

# **Building Standards Year of Young People: Attracting young people into a career in Building Standards**

**June 2019**

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1	Executive Summary	5
2	Introduction	8
3	Job roles, Entry Routes and Requirements	10
4	Careers Awareness, Information and Advice	22
5	Force Map	35
6	Strategic Considerations	41
7	Conclusion	46
8	Appendix 1 – Department Structures	48
9	Appendix 2 – Job adverts	50
10	Appendix 3 – Available course and achievement rates	54
11	Appendix 4 – Young People Survey	58

## Tables

Table 1: Examples of entry requirements for selected Building Standards roles .....	13
Table 2: Construction-related courses available in Scotland of most relevance to Building Standards .....	54
Table 3: Total graduates from Scottish Universities in architecture, building and planning courses 2015/16 .....	55
Table 4: Graduates from Scottish Universities on architecture, building and planning courses (published 2014/15 and 2015/16), employment outcomes.....	55
Table 5: Attainment statistics for construction-related courses (SCQF Level 3-7) 2017 and 2018.....	57

## Figures

Figure 1: Knowledge and understanding of construction-related careers .....	22
Figure 2: Likelihood of respondents considering construction-related careers .....	24
Figure 3: Aspects of a building standards career that respondents would enjoy .....	25
Figure 4: The most important factor influencing young peoples' interest in construction-related careers.....	27
Figure 5: The types of sources used when considering future career options .....	28
Figure 6: Types of information young people want to know about jobs .....	29
Figure 7: Career information channels preferred by young people .....	30
Figure 8: Most important factors when accessing career information .....	31
Figure 9: Awareness (1) and use (2) of career websites.....	32
Figure 10: Building Standards Department structure – Stirling Council .....	48
Figure 11: Building Standards Department structure - East Ayrshire Council.....	49
Figure 12: Current status .....	58
Figure 13: Home region of respondents.....	59
Figure 14: Gender of respondents .....	59
Figure 15: Age of respondents.....	60
Figure 16: Type of qualification studied by respondents .....	60
Figure 17: Subjects studied by respondents .....	61
Figure 18: Respondents' future plans .....	61
Figure 19: Factors influencing decisions on which subjects to study further.....	62
Figure 20: Intention to pursue a career in a related subject.....	62
Figure 21: Most and least attractive types of organisations to work for .....	63

# 1 Executive Summary

## **Building Standards in Scotland**

In Scotland, all 32 local authorities (LAs) are appointed by Scottish Ministers as verifiers of the Building standards system for their own geographical areas. The role of the verifier is to protect the public interest by undertaking independent checks of buildings at design stage and construction stage.

The ageing workforce in Building standards, in combination with few young people entering the profession, poses a significant challenge to the succession planning in the sector. Resulting staff shortages in turn prompt LAs to compete for existing, experienced staff.

It has been estimated by Local Authority Building Standards Scotland (LABSS) – which represents all LA building standards in Scotland – that around 150 replacement staff<sup>1</sup> are required by Building Standards Departments in the next five years.

The LAs have found individual ways to recruit candidates with the right skills for lower-level vacancies, while confirming that the recruitment of experienced building standards specialists remains a crucial challenge. These practices thus do not represent a guarantee that the problem of an ageing workforce will be sustainably solved. The problem of not enough young people entering the profession therefore continues to persist.

## **The importance of young people for the building standards profession**

This report, commissioned by the Scottish Government Building Standard Division, presents reasons why so few young people are entering the profession – chief amongst them being lack of awareness of building standards roles. It provides information on the influences on young people in Scotland when choosing a career and preferred sources and means of communication of career information. In addition, the report outlines positive and negative forces influencing the public profile and promotion of the profession amongst young people.

The research shows that the reasons as to why insufficient numbers of young people enter the profession are manifold.

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<sup>1</sup> This figure was cited in a roundtable stakeholder discussion conducted for this research.

### **Little awareness of building standards**

The survey of young people conducted for this research confirmed that the profession, despite having come into increased public focus due to the Grenfell Tower tragedy and the Oxfords School incident, is poorly understood by young people and is not seen as a career pathway. Young people responded positively to the generic skills and knowledge requirements of the building standards profession such as communication, problem solving or report writing. However, they were less sure about more technical aspects, including inspecting buildings or examining drawings.

To further investigate this result, young people studying building standards related qualifications were interviewed. When presented with an outline of tasks of a Building Standards Verifier, interviewees were intrigued by the public safety and environmental regulation aspects of the profession and felt that a related career in the public sector would be interesting. On the other hand, they were daunted by the enforcement of building regulations, which was perceived as involving difficult communication situations and they had difficulty distinguishing the on-site and off-site aspects of the role.

### **No clear pathway or specific information for young people**

Research of pathways and vacancies in Building Standards Departments in LAs has confirmed that there is no clear pathway in terms of qualification or work experience that directly points, or leads, to a career in the profession. Indeed, some of the most commonly used career websites do not make reference to building standards when presenting related professions such as surveyor or civil engineer. Similarly, we did not find any evidence of universities that offer related degrees showing building standards among their graduates' potential destinations. The research, however, confirmed that providing more related information is only one of many factors to attract young people. To establish further factors, the research analysed the influences, priorities, preferred information and communication channels that inform young people career choices.

### **Career Information needed by young people**

When considering future career options, young people mainly turn to their families and friends. Across all age groups, the majority of young people confirmed that advice from parents/family and friends, open days, career websites and one-on-one coaching are their preferred sources. The interviews of young people studying related disciplines also corroborated the important influence of family and friends in making related decisions.

When considering a career, the qualifications and skills needed, as well as salary offered, were considered most important by the respondents. In terms of gender, females prioritise career progression over salary as the third most important factor, while males value salary over skills and knowledge.

The preferred career information channels for young people are social media, electronic means and open days. When accessing information, young people want information

that is up to date, detailed and provided in real-time.

A related survey of career advisers not only confirmed but also elaborated these findings. Career advisers emphasised that information communicated and presented in such ways should include case studies and success stories as well as outlining a clear set of skills and qualifications needed. In addition, career prospects and job satisfaction play a crucial role.

### **Towards a career engagement strategy**

Building on these results, this report provides a set of strategic considerations to engage more young people and to attract them into a career in building standards using both an “inside” and an “outside” track.

#### **Inside track**

The collaboration between relevant stakeholders, namely providers of career information such as Skills Development Scotland, employers (LAs) and the Scottish Government (Building Standards Division) has to be continued and expanded to ensure effective succession planning in the building standards profession and to attract young people. Furthermore, existing career information on prevalent careers websites should cross-reference information and related sources on careers in building standards. The opportunity should also be taken to engage directly with careers advisers to equip them with tailored information to impart to young people face-to-face.

#### **Outside track**

The use of multiple forms of communication (including social media and online tools) is necessary to reach the widest possible audience of young people in a cost-effective way. This is also a consideration for reaching the main influencers of young people, including family and friends. In terms of information, salaries, prospects and the skills/qualifications-needed are most important.

### 2.1. About building standards verification in Scotland

The building standards system in Scotland is established by the Building (Scotland) Act 2003. The system is intended to ensure that building work on both new and existing buildings results in buildings that meet reasonable standards.

In Scotland, all 32 LAs are appointed by Scottish Ministers as verifiers of the building standards system for their own geographical areas. The role of the verifier is to protect the public interest by undertaking independent checks of buildings at design stage and construction stage. This includes checking of applications for building warrants; carrying out inspections of construction activities through the process of 'Reasonable Inquiry'; and accepting or rejecting completion certificates.

All building standards services in Scotland work to a national Operating Framework and Performance Framework. The Performance Framework comprises three main themes: 1) Professional Expertise and Technical Processes; 2) Quality Customer Experience, and 3) Operational and Financial Efficiency. Under theme 1, verifiers are tasked to ensure the necessary professional expertise to efficiently and effectively undertake all technical aspects of building standards verification and have contingencies for when this expertise is not available in-house.

### 2.2. The workforce bottle-neck

According to Local Authority Building Standards Scotland (LABSS), the membership organisation for building standards services, the current building standards workforce in Scotland comprises approximately 500 professional surveyors, inspectors and support staff<sup>2</sup>. A 2018 LABSS survey of all 32 Scottish LAs confirmed that the workforce is highly experienced and educated, with 46% having worked in the profession for more than 20 years and 32% for between 10 and 19 years. Moreover, around half (49%) of building standards professionals are reported to be at least degree-qualified and 97% hold an HNC qualification or above<sup>3</sup>.

However, local building standards services appear to be facing succession-planning issues and a lack of young people entering the profession. Firstly, the LABSS survey highlighted the issue of an aging workforce, with just over a quarter (26%) of staff aged over 55. Secondly, the number of full-time equivalent (FTE) positions has declined in recent years and the majority of LAs believe funding pressures are making it difficult to

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<sup>2</sup> Source: Labss.org

<sup>3</sup> LABSS (2018), Synopsis Report re Survey 3 – Training Needs and Analysis

recruit sufficient staff to deliver an optimum level of service<sup>4</sup>.

### **2.3. Research objectives and methodology**

To tackle the burgeoning challenge, the aim of the research was to investigate why young people are not choosing a career in building standards and to identify how best to encourage them to do so. Specific objectives for the work are to:

1. review the current provision of education and training courses related to building standards in Scotland. This is covered sections in 3 and 4 as well as Appendix 3.
2. engage with young people to understand their priorities when considering further education and potential careers, what understanding they have of building standards at different stages of education and to identify if there are any blockages to entering the profession. This is covered in sections 3, 4 and 5.
3. identify the level of education and training required by LA building standards departments when employing new staff, and the support that they offer. This is covered in section 3.
4. determine the preferred communication tools (e.g. digital, social media, open day, career advisors, career fair) to encourage and attract young people into the building standards service in Scotland; This is covered in sections 4 and 5.
5. develop an innovative careers engagement strategy for careers in building standards and develop examples of materials/mediums that can be used in schools, colleges and universities to best provide an adaptable and long-term solution. This is presented in a separate document.
6. consider a range of options to manage the on-going delivery of the building standards careers engagement strategy. This is presented in a separate document.

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<sup>4</sup> LABSS (2018), Synopsis Report - Survey 2 – Resources

## 3 Job roles, Entry Routes and Requirements

### 3.1 Job roles and entry routes

To build a picture of job roles and entry routes into the profession and related disciplines, we undertook the following activities:

- desk research to draw out existing insights into recruitment practices in Building Standards Departments and evidence of roles and structures;
- analysed the content of job websites frequently visited by young people to review the profiles of: Building Control Officer (My World of Work), Building Standards Surveyor (Planit), Building Control Surveyor (Prospect UK), Building Control Officer (UCAS), Building Control Surveyor (Go Construct);
- analysed the vacancies of seven LA building standards services in terms of required qualifications, levels of experience and transferable skills viewed as essential and/or desirable;
- interviewed six LAs by telephone to investigate pathways into the profession and recruitment from the local practitioner perspective;
- facilitated a dedicated stakeholder roundtable to discuss pathways into the profession, related challenges, and the proposed building standards-specific graduate apprenticeship.

Job roles and levels within building standards tend to vary between LAs - mainly due to their size, their geographical location (e.g. rural vs urban), and local economic activity - and are not set to a national template.

Most staff are trained and qualified Building Surveyors with a key aspect of their role being to assess building warrant applications. Based on evidence gathered through telephone interviews with LAs and research of vacancies, the role of Inspector generally involves more junior responsibilities in field-based inspection and assisting in building warrant plan assessment for on-going building work. In terms of qualifications required, we found evidence that a Building Standards Inspector is expected to have been educated to SVQ Level 3/HNC level in a relevant discipline and to have construction or building-related professional experience. In contrast, Building Standards Officers can have decision-making responsibilities including assessing and approving building warrant applications and are expected to hold a degree in a related discipline and ideally be accredited with either RICS, CABE or CIOB. Job grades and levels typically

range from trainees and building standards inspectors and officers, through to senior officers (with chartered professional status), team leaders and managers.

The following entry pathways into the building standards profession are currently on offer by LAs and have been recently advertised. Each has its own range of entry qualifications (see section 3.2) required and these can differ according to LA. There is no set pathway into the profession: the following list of example job roles presents the various pathways available based on research of vacancies and telephone interviews:

- Trainee Quantity Surveyor
- Trainee Architectural Officer
- Modern Apprenticeship (MA) in Quantity Surveying/Civil Engineering/Structural Engineering/Business & Administration
- Building Standards Technician
- Graduate Building Standards Officer
- Graduate Building Standards Surveyor
- Building Standards Surveyor
- Building Standards Inspector

The diagrams in Appendix 1 illustrate typical organisational structures of LA Building Standards Departments.

## 3.2 Entry requirements

### Evidence from existing research

Pye Tait Consulting's 2016 research<sup>5</sup> identified that new recruits into building standards are typically required to possess at least a degree level qualification in a relevant discipline, such as building surveying, building engineering or architecture. Chartered professional status (e.g. RICS, CABE or CIOB) was seen as 'desirable' for new recruits, supported by experience in the field where possible. The same research found that new recruits and trainees are encouraged to work towards chartered professional qualifications where not already held. Furthermore, while some LAs would consider a candidate straight from university and be willing to mentor them to reach chartered status, others would not be willing to make that commitment due to resource pressures such as cost and time.

Not all long-standing staff appear to possess chartered professional status and LAs said they did not pursue this for two reasons:

- some staff were reluctant to take on this additional responsibility late on in their careers; and
- the attainment of professional status among these staff was unlikely to add additional value or lead to additional income.

### Evidence from the review of job advertisements and careers information

During the roundtable conducted for this current research, participants confirmed that the entry requirements in the profession had changed.

Due to technological progress, further regulatory requirements and evolving building standards legislation, the profession requires more specialist knowledge and skills. Traditional entry routes via the construction trade without further dedicated training in building standards are not considered adequate by some building standards stakeholders. The ageing workforce creates a challenge in the retention of knowledge, an essential feature of ensuring the highest quality in building standards services.

Job advertisements for experienced building standards professionals (analysed for this study) emphasise experience of work in building standards in an LA and/or the construction sector as well as experience of buildings and building site inspections.

Table 1 shows the essential requirements (qualifications and experience) for four roles recently advertised by LAs. Whilst, for the Graduate role listed, experience of working in a building standards service is not 'essential', it is stated as being 'desirable'. It is

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<sup>5</sup> The Scottish Government (2016) 'Evaluation of the performance of local authorities in their role as building standards verifiers'

essential for the other roles.

Table 1: Examples of entry requirements for selected building standards roles<sup>6</sup>

Role	Qualifications and experience required (essential)
<b>Building Standards Inspector</b>	SVQ Level 3/HNC  A moderate level of experience in the construction industry  A moderate level of experience in local authority building standards
<b>Building Standards Technician</b>	HNC and/or have previous experience of working in a planning or building standards environment and be able to demonstrate equivalent knowledge, skills and competencies gained through relevant experience.
<b>Graduate Building Standards Surveyor</b>	BSc in Building Surveying or related degree  Proficient in use of Microsoft Office packages including word, excel, access and outlook  Experience of recording and entry of casework data onto IT systems  Report writing experience

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<sup>6</sup> These have been taken from job adverts

## Building Standards Surveyor

Detailed knowledge and skill in all aspects of the Building (Scotland) Act, associated legislation and the detail and application of the Building Standards, covering subjects as diverse as structure, environment, safety, noise, energy and sustainability.

The continually changing nature of this legislation requires continuing CPD to ensure an up to date knowledge is maintained.

Experience in designing and/or checking building construction projects for compliance with the building regulations and mandatory standards

Familiar with but not experts in, Health and Safety legislation, and be able to identify, assess and understand the implications of unauthorised building works on public safety.

Communicating verbally and in writing in a concise and factual manner in relation to any matters, including decisions made, to architects, engineers, builders and other building professionals and to members of the public.

Inspecting building work on site in order to ensure compliance with approved plans and identify where rectification is required.

Possess corporate membership of the RICS, CABE CIOB or equivalent.

Extensive professional experience of all aspects of design and construction.

Good verbal and oral communication skills and be able to write technical reports in a manner understood by both professional and lay persons.

Highly developed numeracy and IT skills.

Ability to inspect a site or building to determine the level of protective works required to ensure the safety of the public.

Valid Driving Licence

The ability to inspect work on site (approx. 2 or 3 days per week).

The ability to climb ladders or scaffolding and inspect within confined spaces where necessary (all with appropriate Health and Safety controls)

Ability to assess plans for compliance from a computer screen

	Ability to interpret plans whilst on site from a hand-held tablet device
<b>Principal Building Standards Officer</b>	<p>Degree in a relevant discipline or equivalent, appropriate experience.</p> <p>Chartered member of an institute representing the professional disciplines covered by the service.</p> <p>Significant relevant professional experience, including supervisory/management experience.</p> <p>Proven leadership ability.</p> <p>High order written and verbal communication skills.</p> <p>Highly developed inter-personal skills.</p> <p>Dependable financial management ability.</p> <p>In-depth knowledge of current and proposed legislation and best practice relevant to the responsibilities of the service.</p> <p>Good information technology skills.</p>

Knowledge and skills that are most commonly sought, include:

- Knowledge of building standards regulations and analytical skills
- Teamwork
- Attention to detail
- Problem-solving
- Report writing
- IT
- Communication/interpersonal skills.

