

SURVEYORS JOURNAL

VOLUME 14

ISSUE 1

FEBRUARY/
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2024

THE WORLD OF WORK IN CONSTRUCTION, LAND AND PROPERTY



Chartered property,
land and construction
surveyors

IN THIS ISSUE

SURVEYING IN THE
PUBLIC SERVICE

RECRUITMENT OUTLOOK

NEW SURVEYING
APPRENTICESHIPS



myhome.ie

The image shows a laptop screen displaying the myhome.ie website. The page is titled "New Valuation" and features a search bar with "Property Type" and "Sort By" dropdowns. Below the search bar, there are filters for "SQM" and "BER" (Building Energy Rating). The main content area lists several properties for sale in Ballinteer, Dublin 16. Each listing includes a photo of the property, the type (Semi-D or Detached), the number of bedrooms (4) and bathrooms (1), the square meters (SQM 100), the sold date (04/09/2023), and the listed price (€420,000 to €405,000). There are buttons for "View Brochure" and "Add" for each property. A map on the right side of the screen shows the location of the properties. The laptop keyboard is visible in the foreground.

Property Type	Bedrooms	Bathrooms	SQM	Sold Date	Listed Price	View Brochure	Add
Semi-D	4	1	100	04/09/2023	€420,000	View Brochure	Add
Detached	4	1	100	02/09/2023	€420,000	View Brochure	Add
Semi-D	4	1	100	05/09/2023	€405,000	No Brochure	Add

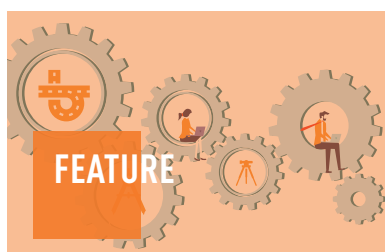
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All submissions will be considered by the Editorial Board: editor@scsi.ie

If you would prefer to receive the *Surveyors Journal* electronically, please email sustainability@scsi.ie.

MAKING AN IMPACT

THE ENGAGEMENT OF SCSi MEMBERS ALLOWS THE ORGANISATION TO HAVE AN IMPACT AND HELPS IT BECOME A BETTER AND MORE INFLUENTIAL BODY.

Connecting is one of the main pillars of the SCSi's strategy. At this year's Annual Dinner, over 1,250 members and guests from over 210 member firms were able to connect. The attendance at and vibrance of this event is a testament to the commitment of members and the value of the SCSi and our colleagues across the property, land, and construction sector.

Wide-ranging impact

It is perhaps not a surprise that we seek the opinions and network of our colleagues. We know that the impact of the SCSi, which is indeed your impact, goes well beyond our membership and now informs and supports the public. The recent addition to the real cost series continues to inform vital discussions around housing viability and affordability in Ireland, and our work representing the profession and engaging with the Government. The Minister for Housing, Local Government and Heritage, Darragh O'Brien TD, said at the Annual Dinner: "The SCSi has been an integral stakeholder but, more importantly, a key support to both myself and my Department, and I thank you for that".

Your input propels the profession forward

Your active membership drives forward our profession and strengthens the voice of the SCSi. The SCSi's success is the manifestation of

shared effort across every membership sector. This is achieved by many means, such as contributing to the work of a committee or working group, supporting your colleagues by taking their calls, delivering a CPD, working on the regulatory boards to ensure standards are upheld, or taking part in the APC process. The public is counting on our industry and profession to meet housing needs and the needs of a sustainable future.

Membership growth

However, we will also need to grow our membership if we are going to achieve these expectations. This special edition of the *Surveyors Journal* highlights how the SCSi is creating a connection to the next generation of surveyors, which the industry and country will count on. For example, the SCSi's education team is evolving our education offering to support new learning approaches and broader opportunities for young people via the new MSc apprenticeship.

In this spirit of connecting, I encourage you to get involved or stay involved. Over the coming months, there will be opportunities to influence the SCSi's next three-year strategic plan, which will be in place by our AGM in June. Volunteering to join professional groups and involving your organisation in the apprenticeship scheme are but two opportunities to shape the world of work in the SCSi and the profession.



PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Enda McGuane
SCSi President



A DIVERSE PROFESSION

ARTICLES IN THIS EDITION LOOK AT THE WORLD OF WORK IN LAND, PROPERTY AND CONSTRUCTION.

As would be expected in a sector with great diversity and breadth, some areas can be very busy, with exceptional demand for surveyors, while others present more constraints. In a feature on page 20, property recruitment specialist Avril Clare points out that demand for construction and property professionals is uneven across the sector. Nevertheless, she says that opportunities exist for those with a diverse skillset. At an interesting point in the development of our economy, this recruitment outlook for 2024 is thought provoking.

One method for ensuring a diverse skillset is to undertake CPD. Michael Mooring, Chair of the SCSi Standing Committee on Education and CPD, says that this should be more than a chore and will help surveyors meet standards for compliance while taking on learning that can be enjoyable. Professional development can be of great value in enhancing a career and diversifying a professional skillset.

For those with experience or who may be in the closing years of their career, Stewart Harrington's piece (page 22) should make very interesting reading. He notes that few Chartered Surveyors have been appointed as non-executive directors of NGOs, non-profit organisations or commercial entities. Observing a shift that has taken place in property over the past 50 years, he says that many companies are now property driven and this has opened up enormous opportunities for surveyors to work as non-executive directors. Stewart has a point and surveyors should look at professional development in acquiring the knowledge and skills needed to undertake these roles. There are courses available to acquire qualifications and knowledge for undertaking this important role, which would help surveyors to diversify their skillsets.

Looking to another area of diversification, Tommy Buckley, a QS with Dublin City Council, says that there is ample opportunity in the public sector for Chartered Surveyors. In an interesting insight, Tommy points out that the sector is value for money rather than margin driven, with a large focus on positive societal impact. This can be attractive for some looking for alternative careers. By way of examples, brief profiles of surveyors with some very interesting roles in the public sector are provided (see pages 24-28).

EDITORIAL

Tom Dunne
Editor



LIFELONG LEARNING IN IRELAND

112,194

Number of lifelong learning enrolments in 2022

65%

Female percentage of all lifelong learning enrolments

35-44 years

The age group making up the highest percentage of lifelong learning enrolments (31.9%)

38%

Percentage of those enrolling in lifelong learning who were employed

28,694

Number enrolling in lifelong learning who were educated to third level (30.1%)

Source: FET in numbers 2022 – Lifelong Learning. Available from: https://www.solas.ie/f/70398/x/960e970063/lifelong_learning_fet_report.pdf.

