



how is covid-19
impacting

the construction industry?

An analysis into how the pandemic has
affected the construction industry.

For the construction industry, when the nationwide lockdown was enforced in efforts to prevent the initial spread of Covid-19, all sites immediately closed down.

Fast-forward to July; sites are reopening, workers are embracing living and working in a new world where social distancing and face coverings are the norm, and the industry is working harder than ever to bounce back.

While the government help to protect the industry by encouraging house building, creating more than 500 jobs through HS2 and implementing job retention schemes, there is still more work to be done at a grassroots level to promote further sector growth.

In order to analyse the impact that Covid-19 is having on the construction industry, we surveyed over 130 construction employers to discover what safety measures they have implemented, how they think the virus has impacted productivity, and how they are ensuring their workforce is safe.

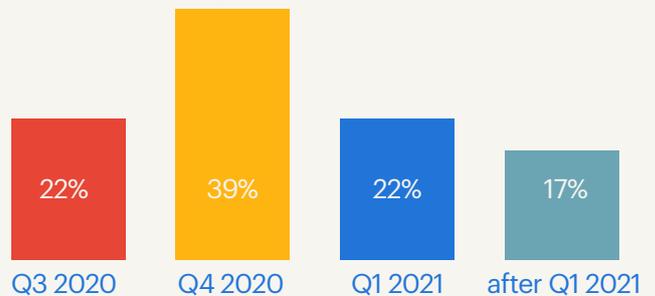
To enable us to paint an accurate picture of how the industry is adapting to change, we also surveyed over 700 construction workers. This allowed us to identify any potential disconnect and to close the gap to ensure aligned thinking.

Recovery.

Our data revealed that fortunately, the majority of sites are now open and running at a healthy capacity.

80% of employers said that their sites are now up-and-running, with a third of those (34%) operating at between 80% and 100% capacity. With regards to returning to a pre-covid landscape, 22% believe to be back to full capacity in Q3 2020, and 39% by the end of the year - some encouraging figures showing the industry is somewhat recovering.

At what point do you expect to be at full capacity?



It appears that the furloughed workforce is being re-deployed, as employers work towards picking up the pace. [Additional support from the government](#) was also welcomed to get the industry back on track.

In June it was announced that new measures to help the construction industry boost building and return to work safely, were introduced, including;

- Government extension of planning permission deadlines, saving hundreds of construction projects' permissions from expiring
- Flexible working hours to support social distancing, helping people return to work safely.

Observations on industry recovery were reinforced by the latest figures from the Purchasing Managers Index (PMI), which showed a [value of 55.3](#) for June, the first time for the construction industry since February. The index recorded 52.6 in February, before falling to 39.3 in March, as the lockdown began and then collapsed to a historic low of 8.2 in April, following the closure of many sites and materials suppliers. May's figure of 28.9 represented a further contraction.

hiring trends.

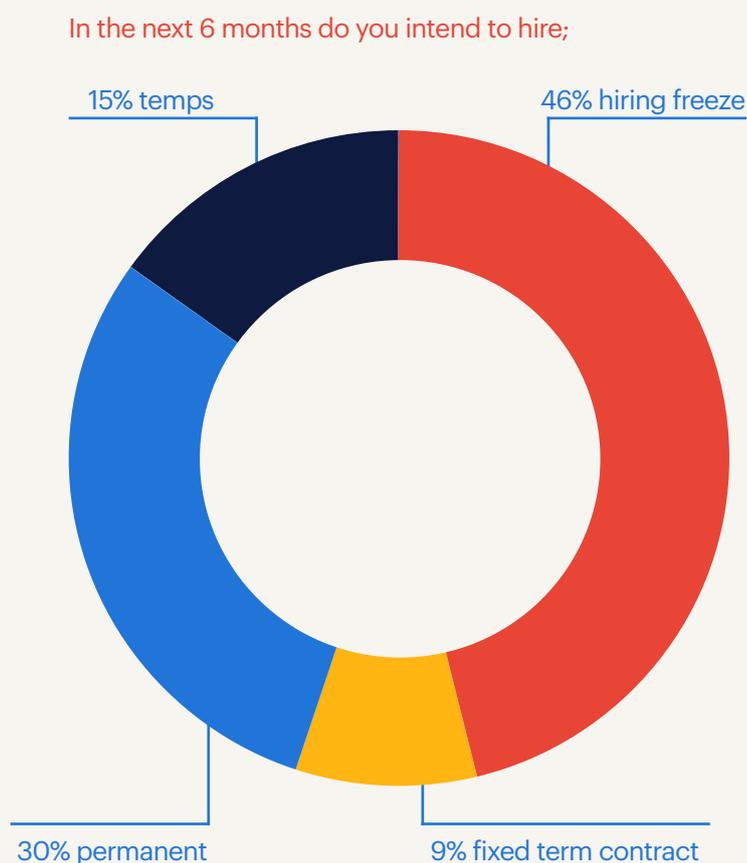
Figures hint towards the industry awakening after the dormant period as furlough comes to an end.