The job-profile for “Building Control Officer” on the Scottish portal My World of Work (operated by Skills Development Scotland (SDS) and widely used by young people), also lists communication, teamwork and problem-solving as some of the top skills required as well as ‘explaining things’, ‘persuading people’ and ‘being tactful’. It also highlights ‘using computers’ as a key skill<sup>7</sup>.

Similarly, for the role of ‘Building Standards Surveyor’, the website Planit (run by a

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<sup>7</sup> From My World of Work ‘Building Control Officer’, available here: <https://www.myworldofwork.co.uk/my-career-options/job-profiles/building-control-officer>

consortium of Scottish LAs) lists communications skills, problem-solving and good observation skills, but also adds more technical skills such as the ability to understand technical drawings and knowledge of building regulations<sup>8</sup>. It also includes softer skills and characteristics of 'good observation and good judgement' and 'assertiveness for making unpopular decisions'.

Likewise, the UK-wide UCAS and Prospect websites emphasise communication and problem-solving skills as well as IT skills and technical knowledge for the job profiles of Building Control Officer/Surveyor<sup>9</sup>. There is also information about the role of 'Building Control Surveyor' on the CITB website 'Go Construct'. This profile focuses more on the technical nature of the role, rather than the softer skills or attributes required and lists the following aspects of the role (amongst others):

- 'Work on the planning and construction phases of a variety of projects, from small house extensions to major city developments'
- 'Called in when buildings have been damaged by fire or bad weather'
- 'Inspect any unsafe building and recommend whether it can be repaired or should be demolished'<sup>10</sup>

According to the LA Building Standards Departments spoken to as part of this research, usually a relevant degree in a building-related discipline is required, although on one occasion, relevant experience and the readiness to study towards a relevant degree were accepted. Studying towards, or having obtained, RICS chartered status was deemed desirable or essential by several LAs<sup>11</sup>. One LA has transferred a young person on an MA in Business and Administration to their Building Standards Department, from elsewhere in the Authority. Apart from assisting the department in the preparation of building warrants and other administrative tasks, the apprentice has been shadowing Building Standards Officers in their work on site visits and is attending training in site-safety and working at height.

Another LA also uses MAs as the preferred route to hire new talent. In a telephone interview, the LA confirmed that young people are very attracted to completing an MA while employed in the public sector, but that young people are less concerned about the MA discipline. In cases where there is no suitable MA framework on offer, the LA described advertising for graduates instead. These examples not only confirm the value

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<sup>8</sup> From Planit Plus, 'Building Standards Surveyor', available here: <https://www.planitplus.net/JobProfiles/View/61>

<sup>9</sup> From UCAS 'Building control officer', available here: <https://www.ucas.com/ucas/after-gcses/find-career-ideas/explore-jobs/job-profile/building-control-officer>; <https://www.prospects.ac.uk/job-profiles/building-control-surveyor>

<sup>10</sup> From 'Go Construct', 'Building Control Surveyor', available here: <https://www.goconstruct.org/learn-about-construction/find-the-role-for-you/career-explorer/building-control-surveyor/>

<sup>11</sup> LAs tend to look for RICS accreditation or equivalent, one job description reviewed for this research, also lists CABE and CIOB (see Table 1)

of MAs in recruiting young talent, but also show that they may be flexibly applied to enable the entry of young people into the building standards profession.

Some of the descriptions on relevant career websites corroborate this profile, though not specifically addressing building standards. In this context, the LABSS website lists building standards vacancies in LAs, but does not provide information on entry routes into the profession, but rather focuses on a description of the nature of services that Building Standards Departments in LAs provide.

All websites emphasise the need for a degree in a related discipline and the potential requirement of obtaining chartered status from RICS, or equivalent body. The analysed job vacancies in LAs equally listed chartered status as an essential or desirable feature of the preferred candidate profiles (see section 3.3. for further information on more junior roles).

Please see appendix 2 for examples of job adverts.

To summarise, information on the skills required in the building standards profession is already provided indirectly by well-used web-portals and the LAs themselves when recruiting for experienced and entry level positions.

## **Relevant qualifications**

The desk review undertaken for this research involved scoping out and identifying the availability of relevant qualifications, as stipulated by LAs in their job descriptions. In many cases, as highlighted above, these descriptions include the requirement for a construction-related degree; others require a relevant qualification (not necessarily degree-level) such as an HNC/D, plus relevant experience.

The desk review identified a total of 24 relevant undergraduate degrees in Scotland, in directly relevant fields of Construction Management, Surveying, Architecture and Architectural Technology. These are available at eight institutions:

- Edinburgh Napier
- Glasgow Caledonian University
- Glasgow School of Art
- Heriot-Watt University
- Robert Gordon University
- University of Dundee
- University of Edinburgh
- University of the Highlands and Islands

In addition, there are listings of 22 HNC/HND offerings at various colleges across Scotland (Table 2 in Appendix 3).

Our review found no specific mention of building standards in the relevant course-related information.

Data showing the numbers of graduates from each institution at course level are not available. However, figures from the Higher Education Statistics Agency (HESA) show that in 2015/16 (latest figures) there were over 2,000 qualifications obtained from architecture, building and planning courses in Scotland. Of these, 910 were first degrees and 135 were HNC/Ds (Table 3 in Appendix 3). There is some data available on employment outcomes of graduates from each Scottish University on building, architecture and planning courses, however the most up to date figures are from 2015/16 (Table 4 in Appendix 3).

At the lower level, there is a pipeline of graduates from various construction-related courses at SCQF Levels 4 to 6, including Skills for Work, National Progression Awards, and National Certificates. In 2018 there were just over 1,500 attainments on these courses (Table 5 in Appendix 3).

### **3.3 Recruitment and training challenges**

Most LAs interviewed for this research seek candidates with a construction and building related qualification. However, the profession requires a specific blend of building regulations knowledge and/or related experience in checking compliance with these that is appropriate to the responsibilities of different junior, mid-level and senior roles. The issue is exacerbated by the lack of available courses specific enough to the profession, as reported by the LABSS research.

Recruitment methods and career pathways in building standards do not appear to be nationally consistent or harmonised, with each LA setting and following its own approaches. Pye Tait Consulting's 2016 research for the Building Standards Division (BSD) identified that recruitment challenges tend to prevail in more rural areas, with instances of roles being re-advertised to ensure vacancies are only filled by candidates with the required mix of qualifications and/or experience<sup>12</sup>.

Based on research into vacancies (see above), it seems that LAs recruit on the basis of perceived local needs and different local interpretations of the nature of the building standards roles. Several interviewed LAs employ Building Inspectors as non-graduate entry level positions. Other recruitment approaches include hiring experienced workers with an HNC and construction-related work experience (e.g. builders or electricians). Most LAs have shadowing systems in place to provide on the job mentoring and training.

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<sup>12</sup> The Scottish Government (2016) 'Evaluation of the performance of local authorities in their role as building standards verifiers'

Finding and recruiting young people is not seen as especially difficult in itself, for example LAs say they cooperate with local universities and schools, offer related MAs in quantity surveying or civil engineering, or appoint to non-specialist entry level positions. With respect to entry-level positions, LAs recruit via a number of different routes, including direct entry from university, hiring experienced workers from other built-environment roles, as well as school leavers into MAs in relevant construction-related disciplines.

Depending on the LA, there are then opportunities to progress and specialise. Specialist areas include:

- Modern building technologies
- Digital technologies
- Renewable energies
- Fire safety and protection
- Finance and budgeting
- Residential, commercial, or industrial buildings

It has to be noted that the use of these pathways and approaches depends on the respective LA. The organigrams of the LAs that advertised for Building Standard Surveyors or Officers included between one and two FTE Graduate Building Standards Surveyor positions as well as positions for Building Standards Inspectors (Appendix 1).

However, a key challenge appears to be recruiting professionals with relevant experience and skills, with some LAs saying that they “poach” each other’s staff to get the experience they need.

## **Graduate Apprenticeship**

According to a 2018 LABSS survey of 195 of its members<sup>13</sup>, existing training courses in Scotland are not specific enough to building standards. It is understood that a new Graduate Apprenticeship in Building Standards is set to be introduced<sup>14</sup>. Designed in cooperation with Glasgow Caledonian and Edinburgh Napier universities, the programme aims to provide a degree in combination with on the job-training in a LA over four years.

The four-year Graduate Apprenticeship (GA) in Building Standards is a proposed future

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<sup>13</sup> Respondents were asked about training needs and requirements, including LAs’ confidence in knowledge and qualifications

<sup>14</sup> Framework document for Construction and the Built Environment at SCQF level 10, January 2019, available here: <https://www.labss.org/sites/default/files/content/cbe-framework-level-10-final.pdf>

course that aims to help close the apparent gap of a clear pathway into the building standards profession. The basis of the programme is to hire a school or college leaver and train them in the profession, on the job, as an apprentice as well as giving them the time to complete a related degree at an accredited university.

Whilst the GA was welcomed by contributors to this research with some enthusiasm as it is putting building standards on the education 'map', some of the LAs are somewhat sceptical about components of it: notably the length of the graduate apprenticeship, and the need for a specific building standards route.

Others suggested a related HNC/HND qualification followed by training on the job. Alternatively, one interviewed LA proposed, as a substitute to gaining a specific degree in building standards, construction professionals and those with related qualifications could attend a dedicated course of no longer than 12 months (see below).

### **Recruiting experienced workers and graduates**

Some LAs have established ways to manage succession planning and have not faced problems hiring young people locally. These LAs often focused on hiring workers with either construction experience or from related trades such as Electrician into Building Inspector positions, with the prospect of progression to Building Standards Officer or Surveyor.

Also, graduates from related disciplines such as surveying or architecture are regularly employed. In some areas, LAs are at an advantage, offering a higher graduate salary than the private sector.

### **Funding pressures**

The issues of financial pressure on the operations of building standards services in LAs and related succession planning challenges were widely confirmed at the roundtable, during telephone interviews for this research and at a BSD event on the Graduate Apprenticeship (27<sup>th</sup> March 2019).

Finding a suitable young person for an advertised role was not seen as a particular challenge, but rather securing the financial support for a position to be created and (re)filled is creating difficulties.

Overall, therefore, there appears to be a significant difference between succession needs and related planning as well as funding resources available. While vacancies designed for young people with a construction-related qualification and/or related experience and graduates from related fields seem to be relatively easy to fill. Conversely,

the reduction of FTE numbers in the building standards services, as the LABSS survey indicates, is a major factor for succession planning.

LAs telephoned also confirmed, as highlighted in the LABSS survey, that revenues generated by the building standards services are not fully re-invested in funding for full-time permanent roles and other related activities such as continued professional development. Rather, the funding needed to support a position may be drawn up from various elements of LA budget streams to create or re-fill a new position in building standards.

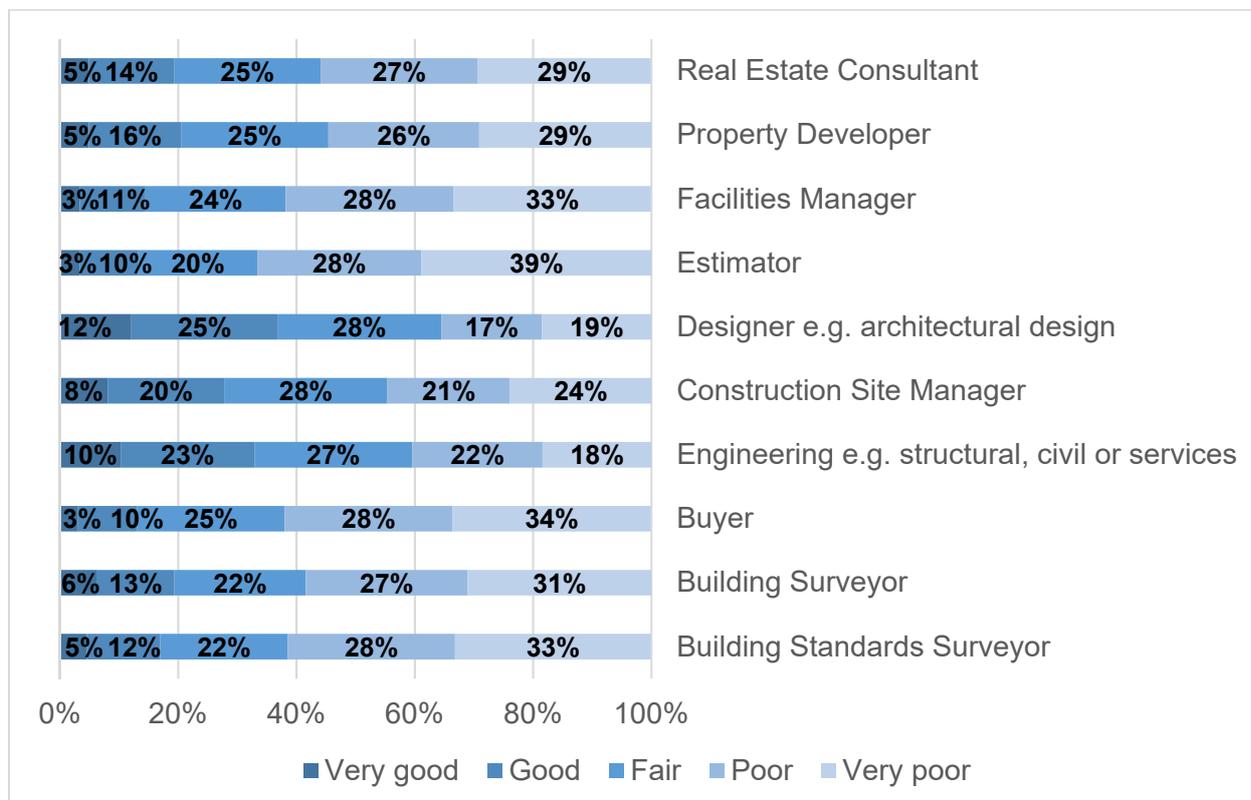
## 4 Careers Awareness, Information and Advice

During the course of the project, a total of 478 young people in Scotland between the age of 16-26 years participated in an online survey aiming to investigate reasons for the presently low recruitment levels of young people into the building standards profession. More information about the profile of survey respondents can be found in Appendix 4.

### 4.1. Awareness of the profession

Young people were asked their awareness of 10 different construction-related roles, including Business Standards Surveyor. Levels of awareness are fairly low across the board. In terms of the role of Building Standards Surveyor, just 17% suggest they have a 'good' or 'very good' understanding, compared with 61% who report a 'poor' or 'very poor' understanding (Figure 1).

Figure 1: Knowledge and understanding of construction-related careers



Base: 4,700 (multiple options could be selected)

In general, there is a widespread lack of awareness of the building standards profession among 16-18 year olds. Awareness and knowledge increases among 19-21 year olds as well as the 22+ groups, but few feel they have any meaningful or specialist

understanding. An analysis across gender leads to similar results. While males rank their knowledge relatively evenly between 'very poor', 'poor' and 'fair', the majority of female respondents rank their knowledge as either 'very poor' or 'poor' and generally are in substantially lower percentiles for 'fair' or 'good' knowledge.

This pattern can also be seen for the profession of Building Surveyor, with most females ranking their knowledge as 'very poor' or 'poor', while it is more evenly spread across, 'good', 'fair', 'poor' and 'very poor' among males. Considering age-groups, 16 and 17-18 year olds generally have 'very poor' or 'poor' knowledge, while the majority of 19-21 year olds as well as 22+ year olds have 'good' or 'very good' knowledge.