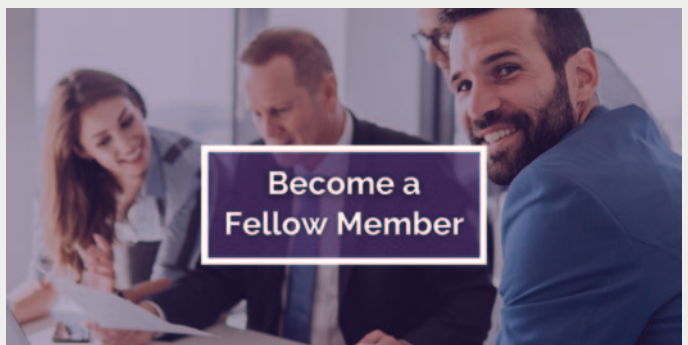
GROW YOUR CAREER: APPLY FOR FELLOWSHIP IN 2024

As we begin the year, we would like to congratulate eight fellows elected during 2023. The Fellowship grade of SCSi membership is a prestigious award that reflects the career achievements of a special group of property, land and construction professionals. Attaining the SCSi Fellowship is a true mark of distinction. Congratulations to:

- Aoife Brennan FSCSI FRICS,
Valuations Surveyor, Lisney Ireland;
- Fiona Dawson FSCSI FRICS,
Quantity Surveyor, South East Technological University;
- Johanna Gill FSCSI FRICS,
Valuations Surveyor, TMF Group;
- David Graham FSCSI FRICS,
Geomatics Surveyor, Murphy Geospatial;
- Gerard O'Malley FSCSI FRICS,
Quantity Surveyor, Tom McNamara & Partners;
- Sarah Sherlock FSCSI FRICS,
Geomatics Surveyor, Murphy Geospatial;

- Peter Walshe FSCSI FRICS,
Quantity Surveyor, Rogerson Reddan & Associates; and,
- Mark Wearen FSCSI FRICS,
Quantity Surveyor, Kroll.

Thinking about applying for fellowship this year? Visit our new Fellowship page, scsi.ie/fellowship, and use our new submission form to apply online.



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CELEBRATING OUR PROFESSION

On Thursday, February 1, 1,250 property, land and construction professionals and their guests from over 210 member firms gathered to celebrate our profession at the SCSi's Annual Dinner.

The evening featured an address from SCSi President Enda McGuane, a virtual address from the Minister for Housing, Local Government and Heritage, Darragh O'Brien TD, and entertainment from Irish comedian Deirdre O'Kane. It was a wonderful evening of making new connections and reconnecting with old friends with the help of our Annual Dinner online directory.

Thank you to all who joined us at this year's Annual Dinner. Special thanks to our sponsors, Addleshaw Goddard and MyHome.ie, for supporting this year's event.



Pictured at this year's Annual Dinner were (from left): SCSi President Enda McGuane; RICS President Tina Paillet; SCSi CEO Shirley Coulter; comedian Deirdre O'Kane; and, RICS CEO Justin Young.

THREE YEARS OF SURVEYORS DECLARE



On Thursday, February 8, the SCSi celebrated the third anniversary of Surveyors Declare. Since the launch, 407 members and 46 firms have committed to sustainable business practices in their day-to-day operations, and to encouraging and supporting clients and colleagues to instil these practices in their lives also. We're proud to do our part to support a more sustainable built environment in Ireland.

Ready to start your journey to sustainable surveying? Visit the Surveyors Declare page on our website at <https://scsi.ie/members-area/my-professional-journey/surveyors-declare/> to get practical tips for incorporating sustainability into your business operations and sign up to support Surveyors Declare.



CONNECT WITH YOUR REGION

This spring, members will be able to network, learn new insights and share input at our regional events series. Our President/CEO Meet-ups provide members with the opportunity to hear updates and give their input to the SCSi. We have a number of President/CEO Meet-ups taking place this spring:

- Southern Region, March 5 (online);
- Dublin Region, March 6 (hybrid);
- North East Region, March 7 (online); and,
- North West Region, March 14 (online).

We also have two Regional Connections Conferences taking place. Our Regional Connections Conferences feature regional market outlooks, the latest guidance, and property and construction updates. The conferences will take place in person and members will receive four CPD hours for attending. Our upcoming Regional Connections Conferences are:

- South East Region, May 9; and,
- Southern Region, May 16.

At both the meet-ups and conferences, CEO Shirley Coulter will give a general update on recent projects and upcoming events and plans within the SCSi. If you have a question for Shirley or SCSi President Enda McGuane, please email events@scsi.ie.



PROMOTIONS AT CARRON + WALSH



From left: Tadhg Ryan; Alan O'Connor; Nigel Cusack; Marian Walsh (Partner); Denis Carron (Partner); Colin Harney; Elaine Brazil; and, Michael Higgins.

Carron + Walsh is delighted to announce the promotion of six longstanding members of its team to Director level. Elaine Brazil, Director, will further promote the expansion of the project management division.

Nigel Cusack, Director, will continue to propel the company's services in the area of MEP quantity surveying. Michael Higgins, Technical Director, will manage the delivery of contract administration and quantity surveying services to a number of key clients in asset management. Colin Harney, Director, will focus on the growth and

development of the company's legal support department. Tadhg Ryan, Director, has responsibility for delivery of services in Carron + Walsh's Waterford office. Alan O'Connor, Director, has responsibility for delivery of quantity surveying services in the Dublin office.

Denis Carron, Partner, said: "These appointments come at a time of significant momentum for the practice and reflect the valued input of the leadership team in facilitating the strategic growth plans for Carron + Walsh across a range of sectors, both in Ireland and internationally".

NEW PROPERTY AND CONSTRUCTION REPORTS

We are pleased to have launched two industry reports: the Annual Residential Market Monitor Review & Outlook 2024; and, the new Tender Price Index.

According to the Residential Market Monitor, SCSi members expect national residential property prices to increase by an average of 1% in 2024, and 63% of agents believe prices are either at peak, or are close to it and will level off soon.

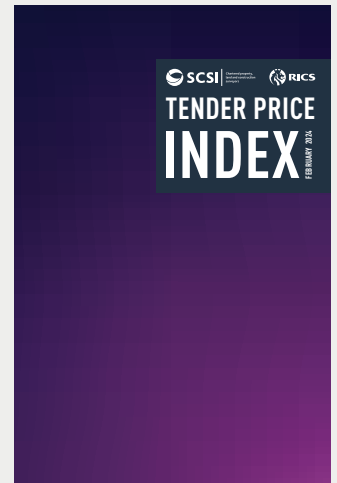
The report also features a regional affordability analysis, which shows that a nurse and garda with combined gross earnings of €89,000 cannot afford to buy a three-bed semi-detached home in the Greater Dublin Area and Galway.

The latest Tender Price Index shows that the rate of commercial construction inflation increased nationally by 1.5% in the second half of 2023, down from 2.4% in the first half of last year. The report also shows that the shortage of skilled labour is now the primary driver of cost increases.

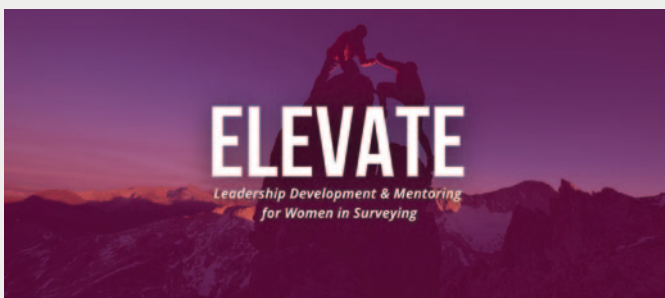
Our thanks to the agents and quantity surveyors who provided their data and commentary. By contributing to our market surveys, you

enable the SCSi to produce insightful market reports that inform surveyors, industry decision-makers and the wider public.

