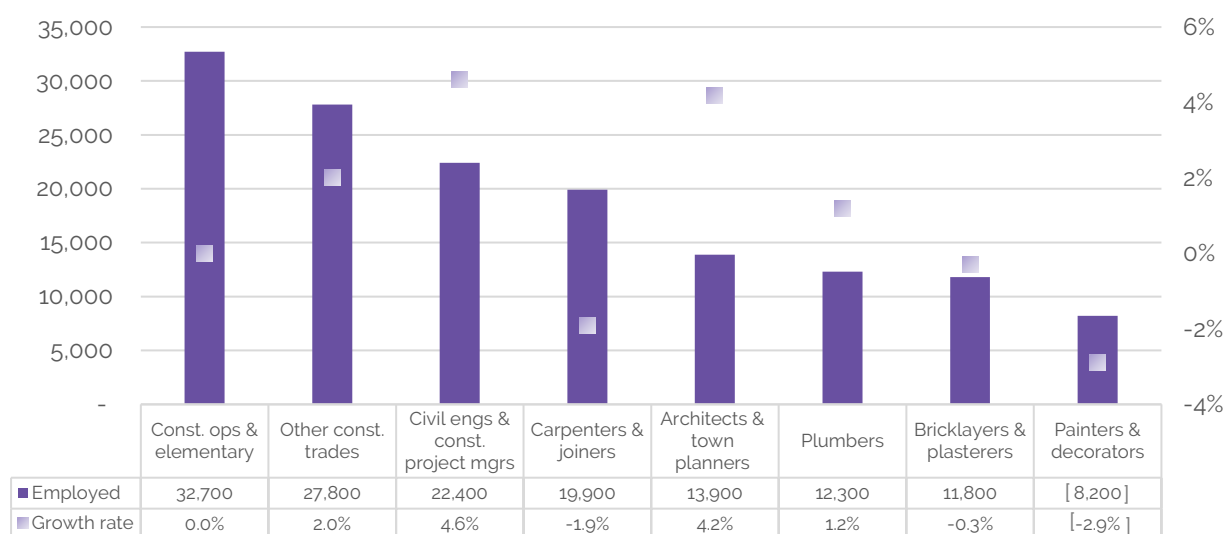


10.8 Construction Occupations

Figure 10.8 Annual Average Employment (2024) & Annual Average Growth Rates (2019-2024)



Overall employment	152,600
Share of total workforce	6.0%
Main sectors of employment	73% - Construction 13% - Professional activities [5%] - Industry
Employment growth	+7,000 between 2019 and 2024 +0.9% on average annually (compared to +3.4% for total workforce)

2024	% Female Q4	% Full-time Q4	% Aged 55 years & over Q4	% Irish citizens Q4	% Third level graduates Q4	Number of new employment permits	Recruitment Agency Survey
Civil engineers & const. project mgrs	...	93%	[20%]	87%	81%	623	✓
Architects & town planners etc.	...	94%	...	74%	93%	171	✓
Construction related technicians	...	...	...	...	...	57	✓
Bricklayers & plasterers	...	92%	...	84%	...	55	✓
Plumbers	...	96%	...	98%	...	45	
Carpenters & joiners	...	98%	...	77%	...	231	✓
Painters & decorators	...	[91%]	...	[69%]	...	36	
Other construction trades	...	96%	[22%]	79%	...	100	✓
Construction operatives & elementary	...	85%	[21%]	77%	...	23	✓
Overall total	[7%]	93%	20%	80%	35%	1,341	

Source: SLMRU (SOLAS) analysis of CSO (LFS) data, DETE, and SLMRU Recruitment Agency Survey (RAS)
Numbers in square brackets should be treated with caution; an ellipsis (...) denotes numbers too small to report
Construction related technicians are included in overall total but numbers are too small to report.

Overall Outlook for these Occupations

Annual average employment growth in construction occupations was well below the national average over the last five years, and actually declined slightly between 2023 and 2024. To date, some planned construction projects have not yet been realised (e.g. the number of housing completions), although retrofitting activities (e.g. energy upgrades) are increasing with nearly 48,000 home energy upgrades in 2023 (up 76% on 2022), and almost 54,000 in 2024.¹

Modern methods of construction will represent a shift in the skills profile required in construction: developments such as off-site construction, digital transformation and sustainable construction standards affect the demand for the volume and skills-mix of construction workers, with skills in demand ranging from technical (including digital and advanced machinery, as well as traditional construction skills), communication/collaboration (especially in logistics, supply chain, leadership), planning & scheduling, quality control, regulatory knowledge, data analysis, among others.²

