Construction Sector Skills Gap and Training Needs Survey

In November 2012 a survey was carried out to identify skills gaps and training needs for the local construction sector. This survey was the first sector specific survey undertaken by Skills Guernsey. It is planned that a series of training needs analysis for other sectors will be undertaken throughout 2013.

The survey provided an opportunity for feedback on current training gaps, but also on how changes in technology, the economy and regulation might impact on skills in the future.

Contacts in the building trades, professional services, specialised trades and retail and wholesale distribution were approached to complete the questionnaire. Responses from about 10% of all companies (about 40 in total) in this sector were received, and the sample remained representative.

Key findings from the respondents to this survey include:

**Commitment to training:**
- 81% invest in trade and professional skills training
- 60% invest in management and personal development training
- 51% invest in existing staff as well as new starters
- 27% carry out training needs analysis for their companies

**How training is provided**
- 30% of training is done on the job
- 32% of training is done off island
- 29% of training is done through local training providers and manufacturers representatives

**Employment from outside the Bailiwick**
- 29% of respondents said they regularly employ people from outside the Bailiwick and of these:
  - 8.3% said it is more cost effective
  - 75% said we can’t find people with the right skills locally
  - 41.7% said we can’t find enough people locally for the size of our projects

**Identified Skills Gaps**
The feedback indicates that currently, the majority of gaps are within the specialist technical skills and include:

- Building services and structural engineering
- Renewable energy specialists
- Electrical & mechanical engineers
- IT
- Management & administration
- Architectural
- BIM technologies
- Consulting geotechnical engineers
- Draughtsmen
- Heavy plant operators
- Welding & fabrication

**Impact of advances in technology**
- 39% of respondents said that advances in technology were creating a need for new skills and training now
- 34% said this would become an issue in the future
• 42% of respondents said they were aware of new regulations that would create the need for new skills and training
• 43% of respondents said changes in the market were creating the need for new skills and training

Additional comments:

• There should be more encouragement for school leavers to join the construction industry
• Technical engineering skills are required for ‘Green Technology’
• There should be encouragement for individuals and companies to do more training
• The States should provide more support for this industry

Skills Guernsey response

General observations:

• It is evident from the analysis that the construction sector is a vibrant sector that recognises the skills challenges that it faces. It is clear that the sector is very diverse, especially for a small community such as the Bailiwick of Guernsey. This presents challenges in terms of the breadth of potential of potential training needs versus critical mass to make courses financially viable.

• Some of the themes identified recur across other sectors for example:
  1. A requirement to respond to changes in their industry, created by external issues such as new technologies and regulation
  2. A recognition that there is a need to top-up local staff with specialist non-local labour
  3. A need to work more closely with the community especially potential, new recruits to the sector such as school leavers, to ensure that they are aware of the opportunities offered by the construction sector

Action arising from the training needs analysis

The findings of the training needs analysis were presented to a representative group of employers from the Construction Sector and the following action has been determined:

• The development of initiatives to showcase careers in construction and to develop a ‘roadmap’ that promotes the variety of career options that are provided by the local sector. This will be undertaken in liaison with the CIF Education Sub-group; an organisation that has been established to coordinate and improve the development of construction skills (professional & technical) within the industry
• Guernsey College of Further Education will, in partnership with construction sector representatives, review some aspects of the College provision especially in areas of higher, specialist qualification
• The Construction Sector will be fully involved in the Apprenticeship scheme review, to be undertaken by Skills Guernsey chairperson, Elaine Monkhouse. The review has been commissioned to ensure that the scheme continues to meet the needs of employers and the changing economy.

The findings will be placed on the Skills Guernsey website and will be distributed to employer organisations associated with the construction sector.