Visit the news section of our website to access both reports.



ELEVATE 2024



The SCSi is committed to increasing diversity in the surveying profession, and we are pleased to start the fifth year of our Elevate Programme, which is designed to support women in surveying. We will be launching the 2024 Elevate Programme at our International Women's Day event on March 7.

The Programme runs from April to December, and provides mentees with mentorship and leadership training. Mentees will have access to a six-module leadership development programme, which will be delivered from April to November with a closing event in December.

We highly encourage women in the SCSi to apply to this programme. Applications open on March 7.

If you have any questions about the programme or would like to become a mentor, please contact SCSi staff at mentor@scsi.ie or visit the Elevate page on the SCSi website.



NEW FIT-OUT FROM THE BUILDING CONSULTANCY

The Building Consultancy has completed the fit-out of the Dylan Bradshaw store and salon on South William Street. The company states that the new design combines a wide range of traditional and contemporary materials to deliver a unique interior space.

Upon entry, customers are greeted with a brass and stone coffee and refreshment bar. This is then followed by the illuminated retail and reception area before opening out to the large 18-station salon space. Stone and leather seating pods run down the centre of the salon floor. Stained oak and reeded glass clad wash stations have been installed at the end of the salon to create what the company describes as the ultimate customer journey.



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INTERNATIONAL WOMEN'S DAY 2024

Every year we come together to celebrate women in surveying, and to help inspire and support the next generation of women in the surveying profession.

This year's event will take place on Thursday, March 7, online and in person at 38 Merrion Square. Our event features guest speaker Sonia Deasy, founder of Pestle & Mortar. Sonia was in her thirties when she

decided to make a major career change, taking the leap from portrait photography to developing her own skincare brand.

Sonia will talk to us about her career, experiences and the challenges along the way, and will touch on this year's theme for International Women's Day, 'Inspire Inclusion'. Visit scsi.ie/calendar to register to attend.



THIRD ACT RETIREMENT CONFERENCE

Join us on March 12, online or in person at 38 Merrion Square, for The Third Act Retirement Conference. This conference provides soon-to-be retired and retired members with key advice on navigating and planning for a fruitful and enjoyable retirement.

The conference is designed to help you plan your 'Third Act' and find out how you can make a positive impact in

your retirement. We will look at next steps, volunteering, non-executive director board membership, and more. This conference will also help you to navigate your financial future and plan for your health and well-being.

This retirement conference is provided free of charge to members. Visit scsi.ie/calendar to register to attend.



NEW DIRECTOR AT GIA

GIA is delighted to announce the appointment of Tony Grant as Director to spearhead the firm's Dublin office and contribute to the expansion of its footprint in Ireland, in particular the building consultancy arm.

GIA states that Tony brings to the role a wealth of experience in business development, client relationship management and project delivery for all aspects of building consultancy in Ireland.

Tony shared his excitement about the new challenge: "I am thrilled to join GIA and eagerly look forward to building on their already established brand. 2024 promises mixed fortunes for property owners and opportunities for investors; being a strategic partner and building consultant positions us to assist clients in maximising value, regardless of where they find themselves in the property cycle".

GIA states that it is looking forward to leveraging Tony's expertise to reinforce its commitment to delivering first-class building consultancy services and fostering continued growth in the Irish market.





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BUILDING LEARNING FOR ALL

AVRIL BEHAN TALKS TO THE *SURVEYORS JOURNAL* ABOUT HER WORK WITH SOLAS TO PROVIDE INTEGRATED, INCLUSIVE LEARNING ENVIRONMENTS FOR FURTHER EDUCATION AND TRAINING.



In many ways, Avril Behan's career trajectory has prepared her well for her current role as Director of the Further Education & Training College of the Future at SOLAS, where she and her team work to provide inclusive, fit-for-purpose educational facilities for learners at all stages of the learning journey. At secondary school in Navan, her career criteria were broad: she wanted to pursue her interest in maths, and wanted to work in the outdoors: "We had an excellent career guidance teacher, and she handed me a little blue prospectus from Bolton Street. I read the description and thought it sounded like something I'd like to do, and that was it. I never looked back".

Avril trained as a geomatics surveyor, and after completing her diploma, went to work with the Office of Public Works. When this contract came to an end, she travelled to Switzerland to


work as a photogrammetrist: "At that time, we were just moving into the era of digital aerial surveying, so they had a camera going up in a plane photographing the entirety of Switzerland. We digitised all of those photographs and then turned them into what you're used to seeing now on Google Maps – 25 years ago, that was cutting edge".

Avril then went to Dundee in Scotland, where her work experience enabled her to enrol in a full-time master's in remote sensing. Next came a stint at TU Delft in the Netherlands as a research assistant, before she returned to Ireland to work as a technical trainer for a telecoms company, a role that took her all over the world. She was attracted to the idea

INTERVIEW

Ann-Marie Hardiman
Managing Editor,
Think Media





ONE OF THE PILLARS IS INCLUSION, AND TO DO INCLUSION, YOU NEED TO PUT SUPPORTS AROUND PEOPLE.

of teaching, however, so when a role came up in her old department in Bolton Street, she applied and was successful. Avril stayed in Bolton Street for a number of years, progressing through various roles from assistant lecturer, lecturer, and head of department, to head of school, dean, and project director, before moving to SOLAS in November 2022.

Skills, pathways and inclusion

SOLAS is the State agency responsible for further education and training (FET), setting its strategic direction, and allocating funding of approximately €1 billion per year, mainly to 16 Education and Training Boards (ETBs), but also to other community groups and providers: “Last year, one in ten Irish people did either a further education or training course, which is a phenomenal impact”.

Since 2020, SOLAS has fallen within the remit of the Department of Further and Higher Education, Research, Innovation and Science, with which it agreed the FET Strategy 2020-2024, and supports transformation of the sector towards the FET College of the Future ideal. The Strategy has three pillars – building skills, creating pathways, and inclusion. Avril explains what that means on the ground: “SOLAS and the ETBs were set up ten years ago, but the system was an amalgamation of two very separate groupings. You had what came from FÁS – the training centres, apprenticeships and traineeships – and then the post-Leaving Cert courses, adult education, part-time evening courses, literacy courses, and the two of them operated very separately. The intention of the FET College of the Future is to enable those, where possible, to be delivered collectively in the same physical spaces and with the same calibre of experience for the learner. An adult learner might come in for two hours a week and have no engagement with anyone other than the tutor that sits in front of them. If you want this to be more like the experience you have in higher education, there should be guidance counselling, access to student support services, engagement of a much broader sort. One of the pillars is inclusion, and to do inclusion, you need to put supports around people. Another is pathways. If you have somebody doing a literacy course, they wouldn't necessarily have any concept of what their next step might be. If we can get them to understand that they're part of an experience where they finish their literacy programme, and maybe the next option is they take on an uncertified programme in something that they're interested in, and then they might do a level one or level two NFQ qualification, it burgeons from there. It's about giving people that opportunity to reach whatever potential and whatever level they want to”.