The supply of construction skills from the formal education and training sector has increased by 38% to reach approximately 4,000 (mostly major) awards over the period 2019-2023; however, given the rapid pace of change occurring in today's workplace, many of the required skills will have to be sourced from within the existing workforce, both construction and manufacturing, with upskilling opportunities playing a vital role in ensuring Ireland has the right skills in its construction workforce. The relatively high number of jobseekers registered with the DSP at the end of December 2024 who stated that their previous occupation was in construction trades or other construction-related occupations points to some potential additional supply for these roles, although it was not possible to disaggregate across trades or to determine if they were qualified tradespersons. With the removal of a number of construction occupations from the ineligible list for employment permits in recent years, supply from outside the European Economic Area has increased. Employment data shows that construction jobs have a particularly high share of males employed; expanding female employment in construction jobs would go a considerable way in meeting skills requirements for these roles.

The recently updated National Development Plan (July 2025) is set to provide funding for large strategic projects in housing, water, energy, and transport, and will require a significant and sustained expansion of the construction workforce.³ A recent DFHERIS report estimates that between 68,000 and 80,000 additional construction workers would be required by 2030 to deliver on housing and retrofitting targets alone.⁴

Future demand for construction skills will be driven by the nature of both private and public sector activity. Factors affecting activity levels include access to finance, costs (materials, labour), planning and infrastructure capacity, as well as technology and modern methods of construction.

¹ SEAI (2024). SEAI-Retrofit-Full-Year-Report-2024.pdf (page 22)

² DFHERIS (2025). Modern Methods of Construction Action Plan. Modern Methods of Construction Action Plan June 2025 Skillnet Ireland (2022). Modern-Methods-of-Construction-Defining-MMC-Business.pdf

³ NDP_Review_document_-_22_July_2025_1025.pdf

⁴ An Update to the Report on the Analysis of Skills for Residential Construction and Retrofitting

Occupation	Economic summary
Civil engineers & construction project managers Skills shortage: Civil engineers & construction project managers	Employment growth was above average for this occupation although employment levels remained unchanged since 2023. New employment permits issued were primarily for civil engineers and construction project managers, but also for site and structural engineers. Difficult-to-fill mentions in both the Recruitment Agency Survey and Skills for Growth data identified a demand for site managers/engineers, project managers, civil/building engineers, with key skills in demand including BIM, design, and sector specific knowledge (e.g. life sciences, renewables, etc). The number of awards from higher education has increased considerably in recent years (following declines associated with the aftermath of the 2008 recession), and were at their highest levels in a decade by 2023 (the number of level 8 and 9 awards in civil engineering related courses had risen to 322, and structural engineering to 90, up from 260 and 81 in 2019 respectively). These increases may help alleviate some of the issues with sourcing suitably qualified personnel for these roles. Increasing housing provision, addressing infrastructure (i.e. utilities) capacity issues, and retrofitting activities will increase demand for these roles.
Architects & town planners, architectural technologists, & surveyors Skills shortage: Quantity surveyors	Although employment growth was above average for this occupation, there have been fluctuations in recent years, with employment in 2024 broadly in line with 2021 levels. Employment levels for the individual job roles within this occupation are too small to allow for an analysis on patterns between roles. Most employed in these occupations were male, and the share of non-Irish citizens employed was above the national average. Employment permits issued in 2024 were mainly for quantity surveyors, architectural technologists, architects (mainly landscape) while mentions of difficult-to-fill vacancies in the Recruitment Agency Survey all referred to quantity surveyors. The number of level 8-10 awards for surveyors (quantity and building) increased from 221 in 2019 to 341 in 2023, while levels 8-10 awards for town planners increased from 66 in 2019 to 114 in 2023. Town planners are likely to be in continued demand to design and locate infrastructure and manage housing/commercial development; however, the numbers employed are too small to allow for detailed analysis. Demand for quantity surveyors and architects is expected to increase with any growth in housing and infrastructure activity, with shortages already evident for quantity surveyors likely to persist.
Construction-related technicians Shortage: Inconclusive	The numbers of persons employed in this occupation are too small to allow for analysis, but demand is evident from a number of sources. Vacancies for CAD technicians/designers appeared in the DSP Jobs Ireland data with both CAD and BIM technicians mentioned as difficult to source in the Recruitment Agency Survey. Employment permits issued for this occupation were also primarily related to CAD and BIM technicians. BIM skills are often a required skill for CAD technicians (along with AutoCAD and Revit) and are also being incorporated into other roles, such as architectural technologists. These skills are also in demand across other sectors beyond construction (including manufacturing and professional activities).
Bricklayers & plasterers	Annual average employment growth over the five-year period was negative for bricklayers/plasterers, although employment has grown strongly since 2023 (an additional 2,500 persons), with numbers almost returning to 2019 levels. Just 55 new employment permits were issued (three fifths for bricklayers, the remainder for plasterers), down from 191 in 2022 and 84 in 2023. A small number of difficult-to-fill vacancy mentions were identified for blocklayers in the Recruitment Agency Survey. Vacancy posts in the DSP Jobs Ireland data were primarily for plasterers and brick/block layers followed by stone masons. In 2024, the number of new apprentice registrations for brick and stone laying was 78 (an 18% increase compared to 2023, although just below 2019 registration levels), with 28 awards in 2023. Since 2022, the number of new plastering apprentice registrations remained at around 30 annually, compared to 36 in 2019, with just 3 awards in 2023 (down from 19 in 2022). Increased uptake of MMC for housebuilding is expected to lead to a reduction in the demand for plasterers and bricklayers but in the short-term, any acceleration of house building or residential repair/retrofitting activity may lead to issues with sourcing supply for these roles.

