



DESIGN | BUILD  
SEARCH



# Salary and Market Trends Report 2024

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# INTRODUCTION

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 wealth of industry experience domestically and internationally. Over the last 7 years DesignBuild 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.

“Speaking with industry leaders across different sectors there is a sense of confidence heading into 2024”

The construction industry in Ireland was expected to shrink by 3% in real terms in 2023. There was certainly evidence to suggest this in Q1, Q2 and the early stages of Q3. Employers were reluctant to act as quick on prospective employees. Employees on the other hand were less engaging and less likely to make a move.

However, over the last 3 months there has been an increase in activity both in engagement and hiring from employers. Employees are now open to making a change. Speaking with industry leaders across different sectors there is a sense of confidence heading into 2024.

# LOOKING INTO 2024

The construction industry is expected to grow in 2024 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 EUR165 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.

## Candidates trends:

Over the last 12 months we have noticed an increase Over the last 12 months we have noticed an increase in construction professionals emigrating to Australia, New Zealand, North America and the Middle East. This has certainly become a more common trend post covid.

We have also noticed a decrease in the volume of construction professionals looking at returning back to Ireland. Of those that relocate the majority are looking for opportunities outside of Dublin and Cork.

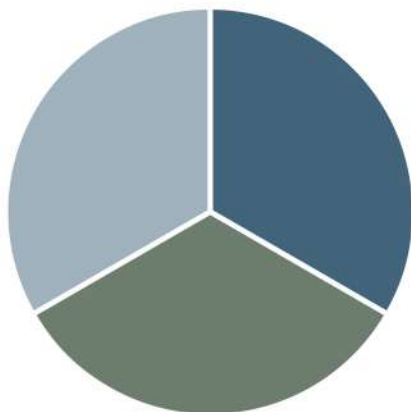
Within the Irish market there is still an appetite for candidates to make a change.

Their decisions are almost always based on three factors.

- Increase in salary or better package
- Promotion or structured career progression
- Flexibility

If you have the capacity to meet these needs then you put yourself in a better position to source the best talent.

# LOOKING INTO 2024



- Salary/package improvement
- Promotion
- Flexibility

At DesignBuild Search, we carried out some research into our total number of placements this year to date in 2023 and how many of those were afforded the opportunity to work either a hybrid or work from home model.

69.6% of the total placements made currently work a hybrid model or were offered the option to work a hybrid model. 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.

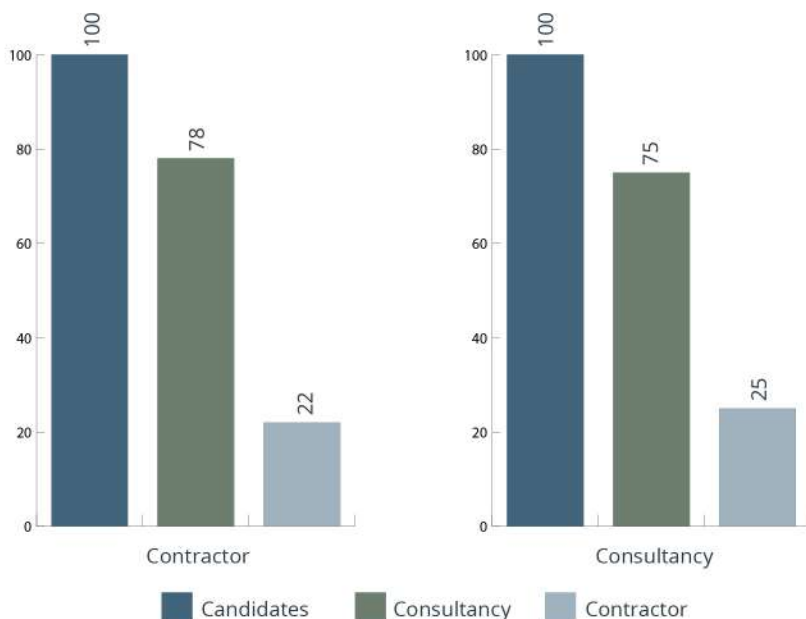


# LOOKING INTO 2024

## Other trends:

Moving from a contractor to consultancy. This transition is very possible to do, 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 have slightly 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 balk 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 2024

But we now also see a lot of people looking for more site-based work as after two years or so of working from home they prefer to be out and about more and see the results of their work.

Throughout the year we spoke with 200 professionals considering a change. 100 working for a main contractor and 100 from the consultancy side. 78% on the contractor side were open to making a switch to a consultancy, citing hybrid working as a big motivator. 22% of consultancy professionals would consider a change to the contractor side. Their motivation was for an increase on salary and to be site based.