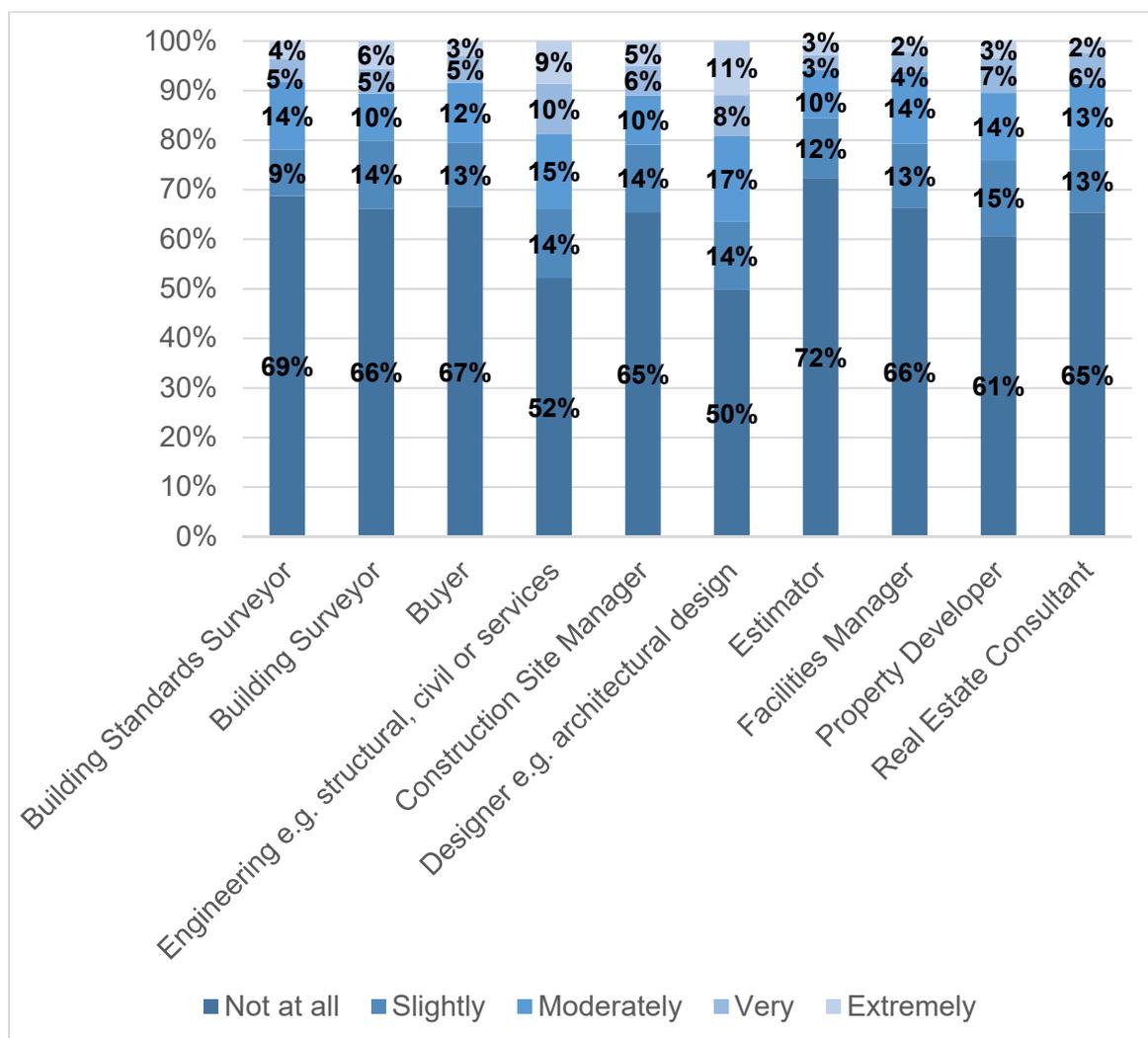
Young people were also asked about their likelihood of considering a career in each of the same 10 construction-related disciplines (Figure 2).

The roles respondents suggested they were most likely to consider were:

- Designer e.g. architectural design (19% extremely or very likely, vs 5% not at all)
- Engineering e.g. structural, civil or services ((19% extremely or very likely vs 52% not at all)

In contrast, 9% consider themselves either extremely or very likely to consider a career as a Building Standards Surveyor, compared to 69% who state 'not at all'.

Figure 2: Likelihood of respondents considering construction-related careers



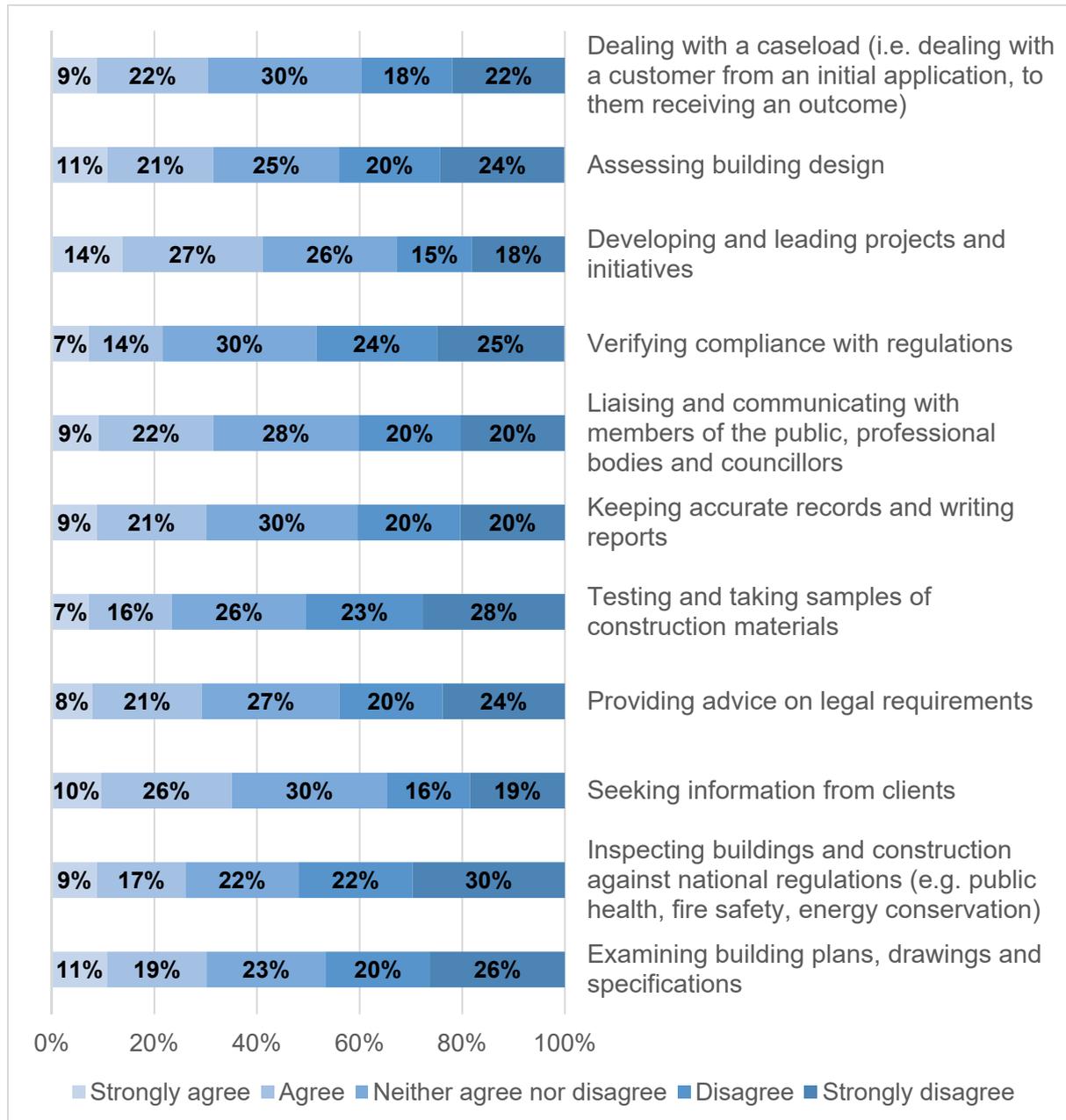
Base: 4,615 (multiple options could be selected)

The age group of 16 and 17-18 year olds is very unlikely (74% and 76% respectively) to take up a career in the building standards profession, while the group of 19-21 year olds is divided between ‘moderately likely’ (37%) and ‘not at all likely’ (30%). Among the 22+ group, 40% say they are ‘not at all likely’ to take up the profession, while the numbers of ‘moderately likely’ (20%) and ‘very likely’ (23%) are quite even. The survey went on to ask young people about the extent to which they felt they would enjoy various different aspects of a building standards career (Figure 3). The aspects agreed with most include:

- Developing and leading projects (41% agreeing)
- Seeking information from clients (36% agreeing)
- Dealing with a caseload (33% agreeing)
- Liaising and communicating with members of the public (32%)

The areas of ‘inspecting buildings and construction against national regulations’ and ‘verifying compliance with regulations’ are the areas that the highest numbers of respondents disagreed they would enjoy: 52% and 49%, respectively.

Figure 3: Aspects of a building standards career that respondents would enjoy



Base: 5116 (multiple options could be selected)

The thirteen young people (attending college or university), followed-up by interview for

this project, were all studying a building standards related subject<sup>15</sup> and responded well to the public safety aspect of the description of the profession. A general lack of awareness and promotion of the profession in schools was also confirmed.

On the other hand, expected salary levels and the inspection aspect did not prove to be appealing beyond those studying a related subject. It was felt that this may involve facing difficult communication situations:

“Personally, it does sound interesting, I'm passionate about the safety side of things but I know a lot of people on my course would say it sounds boring - they are more looking at the contracting side of things and are motivated more by the money. I'm aware the building standards side of things has more modest salaries which I think puts people off.”

Male university student, studying Building Surveying

*“...it is a job where you can't be bothered about people's feelings, the role is basically to find faults!”*

Male college student, doing an HNC in Construction Management

As both the job descriptions of the vacancies and career portals emphasise strong communication skills, this factor is of importance for the provision of career information and the formulation of a career engagement strategy.

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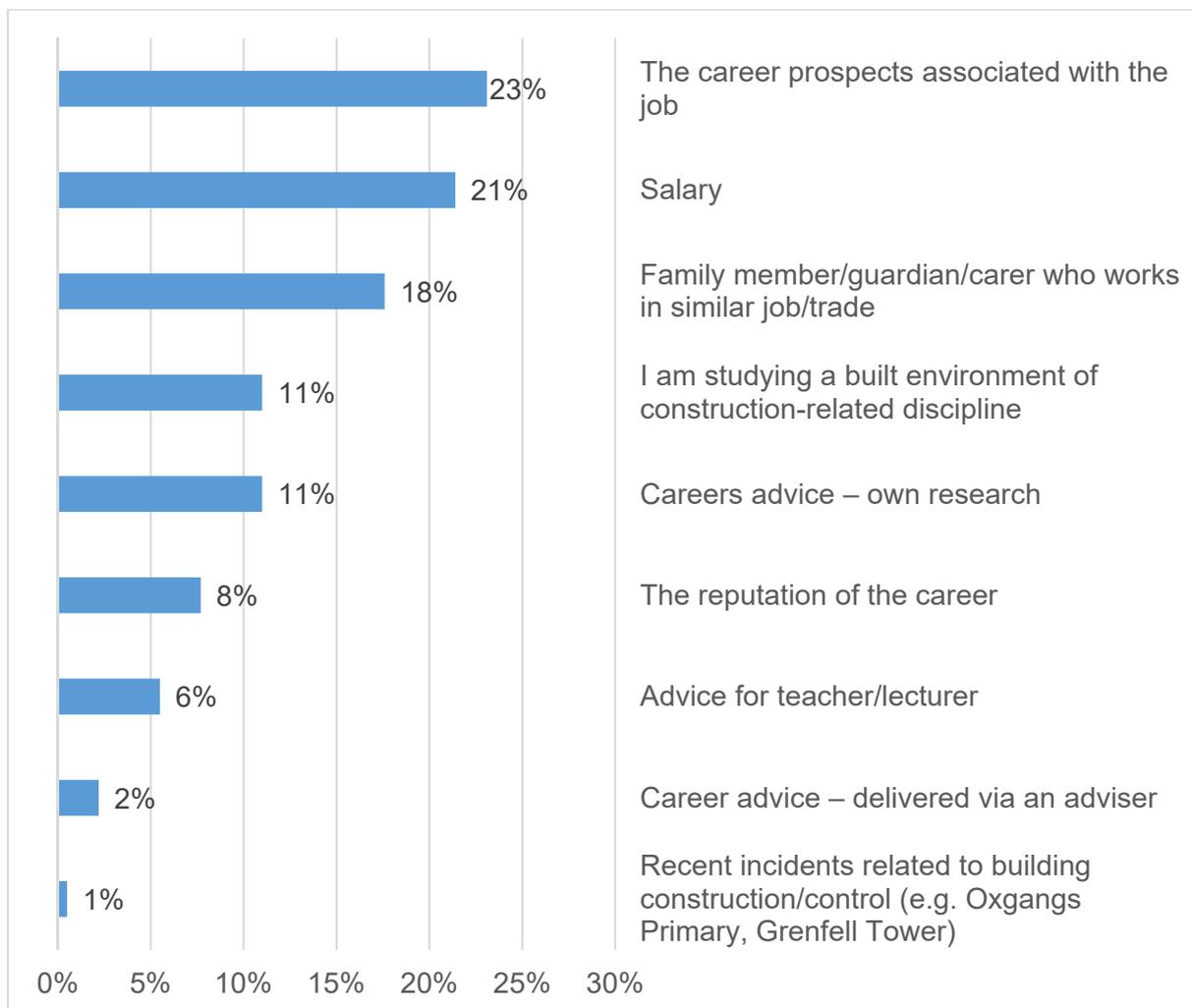
<sup>15</sup> These individuals indicated in the online survey their willingness to participate in a follow-up interview. All of the respondents were male and aged between 18 and 26. Subjects studied included Building (e.g. brickwork, wood trades etc.), Surveying and, Construction Management/Supervision.

## 4.2. Careers information

### Interest in building standards related professions is mainly influenced by salary and career prospects, while family advice is also very important

In general terms, all age groups prioritise salaries, career progression, qualifications, skills and knowledge needed as well as working conditions as their career information needs (Figure 4).

Figure 4: The most important factor influencing young peoples' interest in construction-related careers

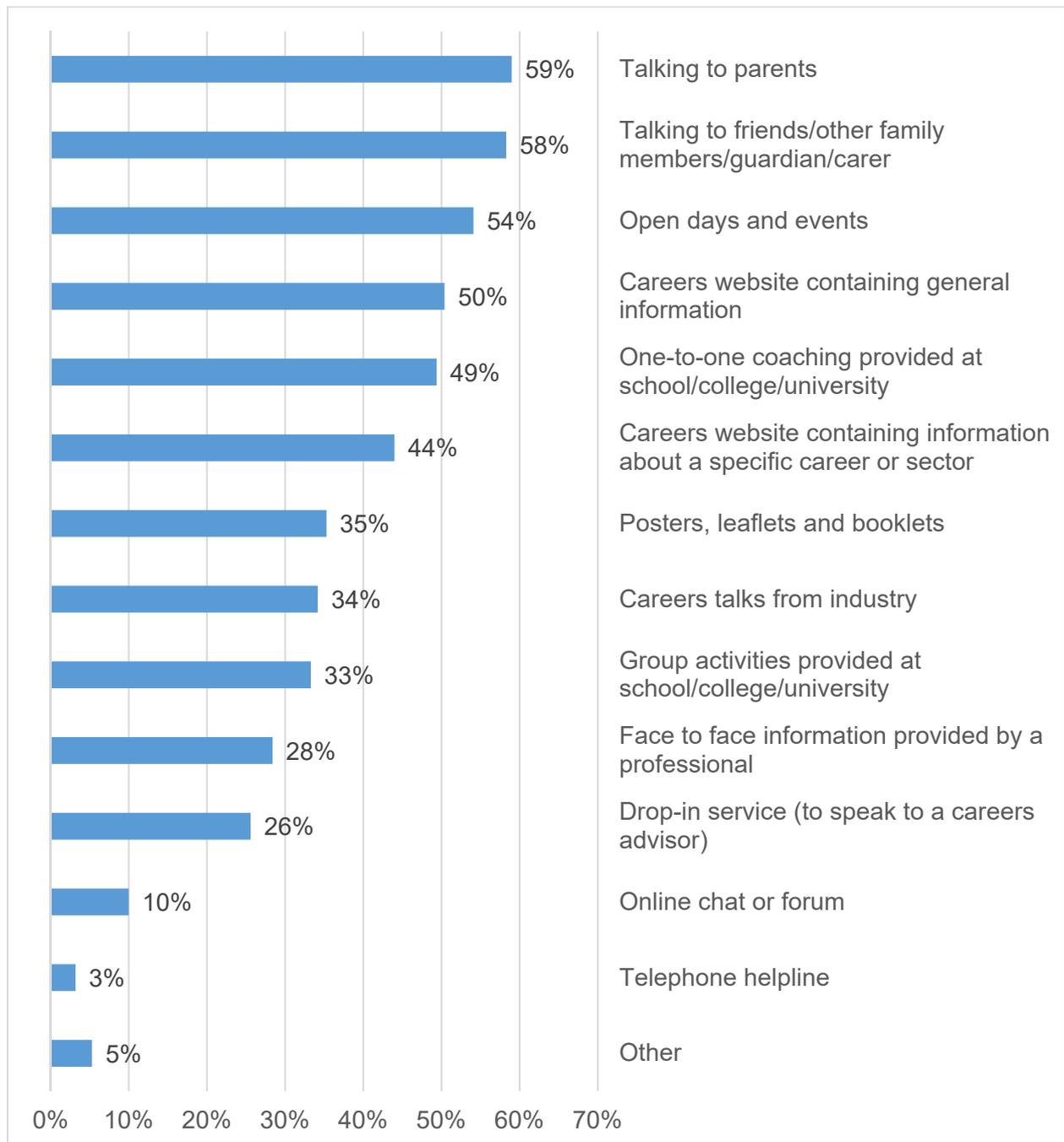


Base: 182

## When considering future career options, young people mainly turn to their families and friends

Across all age groups, the majority of young people confirmed that advice from parents/family and friends, followed by open days, career websites and one-on-one coaching are their preferred sources. This pattern was repeated across the gender groups, though female respondents put a higher emphasis on one-on-one coaching than males (Figure 5).

