

# MAINTAINING EMPLOYMENT IN CONSTRUCTION

## THE RESULTS OF THE PEOPLE SURVEY – APRIL 2021

### Introduction

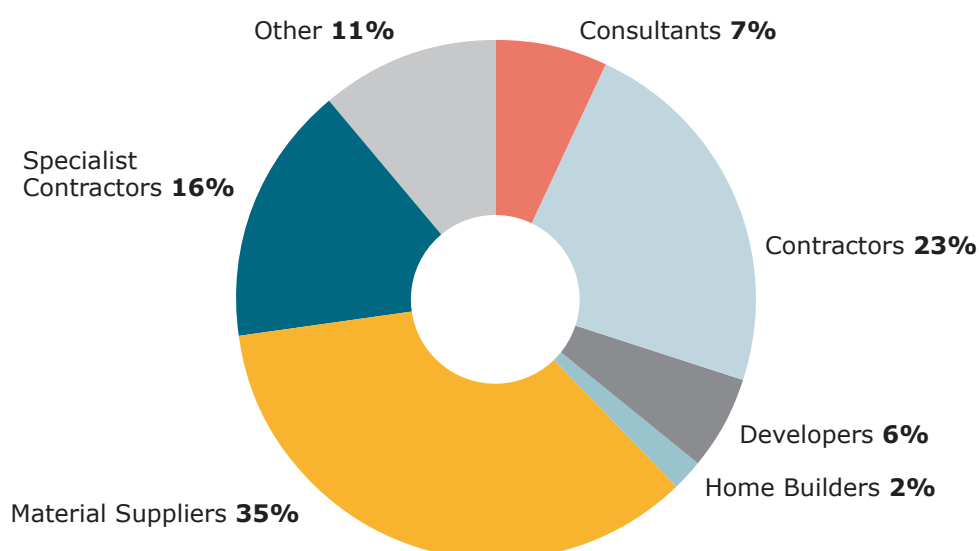
Building on the results of previous cross-industry People Surveys, [Retaining Talent in Construction \(June 2020\)](#) and [Supporting Jobs in Construction \(September 2020\)](#), Build UK carried out the latest survey on behalf of the Construction Leadership Council (CLC) in April 2021.

One year on from the start of the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic, this report summarises the key results, providing an up to date snapshot of the ongoing impact on the construction workforce, which will help to prioritise support for employers as lockdown restrictions continue to be eased across the UK.

### In particular, the data highlighted the following:

- A small number of job losses is expected over the next three months
- There is anticipated to be a slight reduction in the number of EU workers
- Overall, the number of apprentices employed is expected to increase over the next three months
- The number of graduates taken on this September is expected to be higher than last September
- On average, companies are still expecting to lose a third of their Apprenticeship Levy
- Most companies have introduced some form of health and safety training related to COVID-19.