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 – there are typically higher salaries on offer, better benefits packages, and you're at the top of the pecking order – in lot of cases you can be giving instructions to former employers or colleagues!

**“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”**

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.

# HIRING AND MISSING OUT

Within the Irish market there is still a chronic shortage of qualified construction professionals to meet the demand of the growing market. Now, with an increase of people emigrating overseas and a decrease in available talent. It is critical for companies to improve the efficiency and speed of which they hire. 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.

According to LinkedIn, there are over 100,000 active construction professionals in Ireland - the below is a breakdown of the most common skills and professions. We have also seen growth in other skills over the last 12 months, which is represented in the second table.

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

Emmett Finnegan



# 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, Ireland's workforce has transitioned to hybrid working at a greater rate than any other country in the EU, with a quarter of workers now operating from home most of the time, according to a new report.

Commercial property group BNP Paribas Real Estate Ireland reports that while back in 2019 just 7 per cent of Ireland's workforce said they usually worked from home, this figure jumped to 25 per cent in 2022, the biggest percentage point increase of any EU country.

Hybrid/remote working is still a high priority for most job seekers. However, over the last 12 months most employers in the construction industry have been advocating to get employees back in the office. Across the industry as a whole, most construction jobs require people to be physically on site during the construction process. However, even design and construction consultancies are encouraging people back to office.

“Over the last 12 months most employers in the construction industry have been advocating to get employees back in the office”

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

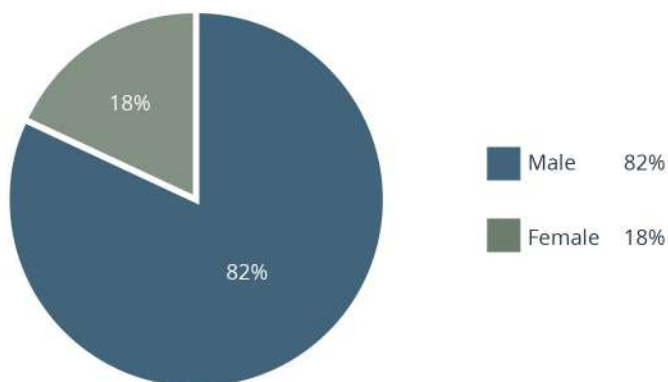
As a company we continue to work with and successfully place an increasing number of international candidates and women with both contractors and consultancies.

|                      | 2023 | 2022 | 2021 | 2020 | 2019 |
|----------------------|------|------|------|------|------|
| <b>Male</b>          | 85%  | 79%  | 80%  | 83%  | 84%  |
| <b>Female</b>        | 7%   | 21%  | 20%  | 17%  | 16%  |
| <b>Irish</b>         | 41%  | 46%  | 57%  | 83%  | 76%  |
| <b>International</b> | 59%  | 54%  | 43%  | 17%  | 24%  |

## 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 the CIF, women account for about 12% of the construction workforce in Ireland in 2023. There are now over 14,000 women working in the construction industry and nearly 25% of new construction vacancies in 2022 were filled by female employees.

Last year we identified that we were placing an above average number of women into our clients' vacancies, about 20% of them.

This year we increased on that again, albeit just by 1%, from 20% to 21%. Hopefully, we will continue to see this number rise in 2023 and beyond.

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.

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

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

# INTERNATIONAL CANDIDATES

2022 was the first time that we placed more non-Irish people than Irish for vacancies within Ireland. This year (2023) we have seen a similar trend. Both contractors and consultancies are more open to hiring international candidates.

Over the last 12 months we have seen construction professionals relocating from India, Sri Lanka, South Africa, UAE, Australia and North America.

## Spouse visa:

In many instances companies are taken advantage of the spouse visa. This tends to be a spouse working in a hospital or in the tech sector. Candidates that qualify for the spouse visa have flexibility to change employers.

## Higher Education:

The higher education visa/Stamp 1g is very effective. It permits graduates at Masters level to work upon graduation for 2 years unrestricted. This allows employers to hire experienced professionals who already have international experience on large scale projects. These professionals will also have a higher level Irish education

## Quality candidates:

This year we have also seen an increase of senior candidates, in particular Quantity Surveyors, successfully securing and relocating to Ireland on a critical skills visa. Contractors and consultancies are seeing the value in hiring experienced professionals from overseas who have large project experience. The visa process has sped up in the last 12 months.



