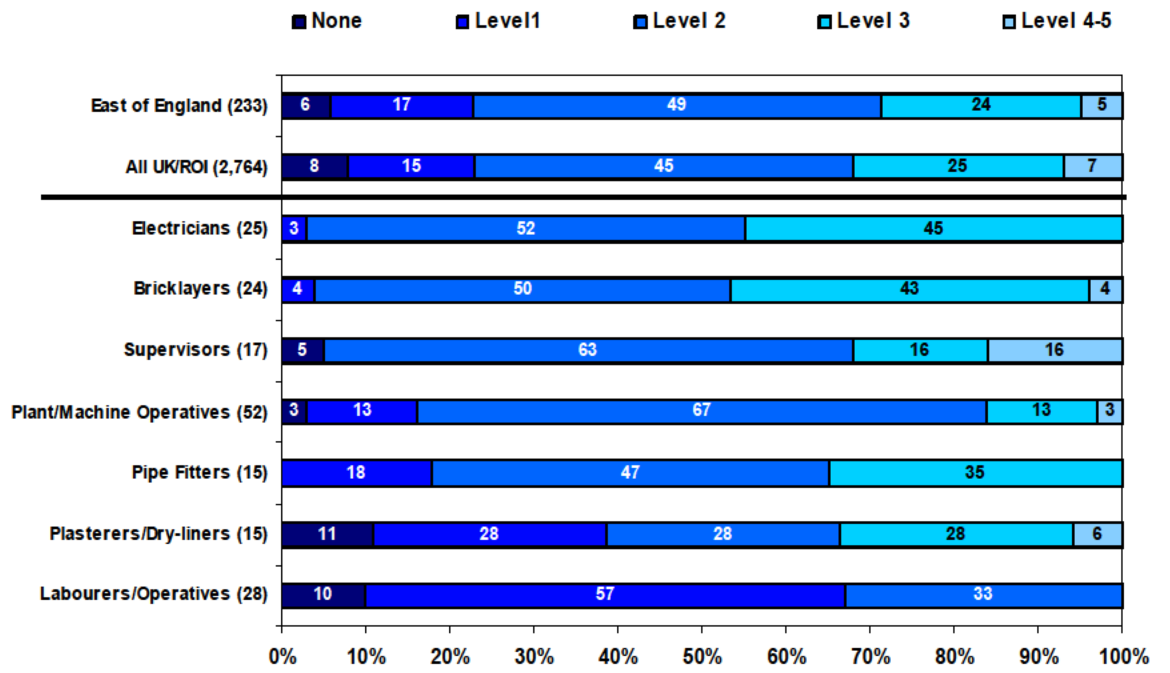
Just 6% of the East of England workforce has no competence/qualification level (i.e. no qualification or management training or skill cards/certificates held). Half (49%) have a level 2 qualification, and almost four in five (78%) have at least this level of qualification.

Results varied by occupation; all bricklayers, electricians and pipe fitters had at least competence/qualification level 1 whereas one in ten plasterers and labourers had no

[4] In 2004 Green CSCS and CSR cards were categorised as Level 2, in 2007 they were categorised as Level 1.

competence/qualification level. Competence/qualification levels were highest among electricians and bricklayers (45% and 46% respectively had a level 3 qualification or higher).

Chart 4.2 Competence/qualification level by occupation



Base: All respondents where a competence/qualification level could be calculated (233)

4.7 Self assessment of skill level

Workers' own perceptions as to whether they had all the skills they need to do their current job were ascertained after they were asked about the various qualifications they held or were working towards. Table 4.9 summarises the results.

Seven in ten workers (69%) believe they have all the skills they require for their current job, although a fifth (19%) say they need more training or qualifications with 10% needing more experience. Predictably younger workers were the most likely to say they needed more training and qualifications (45% of 16–19 year olds). Workers from outside the UK/ROI were more likely to want more experience (29% compared with 9% of UK/ROI nationals) but no likely than average to feel they needed more training or qualifications. This assessment accords with the overall UK/ROI picture, and is broadly in line with 2004, although there appears to be a slightly greater desire for more training and qualifications in 2007.