Plumbers Potential future skills shortage: Plumbers	Although the five-year annual average employment growth rate was below the national average, employment levels for plumbers have been growing annually since 2021. Plumbers and heating/ventilation engineers were the main job titles for both new employment permits and in the DSP Jobs Ireland vacancy data in 2024. The number of new plumbing apprentice registrations was 832 (a 13% increase compared to 2023 and a 32% increase compared to 2019 registration levels); the number of awards was also up, with 409 awards issued in 2023, compared to 204 in 2019. Plumbers play a key role in home energy upgrades (e.g. installation of sustainable heat pumps) and demand for plumbers, particularly those with skills and expertise in water, waste water, and energy efficient systems, will be in demand.
Carpenters & joiners Skills shortage: Carpenters	Employment has fluctuated over the five-year period for carpenters and joiners; employment declined by 1,700 persons in 2024, returning to 2019 levels. Despite this, demand is evident. There was a large volume of vacancy posts notified through DSP Jobs Ireland with shuttering carpenters accounting for a significant share. The number of employment permits (for carpenters including shuttering) has been increasing annually since 2021 and carpenters (including shuttering) also appeared in the Recruitment Agency Survey as being difficult-to-source. In 2024, at 771, the number of new carpentry and joinery apprentice registrations was 8% higher than in 2023 and 29% higher than 2019 pre-COVID levels (at 597). The number of carpentry/joinery level 6 awards has also increased, from 148 in 2019 to 397 in 2023. The lack of employment growth may suggest that employers have been unable to find suitable candidates in the available labour market. MMC adoption may see a dampening of demand for these occupations in the long-term.
Painters & decorators	Employment levels have remained stable since 2022 for painters/decorators. The share of non-Irish citizens was above the national average. A small number of employment permits were issued for painters (including industrial and spray) with spray painters appearing frequently in the DSP Jobs Ireland data; relevant experience rather than qualifications was the main pre-requisite for both the employment permits and vacancies. Although demand for painters in housebuilding activities may decline with increased use of MMC, job opportunities will likely continue to arise for home maintenance activity and in industrial settings.
Other construction trades (e.g. construction supervisors, floorers, glaziers, roofers)	Although employment grew strongly in 2022 and 2023, it declined by 800 persons in 2024. There was a large volume of vacancy posts on DSP Jobs Ireland in 2024 primarily for steel fabricators/fixers, but also for construction supervisors/forepersons, floor and wall tilers, roofers, and glaziers. Online job ads related mainly to tilers and steel erectors. The number of new employment permits issued increased since 2023; the main job roles included steel fixers, tilers, floorers and window fitters. Increased demand in the short-term for roofers and glaziers for retrofitting activities may be dampened with more off-site construction activities.
Construction operatives & elementary Shortage: Inconclusive	Employment numbers in 2024 returned to 2019 levels for this occupation. Despite the recent decline in employment, the high number of recent job hires indicate that job churn is a factor. There was a relatively large volume of vacancy posts on DSP Jobs Ireland, primarily for scaffolders with a smaller share for concrete workers, insulation installers/fitters and groundworkers. The small number of employment permits issued in 2023 were mainly for scaffolders. The Recruitment Agency identified difficult-to-fill vacancies for banksman, scaffolders, pipe layers and general labourers. Between 2023 and 2024, the number of new scaffolding apprentice registrations increased from 18 to 48. Although issues with recruiting scaffolders in particular is evident, the numbers employed are not large enough to determine the extent to which supply meets demand, with increased house building activity likely to accentuate any issues currently being experienced.