Figure 5: The types of sources used when considering future career options

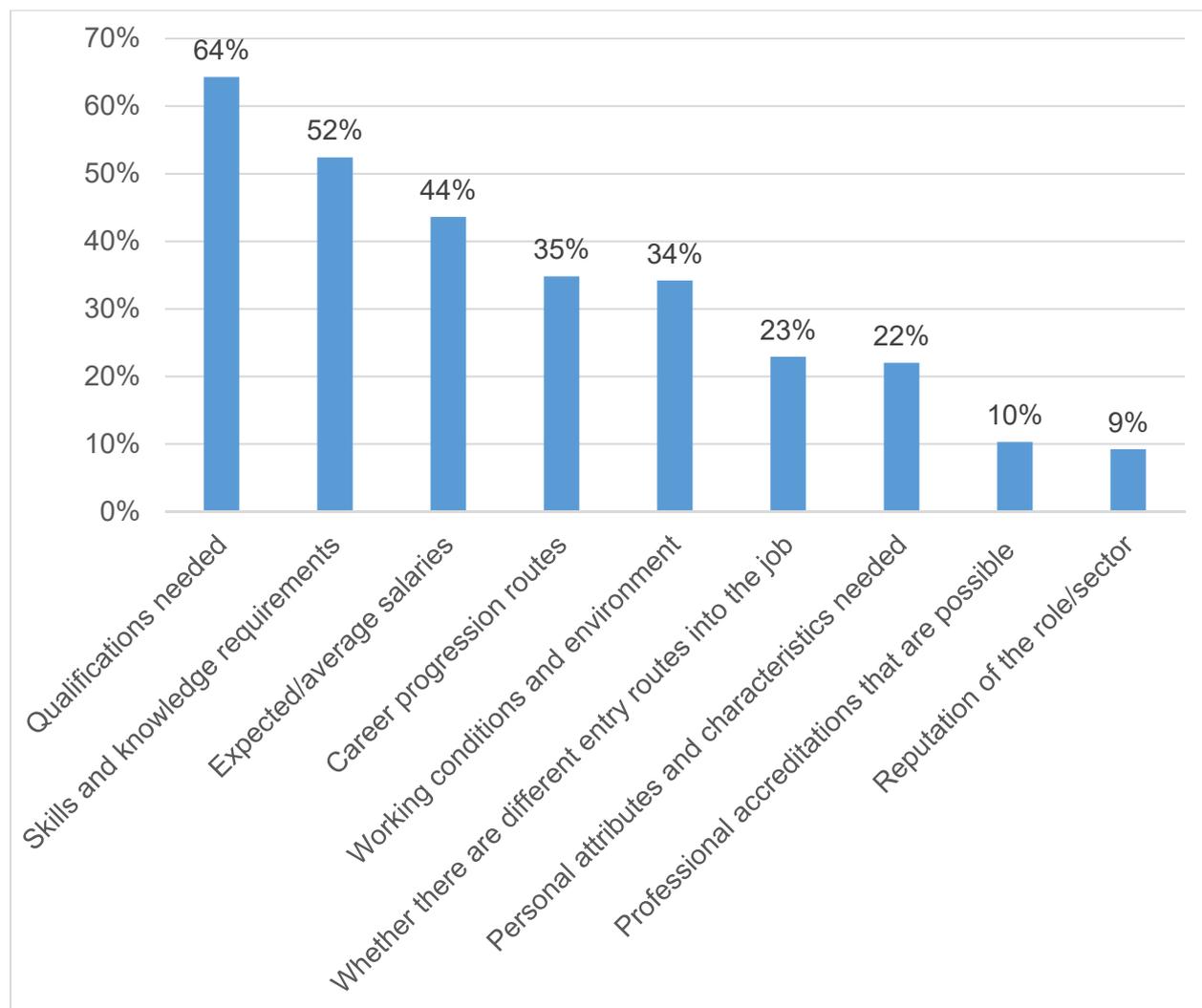


Base: 468 (multiple options could be selected)

## When considering a career, qualifications needed, skills and knowledge needed and salary are most important for young people

The qualifications and skills needed for a particular career as well as salary offered were considered most important by the respondents. In terms of gender, the results are slightly different, as females prioritise career progression over salary as third most important factor, while males value salary over skills and knowledge (Figure 6).

Figure 6: Types of information young people want to know about jobs

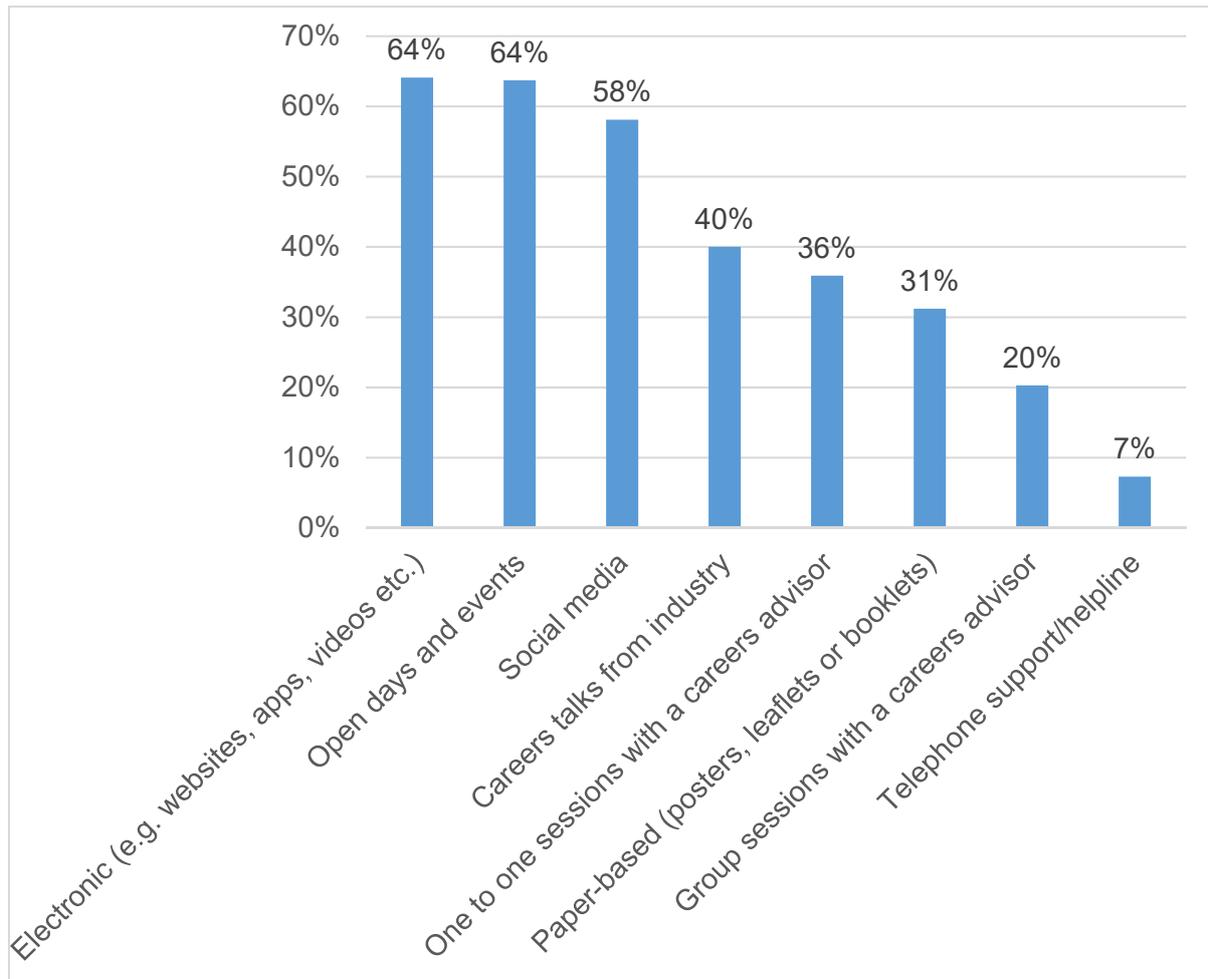


Base: 468 (multiple options could be selected)

## Preferred information channels are electronic means, Open days and Social Media

Across the age groups, there are only slight differences in the ranking of the top-three career information channels: electronic (e.g. websites, apps, videos etc.), open days followed by social media (Figure 7).

Figure 7: Career information channels preferred by young people

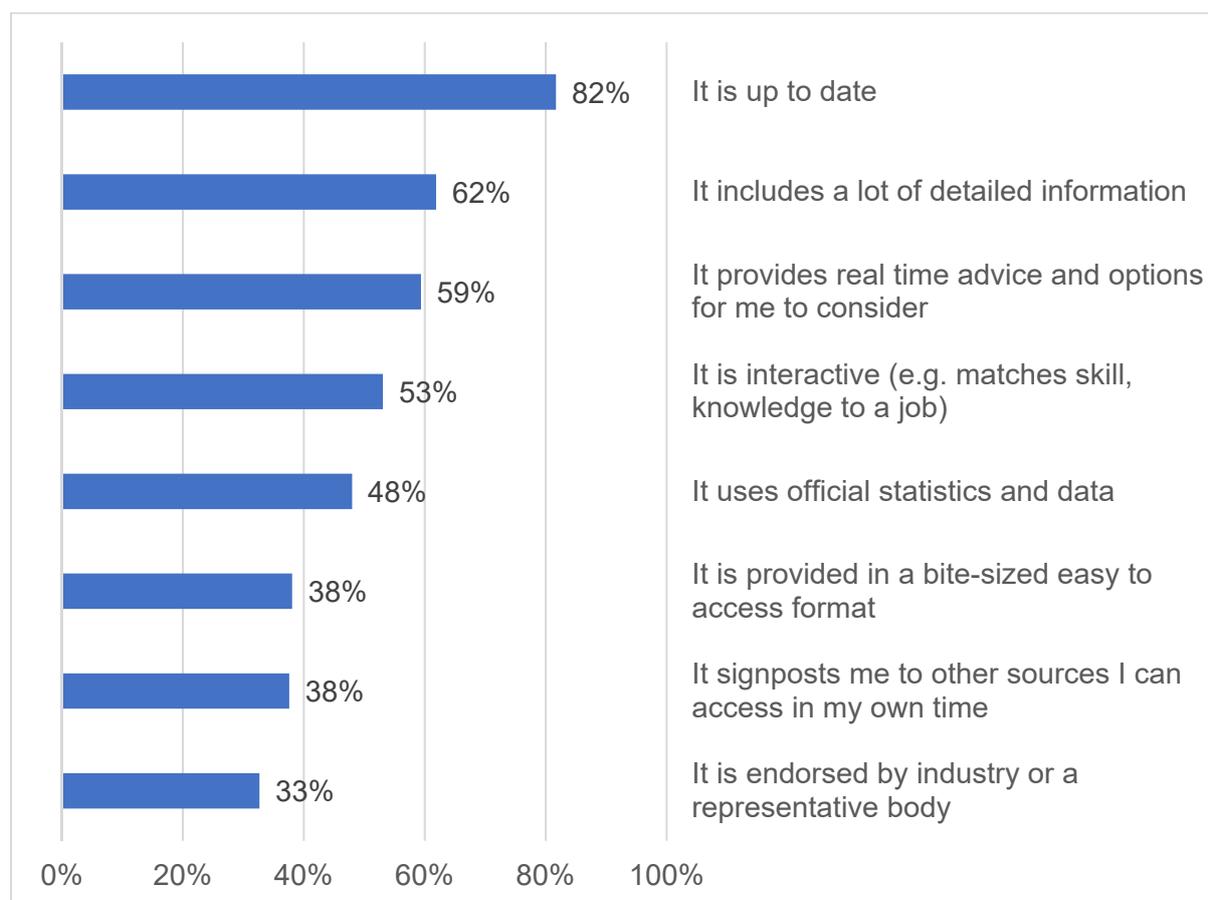


Base: 468 (multiple options could be selected)

## Young people want career information that is up to date, detailed and provides real-time information

The different age groups prioritised information that is up to date when accessing information about careers. This pattern is repeated across gender groups, though males put a higher emphasis on a career path being endorsed by industry or a representative body compared to females and the overall respondent age groups (Figure 8).

Figure 8: Most important factors when accessing career information

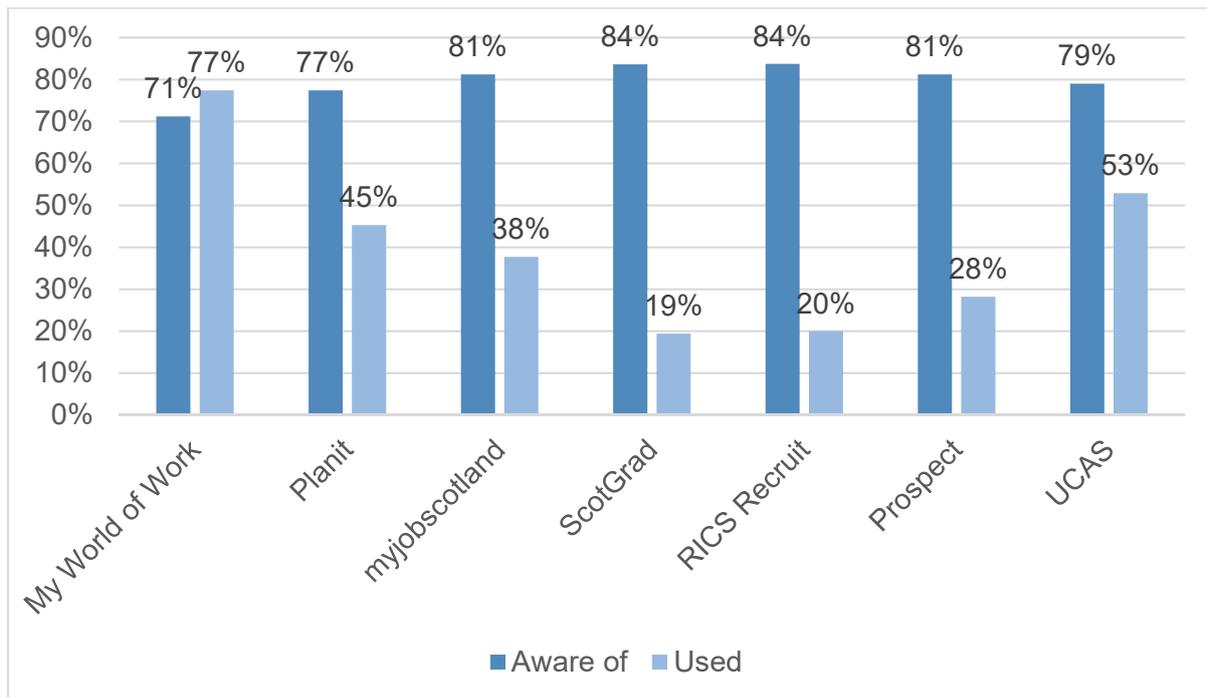


Base: 468 (multiple options could be selected)

## My World of Work and UCAS are the most used careers websites

The Scottish My World of Work and the UK-wide UCAS are the most prevalently used careers websites among young people. The third most-used website is Planit, run by a consortium of Scottish LAs. The LA recruitment website My Job Scotland, where the vacancies for the building standards services are advertised, ranks fourth among the websites used. The LAs interviewed did not report any issues with the My Job Scotland website (Figure 9).

Figure 9: Awareness (1) and use (2) of career websites



Base: 1827 (multiple responses were possible)

### **4.3 Careers advice**

The survey of career advisers undertaken for this project confirmed careers talks from industry, real-time information and the information being interactive as the most important aspects of providing career information to young people.

Careers advisers are in agreement with young people that the information most needed on careers is the qualification requirements, as well as whether there are different entry routes into the job (e.g. routes direct from school, college and university).

Furthermore, in the opinion of careers advisers, young people are most interested in the expected/average salaries associated with a job, followed by the qualifications needed.

#### **Experience of career information requests on building standards**

Half of the careers advisers said they have previously been asked about careers related to building standards (e.g. surveying, but not specifically building standards) by young people.

The actions taken included:

- Showing the young person how to find out more using MyWow and other websites.
- Referring them to web-based sources, looking at both FE and HE entry routes, MA options, and sources of information and vacancies.
- Discussing with them their level of understanding of the industry, their reasons for wanting to enter the industry, sources of support, where they could gain related work experience.
- In one case, suggesting the young person speak to a relation who was a building surveyor and look at entry requirements of courses.
- Arranging work experience at an architect's office.

On the whole, careers advisers suggested they had a fair knowledge of building standards. To improve their own knowledge, they suggested a talk or seminar from employers would be most helpful, as well as liaison with a representative body. However, the findings from the young people's survey suggest that advice from careers professionals has little influence over their interest in a construction-related career. The most important factors being career prospects and salary.

## 4.4 A career adviser's perspective on career engagement

In the view of careers advisers, essential elements of a strategy for attracting young people in building standards should include:

- Employers visiting schools and giving careers talks/careers chats
- Clarity on routes into the profession and pathways
- Having clarity about what the job involves
- Personal success stories and case studies
- Letting Skills Development Scotland and schools know where there are vacancies so they can promote them to young people
- Making sure career advisers are up to date about industry
- Emphasising the careers prospects and job satisfaction
- Linking learning in the classroom to the world of work and highlighting the importance of skills (rather than just qualifications)

The attractiveness of careers talks and face to face interaction are highlighted both by young people and careers advisers contributing to this research. There is evidence to confirm this is a highly effective tool; for example, research suggests that “on average, for each career talk with someone from outside of the school experienced at age 14-15 young people benefited from a 0.8% wage premium when they were 26”<sup>16</sup>.

