



DESIGN | BUILD
SEARCH



Salary and Market Trends Report 2026

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INTRODUCTION

Design Build Search is a specialist recruitment consultancy established with the simple aim of providing a quality recruitment service for clients and candidates alike in the construction and engineering industry.

Our team is made up of experienced construction recruiters who have a wealth of industry experience domestically and internationally. Over the last 8 years Design Build Search has been working with local and international companies helping them solve their recruitment needs.

Salaries will vary from company to company, as well as locations and industries. However, this is a guide to the most common figures we have observed when speaking with employers regarding specific roles.

Construction growth in Ireland was projected to be strong in 2025, with forecasts from CIS and others predicting double-digit growth, up by 11% according to CIS. This growth is fueled by the residential sector, strong economic performance, and investments in infrastructure and key sectors like industrial, commercial, and education

The unemployment rate in Ireland's construction sector is extremely low, at around 1.5% in early 2025. This is significantly lower than the national average and indicates a strong demand for labor, with some reports highlighting a shortage of skilled workers such as electricians, carpenters, and project managers. This low unemployment rate suggests a limited potential to fill labor gaps from domestic unemployed sources and is part of a broader context of capacity constraints in the sector.

The Construction Industry Federation (CIF) Outlook Survey reports a continued increase in both turnover and the number of employees, with 27% of companies noting a turnover increase in Q1 2025 and 20% reporting an increase in employees in the same period, with similar figures projected for the rest of the year.

LOOKING INTO 2026

According to construction federation Construction analysis, the outlook for the Irish construction industry in 2026 is one of stabilization after a decline in housing starts, supported by ongoing investment in infrastructure and specific sectors like medical and hospitality. While housing construction is expected to be lower than previous peaks, significant activity will continue in non-residential areas, though the industry faces challenges like labor shortages and supply chain issues.

The outlook for Ireland's construction industry in 2026 is for a decline of around 9%, following a strong finish to 2025. However, this is a short-term dip, and the long-term forecast is more positive, with strong growth projected for 2027. The 2026 downturn is influenced by factors like project delays, high costs, and financing challenges, though some reports forecast a recovery for 2026 after a strong 2025.

The construction industry is expected to grow in 2025 along with the wider economy. This will be supported by investment in the transport and electricity sectors. As part of the plan, the government aims to increase the share of renewable energy in the country's total electricity mix to up to 80% by 2030. Forecast-period growth in the industry will also be supported by investment as part of the National Development Plan (NDP) 2021-30 plan, which involves an investment of €165 billion for different sectors in the country, over a time frame of 10 years. In addition to the renewable sector there is continued growth expected in the pharma, data centre, commercial, residential, and retail sectors.

“ Q1 and Q2 of 2025 started slow with global political change including conflict. Over the last 3-6 months there has been a growing sense of confidence from industry leaders going into 2026. ”

Emmett Finnegan

LOOKING INTO 2026

Concerns in 2026:

Labour cost:

One of the key concerns that has been highlighted amongst industry leaders is the cost of materials and labours. Over the last two years we have seen a sharp increase in cost of materials and this is expected to continue into 2025. This will have an impact on all projects and have a knock on effect on distribution and supply.

A survey by RTE revealed that the cost of labour and raw materials continues to put upward pressure on pricing across all sub sectors, with 67% of survey respondents seeing an annual increase in the cost of labour and 64% reporting an increase in the cost of raw materials. 54% of companies expect the cost of labour to continue to increase in the quarter of this year also.

The survey also found that the key challenges facing the construction sector are access to skilled labour (73%), securing a healthy profit margin (61%), increased cost of materials (56%) and continuity of work (50%). Hubert Fitzpatrick, Director General of the Construction Industry Federation, said that unprecedented demographic growth and an ageing population will mean that demand for investment in critical infrastructure will reach beyond the existing capital ceilings, especially in water services, housing and transport.

“The Construction Industry Federation is calling for an expansionary Budget in 2025 to support Government’s competing policy choices in the year ahead, in the context of Europe’s twin green and digital transitions and growing geopolitical and economic instability,” Mr Fitzpatrick said.