Creating spaces

The three pillars of the FET Strategy have a number of enabling themes, one of which is capital infrastructure, which is where Avril and her team come in: “My role is basically to invest money in facilities where it's needed to make this happen”.

With approximately 500 properties around the country currently being used for FET, half owned by the State and half leased, it's a big undertaking. These could be purpose-built facilities, former schools, community centres or rented rooms, and they vary hugely in quality. Avril's team have carried out a full estate survey, and they're now working through that to see what needs to be done with the facilities and funding that they have: “Are they meeting the needs? Are they fit for purpose? Where are they in terms of the climate action agenda? We are trying to make sure that the investments that we're making are in the right places, and that they will meet our future requirements”.

The job is not just about bricks and mortar; communities and the learners within them have complex needs, and a vital part of Avril's job is meeting these communities where they are, and getting a real sense of what they need. She describes a recent visit to Shannon: “Twenty-four of the country's employment black spots are within a 30km radius of Shannon, so one of the things they're doing is running a bus to pick up people who are long-term unemployed or multi-generationally unemployed, to bring them into the training centre, trying to mobilise people to realise that there is potential, there are options for them. You've got a skills shortage on one hand, and you've got learners on the other who just need to find a way to get the skills. There's amazing work going on in communities to try and connect learners at whatever level and knowledge stage they're at with what it is that employers need”.

GET INVOLVED

As a Chartered Geomatics Surveyor, Avril served on the Geomatics Professional Group of the SCSl for a number of years, and strongly encourages members to get involved with the Society: "Members who don't really engage with the Society are absolutely missing out on a trick, because it's not just about going to six meetings a year to get some of your CPD points. When you're there, you find out so much about what's going on, what the issues are. The concentrated nature of the networking that happens within the professional groups or the interprofessional groups is really invaluable. I got a huge amount out of it".



IF WE HAD DESIGNED THIS BUILDING SLIGHTLY DIFFERENTLY, WOULD IT HAVE MADE ANYTHING BETTER? WHAT ARE THE PARTICULAR THINGS THAT ARE CAUSING YOU A CHALLENGE?

Avril loves this aspect of the job: "I love to know what's going on, and I love the breadth and depth. I could go down and say, 'Right, where's the leak?', but what is the point in doing that if I don't know what the building is supposed to enable? What sort of learning is going on?"

And the work doesn't end when a building is finished: "We have a really good opportunity at the moment in that there's a new college just opened in Wexford Town, a brand new facility where they have adult learners, post-Leaving Cert learners, apprentices, trainees, community education groups, all in one space. We've set up an engagement with them where we check in every couple of months about lessons learned. If we had designed this building slightly differently, would it have made anything better? What are the particular things that are causing you a challenge? And, equally importantly, what are the things that have happened that you didn't think would happen, positive and negative?"


Challenges

There are of course numerous challenges involved in the work, and meeting the Government's sustainability agenda is one of the most significant. SOLAS is working in partnership with the Sustainable Energy Authority of Ireland (SEAI) on a retrofit programme, and there is also a requirement to adhere to legislation and regulations mandating a high environmental standard for all buildings owned or leased by the State. This is a hugely costly process, and Avril is

conscious of a need to achieve value for money for the State, particularly in the case of leased properties: "An ETB can take on a property, but within three years it has to be brought up to an A3 energy rating. The difficulty is us doing that and paying for that, and then at the end of the day, the landlord has a better property. We're trying to invest as much as possible in the properties we own, but at the same time, we're not allowed to lease properties that are substandard".

Some of the other challenges around the sustainability agenda are more specific to the sector: "Under the new European Green Deal, they're now looking at saying that certain spaces can be exempt from having Building Energy Ratings. That's really important on the apprenticeship side. We're doing a huge amount at the moment to try and expand the apprenticeship system in a number of different trades and we've got to create more workshop space, but trying to fit out a workshop that needs a double height roller door on the end of it to allow pipes and big cars to come in, and having that A3 rated, is impossible".

There can also be conflicting priorities between the sustainability agenda and meeting learners' specific needs: "We could build a facility that is really close to the learners, put it on a public transport route, but the reality is, if you're dealing with apprentices, they probably have a toolbox. They have a van,



I HAVE A REALLY GOOD TEAM WHO ARE WILLING TO SPEND THE TIME WITH COLLEAGUES IN THE ETBs TO FIGURE THINGS OUT, TO HELP THEM WHERE THEY GET STUCK, BUT PERSONNEL IS PROBABLY THE BIGGEST SHORTCOMING THAT WE HAVE, RATHER THAN MONEY.

which is paid for by work. We're supposed to be making sure that any investment we make is future proofed in terms of sustainability, but the guys who are running it are saying, 'we need parking spaces', and we can't authorise that because it's counter to Government policy. That tension between the sustainability agenda, which of course we all commit to and want to do, and the reality on the ground, is probably one of the biggest challenges we have".

A huge part of SOLAS's work is about filling skills shortages, and ironically, skills shortages are also an issue in terms of providing the facilities where that training can happen: "There's no doubt about it, we're chasing targets. But also, when you're talking about capital investment and construction projects, they don't go as fast as you'd hope. You can only feed money into the system at a certain speed. We've authorised projects to happen in the ETB, and they have so many other things going on, so many other priorities and genuinely a lack of staff, that they're not able to get it rolled out. That's before you consider where the logjams are in terms of availability of consultants, contractors and skilled personnel".

Avril's team tries to solve this problem by implementing economies of scale and increasing efficiencies: "We're trying as much as possible to take a Lean and a process-driven approach. There are 16 ETBs around the country. They probably only do a project of this type every now and again, whereas we're working with them on an ongoing basis. If we can standardise projects we save time and effort, and get increased value for money for the State. So that would certainly be a priority for us: to try and streamline, where possible, to drive workflows so that people know what step they're at, and also monitor things and not allow things to sit where possible. I have a really good team who are willing to spend the time with colleagues in the ETBs to figure things out, to help them where they get stuck, but personnel is probably the biggest shortcoming that we have, rather than money".

Surveyors and learning

Avril praises the SCSi's approach to further education and CPD, which has moved from the relatively informal to a mandatory framework: "They took a 'softly, softly' approach in terms of trying to achieve that balance between formal and informal learning, flexible skills versus core skills. And then there's a huge amount of work that they do in terms of webinars, conferences, engagement opportunities, partnering with other people to deliver things that are jointly valuable. I think they've done a very good job of making learning an expected part of all surveying roles".

If she has a message that she would like to get across to surveyors who are thinking about further education, it's the same message that applies to all groups: "I think there's an obsession with going up through the qualification levels. I did it myself – cert, diploma, master's, postgrad cert, and then PhD – but I now know that I would love to go back and do a few special purpose awards or uncertified qualifications in the things I don't know about. You don't need to keep going in one direction with your education. You can go sideways, you can go up and down, and it comes back to lifelong learning and just picking up little pieces of knowledge as you go along".

She references the 'fetchcourses' website (<https://www.fetchcourses.ie/course/finder>), which contains links to a huge range of education opportunities: "The message to surveyors and employers is just look around, see what's there. There's an awful lot of opportunities and it doesn't have to be that you have to give up your people for a number of years to send them back to college. These are flexibly delivered, short, sharp, to the point, and have been developed jointly with industry".