Table 4.9 Self assessment of skill level and training needs for current job			
	East of England 2007 %	No skill card/qualification/nor working towards any 2007 %	Overall Workforce (UK/ROI) 2007 %
Have all the skills needed for current job	**69**	78	76
Need more training or qualifications	**19**	11	13
Need more experience	**10**	11	8
Don't know	**2**	0	3
Base: East of England respondents (314); No qualification nor working towards any (27); Overall workforce (3,877)			

Workers with no skill cards or qualifications and not working towards any qualifications were no more likely than average to see the need for more training or qualifications. Predictably, workers with no qualifications who were working towards a qualification were more likely (53%) to express the need for more training and experience; however 40% still felt that they had all the skills needed for their job.

Workers in more skilled occupations were more likely than average to say they needed more training or qualifications: plumbers, electricians, carpenters/joiners.

All workers were also asked whether they felt they needed training in basic skills. Overall, a quarter (25%) expressed a need for such training, with broadly equal demand for reading, writing, maths and speaking English, although language skills were together deemed more necessary than maths. Several factors appeared to impact on whether workers felt they needed some basic training. They were more likely to identify this need if they were relatively new to the industry (46% of workers with less than a year's experience) and in particular if they were not a UK/ROI national (75%). Not surprisingly the latter most wanted language skills, most notably help to speak English (71% of all non-UK/ROI nationals).

Table 4.10 Need for training in basic skills			
	East of England 2007 %	All identifying a need 2007 %	Overall Workforce (UK/ROI) 2007 %
Any need identified	**25**	100	21
Reading	**17**	66	12
Speaking English	**15**	59	12
Writing	**14**	56	10
Maths	**11**	44	10
Base: East of England respondents (314); All identifying a training need (80); Overall workforce (3,877)			

The other means by which increased training may arise from a demand-led worker angle is those wishing to change occupation within the sector and anticipating this needing re-training. Overall 14% say they want to change the work they do. This is somewhat less than the 24% in 2004, but average for the UK/ROI in 2007. Three-quarters of these (75%) say that to achieve this aim they will need further training and qualifications. This represents 10% of all workers interviewed.

As expected, the desire for a change of role was particularly apparent among less skilled workers, particularly labourers/general operatives (37%) and plant/machine operatives (21%). Temporary workers were also more likely to desire change (21% cf. 13% of permanent workers). The most common roles workers would like to switch to are primarily the more skilled occupations. Better pay was the key motive for change, mentioned by half of workers (50%) wanting to change roles, although the demand for more interesting/less boring work also played a role.

One challenge to delivering training to site-based workers is the relatively short time that workers stay at one site as well as the uncertainty that exists about how long the work will last. The following table shows the results for the length of time workers expect to work at their current site, results are shown for the East of England and overall.

Table 4.11 Total length of time expect to work at site

	East of England 2007 %	Overall Workforce (UK/ROI) 2007 %
<1 month	**11**	11
1–3 months	**19**	20
>3 up to 6 months	**19**	16
>6 months up to a year	**14**	17
More than a year	**21**	20
Don't know	**16**	17

Base: East of England respondents (314); Overall workforce (3,877)

From a training perspective, these figures clearly highlight the difficulty that the construction industry faces in providing site-based training. Only around a third of workers (35%) expected to be on site for more than six months and one in five (21%) expected their work on site to last over a year. A further 16% were uncertain as to how long they'd be on site for. This very much reflects the UK/ROI picture. However, this appears to be an improvement on 2004, when only 16% of East of England workers expected to be on site for more than six months.

Looking at variation by occupation, predictably it tended to be trades whose work is undertaken at specific times in a project who expect the shortest duration on site: plumbers (83%), electricians (68%), carpenters/joiners (68%) and Plasterers/dry-liners (66%) were most likely to expect to be employed at the site for six months or less.

5 Mobility

A key aim of the survey is to gain an understanding of geographic mobility of construction workers and to try to get a measure of which regions are net ‘importers’ and which are net ‘exporters’. Another aim is to identify which types of workers (for example, by occupation and competence/qualification level) are particularly likely to be mobile. The results from this analysis clearly have a bearing on training planning, provision and investment.