“Hyperinflation in many building and construction materials in recent years, as well as fuel, has put a strain on the cost of delivering some of the infrastructure projects in the National Development Plan, as capital budgets are pre-determined. The Construction Outlook Survey results have been tracking this for some time,” he said.

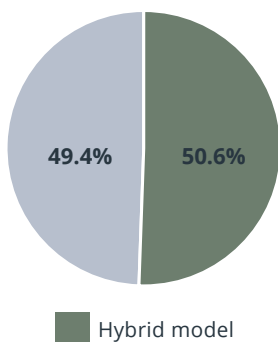
LOOKING INTO 2026

Candidates trends:

In our 2025 salary survey we posted about the increased number of candidates immigrating to Australia, New Zealand, Middle east and North America. This trend has certainly continued. Last year we noted we noticed an increase in the 22-27 brackets. However, this year there has been a significant increase in 30+ year olds and families interested in moving to Australia and US. There has also been an increase in men interested in opportunities in the middle east.

Construction professionals continue to relocate for a multitude of reasons including better lifestyle and higher standard of living, opportunity and financial gain. Other reasons that have become more frequent is the cost of living in Ireland and available property to rent or buy. A significant change we have noticed since last year is the volume of construction professionals returning to Ireland has increased. Typically this demographic is individuals aged 32 and above. It has been a fairly even split in terms of preferred location between the large hubs including Dublin, Galway and Cork. People within this demographic tend to relocate home due to starting their own family, buying a house or feel it's the "right time to return".

Over the last number of years we have still seen a consistent level of candidates seeking hybrid/flexible working. We fully expect this trend to continue, whilst employers are keen to have more internal collaboration there is an acceptance to attract talent some flexibility is critical.



We carried out some research into our total number of placements this year to date in 2025 and how many of those were afforded the opportunity to work either a hybrid or work from home model. 50.6% of the total placements made currently work a hybrid model or were offered the option to work a hybrid model.

LOOKING INTO 2026

For clarity, many of those who were not offered the hybrid model of work largely came down to the function of their position- such as a project/setting out engineer, project building services/maintenance engineer or similar, where it is not a possibility to carry out daily functions from a home working environment.

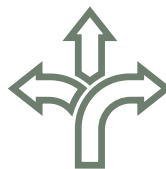
Common trend between most candidates considering a change is the below factors:



Salary/package improvement
Higher salary or better benefits



Promotion and progress
Having a clear path



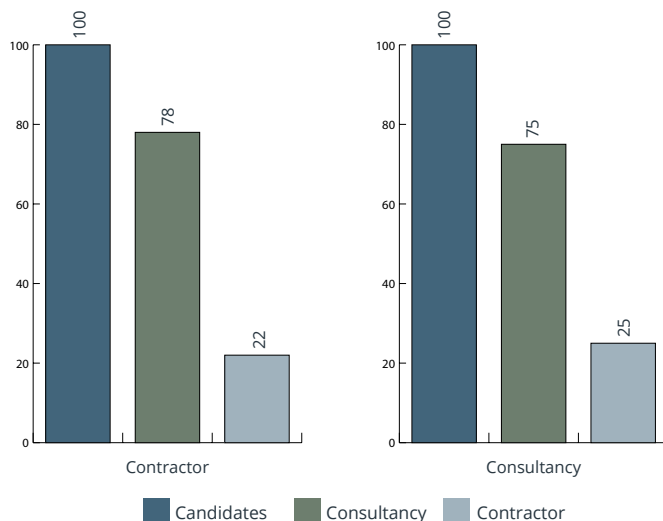
Flexibility
This includes remote working. Hybrid and flexible working hours

Contactor to consultancy

A huge trend we saw was professionals moving from a contractor to consultancy. This transition is very possible to do and there has been an increase in this over the years. However, it does come with its own set of problems – e.g., the consultancy side often has lower salaries, and there is typically a period of adjustment where you must reorient your thinking (from getting the best deal for the contractor to representing your client as best as possible).

People tend to baulk at the salary discrepancy but often fail to consider the shorter working week and change in other working conditions (site-based to office based etc). Much less common is the move from consultancy to contractor side – more money is obviously a big factor, and the contractor side can often provide a better benefits package too – for example, the consultancy side rarely can provide a company vehicle.

