

Supporting Skills Growth

Although UK tradespeople are optimistic about the future, with 82% expecting business activity to remain at the same level or grow over the next 12 months and nearly half (45%) reporting being busier than last year – research conducted by trade retailer, Screwfix, has revealed the majority (57%) are reporting difficulties in recruiting staff to support them.

For those who struggle to recruit skilled employees, more than one third (37%) believe it is because apprenticeships are not given the same level of respect as a university education. Furthermore, 31% say poor public perception of a career in the trade means school leavers are not interested in pursuing a future in construction.

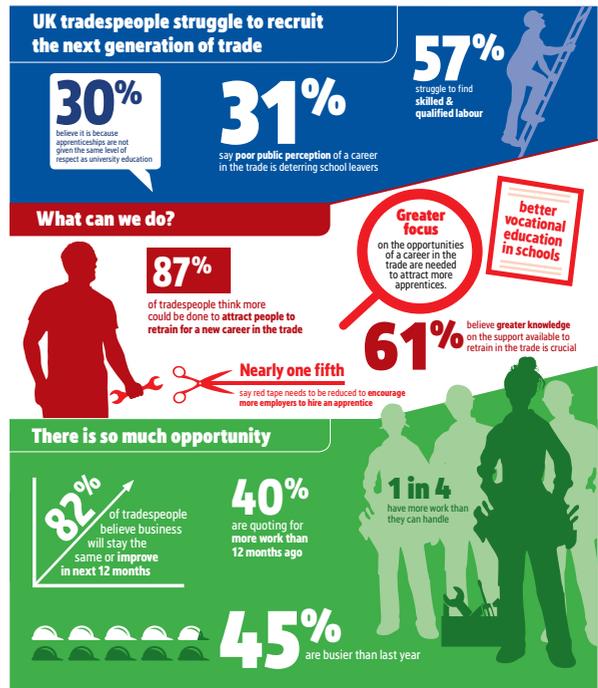
The research, conducted as part of Screwfix Trade Pulse*, a monthly index of more than 500 UK tradespeople, also revealed strong work levels across the trade at the moment, as nearly one fifth (18%) of tradespeople has more work than they can handle and 40% are quoting for more jobs than 12 months ago.

Nearly all (94%) tradespeople said they would recommend a career in the trade and of the reasons why, 85% say they have a strong sense of achievement when a job is done and, 80% enjoy seeing the results of their hard work.

More than half (57%) of those surveyed said they started as apprentices and, when it comes to increasing the numbers undertaking trade apprenticeships, more than one third (35%) believe greater focus is needed on vocational education in schools. More than one quarter (26%) believe improved awareness about the opportunities offered by a career in the trade would drive greater uptake of apprenticeships, with 19% saying that reducing red tape for employers looking to hire an apprentice should be considered.

The research also looked at views around those entering construction at a later stage in their careers. The significant majority (82%) of tradespeople think more could be done to attract people to the trade further into their working lives. More than two thirds (69%) think increasing awareness of the opportunities available would help attract people into the trade and 61% believe greater knowledge of the support available to retrain is also crucial. **1**

ELECTRICFIX Trade Pulse Press
‘The voice of the trade’



To support skills growth in the construction trade Screwfix has partnered with Yeovil College to launch a pilot course covering core construction skills for year 10 and 11 pupils at a time when there is a widely reported construction skills gap.

The Screwfix Construction Trade Academy course aims to educate young people about a successful future in the trade before leaving school.

The 16 students studying the course will learn the foundations of bricklaying, plumbing, carpentry and electrical contracting.

The Screwfix Construction Trade Academy course is City & Guilds qualified and will see the students gain valuable skills, as well as adding to their GCSEs and help towards gaining an apprenticeship after leaving school.

As part of Screwfix's commitment to support the future of construction, the retailer has also invested in a new purpose-built site

at the College. Work has started on the new 'Screwfix Trade Skills Centre' which will see the students benefit from a dedicated space, specifically designed to meet the needs of the future tradespeople training there. The centre features two state-of-the-art work training areas, which have been designed to enable Yeovil College to meet the needs of its local and regional industries. With each training area having the capacity to train up to 20 students/apprentices at any one time, the students will attend the college for half day weekly sessions to give them a taster of life in the trades. **1**



The Power of One

Three major UK house builders have signalled their support for vertically integrated materials sourcing with a switch away from multiple roofline supply partners to GAP's Power of One model.

In September, Taylor Wimpey committed exclusively to GAP for three more years and the following month Persimmon moved its entire roofline supply contract to GAP in a ground-breaking new two-year solus agreement. In early November Redrow handed the GAP Nationals team joint responsibility for its PVC-U fascia, soffit and ancillaries supply.

As well as the three major players, GAP's end-to-end manufacturing, logistics and 112-Depot distribution system is already the building materials source of choice for Lovell Homes, Miller Homes and Keepmoat.

Paul Sowerby, GAP's Director of Group Sales & Marketing says: "As a Board, we felt it was time to demystify the whole process and give buyers what they say they most want. One negotiation. One brand. One fixed price. One point of contact. And one simple invoice.

"For house builders, the chance to engage quickly and effortlessly with every stage of the supply chain via a single point of contact is obviously important, but the big difference is the commercial transparency and financial clarity that come with it.

Following the cash acquisition of the SIG Building Plastics and SIG Windows businesses in August 2017, Blackburn-based GAP became the UK's largest distributor of PVC-U roofline, cladding and trim products to the UK's new home building sector. [i](#)



Romford-based Glazefix is the latest fabricator to sign up with Eurocell.

MD Lewis Mayer explains: "We primarily work with trade, with a smaller proportion of retail, but we can see the potential for more commercial work and the Eurocell range of foil products will support our move into that sector, particularly because it is very keenly priced. It's also important that all the ancillary items such as trims can be supplied in matching colours.

"Eurocell has a great range of ancillary products that is growing all the time and that's available through all their branches so we could be working on a job as far away as Cornwall and still get everything we needed, from sealants to conservatory roofs".

Established in 2011, Glazefix operates from a unit in Havering-atte-Bower on the outskirts of Romford in Essex, where it fabricates around 150 frames per week and employs up to seven staff. Since signing up with Eurocell, the company reports that it has already seen considerable growth already and is planning to acquire new machinery and build a further 56m² of office and warehouse space. [i](#)

FIT Show's 'Installation of the Year' competition is back for 2018. The hunt is now officially on to find the industry's best glazed installations.

New for 2018, entries are being invited across two installation categories; 'residential' and 'commercial'. Whilst the actual FIT Show will not run until May 2019, Show organisers have responded to the industry's enthusiasm for the 'Installation of the Year' competition by making it an annual fixture.

Entries can be made via Twitter by posting a picture of an installation to @FITShow and utilising either the hashtag for #Commercial or #Residential - to identify the relevant category - accompanied by a short description of the project. (Last years winner Uni_Slide, partnered with Barc Architects, pictured right)



The competition is open now and will run until June. Each month entries will be showcased on the brand new FIT Show website, with one winner selected for both categories by FIT Show's official judging panel made up of industry experts.

Monthly prizes will be awarded to the winners in both categories, with the 6 monthly commercial and 6 monthly residential winners fighting it out to take home the overall 'Installation of the Year' crown in each category when it goes to public vote.

Overall winners will be announced at the 2019 FIT Show Gala Dinner and, alongside the honour of having the 'Installation of the Year', winners will receive a trophy and a two-night stay at a golf/spa hotel with dinner. [i](#)