Research conducted in 2014 (and quoted in a relevant 2019 report) also found that young people place a great deal of value on careers talks – 84% of those exposed to 3+ career talks felt it was helpful for them in deciding on a career, followed by mentoring (78%) and work experience (58%)<sup>17</sup>.

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<sup>16</sup> Keshepakdel, E & Percy, C (2016) 'Career education that works: an economic analysis using the British Cohort Study', *Journal of Education and Work*, Vol 30, 2017, Issue 3

<sup>17</sup> Mann, A et al (2018) 'Employer engagement in education: Insights from international evidence for effective practice and future research', *Education and Employers Research*

A wide variety of influences impact on the way in which building standards roles are educated, recruited, and filled. All have an effect on the way future approaches to education and recruitment must be designed.

The following elements describe the main forces in play that should be borne in mind for a future strategy for engaging with young people.

### **5.1. Positive forces**

#### **The Year of Young People**

As part of the Scottish Government's Programmes of 'themed years', 2018 was the Year of Young People (YOYP), with a mission to celebrate young people's achievements, value their contribution to communities and create new opportunities for them to shine locally, nationally and globally.

Activities and events focused on six themes that young people identified as most important for them as young Scots, notably culture, education, enterprise and regeneration, equality and discrimination, health and wellbeing, and participation. The theme of education, focused on creating a stronger role for young people in shaping their learning, while the theme of enterprise and regeneration aimed to celebrate young people's role in innovation, entrepreneurship, the Scottish economy, as well as making Scotland a greener and more pleasant place to live.

#### **Involvement of Local Authority Building Standards departments**

In delivering the engagement strategy, a partnership approach between LAs and BSD is strongly recommended. Working collaboratively will give the strategy the greatest chance of success.

#### **New career pathway (introduction of Graduate Apprenticeship)**

Introducing a Graduate Apprenticeship could help provide a clear entry route into the profession, and the added attraction for applicants of being able to earn whilst they learn.

## **Existing partnerships and relationships to build on**

- LABSS has been working closely with BSD on the development of the GA and on a complementary competency framework, scheduled for roll-out from Summer 2019.
- LABC has recently completed similar work on developing a competency framework for England and Wales, with lessons used to inform LABSS's current work.

Links with professional bodies, including RICS and others such as CIOB and CABE, exist (some of which are well-established according to this research), which could be capitalised on. RICS offers a Building Control pathway to Chartered (MRICS) status and Associate (AssocRICS) status to those who have relevant work experience and/or vocational qualifications (e.g. HNC/D).

## **Existing infrastructure, tools and experience to capitalise on**

- Skills Development Scotland delivers careers guidance in Scotland, in schools and to the wider community. There is a well-developed and embedded network of careers advisors delivering a range of support to young people in schools, and via SDS's community and partner premises across the country.
- A key part of the SDS offer is delivered via the My World of Work (MyWoW) website which is available to all. It offers support and guidance on career planning, career case studies as well as a dedicated area for parents. The results from the research show that young people (aged 18-26) are well aware of MyWoW and that it is well used: 77% of survey respondents have used it – far more than any other source asked about.
- The desk research conducted for this strategy found that most building standards vacancies are advertised on [www.myjobscotland.co.uk](http://www.myjobscotland.co.uk), and on LABSS and some LA websites. Awareness of myjobscotland is high amongst young people – 81% of those surveyed know of it, but very few (38%) have used it.
- Developing the Young Workforce (DYW), is a Scottish Government Youth Employment strategy, to reduce youth unemployment by 40% by 2021. The strategy targets employers, young people and parents as well as career advisers and teachers. Cornerstones of the strategy are to expand pathways and routes from school into employment, to increase young people's awareness of the world of work, to increase uptake of vocational qualifications by school leavers, particularly of MAs and to foster partnerships between employers and

education<sup>18</sup>.

To achieve the strategy's goals, the Scottish Government has established 21 Developing Young Workforce (DYW) regional groups. Their formation has been guided by the industry-oriented National Invest in Young People Group. They are to "create a bridge between employers and education, providing a resource for teachers and practitioners, and encourage and support employers to recruit and train young people<sup>19</sup>."

The groups take diverging approaches to reducing youth unemployment and have different business and industry partners. Nevertheless, they must all be able to demonstrate<sup>20</sup>:

- Private sector leadership
  - High level buy-in from regional partners
  - A commitment to engage with a wider range of employers
  - Capacity by the board to steer the day to day work of the executive
  - Control and accountability for the use of the Scottish Government resources
- 
- Work placement/work experience units and departments exist in LAs across Scotland. The role of these bodies is to broker relationships between local employers and schools and colleges. Whilst some of these units are well-advertised, and have a good presence online for example, not all are visible.
  - The ageing building standards workforce, while presenting a challenge may also provide an opportunity for providing valuable knowledge and training to new recruits. Aside from already practiced job shadowing, the vast amount of experience held in the profession may be harnessed to inform training provision such as the proposed GA and/or related college and university courses.
  - Other factors include competitive salaries that are higher than entry level salaries in other disciplines such as architecture or the opportunity to work in the local community, which is a factor in more remote regions.

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<sup>18</sup> <https://collegesscotland.ac.uk/our-work/project-activity/young-workforce/213-scotlands-youth-employment-strategy/file>; <https://www.gov.scot/publications/developing-young-workforce-scotlands-youth-employment-strategy/pages/5/>

<sup>19</sup> <https://www.gov.scot/publications/developing-young-workforce-scotlands-youth-employment-strategy/pages/6/>

<sup>20</sup> <http://www.sqw.co.uk/about-us/latest-news1/evaluation-of-developing-the-young-workforce-regional-groups/>

## 5.2 Negative forces

### Time (ageing workforce)

According to recent research conducted by LABSS, nearly half (46%) of those working within building standards services in Scotland have worked there for over 20 years, and a further 32% have 10-19 years' experience<sup>21</sup>. Feedback from the roundtable conducted for the research pointed to a predicted need to fill 150 vacancies in the next five years<sup>22</sup>.

In general, hiring experienced workers to bridge the gap creates problems for LAs, which often have to search for workers Scotland-wide or even abroad in the case of one LA who took part in a telephone interview. There is a practice of poaching experienced workers, many of whom are already in their 50s. One LA, however, reported that hiring from abroad was not a big issue, where the individual had experience of working in the oil & gas industry, due to the presence of such facilities in the LA area.

The urgency of addressing the replacement demand is two-fold:

- Attracting sufficient new recruits with potential for longevity in the role to replace workers when they retire;
- Ensuring the skills and knowledge possessed by prospective retirees is passed onto new recruits (as far as is practicable).

Many other areas of the construction and built environment sector are currently suffering from an ageing workforce. These sectors are also seeking to attract young people into their talent pipeline (see 'competition from other roles') below.

### Unclear pathways into the profession

The routes into the profession need to be clear (contingent on the above). Currently, there is no centralised or harmonised pathway into the profession, resulting in a patchwork approach (as described in section 3.1). LAs recruit based on local needs as well as different local interpretations of the nature of the profession.

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<sup>21</sup> LABSS (2018) Synopsis Report re Survey 3 – Training Needs and Analysis

<sup>22</sup> The roundtable was held in January 2019

## **Competition from other roles**

As well as facing their own internal challenges, as highlighted in this section, building standards services also face competition from other sectors of the built environment. Given the diverse range of entry routes, the recruitment pool into building standards is potentially very large, however there is an evident lack of knowledge and awareness of building standards meaning that competition from other more well-known and/or seemingly more attractive sectors wins out.

Compared with building standards, young people surveyed for this research have greater knowledge and understanding of: engineering; architectural design; property development and real estate consultancy.

There is of course direct competition from private-sector surveying companies for graduates, and competition from many other sectors for those looking to pursue an MA and for those achieving technical qualifications, such as an HND. Furthermore, evidence from the survey of young people confirms that employment in the private sector is more attractive than central government, local government, or the voluntary sector (Figure 21).

## **Lack of awareness of building standards**

In general, there is a widespread lack of awareness of the building standards profession among young people.

College and university students from construction-related disciplines are divided on the description of building standards roles and are mostly unaware of daily tasks. Correspondingly, as 16-18 year olds are most likely to take up apprenticeships and degrees, the nature of the profession and related tasks will have to be explained in a tailored manner while considering preferred information sources and mechanisms outlined in section 4.2. In addition, the preferred aspects of promoting public safety should be highlighted amongst all age groups, while a variety of tasks including on-site work should also be underscored.

Another factor may be the title 'Building Standards'. Previously in Scotland, and currently elsewhere in Great Britain, the role is referred to as 'Building Control', which may lead to confusion and a lack of visibility of building standards. Indeed, RICS pathways, and role profiles published on Go Construct, My World of Work and UCAS websites are titled 'Building Control', which may confuse those interested in a career in building standards and who may perhaps choose an alternative route as a consequence (this links to the previous sub-section 'Competition from other roles').

## **Funding for new roles**

This in practice would include funding for new 'trainee' type roles, possibly an MA and a Graduate route for those undertaking a Graduate Apprenticeship (GA).

In current practice, securing funding for filling or re-filling a position seems to be paramount over finding the right candidates for junior or less experienced vacancies in building standards.

## 6 Strategic Considerations

In light of the forces discussed in the previous section, any future strategy to recruit building standards professionals must take into account the considerations below.

The career engagement strategy based on this report lists the relevant stakeholders that will need to be engaged in order to meet the objectives of the strategy. Some stakeholders share the same interests and considerations.

No one action, or actor, will bring about the changes needed to fulfil the objectives of the strategy. Its success hinges on collective action and cooperation, with all parties working towards a common goal.

### 6.1 Inside track

#### Engagement between LABSS, the Building Standards Division and SDS

LABSS and BSD have already engaged with SDS on the proposed development of a GA and in developing career pathways. This relationship should be capitalised on to ensure relevant, up to date and targeted information is available on building standards careers. Further activities, which will be necessary to reach young people include:

- Making use of the MyWoW website and My Kids Career, with bespoke job profiles of those working in building standards, including Graduate/Trainee roles. This would need to be developed in partnership between BSD and SDS
- Equipping careers advisors with the necessary tools to engage young people. This research has shown that, apart from websites which young people can access themselves, and open days, other valued resources include:
  - One-to-one coaching provided at school/college/university (49%)
  - Posters, leaflets and booklets (35%)

The opportunity should be taken to engage directly with careers advisors to equip them with tailored information to impart to young people in a face-to-face capacity. An efficient way of delivering this would be via a webinar or similar online method that advisors could access at their convenience. Leaflets and posters are also useful vehicles for communicating headline messages, when displayed in careers offices.

## **Local Authority Building Standards and Colleges/Universities**

There are multiple drivers necessitating good relationships between LABSS and colleges and universities; this is underscored by the proposed roll-out of the Graduate Apprenticeship (GA). The benefit of these relationships is borne out by the successes of some LAs in securing graduate entrants via close working with local universities. Indeed, one LA interviewed confirmed working together closely with their local university's school of architecture and built environment, successfully promoting graduate roles within the LA's Building Standards Department. Major selling points include a career in the public sector and a competitive entry salary above industry average.

At a more fundamental level, engagement between LAs and local learning providers is good practice for ensuring the relevance of the skills and knowledge delivered on vocational and technical courses (e.g. HNC/D) which provide a route into building standards.

A third element is direct promotion of building standards careers, to those working within Colleges and Universities who influence young people's career decisions. These influencers not only include careers advisers, but also those in teaching and tutoring roles. This is important in consideration of the evidence gathered from the survey of young people that they are most interested in studying subjects that are closely aligned to a specific career (Figure 19). Those studying relevant construction-related courses (e.g. surveying, architecture/architectural technology, construction management) must therefore be made aware that the prospects available to them include a career in building standards.

The increasing focus on technology within building standards, and various opportunities to specialise (dependent on the LA) in diverse areas such as modern building technologies, fire engineering, renewable energy may help to attract more young people to the profession and should therefore be promoted.

## **Capacity building within Local Authorities**

Attracting young people into LAs will require concerted activity and commitment by local Building Standards Departments in a number of ways.

Providing work experience/placements for young people should be encouraged by all LAs to provide insight and understanding to young people about a role in building standards. Although some LAs already offer work experience opportunities, a formal offer should be standardised across the 32 LAs. This may require capacity building within LAs to develop structured activities for the young person to undertake, as well as ensuring mentoring and monitoring.

Existing public sector models could be emulated. For example, NHS Grampian has in place a structured work placement scheme for young people interested in a career in medicine. Application forms for the scheme are issued to all LA work experience units for them to distribute to their local schools and to guidance staff in independent schools<sup>23</sup>. A similar model for building standards should be considered, which would likely require central coordination from the Building Standards Division on behalf of Building Standards Departments. Direct exposure to the profession will help young people understand the interesting and varied nature of building standards roles.

### **Local Authority Building Standards and Schools**

Some LAs already engage directly with local schools. Work experience is a typical form of engagement where relationships between LAs and schools exist, however this is usually targeted at older pupils (e.g. 16-18 and those on college and university courses).

The DYW Career Education Standard, targeted at 3-18 year olds highlights the importance of engaging children at a young age<sup>24</sup> – a factor that was reiterated during stakeholder interviews for this research which emphasised the importance to engaging with primary-aged children. Indeed, the survey of young people illustrates that females, in particular, should be targeted at a younger age than males, due to the lower uptake amongst females of the sort of technical courses providing a route building standards careers.

Face-to-face interactions within schools – via industry talks – are a highly valuable mechanism for promoting careers and sparking young peoples' interest. These interactions would be best handled centrally, using a similar model to the work placement example given above.

A network of 'Building Standards Ambassadors' should be recruited to perform this role, targeting primary schools in the longer term. However, given the urgency of the recruitment challenge for LAs, priority should be given to engaging directly with secondary schools, colleges and universities to engage with those closer to employment age.

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<sup>23</sup> NHS Grampian, Medical Placements:

[http://www.nhsgrampianworkexperience.com/Placement\\_Medical.html](http://www.nhsgrampianworkexperience.com/Placement_Medical.html)

<sup>24</sup> Education Scotland (2015) Developing the Young Workforce, Career Education Standard (3-18)

## **6.2 Outside track**

### **Engaging with parents**

This research has found that from a range of sources of careers information and guidance, parents have most influence on young peoples' decisions (59% of young people responding to the survey indicated so), followed by 'talking with friends/other family members/guardian/carer' (58%).

Parent groups are an obvious route for engagement, such as the National Parent Forum of Scotland (NFPS), and at a local level, engagement between individual LA Building Standards Departments and Parent Councils: the NFPS has 33 local representatives. Schools seek the views of Parent Councils on various matters, including careers.

### **Overcoming barriers to engagement**

Young people come from all backgrounds. Some experience barriers to education and training, and to employment. Consideration should be given to these barriers in attracting a diverse and suitably skilled workforce.

- The use of multiple forms of communication is necessary to reach the widest possible audience. Cost effective ways may include social media, websites, local newspapers (particularly delivered electronically and via apps) and through promotion to community groups, and young groups. This is also a consideration for reaching the influencers of young people, including family and friends.
- Consideration should be given to cultural sensitivity and flexibility tailored to the cultural and other social circumstances of young people from different backgrounds.
- Make use of the mediums that young people value and respond to, e.g. online tools. We know from this research that MyWoW for example is well-used by young people.

### **What young people want to know when considering careers**

Young peoples' decisions about their future career are mostly influenced by:

- ✓ Available salary
- ✓ Opportunities for career progression

The majority of **all age groups** prioritise:



Both males and females seem to want broadly the same information – although their priorities may be very slightly different. Taking everything into account, salaries and the skills/qualifications-needed are most important.

The interest in building standards-related professions is mainly influenced by salary and career prospects, family influence among the age groups. Among males, this ranking still stands, while for females, the career prospects and family advice rank highest, followed by salary.

## 7 Conclusion

The challenges facing the building standards profession in Scotland, as identified in the LABSS survey, a dedicated stakeholder roundtable in the course of this project, and the wider survey of this study, are manifold.

1. Several findings have pointed to what is said to be a **lack of a clear and dedicated pathway** into the building standards profession in Scotland. Nonetheless, the evidence from careers advisers and young people seems to place greater emphasis on a general **lack of understanding** of what building standards professionals do and a possible perception of the work being “boring” and underpaid.
2. However, skills and knowledge requirements have evolved due to **technological and legislative change**, creating opportunities for building standards professionals to develop **specialist knowledge and expertise**. Emphasising these opportunities and the varied nature of the work may help counteract negative views of the profession.
3. **Entry routes into a number of professions are complex** but that, alone, is rarely a problem in terms of recruitment.
4. The **ageing workforce in building standards is a critical factor** and driving LAs to try to recruit a larger number of experienced staff. A lack of recruitment success in the younger cohorts in previous years (which LAs suggest they are recently managing to overcome) may have exacerbated the issue. It is a position in which even success in attracting young people into Modern and Graduate apprenticeships will take a number of years to bear fruit. Keeping those people will require attention to conditions of service.
5. Young people at school, college and university, even when studying related qualifications, are largely unaware of the profession. Nevertheless, LAs confirm that **recruiting young people and/or workers with related qualifications in surveying, construction and building, is not posing a serious issue in practice**.