LOOKING INTO 2026



Other trends:

Similarly, we are now seeing a lot of people try to break into sectors they have never worked in before – Renewable Energy, Data Centres, Pharmaceutical, etc. Often this requires a slight step back in salary or responsibilities until you become more familiar with the idiosyncrasies of the new sector. After this period of adjustment, people do tend to get back to their original level fairly quickly.

“A big trend we are noticing now is that professionals from both sides of the industry are very interested in working for the end client”

HIRING AND MISSING OUT

Ireland needs nearly 80,000 additional construction workers to address current infrastructure deficits, according to the Irish Fiscal Advisory Council (IFAC). However, this number could be reduced to less than 20,000 if construction sector productivity were to improve significantly. Another report indicates that up to 120,000 additional workers and the reskilling of 164,000 workers would be needed by 2030 to meet both housing and climate targets.

“**Highly sought after talent can expect to have multiple interviews and offers within days of them searching for a new job**”

Emmett Finnegan

With such a demand for talent in Ireland, it's imperative for prospective employers to act fast. While hiring wrong can cost as business so can missing out.

Depending on the urgency of the position a client should be setting up a meeting with a candidate within 48 of receiving the application (if suitable for their position) on the assumption the interview or interview(s) go well they should then move to offer verbal/written within 48 hours.

Highly sought after talent can expect to have multiple interviews and offers within days of them searching for a new job. If you find yourself repeatedly struggling to secure talent there is a distinct possibility it is due to a slow recruitment process and/or not being in a position to meet the candidates' key motivators.

HIRING AND MISSING OUT

Most common skills	% of total
Construction	28%
Engineering	21%
Quantity Surveying	18%
Construction Management	12%
Autocad	12%
Project coordination	3%
Construction procurement	6%

Fastest Growing Skills	Growth in last 12 months
Project Delivery	52%
Analytical Skills	46%
Customer Relationship Management (CRM)	37%
Quality Control	33%
Design	31%
Customer Satisfaction	25%
Project Coordination	24%
Health & Safety	21%
Quality Assurance	21%
3D Modeling	20%

HYBRID WORKING

According to the Irish Times, Some 92 per cent of respondents in Ireland expressed a strong preference for continuing in a hybrid or remote work model. Despite employee preferences, 56 per cent of companies globally with 42 per cent in Ireland are urging staff to increase their in-office presence.

Professionals working in hybrid models expressed the highest contentment with their work patterns, with 59 percent willing to forgo pay raises for desired flexibility. Flexible working arrangements have emerged as a crucial factor in talent attraction and retention, after 80 per cent of hiring managers highlighted its importance. The survey found that one to two days in the office is the favoured weekly working pattern for 47 per cent of professionals, with a further 25 per cent selecting three to four days in Ireland. Only 8 per cent were happy to be in the office for the full five working days.

Hybrid working in construction

Whilst hybrid working is simply not possible within certain professions within the construction industry it certainly has caused a change. From speaking with recent graduates there is an increasing number who are looking for a split between Site, Office and Home. We are also noticing an increase in people looking to change their position within the construction industry to a job that will allow them more flexibility. This will be problematic as construction requires on site presence for the development of projects.

“Over the last 12 months the majority of employers have been trying to encourage staff back to office”

Emmett Finnegan

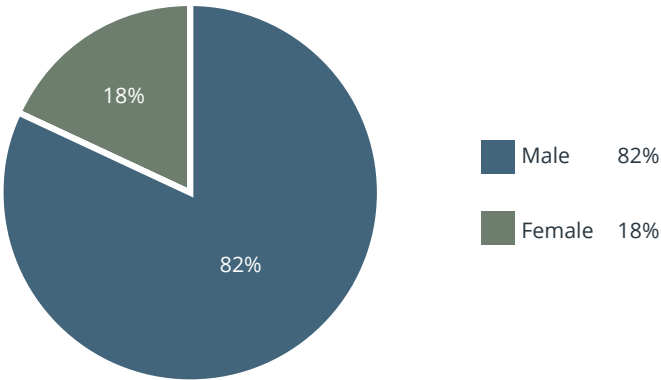
There is still flexibility, but the model has changed to some companies offering 4 days in the office 1 from home or hybrid flexibility after a successful probation period.

DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION

As a company we continue to work with and successfully place an increasing number of international candidates and women with both contractors and consultancies.

	2025	2024	2023	2022	2021	2020
Male	78%	80%	85%	79%	80%	83%
Female	22%	20%	7%	21%	20%	17%
Irish	59%	60%	41%	46%	57%	83%
International	41%	40%	59%	54%	43%	17%

Following statistics from LinkedIn talent insights Industry:
Construction, Civil Engineering and Architecture industries.
Based on circa 90,000 construction professionals.



Throughout the year 9,820 of those professionals changed employers and according to LinkedIn Insights the median tenure was 1.7 years.

WOMEN IN CONSTRUCTION

According to recent figures by CIF in 2025, women constitute approximately 9% to 10% of the construction workforce in Ireland, with the exact number varying depending on the source and specific data year. While this indicates roughly 15,000 to 17,000 women, Over the last 5 years this figure has on average been between 8%-10%.

There wasn't one particular sector of the construction industry that we placed women into most often, but we did identify higher numbers in the Environmental & Planning sector, Mechanical Engineering, as well as Civil / Structural BIM Specialists.

The Irish government are Encouraging more women to take up jobs in construction it is a key part of the Government Action Plan aimed at boosting employment in the sector.

“**Safer working conditions
can make construction
more appealing to potential
recruits**”

The shortage of skilled labour is one of the biggest challenges facing building companies. It has led to rising wage costs which in turn is contributing to increasing tender prices.

The Society of Chartered Surveyors Ireland said more than 100,000 additional workers will be needed across property and construction over the coming decade to meet demand.

INTERNATIONAL CANDIDATES

During 2025 we have helped international candidates from various locations secure jobs in Ireland. This year we have noticed an increase in personnel from EU countries such as Spain, Portugal. Italy and Germany interested in making a move. We have also placed candidates from South Africa, India and Sri Lanka who have required a visa.

Clients across the Contractor, Consultancy and Developer space have been open to interviewing and hiring Quantity Surveyors, Engineers, Project Managers and Safety personnel.

Visa:

The most common visa that we have seen this year like other years is Stamp 1g or Spouse visa. These visas don't require prospective employers to complete any additional paperwork or pay any fees. The stamp 1g visa is typically common for Graduate/Junior level roles. This would require a candidate to successfully complete a master's and would grant successful applicants 2 years eligibility to work in Ireland. Spouse visa also very common allows a spouse to work in Ireland unrestricted if their husband or wife has received sponsorship through an employer.

Change this year:

This year employers have been less reluctant to interview and hire international candidates if they don't have a stamp 1g or spouse visa. There have been delays this year due to high application volumes, staffing shortages, backlogs, and administrative processing, such as security checks or the need for in-depth document verification. These delays have put some employers of going the full sponsorship route.

Expectation in 2026

The construction industry in Ireland has a talent shortage which fundamentally impacts most projects. This shortage is from general operatives to Senior Management. While there is desire to have local industry experience. Contractors and consultancies are now accepting that with some guidance and mentorship especially in those management positions there is quality talent globally that can help with the demand as we head into 2026.

BENEFITS IN CONSTRUCTION

Employee benefits offer a way to attract and keep people, contribute towards improving wellbeing, and encourage required behaviours, achievements, values, and skills. The advantages of having company benefits can provide an organisation a competitive edge compared to other organisations that do not provide employee benefits.

Offering employee benefits within an organisation is important as it shows employees that employers are invested in their overall health and their future well-being. Throughout the year, having been in contact with thousands of prospective job seekers and changers there is a strong desire for more than just a base salary.

Typically, the three key components for people accepting or declining an offer is salary, career progression and hybrid working. However, nearly 80% of personnel we speak to want to know about company benefits. When comparing offers their decision is likely to be influenced based on benefits and checking if the other components are the same.

“**The three key components for people accepting or declining an offer is salary, career progression and hybrid working**”

DesignBuild Search have included the below list of most common benefits that we have seen from employers coming from the construction industry. The below is a guide to what is available.