TIME TO THINK

Originally from Kilmessan in Co. Meath, Avril lives in Maynooth, Co. Kildare, with her husband Rob, who is also a geomatics surveyor, and her two children, Naemi (13), and Ronan (12). She's currently studying part-time for an MBA, so time is at a premium, but she says she walks as much as possible, "without headphones or podcasts or my emails being read to me, so that I can muse and think. We don't give ourselves enough time to think and that's something that I consciously try to create time for. It's amazing how many brilliant ideas can come into a clear mind; but of course, I'll need my technology solution to record the thought so that it doesn't disappear before there's an opportunity to enact it!"

FROM APPRENTICESHIP TO CHARTERED MEMBERSHIP

THE NEW SCSi/TUS ADVANCED QUANTITY SURVEYOR APPRENTICESHIP IS A FANTASTIC OPPORTUNITY FOR CAREER PROGRESSION.



In late 2023, the SCSi in partnership with Technological University of the Shannon (TUS) launched the new Advanced Quantity Surveyor (AQS) Apprenticeship programme, which will equip students with the knowledge and skills to acquire a highly practical level 9 master's qualification in quantity surveying. This programme will allow those who possess a mix of academic qualifications, relevant professional institute membership and experiential learning gained from working within the built environment, to become Advanced Quantity Surveyors.

This level 9 MSc apprenticeship will not only contribute to addressing skills shortages in the industry, but will also attract a more diverse, talented range of graduates into the sector. The blend of on-the-job and off-the-job learning is an ideal approach for busy professionals who wish to progress their studies while working and gaining valuable industry experience.

Vital role for employers

Employers will play a vital role in this apprenticeship, as any prospective apprentice must first gain employment with an approved apprentice employer before entering the programme. This link between industry and academia will ensure that the apprenticeship is an effective way of recruiting, developing and retaining staff. A recent report by the National Apprenticeship Office found that 90% of approved employers were planning either to employ more apprentices, or

to maintain the same number, over the next 12 months, and almost half reported retaining apprentices after they qualified.

The process for an employer to be approved by SOLAS to recruit an apprentice, or to appoint one from within their firm, is straightforward:

- the employer submits an Expression of Interest on apprenticeship.ie;
- a consortium representative (usually James Lonergan of the SCSi) contacts the employer to discuss the programme and share information – this will confirm that the employer can provide experience relating to learning outcomes, and gather information on the qualifications and experience of the mentor;
- the consortium representative will liaise with a SOLAS Authorised Officer (AO) to confirm that the above actions have been completed, and supply the AO with relevant paperwork and a recommendation on approval;

NEWS FEATURE

James Lonergan
Director of Education &
CPD, SCSi



- the AO reviews the material and arranges a visit with the employer
 - the AO completes and manages the final documentation for the statutory approval process as appropriate, and advises the consortium representative when the employer has been approved;
- the employer can now either appoint an apprentice from within their firm or recruit externally; and,
- the apprentice registers on the MSc course with TUS.

Progression to Chartered Membership

The AQS Apprenticeship will also provide apprentices with an opportunity to gain Chartered Membership of the SCSi. The course is SCSi accredited and, as it is a part-time postgraduate programme, students can register for their Assessment of Professional Competence (APC) and complete their structured training concurrently with the programme, giving them the opportunity to come forward for Chartered Membership on graduation. Assessment within the programme has been carefully designed by TUS to complement the structured training required for the APC, and has been mapped against the SCSi's quantity surveying competencies to ensure a very close alignment for the benefit of students who wish to pursue Chartered Membership with the SCSi.

Addressing skills shortages

At a time when there is a very busy private sector, along with initiatives such as the National Development Plan, Housing for All and the Climate Action Plan, skills shortages are likely to continue, and we need innovative measures to address this. The development of surveying apprenticeships is an essential element to help address the skills shortage challenge the industry faces across property, land and construction.

The SCSi is committed to continuing to market and promote the surveying profession, not just to school leavers, but also focusing on encouraging more professionals to consider surveying-related master's level programmes to develop their skills while in work. The SCSi's commitment to the future of the profession, and to making education more accessible, led to the Society's collaboration with TUS, and we see apprenticeship as an ideal fit to attract new talent to the industry. Other new surveying apprenticeships are in development, which will provide new routes to Chartered Membership in other disciplines, and will further help to address the acute skills shortages our industry faces.

Any prospective employers or apprentices interested in the new Advanced Quantity Surveyor Apprenticeship should please contact james@scsi.ie.

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HITTING THE GROUND RUNNING

MALEPELI MALATALIANA DESCRIBES HER JOURNEY FROM LESOTHO AND SOUTH AFRICA TO LIVING AND WORKING IN IRELAND.

I am a Chartered Quantity Surveyor from Lesotho, currently working in the Republic of Ireland. My journey started at the University of Pretoria, South Africa, where I obtained a BSc(Hons) Quantity Surveying degree. After working in South Africa's construction industry for almost five years, I sat the South African Council for the Quantity Surveying Profession (SACQSP) Assessment of Professional Competence (APC) and finally obtained Professional QS status, which allowed me to attach the PrQS title to my name and proffer my induction into the Royal Institution of Chartered Surveyors (RICS) (please note, PrQS is a big deal in South Africa).

Navigating cross-continental recruitment

In November 2022, a recruiter from LinkedIn approached me with a few job interviews, which eventually led to my employment at OCFPM in Cork. Frankly, talking to strangers on social media about moving continents could be scary, given the many scams and scary stories that have followed some young professionals seeking employment overseas. In my openness to the prospects presented, I learnt that establishing the legitimacy of the recruiter and the opportunities they present is best done through extensive questions over email and phone calls. Most critically, all experts looking to relocate have the responsibility to carry out due diligence by researching their prospective employer, and even its employees. I am here, so my recruiter was not a scam!

At the time of my recruitment to work in Ireland, I certainly wanted more for my career, but what 'more' meant remained to be determined. Convinced that I had gathered all I needed from the South African quantity surveying domain, I broadly wanted growth. I was presented with Ireland: new country, new continent, new contracts, and new ways of doing things. It occurred to me that this would be the first step to quelling my inner discontent and search for growth.

Immigration

As immigration processes into the Republic of Ireland began, I observed that Ireland has very clear processes with easy-to-follow steps. I was admitted into the country on a Critical Skills Employment Permit, which has a very navigable and uncomplicated application process. In my case, the visa was facilitated and processed on my behalf by my future employer. However, all of the details and resources to guarantee an informed process are available on the Employment Permits Online platform, and a full checklist for all involved parties is provided on the Department of Enterprise,

Trade and Employment Critical Skills Employment Permit webpage.

New employees who are asked by their Irish employer to process the permit on their own should not panic, because the process is straightforward. Notwithstanding this, it is good practice and a good indication of a great company if that support is provided to you. In my case, support from HR in settling new hires from outside Irish borders proved integral to my success in the new role. Ireland is experiencing housing shortages, and finding an apartment is harder than getting a job and employment permit combined. With more proactive and responsive HR support, as demonstrated at OCFPM, more expertise could be recruited into the country to bridge the skills gap facing the Irish construction industry.