It has been estimated by LABSS that around 150 replacement staff are required by building standards departments in the next five years<sup>25</sup>. Of these, possibly half or two

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<sup>25</sup> As discussed at the stakeholder roundtable discussion.

thirds may be required as young entrants<sup>26</sup>. These numbers would appear to underpin the feedback we obtained from LAs that, on the whole, the recruitment issue is not excessively difficult<sup>27</sup>.

Rather, it seems the main problem for LAs is securing funding for new positions. This is widely seen as a key hurdle. In this context, the LAs have found their own individual ways to recruit candidates with the right skills for lower-level vacancies, while confirming that the recruitment of experienced building standards professionals remains a crucial challenge.

In terms of engaging young people, the surveys of young people and career advisers have confirmed that young people prefer engagement by social media, electronic means, and open days. The career information is preferred to be up-to-date, detailed and providing real-time information. The young people studying building standards-related disciplines tend to have been attracted by salary and career prospects, while family advice is also very important. Overall, the young respondents have confirmed that they most value the advice of parents and friends when choosing a career but they are attracted by salary and conditions, and by status.

These preferences will have to be supplemented by the points for a career engagement strategy as identified by career advisers (as described in section 4.4).

These include clear information on entry routes, success stories (case studies), career prospects, and a close cooperation with Skills Development Scotland to give information on vacancies. Case studies emphasising the human side of careers – personal satisfaction, team work, job satisfaction, etc., would be the target for this aspect of promotion.

All such actions will also need to be tailored to parents as a priority target audience and key influencers of young people's career decisions.

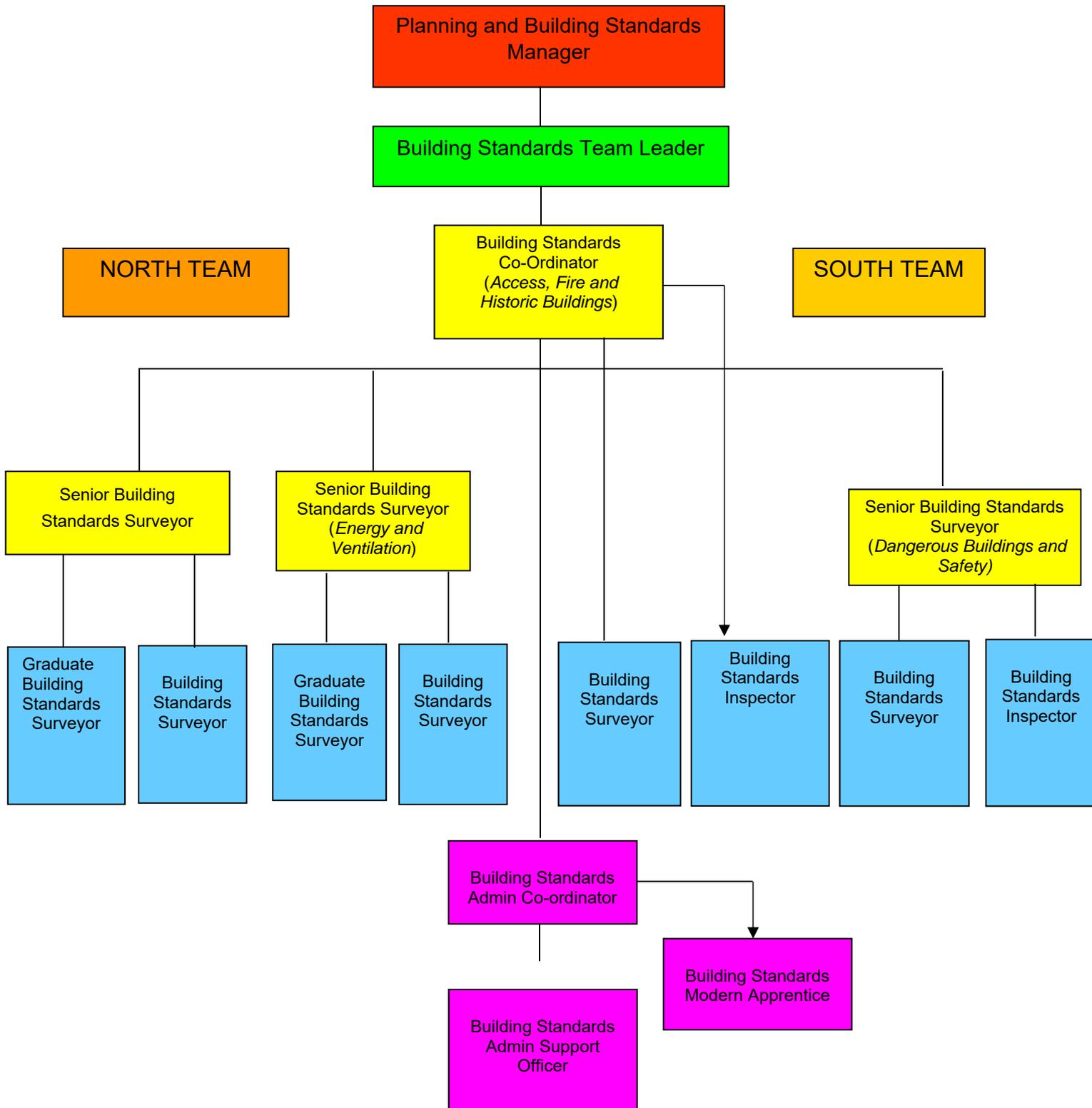
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<sup>26</sup> This is an estimate taking into account the current ageing workforce (only around a fifth of which is under 30) and the probability of an increased rate of loss of older staff, and a relatively high rate of demand for younger staff.

<sup>27</sup> The sample was not representative, but included a cross-section of urban, rural and remote Local Authorities.

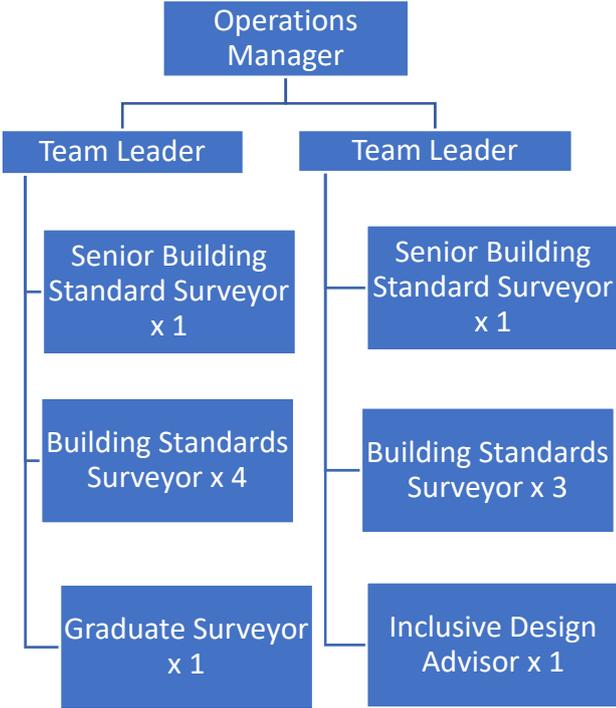
# 8 Appendix 1 – Department Structures

Figure 10: Building Standards Department structure – Stirling Council<sup>28</sup>



<sup>28</sup> Provided by Stirling Council and anonymised by Pye Tait

Figure 11: Building Standards Department structure - East Ayrshire Council<sup>29</sup>



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<sup>29</sup> Obtained from a job advert for the role of 'Building Standards Surveyor (Graduate)' for East Ayrshire Council

## 9 Appendix 2 – Job adverts

### **Building Standards Surveyor**

#### **West Dunbartonshire Council**

To contribute to the effective provision of the building standards service to all customers, including provision of high-quality professional advice and recommendations to stakeholders including customers, managers and committees, to encourage and facilitate within building developments a high level of compliance with the requirements of the building regulations, to provide excellent customer care, and contribute to the achievement of performance targets.

The Building Standards Surveyor will primarily deal with a high volume caseload of Building Warrant and related consents quickly and effectively, with particular responsibility for a large volume of applications in relation to alterations and extensions of domestic properties, small scale housing developments and minor works relating to non-domestic properties, although opportunities may arise for personal development by way of assisting Lead Building Standards Surveyors in developments of scale and/or innovation were appropriate. To contribute to the delivery of an effective integrated Regulatory Service.

### **Building Standards Inspector**

#### **North Lanarkshire Council**

North Lanarkshire Council, as one of Scotland's largest local authorities, is leading an exciting and ambitious regeneration programme for its town centres and surrounding areas as part of its plans for inclusive economic growth. Working with a variety of partners, the Enterprise and Communities service has a key role in guiding this regeneration towards sustainable development. We are committed to creating prosperity and making North Lanarkshire a great place to live, learn, work, invest and visit.

North Lanarkshire Council is considered, by Scottish Government, as a strong performing Building Standards Verifying Authority. In recognition, our Service recently received the maximum Verification appointment period of 6 years.

You will be based in our Kildonan Street/Fleming House office and will be part of the

Building Standards team dealing with a broad range of Building Standards functions. Primarily, you will be involved in site inspection activities related to building work under construction including the updating and maintenance of case records. In addition, you will assist in building warrant plan assessment as part of your core duties. Your good communication skills and proactive, customer-focussed approach will ensure you provide an excellent service to architects, developers and other customers.

You will be educated to SVQ Level 3/HNC level in a related discipline with a moderate level of experience in the construction industry. A moderate level of experience in local authority building standards is essential and a current driving licence is desirable.

### **Building Standards Surveyor**

#### **South Ayrshire Council**

- Maintain a Best Value culture.
- Contribute to a positive and inclusive working environment within which regular performance review takes place and undertake further training as appropriate.
- Ensure safe working practices in which the health, safety and welfare of colleagues are not jeopardised.
- Participate in the implementation of effective operational plans to meet the objectives of the service.
- Assist in meeting appropriate operational and other statutory targets.
- To process Building Warrant applications and applications for Completion Certificates and plans through the stages of checking, consultations and decision.
- To inspect and test site works in relation to approved Building Warrants and CCNPs and maintain accurate records of same.
- To interpret the Building Standards (Scotland) Regulations and associated legislation.
- To advise the public on all aspects of the Building (Scotland) Acts and associated Regulations.
- To prepare reports and deal with matters relating to Building Standards which includes alternative solutions for compliance with the Building Regulations, requests for Ministerial Views, allocating street names and postal addresses and Licensing.

- To carry out appropriate enforcement action involving dangerous buildings, or when unauthorised work, requiring a Building Warrant, is brought to the Council's attention.
- Give advice to the public in respect of Housing Grants and process such applications, if directed.
- The post holder has a duty to report concerns about the wellbeing of children or vulnerable service users and the ability to form and maintain appropriate professional relationships with the service users.
- To carry out such other duties consistent with the post as may be required by the Building Standards Team Leader, Service Lead – Planning and Building Standards and Director – Place.

Possession of:

- A degree/HND or HNC or equivalent in an appropriate discipline.
- Corporate Membership of RICS or equivalent professional qualification would be advantageous.

Substantiated ability to:

- Recognise and report concerns about the wellbeing of children or vulnerable service users.
- Form and maintain appropriate professional relationships with services users.
- Commit to own career development and professional advancement.
- Work well under pressure, to use initiative and work with minimal supervision.
- Demonstrate a flexible attitude and approach.
- Ability to meet the standards of performance required under South Ayrshire Council's Competency Framework.

Demonstrable experience of:

- Building Standards work.
- Experience of working within the construction industry.
- Administration systems, technical skills and IT skills.
- Reading electronic applications and drawings, in particular e-Building Standards.
- Confidence, enthusiasm backed by a calm temperament.
- Good interpersonal and organisational skills.

- Working well under pressure, to use initiative and work with minimal supervision.
- A flexible attitude and approach.

Proven Technical Understanding of:

- Relative Building Standards experience.
- The construction industry.
- IT packages including Microsoft office.
- Knowledge of Building Standards (UNIFORM) system would be advantageous.

## 10 Appendix 3 – Available course and achievement rates

Table 2: Construction-related courses available in Scotland of most relevance to Building Standards

<b>Course</b>	<b>Institution</b>
<b>Undergraduate</b>	
Architecture MA	University of Edinburgh
Architecture MA	Robert Gordon University
Architecture BArch	Glasgow School of Art
Architecture Studies MArch	University of Dundee
Architecture MArch	University of Dundee
Architecture with Urban Planning MArch	University of Dundee
Interior Architecture and Design	
Architectural Technology BSc	University of the Highlands and Islands
Architectural Technology BSc	Robert Gordon University
Architectural Technology BSc (Hons)	Inverness College UHI
Building Surveying (GCU Pathways) BSc	Glasgow Caledonian University
Building Surveying BSc	Edinburgh Napier University
Building Surveying BSc (Hons)	Glasgow Caledonian University
Building Surveying BSc (Hons)	Edinburgh Napier University
Civil Engineering Construction Management BEng	Heriot-Watt University
Construction and Project Management BSc	Edinburgh Napier University
Construction Management (GCU Pathways) BSc	Glasgow Caledonian University
Construction Management BSc	Glasgow Caledonian University
Construction Management BSc	Robert Gordon University
Construction Project Management BSc	Heriot-Watt University
Fire Risk Engineering BEng	Glasgow Caledonian University
Structural and Fire Safety BEng Engineering	University of Edinburgh
Structural Engineering BEng	Heriot-Watt University
Surveying BSc	Robert Gordon University
<b>HNC/D</b>	
Interior Architecture and Design HNC/D	West College Scotland
Architectural Technology HNC/D	Edinburgh College
Architectural Technology HNC/D	City of Glasgow College
Architectural Technology HND	Dundee and Angus College
Building Surveying HND	City of Glasgow College
Building Surveying HND	Dundee and Angus College
Built Environment HNC	New College Lanarkshire
Built Environment HNC	Edinburgh College
Built Environment HNC	Dundee and Angus College
Construction Management HNC	New College Lanarkshire

Construction Management HNC	Glasgow Clyde College
Construction Management HNC	West College Scotland
Construction Management HNC/D	Per College UHI
Construction Management HNC/D	Shetland College UHI
Construction Management HNC/D	Argyll College UHI
Construction Management HNC/D	Inverness College UHI
Construction Management HNC/D	North Highland College UHI
Construction Management HNC/D	Moray College UHI
Construction Management HNC/D	University of the Highlands and Islands (UHI)
Construction Management HNC/D	Edinburgh College
Construction Management HNC/D	South Lanarkshire College
Construction Management HNC/D	City of Glasgow College
<b>Group Award or National Certificate</b>	
Built Environment (Construction) NC	New College Lanarkshire
Construction: Built Environment NC	Glasgow Clyde College
Built Environment NC	Dundee and Angus College
Built Environment NC	West College Scotland

\*As identified in stakeholder interviews. Source: SDS, My World of Work, course search results

Table 3: Total graduates from Scottish Universities in architecture, building and planning courses 2015/16

Scotland HE providers					
Postgraduate	First degree	Foundation degree	HNC/HND	Other undergraduate	All levels
955	910	0	135	100	<b>2095</b>

Source: HESA: Table 12a - HE qualifications obtained by sex, subject area\*\*, location of HE provider and level of qualification obtained 2015/16

Table 4: Graduates from Scottish Universities on architecture, building and planning courses (published 2014/15 and 2015/16), employment outcomes

	2012/13 cohort	2013/14 cohort
THE UNIVERSITY OF ABERDEEN	5	15
UNIVERSITY OF ABERTAY DUNDEE	35	.
THE UNIVERSITY OF DUNDEE	5	100
EDINBURGH NAPIER UNIVERSITY	25	50
THE UNIVERSITY OF EDINBURGH	5	75
GLASGOW CALEDONIAN UNIVERSITY	.	180
GLASGOW SCHOOL OF ART	.	.
THE UNIVERSITY OF GLASGOW	15	5

HERIOT-WATT UNIVERSITY	.	80
QUEEN MARGARET UNIVERSITY, EDINBURGH	.	.
THE ROBERT GORDON UNIVERSITY	.	90
ROYAL CONSERVATOIRE OF SCOTLAND	.	.
THE UNIVERSITY OF ST ANDREWS	.	.
SRUC	40	.
THE UNIVERSITY OF STIRLING	5	.
THE UNIVERSITY OF STRATHCLYDE	.	55
UNIVERSITY OF THE HIGHLANDS AND ISLANDS	20	20
THE UNIVERSITY OF THE WEST OF SCOTLAND	.	.

Source: Gov.uk; Statistics: higher education graduate employment and earnings. Table 1a: Employment outcomes of graduates by subject and institution one year after graduation.

