

A Summary of Mind the Skills Gap – the Skills We Need for Sustainable Communities



This major piece of research was undertaken by Arup on behalf of ASC. Building on the work of others - including Ernst & Young, DTZ, York Consulting, Asset Skills, CIS and CABE - the study provides the first cross-sector assessment of supply and demand of skills required to deliver sustainable communities. It provides detailed information on current and forecasted labour shortages and skills gaps, by profession and by region.

Building sustainable communities depends on the efforts of a wide range of occupations, including architecture, planning, civil engineering, surveying, housing, community development, neighbourhood management, economic development and increasingly environmental management. This study provides the sector with an opportunity to assess what we're doing to tackle these issues and ensure that we accelerate our programmes to meet market demand.

The study found:

- Significant investment and progress has already been made by organisations in tackling shortages
- Labour shortages and skills gaps are widening
- Multidisciplinary working and generic skills are essential to delivering sustainable communities
- Further research is required

The study highlights the progress being made by ASC, the Regional Centres of Excellence, Sector Skills Councils and professional institutes in addressing skills and labour shortages across the professions. It points out that despite these efforts the country could face significant shortfalls in qualified professional unless more efforts is made to address them.

The model used to forecast labour shortages is based on a continuation of current trends and indicates the speed and direction of labour market changes – unless we continue the good work already undertaken and continue to make additional interventions we could face serious capacity issues in key professions as well as a serious lack of generic skills across the sector.

This is a fast-changing sector so this report is not intended to be the final word. The housing sector, for example, is particularly sensitive to changes in demand and will be hugely influenced by the direction of future housing policy. We are already working with others to review the housing data, establish new baselines and re-run the forecast model to take account of the Housing Green Paper and the Comprehensive Spending Review 2007.

Our ultimate challenge is to create places that are carbon efficient, socially cohesive, prosperous and well connected. As the Government's national body for the skills and knowledge required to make and maintain better places, we are leading the drive along with partners to ensure that there are recruitment and training programmes in place to provide enough people with the right skills.

We hope that the findings of this study will stimulate a dialogue across this wide-ranging sector and lead to practical solutions to support the delivery of sustainable communities.

Source: www.ascskills.org.uk/pages/research/mind-the-skills-gap