Responses by Sector



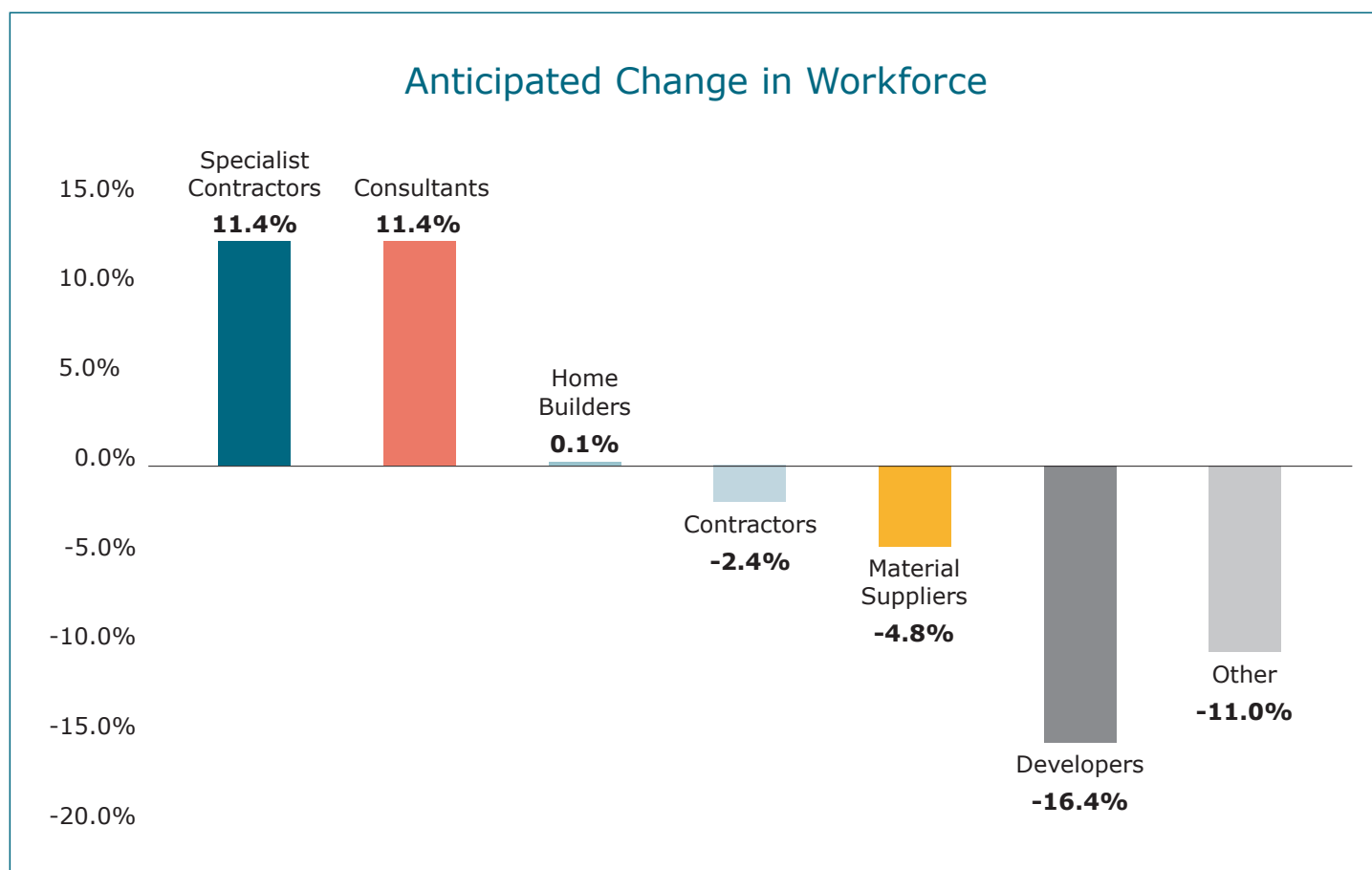
## Employment

To understand the ongoing impact of COVID-19 on jobs, the People Survey collected data on current employment levels (April) and anticipated employment levels in three months' time (July).

Respondents currently directly employ 85% of their workers, with the remaining 15% being self-employed or agency workers.

- There is anticipated to be a **reduction of 1.3% in the number of directly employed workers** across the industry by July.
- On average, 3% of direct employees are still furloughed, down from 6% in September and 32% in June 2020.
- In the longer term, **17% of companies anticipate making redundancies**, with 3% of their workforces being affected. This is down from 44% of companies who anticipated making redundancies in September, affecting 6% of their workforce.
- There is expected to be just a **0.7% reduction in the number of self-employed and agency workers** across the industry by July, which is a drop from the 5.3% anticipated in September.
- Home Builders, Specialist Contractors and Contractors continue to be the most significant users of self-employed and agency workers. Whilst Home Builders and Contractors anticipate no significant changes in the numbers they use, Specialist Contractors are looking to increase their numbers by 19%. The significant reduction reported by Developers was accounted for by a small number of respondents.
- Following the UK's exit from the EU, there is expected to be a **1.7% reduction in the number of EU workers** by July.

**Combining these figures shows a small anticipated reduction in the construction workforce of 1.2% between April and July.**



## The Next Generation

The future pipeline of talent remains vital to the long-term sustainability of the industry, and the People Survey sought to understand the ongoing impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on the number of apprenticeships and graduate programmes across the sector.

### Apprentices

44% of respondents employ apprentices. Only 1% of apprentices remain furloughed, down from 3% in September and 43% in June 2020.

The total **number of apprentices employed is expected to increase by 2.7%** over the next three months, with Material Suppliers looking to increase numbers by 35% and Specialist Contractors by 24%. No respondents anticipated making apprentices redundant.

**63% of companies recruited the same number of apprentices in January**, with 11% taking on more and 26% taking on fewer.

At the next intake in September, **56% of companies expect to take on the same number of apprentices** as they usually would, with 25% looking to recruit more and 19% planning to take on fewer. This is in stark contrast to June 2020 when 60% of companies expected to recruit fewer apprentices and only 2% planned to take on more.

**31% of respondents pay the Apprenticeship Levy** and 79% of those employ apprentices. Just 28% of companies that don't pay the Apprenticeship Levy employ apprentices.

On average, those that pay the Apprenticeship Levy expect to **lose a third of their Levy pot** at the end of this year, due to not being able to spend it within the two-year timeframe. This figure has been consistent across all three People Surveys.

### Graduates

Just 22% of respondents have a graduate scheme, which is consistent with previous surveys.

Following a decrease of 18% in the number of graduates taken on last September, it is anticipated that there will be a **17% increase in the number of graduates taken on this September**.



## Training and Skills

Ensuring the industry continues to have the skills it requires will be key to its success, and the People Survey collected data on how learners were being taught during lockdown.

**91% of respondents provide training for their workforce** and half of those expect it to take place online over the next three months, which is consistent with the response to the previous survey in September.

Over the next three months, training providers anticipate **50% of courses taking place online**, which is also consistent with the response in September (55%). However, 42% of training providers and respondents report that face-to-face training has already resumed, with a further 40% saying it will resume over the next three months.

**79% of respondents have introduced COVID-19 specific health and safety training** for their workforces, with 44% now providing mental health and wellbeing training.