Table 5: Attainment statistics for construction-related courses (SCQF Level 3-7) 2017 and 2018

Level/Award	2017			2018		
	Attainment	%	Entries	Attainment	%	Entries
SCQF Level 4, Skills for Work: Construction Crafts	390	76.0%	513	419	73.3%	572
SCQF Level 5, Skills for Work: Construction Crafts	444	80.1%	554	348	83.5%	417
SCQF Level 5, National Progression Award, Construction	870	-	-	392	-	-
SCQF Level 5, National Progression Award, Construction Operations	29	-	-	15	-	-
Construction: Bricklaying at SCQF Level 5	-	-	-	26	-	-
Construction: Carpentry and Joinery at SCQF Level 5	-	-	-	84	-	-
Construction: Multi Trade at SCQF Level 5	-	-	-	36	-	-
Construction: Painting and Decorating at SCQF Level 5	-	-	-	43	-	-
Construction: Plastering at SCQF Level 5	-	-	-	10	-	-
Construction: Wall and Floor Tiling at SCQF Level 5	-	-	-	1	-	-
SCQF Level 6, National Certificate: Architecture and Interior Design	16	-	-	28	-	-
SCQF Level 6, National Certificate: Built Environment	124	-	-	149	-	-

Source: SQA Attainment Statistics 2018

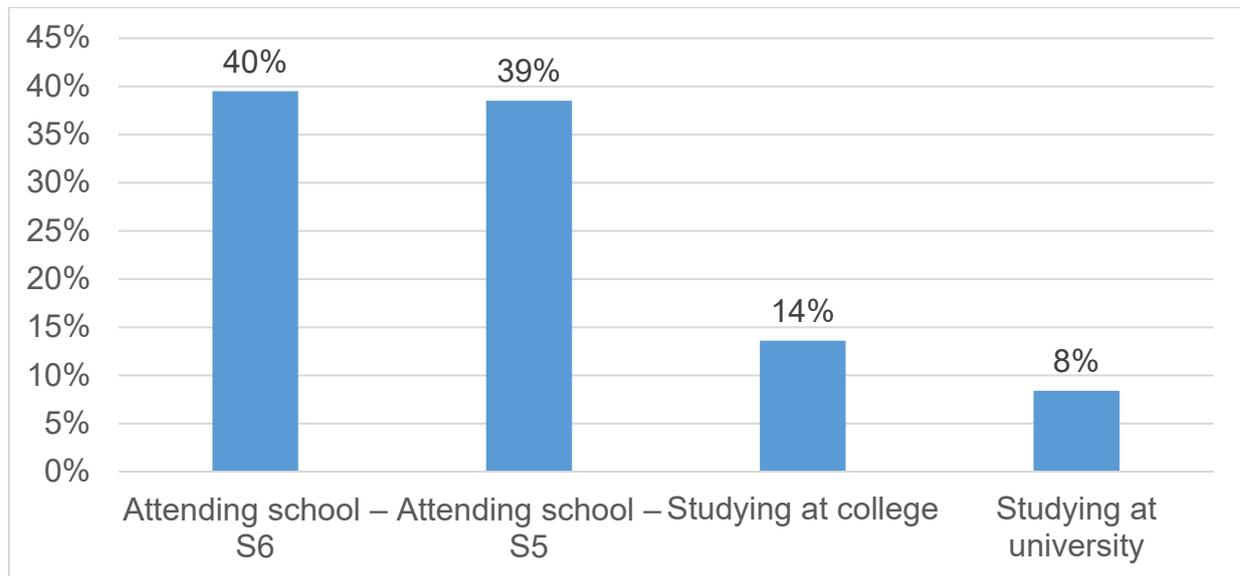
# 11 Appendix 4 – Young People Survey

## About the survey and respondent profile

During the course of the project, a total of 478 young people in Scotland between the age of 16-21 years participated in an online survey aiming to investigate reasons for the presently low recruitment levels of young people into the Building Standards profession.

Of the respondents, 184 (39%) were attending school at level S5, while 189 (40%) were attending school at level S6. In addition, 65 (14%) were studying at college and a further 40 young people (8%) were studying at university.

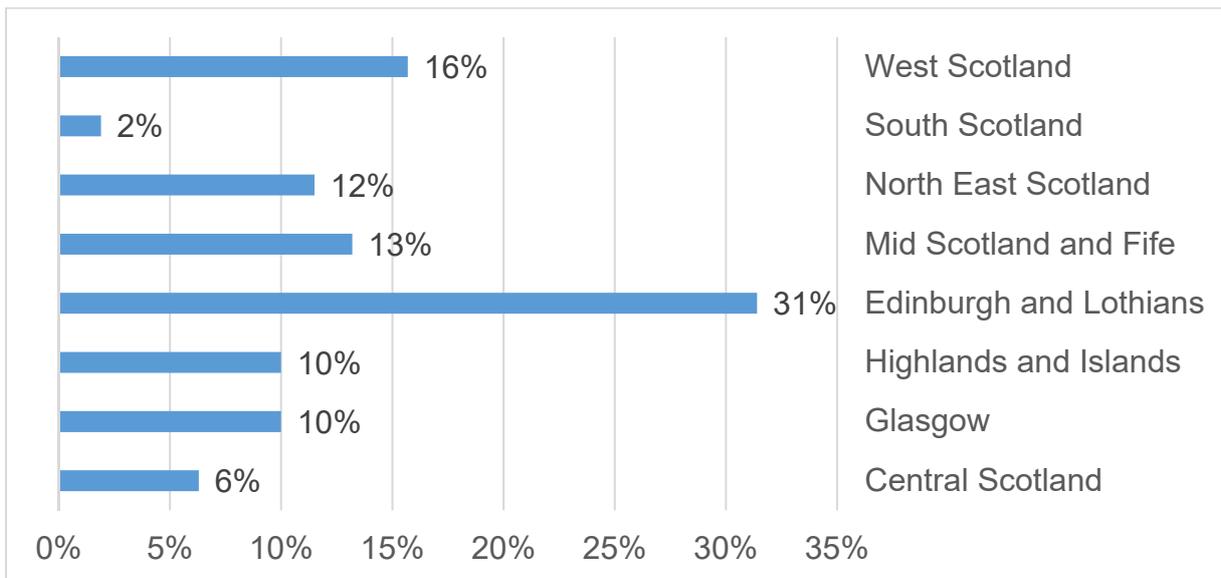
Figure 12: Current status



Base: 478

The majority of survey respondents thus fell within the target groups of the Graduate Apprenticeship and other pathways for young people listed by job websites and the LAs.

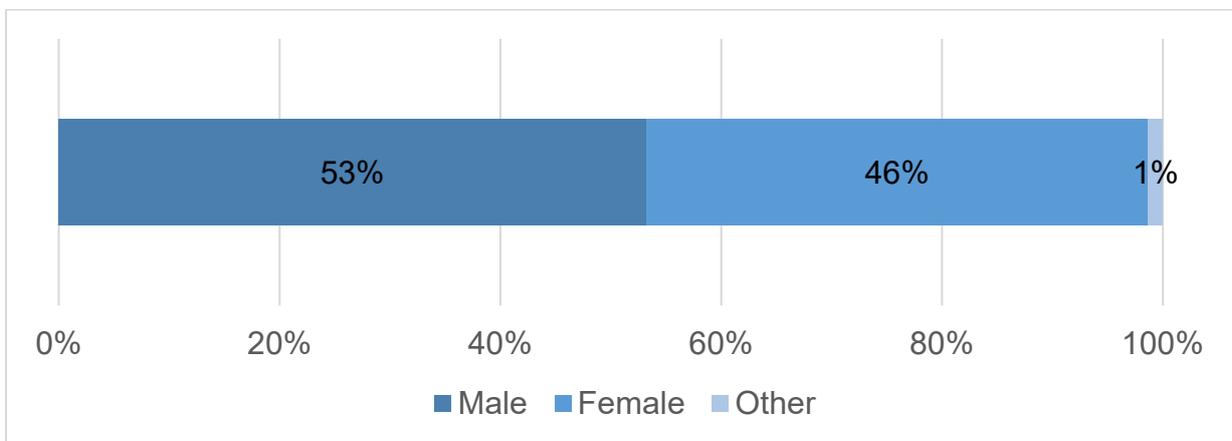
Figure 13: Home region of respondents



Base: 478

In addition, the survey respondents represent a relatively even gender balance with 254 (53.2%) male, 217 (45.5%) female and 6 (1.3%) identifying as “Other”.

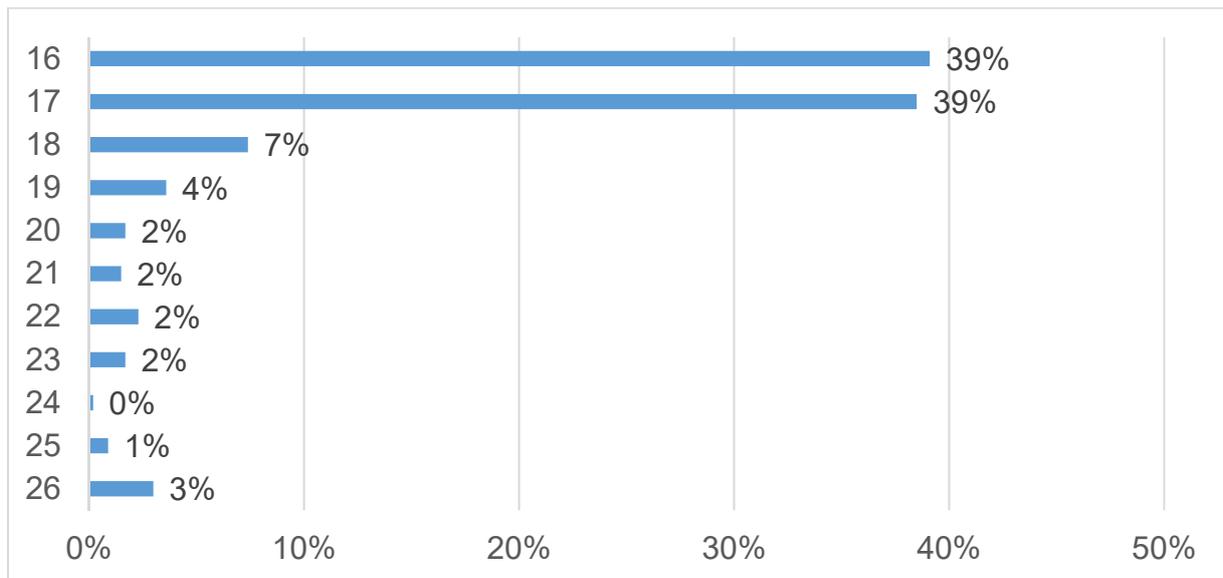
Figure 14: Gender of respondents



Base: 477

Respondents spanned a range of ages from 16-25, with more than two thirds (78%) aged 16 or 17.

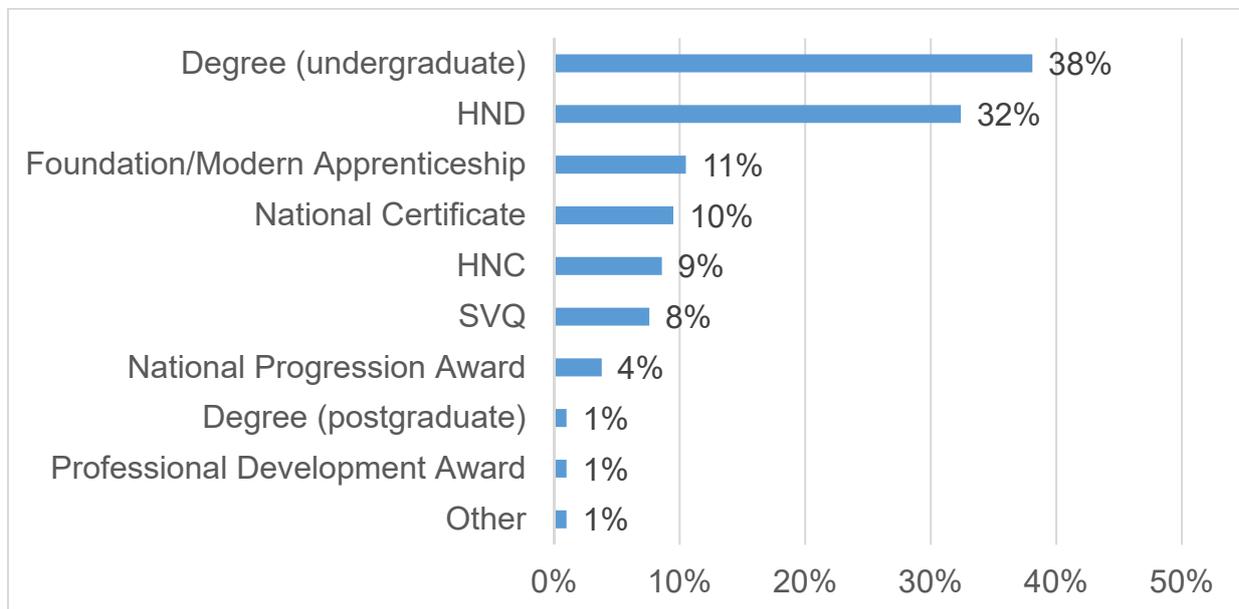
Figure 15: Age of respondents



Base: 470

The 105 respondents to the survey (79 males and 25 females and 1 other) who confirmed studying for qualifications other than at S5 and S6 levels were studying for the following qualifications:

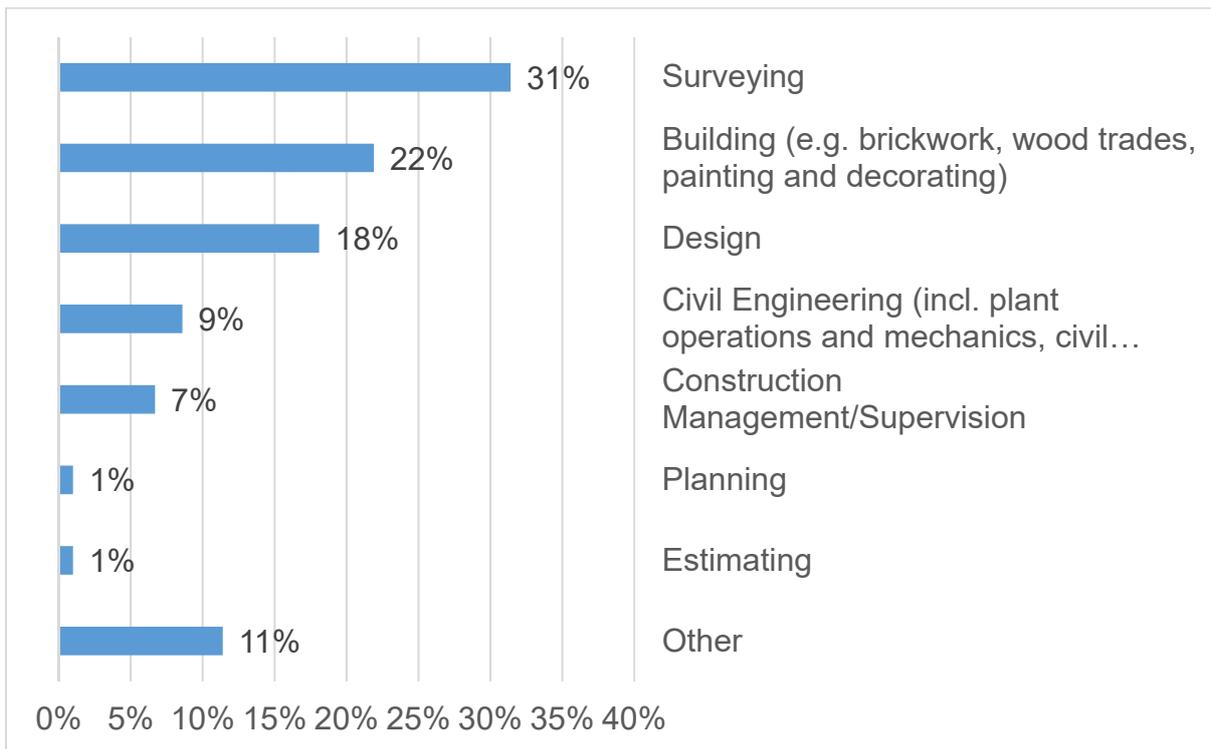
Figure 16: Type of qualification studied by respondents



Base: 105

In terms of subjects studied by the previously mentioned 105 respondents, Surveying, Building (e.g. brickwork, wood trades, painting and decorating) and Design represented the top-three, while there was a large discrepancy with many other disciplines listed, which were virtually not studied at all.