Global profession

Once I hit the ground running at OCFPM, it became evident that quantity surveying is generally standardised globally. I found that doing bills of quantities, valuations, cost reports, and payment certificates is standardised. The use of the same software for take-offs and bill production allowed me to transition smoothly into the workflow, and any new recruits can take on their roles with a head start.

The stark differences are in the contracts, understandably so due to Ireland having a distinct legal regime, which all new recruits will have to study in order to run projects smoothly. In Ireland most contracts, in my observation, are bespoke contracts that are a version of the Royal Institute of the Architects of Ireland (RIAI)

FEATURE

Malepeli Malataliana
MRICS, MSCSI
Senior Quantity Surveyor,
OCFPM



LESOTHO

SCSI

IRELAND

standard form of contracts (Blue, Pink, or Yellow forms). In South Africa, by contrast, the Joint Building Contracts Committee (JBCC) forms would be used verbatim, and any changes transform the contract into a bespoke contract inspired by or based on the JBCC. Public Works Contracts in Ireland are similar, and the Public Works Contracts website provides handy guidelines on how to use them. Notably, attending relevant CPDs enabled me to get further understanding of how the systems work.

Another difference is that bank monitoring in Ireland is a distinct sector, yet in South Africa it is a niche under the purview of infrastructure/building departments and design teams within big commercial banks and financial institutions lending to developers.

Joining SCSI

Once in Ireland, I knocked on the doors of the SCSI. Registration with the SCSI was a seamless process, given that I was already a PrQS and a member of the RICS. It was essentially a conversion of MRICS to MSCSI, which speaks to the international credibility and recognition of the SCSI. The conversion takes a matter of weeks, and the SCSI provides support throughout the whole process.

The SCSI also provides programmes such as Elevate Women in Surveying, which empowers young women working in the built environment. I participated in the programme, and I strongly recommend it to all young female professionals in this industry. Through the programme, the SCSI paired me with a mentor, who, through meticulous consideration on the SCSI's part and what can only be the swoosh of a magic wand or renowned Irish luck, has been a perfect match in every way.

The many publications on the SCSI website are also a great resource, providing the historical evolution and recent trends of the Irish built environment industry, which have helped me with getting up to speed with the industry's conventions and peculiarities.

Make the leap

Irish companies that are considering recruiting expertise from beyond Irish shores can be assured that the new recruits will warm up and excel in their tasks easily, especially with support from their Irish counterparts.

For non-Irish people eager to make that big leap, get ready for the culture shock, the most obvious being the accent (do not worry you will get used to it!) Turnaround times are quite rapid, requiring thorough and excellent performance. Be open to learning new things, pursue excellence, grow and collaborate, and you will have a very rewarding career. You will also find out that the Irish are the friendliest nation on earth, so there's nothing to worry about.



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RECRUITMENT OUTLOOK 2024



DEMAND FOR CONSTRUCTION AND PROPERTY PROFESSIONALS IS UNEVEN ACROSS THE SECTOR, BUT OPPORTUNITIES EXIST, ESPECIALLY FOR THOSE WITH A DIVERSE SKILLSET.

As we progress through the opening few weeks of 2024, it is evident that demand for property professionals is uneven across the various parts of the sector. At one end of the spectrum, demand for construction and engineering professionals is strongly outstripping supply, whereas at the other, demand for property professionals in the office and private rental sectors (PRS) is softer. The key headwinds affecting this demand are the uncertainty caused by macro-economic factors, e.g., high interest rates, and domestic factors such as changes in work practices.

As we look ahead to the rest of the year, it is important to examine the outlook for jobs in property, land and construction. In this article, we will discuss the current state of the property market, the factors influencing job growth, and the potential opportunities and challenges for property professionals, while bearing in mind the uneven nature of demand across the sector.

Construction

As alluded to earlier, we are experiencing particularly strong demand for construction and engineering professionals. Vacancies such as mechanical and electrical consultant engineers, project managers, civil supervisors and technicians are taking the longest to fill.

Construction professionals with environmental, social, and governance (ESG) qualifications are also heavily sought after, given the regulatory requirements to report on the likely impact of proposed construction works on the environment and surrounding habitats.

The sharp rise in construction materials costs due to both macro-economic and domestic pressures has resulted in many projects needing to be re-priced. Despite these pressures, housing availability and affordability remain at the forefront of the political agenda.

The Irish Government has implemented several policies and initiatives to stimulate growth in property construction, such as the Help to Buy Scheme and the Housing for All strategy. These initiatives have contributed to the growth of the construction and real estate sectors and have, in turn, increased job opportunities for professionals in these fields.

Housing for All aims to increase the supply of housing to an average of 33,000 units per annum over the next decade, and provides for a mix of social, affordable, and private housing for sale and rent. These Government initiatives will undoubtedly drive the construction sector over that period, and this drive to construct more homes has resulted in demand strongly outstripping supply for construction and engineering professionals, especially those with relevant on-site experience.

Office

In recent years, there has been a shift towards flexible and remote working, which has led to a reduction in the demand for office space. As we progress through 2024, it is likely that the office sector will continue to evolve. Companies may opt for more flexible leasing arrangements, smaller office spaces, or a combination of remote and in-office work. This trend is expected to lead to a rise in demand for co-working spaces and serviced offices. ESG concerns are also becoming increasingly important in the office sector. Investors and occupiers are placing greater emphasis on sustainability, with a focus on reducing carbon emissions, improving energy efficiency, and promoting health and well-being in the workplace. This trend is expected to continue, with the adoption of ESG principles becoming a key factor in the decision-making process for both investors and occupiers.

FEATURE

Avril Clare
Property Recruitment
Specialist





There are also greater statutory requirements for energy efficiency, such as the EU's Energy Performance of Buildings Directive, which is aimed at ensuring that all new buildings across the EU bloc produce zero emissions from 2028 on. Therefore, while on an overall basis demand is softer in this part of the sector when compared to construction professionals, there is very strong demand for suitably qualified professionals, particularly for Chartered Surveyors and at company director level, with qualifications in energy performance especially at a premium.

Retail

The retail sector has faced significant challenges in recent years, with the rise of e-commerce and changing consumer behaviour, and it is expected that this trend will continue. However, there are also new retail initiatives, such as experiential retail, where customers are drawn to unique, immersive, and interactive shopping experiences. This new approach goes beyond the traditional passive 'shelf and aisle' store layout and uses digital tools to actively engage customers. This shift in focus may lead to a revival of high street retail, particularly in urban areas with a strong sense of community and local culture.

Industrial

The industrial sector has been a driving force behind the growth of the Irish commercial property market, with the country's strategic location and strong logistics infrastructure making it an attractive destination for businesses seeking to establish a presence in Europe. This trend is expected to continue, with the industrial sector remaining a key growth area in the years leading up to 2024.

Private rental

Ireland has consistently attracted significant foreign direct investment (FDI) due to its favourable tax environment, skilled workforce, and strong economic performance. This investment has played a crucial role in the growth of the PRS. However, new investment in large PRS schemes from investment funds has declined sharply since the European Central Bank's hiking of interest rates and the resultant increase in the cost of capital. Despite this, demand from renters remains very high and there is still demand for property professionals in the PRS sector, particularly in the areas of lettings, administration, property management and finance.