# BENEFITS

Employee benefits offer a way to attract and keep people, contribute towards improving wellbeing, and encourage required behaviours, achievements, values, and skills. Companies tend to offer various benefits. 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 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

| Employee benefits  |
|--|
| Salary/package improvement   |
| Career progression   |
| Remote/flexible working arrangements   |
| Pension 5%-10%   |
| Annual leave 21-27   |
| Healthcare   |
| Career progression   |
| Company vehicle – more common with contractors   |
| Cycle to Work Tax Saver Scheme Tax Saver Travel Scheme                                       |
| Professional subscriptions   |
| Gym membership   |
| Bonus contractor and consultancy.<br>(contingent on both company and individual performance) |
| Further education – paying or covering part of fees  |

# SALARY SURVEY

## Engineering consultancy

| Position                               | Dublin Region     | Rest of Ireland   |
|--|-------------------|-------------------|
| Junior Structural Engineer:            | €32,000 - €35,000 | €30,000 - €32,000 |
| Mid-level Structural Engineer:         | €40,000 - €55,000 | €40,000 - €50,000 |
| Senior Structural Engineer:            | €60,000 - €70,000 | €55,000 - €60,000 |
| Junior Civil Design Engineer:          | €32,000 - €35,000 | €30,000 - €32,000 |
| Mid-level Civil Design Engineer:       | €40,000 - €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     | €32,000 - €35,000 | €30,000 - €33,000 |
| 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:            | €32,000 - €35,000 | €30,000 - €32,000 |
| Intermediate CAD/BIM Coordinator:      | €35,000 - €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:     | €30,000 - €35,000 | €28,000 - €32,000 |
| Junior Mechanical and Electrical Design Engineer:       | €35,000 - €40,000 | €32,000 - €40,000 |
| Intermediate Mechanical and Electrical Design Engineer: | €45,000 - €55,000 | €45,000 - €50,000 |
| 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:       | €30,000 - €33,000 | €28,000 - €30,000 |
| Junior Mechanical and Electrical Engineer:         | €33,000 - €35,000 | €30,000 - €33,000 |
| 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     | €35,00 - €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 | €75,000 - €85,000 |
| Project Manager:                            | €70,000 - €85,000 | €65,000 - €75,000 |
| Senior Site Manager:                        | €65,000 - €75,000 | €60,000 - €70,000 |
| Site Manager:                               | €55,000 - €65,000 | €50,000 - €60,000 |
| Assistant Project Manager:                  | €50,000 - €60,000 | €45,000 - €50,000 |
| Foreman:                                    | €50,000 - €60,000 | €50,000 - €60,000 |
| Finishing Foreman:                          | €50,000 - €60,000 | €50,000 - €60,000 |
| Mechanical and Electrical Site Manager:     | €65,000 - €75,000 | €55,000 - €65,000 |
| Mechanical and Electrical Project Manager:  | €75,000 - €90,000 | €65,000 - €75,000 |
| 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  | €30,000 - €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 | €70,000 - €85,000  | €65,000 - €80,000 |
| Senior Quantity Surveyor     | €70,000 - €85,000  | €65,000 - €80,000 |
| Associate Director           | €85,000 - €100,000 | €80,000 - €90,000 |
| Director                     | €100,000+          | €90,000+          |

| Contractor                   | Dublin Region       | Rest of Ireland     |
|------------------------------|---------------------|---------------------|
| Junior Quantity Surveyor     | €40,000 - €45,000   | €35,000 - €40,000   |
| Intermediate                 | €50,000 - €65,000   | €45,000 - €60,000   |
| Intermediate M&E QS          | €50,000 - €65,000   | €45,000 - €60,000   |
| Senior M&E Quantity Surveyor | €75,000 - €85,000   | €70,000 - €80,000   |
| Senior Quantity Surveyor     | €75,000 - €85,000   | €80,000 - €90,000   |
| Managing Quantity Surveyor   | €85,000 - €100,000  | €80,000 - €90,000   |
| Commercial Manager           | €100,000 - €120,000 | €90,000 - €100,000  |
| Commercial Director          | €120,000 - €150,000 | €100,000 - €120,000 |

## Commercial/Estimating

| Contractor         | Dublin Region      | Rest of Ireland   |
|--------------------|--------------------|-------------------|
| Estimator          | €65,000 - €75,000  | €55,000 - €65,000 |
| Senior Estimator   | €75,000 - €85,000  | €65,000 - €75,000 |
| Estimating Manager | €85,000 - €100,000 | €75,000 - €85,000 |

# 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.

Design Build Search is a member of a wider group, The Vertical Markets Group. VM Group was founded in 2008 and has since developed into 6 specialist consultancies Life Science Recruitment, Capital Markets, IT Search, HR Search, Design Build Search and A+F Recruitment. Our founding philosophy is based on three fundamental principles: People, Environment and Opportunity.



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