What constitutes a mobile worker is not straightforward. Potentially it includes those who live outside a region and travel in on a daily basis, those who live in temporary accommodation while working but whose permanent address is outside the region, those who have moved to the area on a semi-permanent basis, as well as those who received their construction training elsewhere but have now moved to the region on a permanent basis. Hence for the survey a number of questions were asked covering these issues. These were:

- where respondents were from originally
- whether they travel from their permanent address or a temporary address (and if temporary why they work in the current region)
- the proportion of their time working in construction which has been on sites within the region where they are currently working
- the miles they travel to get to the site each day
- whether when they finish this site they expect to get a job which allows them to commute on a daily basis from their permanent address.

These areas are discussed in turn. In the last section we also look at how long workers are typically based at an individual site to give some idea of the frequency of moving between sites. Clearly workers may have spent their whole working life in one region and therefore appear relatively immobile, but if they move site frequently, providing training to these workers could be problematic.

5.1 Worker origin

Workers were asked where they were from originally. As a measure of mobility clearly this is very broad, since people may have moved to a region on a permanent basis and done so many years ago for reasons other than their work. That said there are still some interesting differences between regions as far as importing and exporting workers is concerned, which are shown in table 5.1.

Table 5.1 Where from originally/international and inter-region movement													
	Where currently working												
Where from originally	NI %	NE %	Scot %	Wales %	NW %	Y&H %	WM %	ROI %	EM %	SW %	EE %	SE %	Lon %
Northern Ireland	92	*	-	2	1	-	*	*	1	*	**1**	1	1
North East	*	84	4	1	*	5	2	*	1	1	**1**	1	1
Scotland	1	1	84	*	*	1	1	*	1	1	**-**	*	1
Wales	-	*	-	79	3	1	1	-	2	5	*	2	1
North West	*	1	4	2	74	5	2	-	2	8	**1**	1	1
Yorkshire and Humber	*	4	2	-	4	74	2	1	9	3	**1**	1	1
West Midlands	*	-	1	1	11	-	70	-	7	7	**1**	3	*
Republic of Ireland	2	*	-	1	1	2	5	67	2	2	**5**	5	5
East Midlands	*	*	*	1	1	6	7	-	65	4	**2**	2	1
South West	-	1	-	7	-	*	3	-	1	60	**2**	4	*
East of England	1	4	-	-	*	3	1	*	2	2	**57**	7	9
South East	-	1	-	1	*	1	1	*	2	8	**6**	49	15
London	-	*	1	1	*	*	1	*	1	3	**13**	12	33
Outside UK and ROI	2	1	2	4	-	1	3	29	2	1	**8**	8	22

Base: All Respondents (3,877)
NB: Dark shading denotes proportion of workers in region originally from that nation/region. East of England workers are also shaded (light).

Nearly three-fifths (57%) of those currently working in the East of England originate from the region. Whilst this does not quite make the East of England a net importer of workers, it is nonetheless one of the regions with fewest 'home grown' workers. London is the most likely external source of workers (13%), followed by workers from outside the UK/ROI (8%).

5.2 Location of workplace, current and permanent residence

Respondents were all asked where they were living to get to their current place of work, whether this was their permanent address and, if not, where their permanent address was. Table 5.2 presents results for *all* regions showing:

- the percentage of workers whose **permanent** residence is in the same nation/region as their current work
- the percentage of workers currently living in the same nation/region while as their current work.

In each instance the corresponding percentages resident in different regions are shown to the left and the percentages resident in neighbouring regions to the right. The results from the 2004 survey are also included for comparison.

Table 5.2 Nation/Region of establishment/permanent residence and work residence

	Region of **permanent** residence						Region of **current** residence					
Region of establishment	% from different nation/region		% from same nation/region		% from neighbouring nation/regions		% from different nation/region		% from same nation/region		% from neighbouring nations/regions	
	2007	2004	**2007**	2004	**2007**	2004	**2007**	2004	**2007**	2004	**2007**	2004
Northern Ireland	**1**	0.5	**99**	99.5	**-**	-	**0.5**	0.5	**99.5**	99.5	**-**	-
Scotland	**8**	2	**92**	98	**4**	1	**1**	1	**99**	99	**-**	1
North East	**9**	5	**91**	95	**6**	4	**8**	4	**92**	96	**5**	3
West Midlands	**13**	11	**87**	89	**10**	10	**7**	10	**93**	90	**7**	9
Wales	**13**	10	**87**	90	**7**	5	**12**	8	**88**	92	**7**	4
Yorkshire and Humber	**16**	12	**84**	88	**15**	10	**12**	8	**88**	92	**11**	8
East of England	**20**	32	**80**	68	**17**	27	**18**	30	**82**	70	**15**	28
North West	**12**	19	**82**	81	**15**	17	**18**	13	**82**	87	**15**	12
South West	**22**	13	**78**	87	**13**	8	**17**	8	**83**	92	**11**	5
East Midlands	**23**	25	**77**	75	**20**	18	**22**	20	**78**	80	**20**	16
London	**32**	43	**68**	57	**30**	25	**30**	29	**70**	71	**30**	26
South East	**32**	27	**68**	73	**24**	23	**31**	21	**69**	79	**25**	21