Conclusion

As the year unfolds, it is becoming evident that demand for property professionals is uneven throughout the sector, headwinds are adversely affecting certain parts of the sector more than others, and new opportunities are also presenting themselves. This divide in demand offers professionals the chance to work in niche areas and develop specialised skills. It has also contributed to a skills gap, with a shortage of skilled professionals in certain areas. Where possible, it would be of benefit for job seekers in 2024 to obtain new qualifications in fields such as ESG, where future growth prospects lie across the sector.

**THERE IS VERY STRONG DEMAND FOR
CHARTERED SURVEYORS, WITH
QUALIFICATIONS IN ENERGY PERFORMANCE
ESPECIALLY AT A PREMIUM.**

GETTING ON BOARD

CHARTERED SURVEYORS ARE UNDER-REPRESENTED AS NON-EXECUTIVE BOARD MEMBERS, BUT ARE EMINENTLY QUALIFIED TO TAKE ON THESE ROLES.



The role of professional board member has to date been dominated by the accountancy and legal professions. Very few Chartered Surveyors have been appointed as non-executive directors of NGOs, non-profit organisations or commercial entities. However, many professional advisors, if they have a choice of working beyond their normal retirement age, see this area of non-executive directorship as an opportunity to continue working as they enter the third age of their careers, but at a reduced pace.

Opportunities for Chartered Surveyors

Regarding the suitability of Chartered Surveyors to work as non-executive directors, I would like to draw readers' attention to one major shift that has taken place over the past 50 years in the property industry. The major property development and investment companies were originally

derived from construction companies expanding into the development and investment area. However, from the 1970s onwards there was a significant change from these companies being construction driven to being property driven. The CEOs and senior executives of these companies started to come from a commercial estate agency background as opposed to a construction background, leading to a situation where today the CEOs and senior executives of property and development companies tend to be Chartered Surveyors. This shift has opened up enormous opportunities for Chartered Surveyors and more recently for retiring Chartered Surveyors to work as non-executive directors in this area.

FEATURE

Stewart Harrington
Chartered Surveyor and
non-executive
board member



State sector and NGOs

I see great opportunities for Chartered Surveyors to take on non-executive roles on the boards of special purchase vehicles, which now play a major role in joint venture funding. Examples of this can be seen in State organisations such as the Ireland Strategic Investment Fund and more recently the Land Development Agency, which are involved in financing developments through the ownership of special purchase vehicles. This has resulted in the necessity to have independent non-executive directors of these vehicles and this offers a unique opportunity for experienced Chartered Surveyors.

Another area is in State ownership of real estate and the requirement to have good governance in the efficient operation of these properties. A number of State agencies, including the Office of Public Works and more recently the HSE, have become major owners and operators of real estate, with separate property divisions within these organisations.

As a result there is a need to ensure proper oversight of these assets and in my opinion Chartered Surveyors as non-executive directors will have a significant role to play.

Public-private partnerships are also an area where independent oversight of activities presents further options for Chartered Surveyors as non-executive directors, as are approved housing bodies providing social and affordable housing, which need to have independent boards in order to comply with statutory requirements.

Local authority-led development

A further area of opportunity for Chartered Surveyors is likely to arise via the recent developments in Limerick and Kilkenny, whereby local authorities are involved in direct development. Perhaps the best example of this is the decision of Limerick City Council and Limerick County Council to establish Limerick 2030 DAC as a wholly owned property development company in order to develop sites they had acquired from NAMA. Limerick 2030 is currently developing the opera site in Limerick city centre, which is now regarded as the largest commercial property development outside the Greater Dublin Area. The board of Limerick 2030 has two Chartered Surveyors serving on it, and is an excellent example of the role of Chartered Surveyors as independent non-executive directors.

Private sector

Retail and finance are two areas of the private sector where Chartered Surveyors can play a meaningful role as non-executive board members.

Retail companies normally occupy, either as owners or as lessees, significant retail, wholesale and distribution units. The acquisition, disposal and management of these retail assets requires significant oversight at board level. In addition, there are now a number of finance companies providing both working capital and long-term finance for the development of both housing and commercial development. I believe that Chartered Surveyors can contribute at both board and credit committee level in these companies.

ONE VALUABLE LESSON I LEARNED EARLY IN MY NON-EXECUTIVE CAREER WAS THAT IT IS IMPORTANT THAT YOU UNDERSTAND THE DYNAMICS OF THE BUSINESS THAT YOU ARE JOINING.

What is involved in board membership?

How can a Chartered Surveyor who is contemplating a non-executive career in their later working life prepare for such a role? My advice is to get involved in some charitable or non-profit organisations in order to gain experience of sitting on boards and understanding the dynamics of how these boards function and are governed. I was fortunate to have been appointed a non-executive director of a State company when I was still in private practice as a Chartered Surveyor. This gave me invaluable experience when I decided to retire from private practice. In addition, I was fortunate to have been appointed a board member of a hospital group and also to the board of governors of my old school. These appointments gave me valuable experience of board governance.

If a surveyor is contemplating taking on a non-executive role, it is important that they are independent, available, and understand the dynamics of the business they are getting involved with. Any person offering their services as a non-executive should fully understand the amount of his or her time that would be required. Most boards meet on a monthly and/or quarterly basis, but in addition, a well-run board will also have sub-committees, such as audit, remuneration, risk management and nominations. Any person considering a board appointment will therefore need to fully understand what additional time may be required sitting on these board sub-committees.

Lessons

One valuable lesson I learned early in my non-executive career was that it is important that you understand the dynamics of the business that you are joining. This involves meeting with senior management in order to fully understand how the business works. While a Chartered Surveyor may understand the dynamics of real estate, as a non-executive director you are taking on the responsibility of overseeing the running of a corporate entity and therefore it is important that you avail of every opportunity to understand the enterprise you are joining. Finally, I also believe that with people living longer, the notion of retiring at a particular age does not suit a lot of people. It is difficult to go from a situation where you are working long hours as a surveyor in private practice, Government service or in a property company, and then have to stop all of a sudden. I firmly believe that people should be allowed to work at a reduced rate and that furthermore a number of firms and organisations are only too happy to avail of the experience gained by people working in the real estate business.

SURVEYING IN PUBLIC

MOST SURVEYORS IN IRELAND WORK FOR PRIVATE FIRMS BUT THERE IS AMPLE OPPORTUNITY IN THE PUBLIC SECTOR ALSO, AND MANY PUBLIC BODIES ARE AS KEEN TO RECRUIT SURVEYORS AS THEIR PRIVATE COUNTERPARTS. HERE WE SPEAK TO SOME WHO CHOSE TO GO DOWN THE PUBLIC SECTOR ROUTE.

Tommy Buckley,
Deputy Chief Quantity Surveyor, Dublin City Council

Tommy has been with Dublin City Council (DCC) for five years, and previously worked in the private sector in Ireland and the UK. He always had a keen interest in the public sector, and enjoys seeing projects through from start to finish, and working on projects where there is a social benefit.



Tommy started out in DCC as an Executive Quantity Surveyor before moving up to his current role, where he manages a team of Qs delivering services across the Council.