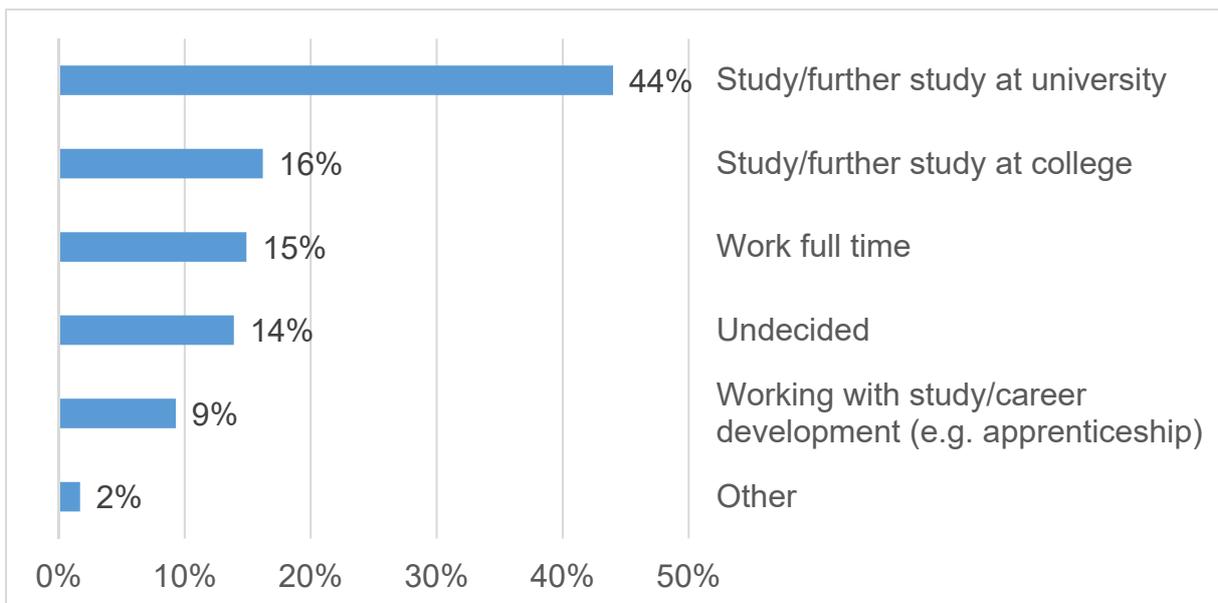
Figure 17: Subjects studied by respondents



Base: 105

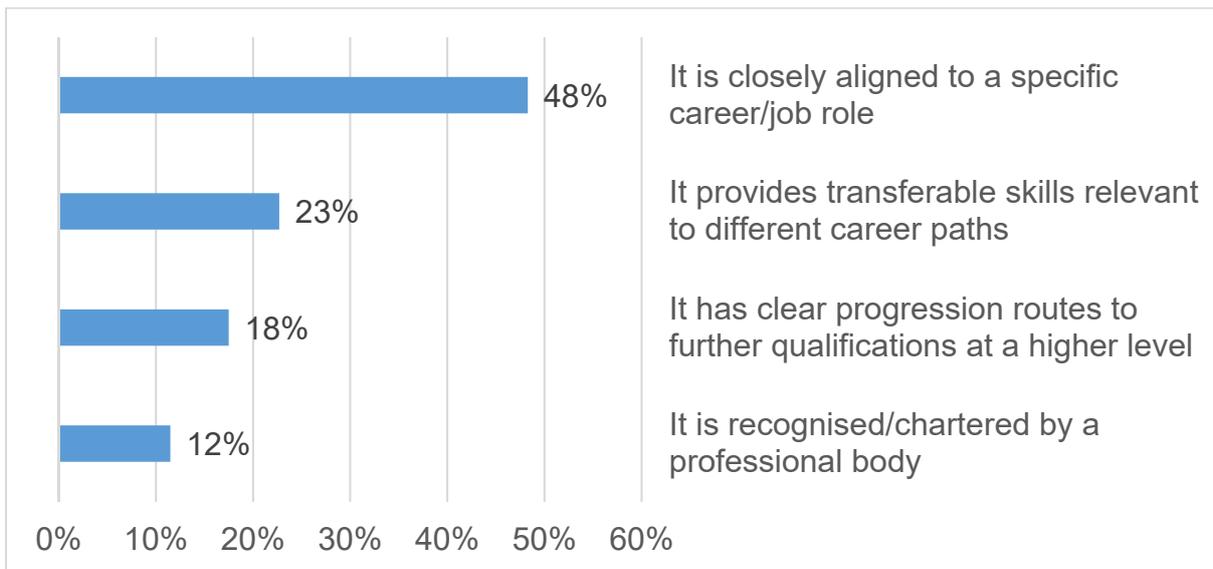
### Supplementary charts

Figure 18: Respondents' future plans



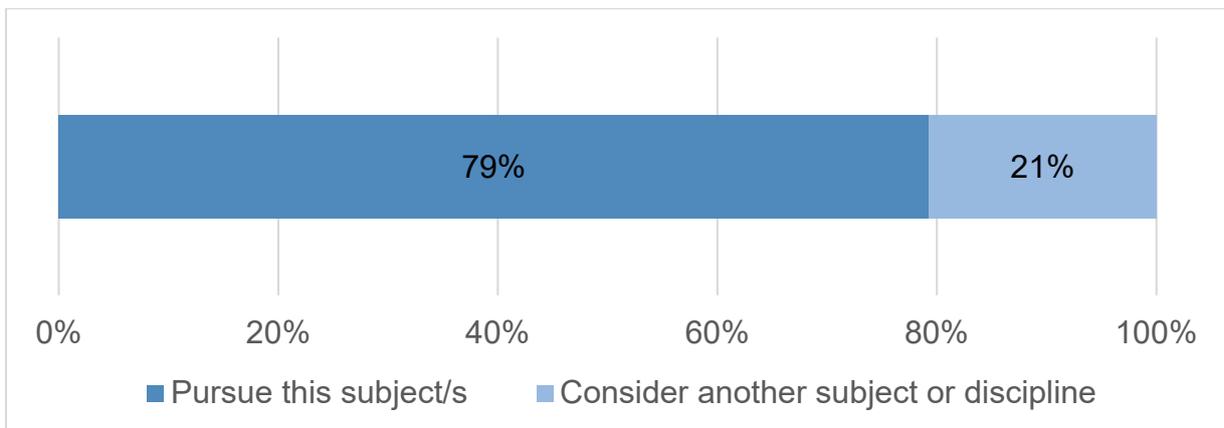
Base: 475

Figure 19: Factors influencing decisions on which subjects to study further



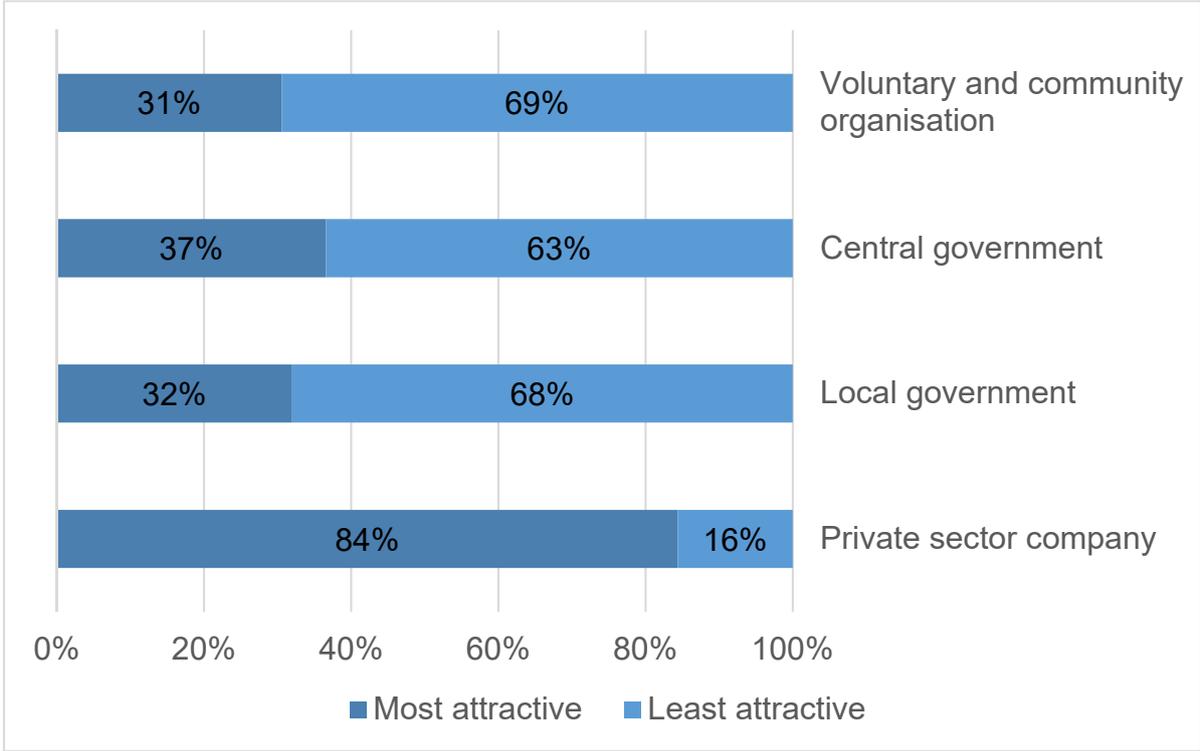
Base: 286

Figure 20: Intention to pursue a career in a related subject



Base: 285

Figure 21: Most and least attractive types of organisations to work for



Base: 883 (multiple responses possible)

## Survey content

### **Are you considering whether to go to college, University or to start a career? Do you fancy being in with a chance of winning Amazon vouchers?**

We'd like to hear your views on career options and the types of information you need to help you decide. This survey should take no more than 7-8 minutes to complete.

### **To thank you for your time, everyone completing this online survey has the chance to win one £150 Amazon voucher or one of three £50 vouchers.**

If you would like to be entered into the prize draw, please complete your contact details when prompted at the end of the survey.

The prize draw will be administered by Pye Tait Consulting. All entries must be received by 15<sup>th</sup> February 2019. Entries received after this date will not be entered into the draw. The draw will be held on 1st March 2019 and the winner will be notified by email no later than 12<sup>th</sup> April 2019. The winner will be announced on the Pye Tait website by 18<sup>th</sup> April 2019. The prize cannot be substituted for a cash alternative.

To view our privacy note [click here](#).

#### **About the research**

The Scottish Government's Building Standards Division are reviewing the existing career paths and looking at the potential for new opportunities within the building standards profession. This is being undertaken to support the Year of Young People 2018.

The results of the survey will be used to inform a careers strategy.

This research is being conducted by Pye Tait Consulting on behalf of the Scottish Government's Building Standards Division. In line with the Market Research Society Code of Conduct please be assured that your answers will be treated anonymously, and you will not be identified.

If you have any queries about this survey, please contact Clare Vokes at Pye Tait Consulting, via [c.vokes@pyetait.com](mailto:c.vokes@pyetait.com) (telephone 01423 509433).

## About you

### 1. Where do you currently live?

Central Scotland	
Glasgow	
Highlands and Islands	
Edinburgh and Lothians	
Mid Scotland and Fife	
North East Scotland	
South Scotland	
West Scotland	

### 2. How old are you? *[drop down]*

16	
17	
18	
19	
20	
21	
22	
23	
24	
25	
26	

### 3. Are you male or female?

Male	
Female	
Other	

If 'other', please specify

### 4. Which one of the following options best describes what you are doing now?

Attending <b>school</b> – S5		Go to Q7
Attending <b>school</b> – S6		Go to Q7
Studying at <b>college</b>		Go to Q5
Studying at <b>university</b>		Go to Q5

## Young People attending College/University

### 5. What type of course/qualification are you currently studying?

Foundation/Modern Apprenticeship	
National Certificate	
National Progression Award	
Professional Development Award	
HNC	
HND	
SVQ	
Degree (undergraduate)	
Degree (postgraduate)	
Other	

If 'other', please specify

--

### 6. Which subject are you studying?

Building (e.g. brickwork, wood trades, painting and decorating)	
Civil Engineering (incl. plant operations and mechanics, civil engineers)	
Construction Management/Supervision	
Design	
Estimating	
Engineering	
Facilities Management	
Planning	
Property Management	
Specialist (incl. steel erectors, scaffolders, plasterers, dry liners)	
Surveying	
Other	

If 'other', please specify

--

**All groups**

**7. Which of the following statements BEST describes what you plan to do when you leave school/college/university?**

Study/further study at college	
Study/further study at university	
Working with study/career development (e.g. apprenticeship)	
Work full time	
Undecided	
Other	

If 'other', please specify

--

**8. If you are considering further study, what ONE factor is the most important to you about the course/qualification?**

It is closely aligned to a specific career/job role	
It provides transferable skills relevant to different career paths	
It has clear progression routes to further qualifications at a higher level	
It is recognised/chartered by a professional body	

**9. Do you intend to pursue the subject/s you are currently studying as a career, or are you considering another field? Please select the option that is MOST likely.**

Pursue this subject/s	
Consider another subject or discipline	

**10. How likely are you to consider a career in any of the following disciplines?**  
*[Select all that apply]*

	Extremely	Very	Moderately	Slightly	Not at all
Building Standards Surveyor					
Building Surveyor					
Buyer					
Engineering e.g. structural, civil or services					
Construction Site Manager					
Designer e.g. architectural design					
Estimator					
Facilities Manager					
Property Developer					
Real Estate Consultant					

**11. What ONE of the following has had the MOST influence on your interest in these options?** *[Select only one options]* (where ‘extremely’ and ‘very’ are selected in response to Q10)

Advice for teacher/lecturer	
Career advice – delivered via an adviser	
Careers advice – own research	
Family member/Guardian/carer who works in similar job/trade	
Recent incidents related to building construction/control (e.g. Oxfangs Primary, Grenfell Tower)	
Studying a built environment or construction-related discipline	
The reputation of the career	
Career prospects	
Salary	

**12. How would you rate your knowledge and understanding of these careers?**

	Very good	Good	Fair	Poor	Very poor
Building Standards Surveyor					
Building Surveyor					
Buyer					
Engineering e.g. structural, civil or services					
Construction Site Manager					
Designer e.g. architectural design					
Estimator					
Facilities Manager					
Property Developer					
Real Estate Consultant					

**13. Please select the types of sources you have used when considering future options** *[Select all that apply]*

One-to-one coaching provided at school/college/university (e.g. careers advisor, teacher, tutor)	
Group activities provided at school/college/university	
Open day and events	
Careers talks from industry	
Drop-in service (to speak to a careers advisor)	
Careers website containing general information about different careers and sectors	
Careers website containing information about a specific career or sector	
Online chat or forum	
Face to face information provided by a professional outside of school/college/university	

Posters, leaflets and booklets	
Telephone helpline	
Talking to parents	
Talking to friends/other family members/Guardian/carer	
Other	

If 'other', please specify

--

**14. Which of the following sources 1) are you aware of, 2) have you used?**

	Aware of	Used
My World of Work		
Planit		
myjobscotland		
ScotGrad		
RICS Recruit		
Prospect		
UCAS		

**15. By which of the following channels do you/would you prefer to receive information about careers? [Select all that apply]**

Open days and events	
Careers talks from industry	
Group sessions with a careers advisor	
One to one sessions with a careers advisor	
Electronic (e.g. websites, apps, videos etc.)	
Social media	
Paper-based (posters, leaflets or booklets)	
Telephone support/helpline	

**16. Which of the following factors are important to you when accessing information about careers? [Select all that apply]**

It is up to date	
It uses official statistics and data	
It is provided in a bite-sized easy to access format	
It includes a lot of detailed information	
It is interactive (e.g. matches skill, knowledge to a job)	
It provides real time advice and options for me to consider	
It signposts me to other sources I can access in my own time	
It is endorsed by industry or a representative body	

**17. Which THREE types of information do you most want to know about the jobs you are considering? [Select three only]**

Qualifications needed	
Whether there are different entry routes into the job (e.g. routes direct from school, college, university)	

Qualifications needed	
Skills and knowledge requirements	
Personal attributes and characteristics needed	
Expected/average salaries	
Working conditions and environment	
Career progression routes	
Professional accreditations that are possible (e.g. Memberships, Chartered status etc.)	
Reputation of the role/sector	

**18. To what extent do you agree that you would enjoy a career involving...**

	Strongly agree	Agree	Neither agree nor	Disagree	Strongly disagree
Examining building plans, drawings and specifications					
Inspecting buildings and construction against national regulations (e.g. public health, fire safety, energy conservation)					
Seeking information from clients					
Providing advice on legal requirements					
Testing and taking samples of construction materials					
Keeping accurate records and writing reports					
Liaising and communicating with members of the public, professional bodies and councillors					
Verifying compliance with regulations					
Developing and leading projects and initiatives					
Assessing building design					
Dealing with a caseload (i.e. dealing with a customer from an initial application, to them receiving an outcome)					

**19. Of the following types of organisation, which do you consider MOST and LEAST attractive to work in?**

	Most attractiv	Least attractiv
Private sector company		
Local government		
Central government		
Voluntary and community organisation		

## Finally

**20. Do you have any final comments to make about careers?**

**21. To be entered into the free prize draw, please enter your name and contact details below.**

Name

Phone number

Email address

We are also seeking people to take part in a short follow-up telephone interview. This should take no more than 10 minutes of your time. Are you happy to be contacted to take part in a telephone interview?

Yes	
No	

**Thank you for taking the time to complete this survey.**

*Now please press 'Submit'.*



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Any enquiries regarding this publication should be sent to us at  
The Scottish Government  
St Andrew's House  
Edinburgh  
EH1 3DG

ISBN: 978-1-78781-918-4 (web only)

Published by The Scottish Government, June 2019

Produced for The Scottish Government by APS Group Scotland, 21 Tennant Street, Edinburgh EH6 5NA  
PPDAS595570 (06/19)

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