Base: All respondents (2007: 3,877; 2004: 8,436)

The majority of construction workers in the East of England have residences (both permanent and current) in the region, as is true of all nations/regions. Four-fifths of workers in the region have a permanent address in the East of England. The remainder almost exclusively (17%) have a permanent address in a neighbouring region so journeys may well be over short distances only, and reflect more general commuting patterns across regional boundaries. Overall 20% of respondents working in the East of England are working outside the nation/region where they have their permanent address and 18% are working outside the nation/region of their current residence.

Relative to other regions the East of England is in the middling pack, neither one of the peripheral regions which draw nearly all workers from the region, nor a region like London or the South East, where a higher proportion of workers come from outside the region.

Table 5.3 shows the percentage of construction workers working outside the nation/region where they have a permanent residence.

Overall 28% of respondents with a permanent residence in the East of England are working outside the region. This places the East of England in the upper echelon in terms of exporting workers, although at the lower end of that group. This measure varied widely by nation/region, and not surprisingly the more geographically isolated areas of Scotland and Northern Ireland had very few workers who live there while working outside the geographical area.

Table 5.3 Percentage working outside their nation/region of permanent residence		
Region of permanent address	**Permanent 2007 %**	Permanent 2004 %
West Midlands	**31**	27
London	**30**	35
East Midlands	**28**	43
East of England	**28**	29
South East	**20**	12
Yorkshire and Humber	**18**	22
North East	**16**	21
Wales	**16**	18
South West	**15**	27
North West	**9**	15
Northern Ireland	**4**	2
Scotland	**1**	8
All	**18**	21
Base: All respondents (2007: 3,877; 2004: 8,436)		

5.3 Temporary accommodation

While clearly not everyone based in temporary accommodation will necessarily be 'imported' workers (some may also have a permanent address within the nation/region), this group is a proxy for the highly mobile workforce and as such constitutes another measure of mobility.

Overall 6% of workers interviewed in the East of England were based at a temporary address to get to work. It's not surprising to find that workers employed on a temporary basis were more likely to say they were living at a temporary address (11% of temporary workers versus 5% of permanent workers), perhaps linked with this finding is that workers who haven't been in the industry long were also more likely to be living at temporary address (24% of those with less than a year's experience versus 4% of those with five or more year experience). It is perhaps also to be expected that workers from outside the UK/ROI are more likely to be in temporary accommodation (25% compared with 4% of UK/ROI nationals).

5.4 Proportion of career spent in current location

Workers were asked what proportion of the time they had worked in construction in the UK/ROI had been spent on sites in the nation/region where they were currently working. Half (50%) said they'd spent all of their construction careers on sites in the East of England, and a further third (30%) have spent most of their construction career in the region. These figures are broadly in line with the overall UK/ROI, suggesting the construction site workforce is relatively geographically immobile.

Table 5.4 Proportion of construction career spent in current nation/region

	East of England 2007 %	East of England 2004 %	Overall Workforce (UK/ROI) 2007 %
All of it	**50**	39	43
Most of it	**30**	51	33
Around half	**7**	6	9
Small proportion	**8**	2	8
Only this job	**2**	N/A	3
Don't know	**3**	N/A	3

Base: East of England respondents (2007: 314; 2004: 651). Overall workforce (3,877)

The patterns on mobility discussed already in this chapter, particularly on where workers say they were from, are repeated on this measure of mobility. Those currently working in Scotland and in Northern Ireland were particularly likely to have spent all their time in construction within the nation/region (68% and 64% respectively). By contrast, in the East Midlands and London around a quarter had spent all their time on sites within the region (28% and 26% respectively).

