



# The UK Trade Skills Index **2023**

## Summary

# Background

Get In is the new campaign from Checkatrade.com. Being launched in early 2023, its key aims are to highlight the vast skills gap in UK construction, while also encouraging more young people to consider trades apprenticeships as a viable career path. We want to connect 16-25 year olds with brilliant job opportunities across the UK, helping kick-start careers in the trades.

This is the third annual UK Trade Skills Index report, and this year Checkatrade.com has worked with independent macro-economic research firm Capital Economics to examine the sector's skills gap; the shortfall in apprentices and young people entering the trades; and its contribution to the UK economy.

We were also interested in finding out more about the economic forecast for the sector, including the future impact it could have on the wider economy.



# Key findings

- The UK needs 937,000 new recruits in trades and construction over the next 10 years
- Of these, 244,000 need to be qualified apprentices who have completed their training - 200,000 in the 11 trades we've identified
- Despite an anticipated short-term fall in construction output, the UK must ramp up the number of completed construction apprentices by around 25,000 per year to meet demand and avoid the skills gap worsening – that's an increase of 34% above the current levels
- The skills gap is being exacerbated by an ageing workforce and exodus of EU workers
- We need to be ready for a recovery of the UK economy, expected to happen in 2024
- We're expecting a 36% fall in housing starts in 2023, the biggest fall since 2008, and house prices to drop by around 10.5% in 2023 – before growing again in 2024. This means the government is unlikely to hit its target for building 300,000 new homes per year by the middle of the decade
- Decarbonisation and transitioning homes to net zero will power the home improvement and repair market – it is expected to grow by 1.5% per year from 2023 to 2027, and 1.9% from 2028 to 2032
- The UK has seen a sharp rise of skills shortages across construction – from 29% in Q1 2021 to 55% in Q4 2021 and these have persisted through 2022
- Widespread shortages exist particularly among plumbers, bricklayers, carpenters and electricians
- Construction and trade vacancies at record highs
- Since 2017/18 the number of completed construction apprenticeships has fallen by around 11% per year
- We saw a spike in apprenticeship starts when government incentives were in place – but we expect this to drop again following their removal
- In 2020/2021, almost half of the apprenticeship levy was unspent – amounting to around £1.3bn

# Conclusions

The UK Trade Skills Index 2023 report has examined in depth the alarming skills gap engulfing the construction sector over the coming 10 years and has made clear that urgent action is needed.

Checkatrade.com concludes there needs to be a concerted joint effort from the Government, industry, and training and careers services to tackle the deepening skills crisis.

Through Get In and other Checkatrade.com-led campaigns, we hope to contribute at least part of the solution to this problem.

**Our Get In campaign will aim to get thousands more young people aged 16 to 25 into trades careers through apprenticeships. It will seek to capture young people's CVs and connect them to opportunities within Checkatrade.com's membership base, as well as large trade employers and SME trade businesses.**

**We hope to make waves in terms of tackling this challenge, working with the industry, government and regional decision makers to take action and inspire a new generation of tradespeople into the construction industry.**





# Questions?

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