BENEFITS



Salary/package improvement



Career progression



**Remote/
flexible working
arrangements**



**Pension
5%-10%**



**Annual leave
21-27**



Healthcare



**Company
vehicle**

More common with
contractors



**Cycle to Work
Tax Saver
Scheme**



**Tax Saver
Travel
Scheme**



**Professional
subscriptions**



**Gym
membership**



**Further
education**

Paying or covering
part of fees



**Bonus contractor
and consultancy**
(contingent on both company
and individual performance)

DUBLIN/REST OF IRELAND:

Since we first started publishing our annual salary survey there has always been a significant difference in salaries in Dublin versus the rest of the country. However, this year we have noticed an increase in other regions which has brought it close to Dublin ranges.

There has been a significant increase in salaries in the West of Ireland this year in particular Galway and Mayo. We have seen increases up to 12% and 15% and this is across contractors and consultancies.



SALARY SURVEY

Engineering consultancy

Position	Dublin Region	Rest of Ireland
Junior Structural Engineer	€35,000 - €37,000	€32,000 - €35,000
Mid-level Structural Engineer	€45,000 - €55,000	€45,000 - €50,000
Senior Structural Engineer	€60,000 - €70,000	€55,000 - €60,000
Junior Civil Design Engineer	€35,000 - €37,000	€32,000 - €35,000
Mid-level Civil Design Engineer	€45,000 - €55,000	€40,000 - €50,000
Senior Civil Design Engineer	€60,000 - €70,000	€55,000 - €60,000
Resident Engineer	€60,000 - €70,000	€50,000 - €60,000
Associate/Chartered Engineer	€65,000 - €75,000	€55,000 - €65,000
Junior Traffic/Transport Engineers	€35,000 - €37,000	€32,000 - €35,000
Mid- level traffic/Transport Engineers	€40,000 - €50,000	€40,000 - €45,000
Senior Traffic/Transport Engineers	€55,000 - €65,000	€50,000 - €60,000
Junior CAD/BIM Coordinator	€35,000 - €37,000	€32,000 - €35,000
Intermediate CAD/BIM Coordinator	€40,000 - €45,000	€35,000 - €40,000
Senior CAD/BIM Coordinator	€45,000 - €60,000	€45,000 - €55,000

Mechanical and Electrical Design Engineering

Position	Dublin Region	Rest of Ireland
Graduate Mechanical and Electrical Design Engineer	€32,000 - €35,000	€30,000 - €32,000
Junior Mechanical and Electrical Design Engineer	€37,000 - €40,000	€35,000 - €40,000
Intermediate Mechanical and Electrical Design Engineer	€50,000 - €60,000	€50,000 - €55,000
Senior Mechanical and Electrical Design Engineer	€60,000 - €70,000	€60,000 - €65,000
Associate Mechanical and Electrical Design Engineer	€70,000 - €85,000	€70,000 - €80,000

Engineering (Contractor/On-Site)

Position	Dublin Region	Rest of Ireland
Junior Site Engineer	€33,000 - €40,000	€32,000 - €35,000
Intermediate Site Engineer	€40,000 - €50,000	€35,000 - €45,000
Senior Site Engineer	€55,000 - €65,000	€50,000 - €60,000
Quality Engineer	€40,000 - €60,000	€40,000 - €50,000

Contractor: Mechanical and Electrical Engineering

Position	Dublin Region	Rest of Ireland
Graduate Mechanical and Electrical Engineer	€32,000 - €35,000	€30,000 - €32,000
Junior Mechanical and Electrical Engineer	€35,000 - €40,000	€32,000 - €37,000
Intermediate Mechanical and Electrical Engineering	€45,000 - €55,000	€40,000 - €45,000
Senior Mechanical and Electrical Engineer	€50,000 - €65,000	€50,000 - €65,000
M&E Coordinator/Building	€55,000 - €65,000	€50,000 - €60,000

Management and operations (Consultancy)

Position	Dublin Region	Rest of Ireland
Operations Manager	€75,000 +	€70,000 +
Associate	€95,000 +	€5,000 +
Senior Project Manager	€65,000 - €75,000	€55,000 - €65,000
Project Manager	€60,000 - €65,000	€50,000 - €60,000
Assistant Project Manager	€45,000 - €55,000	€40,000 - €45,000
Project Coordinator	€40,000 - €50,000	€35,000 - €45,000
Junior Project Manager	€35,000 - €45,000	€35,000 - €40,000