Predictably, temporary workers have spent significant periods of their working careers outside the East of England (only 38% have spent all their career in the region, compared with 54% of permanent workers). Employee status and permanent employment are correlated; hence employees are more likely to have spent their entire construction career in the East of England than their self-employed counterparts (55% cf. 39%). Not surprisingly, those who have been in the industry a long time are more likely to have ventured outside of the region, having had greater opportunity (in terms of time) to have done so.

Mobility defined in these terms also varied by occupation. Plumbers (65%), carpenters (63%) and bricklayers (59%) were most likely to have spent all their construction careers in the East of England, whereas roofers (33%) were least likely to have done so.

5.5 Travel to work distances

The mean average number of miles travelled to work (each way) was 37 miles (31 miles in 2004), which is somewhat higher than the UK/ROI average (24 miles), as it was in 2004.

15% of workers reported travelling less than five miles, with nearly half (46%) travelling less than 25 miles. However, a quarter (24%) were travelling over fifty miles each way to work, which is substantially higher than the UK/ROI average (10%). This of course will be affected by the geographical size and population density of the regions.

There were wide variations in the average travel distance to work by occupation. The lowest average distance travelled was among plasterers/dry-liners (22 miles). By contrast, roofers and supervisors had much higher than average travel to work distances (71 miles and 50 miles respectively).

5.6 Sub-sector mobility

All workers were asked whether they had spent significant parts of their construction career on any of the following types of project: new housing; housing repair and maintenance; commercial work such as shops, offices, pubs etc.; private industrial such as warehousing, land reclamation etc.; public non-housing such as schools, landscaping etc and infrastructure such as road, tunnel etc. Results are summarised in table 5.5[5].

Table 5.5 Type of projects spent significant periods of construction career on

	East of England 2007 %	Overall Workforce (UK/ROI) 2007 %
New housing	**66**	73
Public non-housing	**44**	44
Commercial work	**41**	43
Housing repair and maintenance	**34**	38
Private industrial	**32**	33
Infrastructure	**25**	21
One type of project only	**37**	34
Two types of project only	**19**	19
Three types of project only	**18**	15
Four types of project only	**10**	12
Five types of project only	**9**	11
Worked on all six types of project	**4**	6

Base: East of England respondents (314); Overall workforce (3,877)

[5] Results are not directly comparable with 2004 on this measure as a different number and definition of types of projects was used in 2004.

Most workers (66%) had spent significant periods of their career working on new housing projects while only 34% had spent time working on housing repair, 32% on private industrial and 25% on infrastructure projects. The majority of workers had spent significant parts of their career across different types of project, only a third (37%) had worked within one type of sub-sector only. These results are very much in line with the UK/ROI overall.

Plasterers and labourers were most likely to say they had only worked in one sector (58% and 56% respectively) whereas plumbers and supervisors were least likely to have worked in only one sector (12% and 22% respectively).

Results vary predictably by length of time in the industry. Three-quarters (76%) of those who had only been in the industry a year or less had worked on just one type of project, compared with just 31% of those with five or more years' experience.

5.7 Leaving the industry

A final measure of mobility is the anticipated outflow from the workforce i.e. those leaving the industry. The results for workers aged below 60 are shown in table 5.6.

Table 5.6 Likelihood of working in construction in 5 years time

	East of England 2007 %	East of England 2004 %	Overall workforce (UK/ROI) 2007 %
Definitely will	**43**	69	44
Very likely	**34**	22	32
Quite l kely	**11**	3	10
Quite unl kely	**2**	1	2
Very unlikely	**2**	1	2
Definitely will not	**1**	1	2
Hope to be retired in 5 years	**0**	N/A	2
Don't know	**8**	2	6

Base: East of England workers aged under 60 (2007: 294; 2004: 364); All respondents aged under 60: (3,686)

Five per cent of workers aged below 60 think it is unlikely they will be working in the industry in five years' time, with over three quarters saying it is definite (43%) or very likely (34%) they will stay. These results are very similar to those for the UK/ROI as a whole, but less positive than in 2004.

Predictably those new to the industry (with less than one year's experience) were more uncertain than average, 22% being unsure whether they would be working in construction in five years' time.

There was relatively little variation by occupation, with electricians and plant/machine operatives appearing the least committed, only 31% and 34% respectively saying they would definitely still be in the industry in five years' time.