We asked employers what basis they intend to hire on in the next six months to get a clear indication.

The majority, nearly half (46%), predicted a hiring freeze, focusing on the already employed workers and utilising the skills of those returned from leave.

Some encouraging data was discovered regarding the recruitment of permanent employees.

30% of employers are looking to hire permanent workers within the next six months and 15% are looking to hire temporary workers.



safety.

Findings from the survey revealed a number of safety talking points.

When it comes to Covid-19, the general consensus is that workers do not feel safe. 59% of workers surveyed admitted to feeling somewhat safe or not safe at all during the working day.

How effective are the measures in keeping staff safe?



I feel safe 41%

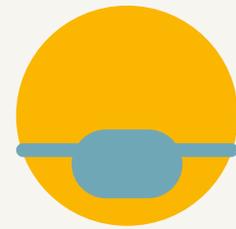


somewhat safe 30%



do not feel safe at all 29%

The results present an interesting disconnect between what employers think about the effective implementation of safety measures versus the experience of those working on the sites.



92% of employers are confident that they are providing adequate PPE to prevent the spread of Covid...

35% of workers, however, do not have access to enough PPE to allow them to confidently work while the virus is still present.

Another discrepancy identified is with regards to social distancing on UK sites - 25% of workers feel that social distancing measures are adequate, while 84% of employers are confident that reasonable steps have been taken to enforce workers stay a safe distance from one another.

Lastly, it has become clear that workers are confident that basic personal hygiene is freely available, with three-quarters of workers noticing an increase in the availability of hand-washing facilities, showing that employers are making some positive steps towards Covid spread.

how can covid-19 safety measures be improved?

With over half of employees stating that they do not feel completely safe at work, despite the majority of employers confident that social distancing measures are in place and Covid PPE is available, is this now time to implement greater measures to prevent the virus spreading?

With robust health and safety measures already in place, communication between head office and those on site is more vital than ever. This will ensure those on the ground know what covid-19 government guidance is being followed in order to ensure compliance and safety.

By hiring specialist [covid-focused roles](#) such as Covid Supervisors or Covid Marshalls, employers will be able to ensure that dedicated resource is on hand to reinforce the importance of social distancing and strict cleaning measures.

Surprisingly, less than a quarter of employers have hired Covid-19 supervisors (22%).



The new role was created to keep workers and visitors safe during working hours, with a special emphasis on social distancing, safely checking in visitors and contractors and ensuring signage is being used effectively. Eligible Candidates will be required to have a valid CSCS card, with fairly flexible pay rates, offering a cost effective solution.



are you confident you have the skills you need?

Nearly a quarter of employers surveyed admitted to feeling that they do not have the relevant skills within their current workforce.

22% stated that their business is suffering from a gap in skills due to the ability and availability of workers during the pandemic.

Need to close the skills gap?

Randstad can provide professionals who are specialised in guaranteeing safety. If you need to take steps to ensure the safety of your workers, get in touch now.

[Click here to contact us](#)

Additional resources:

[construction and COVID19, what's next?](#)

[Build, build, build - the prime minister's pledge](#)

[A guide to staying safe in construction with covid-19 \[video\]](#)

[Download our checklist for COVID19 protection on construction sites.](#)

About the data:

Randstad Construction, Property and Engineering surveyed 131 construction employers and 723 construction workers between June 2020 and July 2020



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