Management/Operations (Contractor/On-site)

Position	Dublin Region	Rest of Ireland
Construction Director	€120,000+	€100,000+
Contracts Manager	€100,000+	€80,000 +
Senior Project Manager	€85,000 - €95,000	€80,000 - €85,000
Project Manager	€70,000 - €85,000	€65,000 - €80,000
Senior Site Manager	€75,000 - €85,000	€70,000 - €80,000
Site Manager	€65,000 - €75,000	€60,000 - €70,000
Assistant Project Manager	€50,000 - €60,000	€45,000 - €55,000
Foreman	€60,000 - €65,000	€50,000 - €60,000
Finishing Foreman	€60,000 - €65,000	€50,000 - €60,000
Mechanical and Electrical Site Manager	€65,000 - €75,000	€60,000 - €70,000
Mechanical and Electrical Project Manager	€85,000 - €95,000	€75,000 - €85,000
Mechanical and Electrical Contract Manager	€90,000+	€80,000+
Junior EHS Advisor	€35,000 - €40,000	€35,000 - €40,000
Intermediate EHS Advisor	€40,000 - €50,000	€40,000 - €45,000
EHS Advisor	€60,000 - €70,000	€50,000 - €60,000
EHS Manager	€75,000 - €90,000	€70,000 - €80,000

Commercial/Quantity Surveying

Consultancy	Dublin Region	Rest of Ireland
Junior Quantity Surveyor	€35,000 - €45,000	€32,000 - €40,000
Intermediate	€45,000 - €65,000	€40,000 - €60,000
Intermediate M&E QS	€45,000 - €65,000	€40,000 - €60,000
Senior M&E Quantity Surveyor	€80,000 - €85,000	€75,000 - €85,000
Senior Quantity Surveyor	€80,000 - €90,000	€65,000 - €80,000
Associate Director	€85,000 - €100,000	€80,000 - €90,000
Director	€120,000+	€100,000+

Contractor	Dublin Region	Rest of Ireland
Junior Quantity Surveyor	€40,000 - €45,000	€37,000 - €40,000
Intermediate	€50,000 - €65,000	€45,000 - €60,000
Intermediate M&E QS	€60,000 - €65,000	€55,000 - €60,000
Senior M&E Quantity Surveyor	€85,000 - €95,000	€80,000 - €85,000
Senior Quantity Surveyor	€85,000 - €95,000	€80,000 - €90,000
Managing Quantity Surveyor	€90,000 - €110,000	€90,000 - €100,000
Commercial Manager	€110,000 - €130,000	€100,000 - €120,000
Commercial Director	€130,000 - €150,000	€120,000 - €150,000

Commercial/Estimating

Contractor	Dublin Region	Rest of Ireland
Estimator	€75,000 - €75,000	€60,000 - €65,000
Senior Estimator	€80,000 - €90,000	€70,000 - €80,000
Estimating Manager	€100,000 - €120,000	€90,000 - €110,000

GET TO KNOW DBS

DesignBuild Search is a specialist recruitment consultancy established with the simple aim of providing a quality recruitment service for clients and candidates alike in the construction and engineering industry. Our team is made up of experienced construction recruiters who have a genuine passion for the construction industry.

Operating as part of the Vertical Markets Group, Design Build Search was founded in 2016 with the aim of bringing our expertise, specialist approach and vast network to the construction recruitment sector. Since then we have grown organically, nurturing valuable relationships with the businesses we partner with.

Our reputation in the construction sector is well-established, and a significant portion of our business comes from repeat business and referrals which is a testament to our ability to cultivate long term relationships with our clients.

At Design Build Search

We pride ourselves on building on your foundation and becoming an extension of your business. What sets us apart is our commitment to providing consultancy services rather than just recruiting. Our main aim is to cultivate long lasting relationships with both employers and employees rather than just one of encounters.

We understand the uniqueness of each client and go beyond job descriptions to comprehend organisational nuances, cultural dynamics, and team requirements. We tailor our approach, including feedback and review processes to meet the specific needs of our clients.

GET TO KNOW DBS



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