The work is mainly focused on housing developments at the moment but could incorporate many other types of projects: "DCC is the largest local authority in the country. In the Quantity Surveying Division (QSD), we're essentially an internal quantity surveying practice for DCC.

We deal with all aspects of quantity surveying, including procurement, construction stage, commercial management, pre-construction work (including project strategy and occasional project management), project delivery, and post-construction work. DCC has a circa €1bn annual budget for capital works and we're heavily involved in most of the work streams including capital works and maintenance programmes".

WORKING IN THE PUBLIC SECTOR IS VALUE FOR MONEY DRIVEN RATHER THAN MARGIN DRIVEN, PLUS THERE'S A LARGE FOCUS ON POSITIVE SOCIETAL IMPACT.

Housing is the major focus at present, resulting from the housing crisis and the Government's Housing for All 2030 plan: "There's various pathways for housing delivery streams related to that. We build some of our schemes via direct delivery, and then there's other ways of delivering housing units through, say, the Part V processes or delivery through approved housing bodies".

On the technical side of things, working in the public sector is very similar to the private sector, but Tommy says what is different is the focus: "Working in the public sector is value for money driven rather than margin driven, plus there's a large focus on positive societal impact".

One aspect that Tommy enjoys is how he is involved in the life of a building, not just its construction. In the private sector, once the project is built, the surveyor might never work on that building again, but in the public sector Tommy explains that when it is time for maintenance or renovation, it could often be the same surveyors who were involved in the construction stage.

FEATURE

Colm Quinn
Senior Journalist,
Think Media Ltd





Some of the advantages that Tommy lists to working in the public sector are working on projects that have a positive impact on society, job security, and the opportunities available within the public sector. There is opportunity for upskilling and promotions, and the flexible working arrangements are desirable, along with other benefits like career breaks.

Tommy has some advice for surveyors starting out in the public sector: "Ask lots of questions early, try to absorb as much information as you can about your new organisation, and challenge yourself by taking on a broad range of projects and tasks".

For surveyors who are thinking about joining the public sector, Tommy says: "Go for it, because I don't think they'll be disappointed. I certainly wasn't.

And none of the people who have joined DCC QSD in the last few years have been disappointed. We will be hiring in 2024 so if you're interested, keep an eye on our website".

Julian Pringle,
*Senior Quantity Surveyor, Planning and Building Unit,
Department of Education*

Julian is based in Tullamore, Co. Offaly, and works a busy brief. Technology is moving fast and the industry is changing rapidly, he says: "If you take a flexible and proactive approach to problems, including the use of new technologies, you can deal with many of the varied problems and challenges we are facing in delivering educational infrastructure". Julian previously worked in the private sector in both Ireland and the UK. While in London, he worked at Heathrow Airport, which he said was varied and fascinating. Following more private work in Dublin, he took on the role in the Department of Education.



THE FOCUS OVER THE COMING YEARS IS TO REALLY DEVELOP THE HEALTH ESTATE AND THERE ARE A NUMBER OF VERY EXCITING PROGRAMMES OF WORK PLANNED.

The senior Qs are heavily involved in procurement and cost decisions in the Department's building programmes: "We interact at all stages of the delivery of educational projects. We would input into everything from the initial setting of cost plans and budgets, and have oversight on how those projects move through the delivery stages".

In addition to dealing with day-to-day cost and procurement issues, Julian is involved in the Department's evolving modular accommodation and decarbonisation programmes. It is Government policy now that new schools should be heated with alternatives to oil or gas, such as heat pumps and mechanical ventilation with heat recovery (MVHR). The Department's Decarbonisation Pathfinder Programme (in conjunction with the Sustainable Energy Authority of Ireland (SEAI)) endeavours to retrofit schools so they can achieve a 50% reduction in CO₂.

Julian also sits on the Government Construction Contracts Committee (GCCC) for the Department: "When Government policy is changed in relation to construction and procurement, it comes via the Office of Government Procurement (OGP), and is discussed and disseminated through the GCCC, then I try and make sure that those policies get implemented within the Department of Education".

Julian says his work is varied and interesting, but that there are guidelines to follow: "There are well-established design requirements, procurement rules and procedures. You have to understand those if you are to evaluate a cost plan, consider a tender or sign off on a final account. You need to have a basic understanding of those procedures to be able to make decisions based on what the Department's objectives and requirements are".

The biggest difference between the public and private sectors is that in the public service, you have the luxury to focus on policy and how to shape programmes to meet objectives that are not driven by the bottom line. Julian says that of course you have to consider value for money, but that: "Nobody's going to tap you on the shoulder saying you didn't crank out enough bills of quantities or issue enough fee invoices. That aspect of it is not there".

For surveyors thinking about joining the public sector, Julian suggests waiting until they have some experience: "Get a good general level of experience in construction, both on the client side and the contractor side if possible, because you need to understand the whole life cycle of a project if you are to interact with it at various points".

You should also understand how public procurement works and be

familiar with OGP publications, the Capital Works Management Framework (CWMF) and public works contracts.

Julian likes working in the Planning and Building Unit (PBU) and who he works with: "It's quite relaxed and it's quite a people-oriented department. It's a multidisciplinary unit and people are very helpful working in our various teams. We go out of our way to make sure that if you have questions or if you have problems that there is always someone you can ask".

Colin Cleary,
Principal Quantity Surveying Advisor, HSE

Colin graduated from DIT Bolton St in 2000 with an honours degree in Construction Economics. He started his career in a private sector firm, and was involved in a lot of public sector work. Through this, Colin realised it was an area he was attracted to: "I could see from that experience that being part of a client-led delivery team, which had a clear focus on improving the quality of the State's infrastructure, was something I really wanted to pursue later in my career".

After many years in the private sector, he finally moved into the public service in 2019: "I spent a couple of years on contract with the HSE, and then the role of Principal Quantity Surveying Adviser opened up and ultimately I took that on".

His current role is a senior post within the structure of HSE Capital and Estates: "I sit on the senior management team that's made up of the National Director of Capital and Estates, and Assistant National Director colleagues whose primary focus is to ensure that the national health estate is fit for purpose to deliver the full range of health services".

In terms of his day-to-day function, Colin says: "It's principally supporting and responding to the needs of the national health service agenda by delivering a modern, sustainable, cost-effective health estate in line with national and international procurement policy.

This involves managing all things relating to the commercial, procurement and contractual-related matters, while adhering to good governance, i.e., alignment with the Capital Works Management Framework, and the Infrastructural Guidelines (Public Spending



Code), which ensures value for money through the evaluation, planning and management of public investment projects”.

The role entails supporting the delivery of major healthcare infrastructural projects, which have both a national and regional focus. He engages with a wide variety of healthcare professionals to ensure that their needs are fully considered at the outset. This ensures that projects are appropriately briefed and fit for purpose. The engagement with all manner of stakeholders ensures that Colin comes away with a level of enthusiasm to deliver projects that make a difference: “If I can play a small part in improving service colleagues’ working environment, but equally the patient’s experience, isn’t that a job well done?”

Colin says that the focus over the coming years is to really develop the health estate and there are a number of very exciting programmes of work planned. To achieve these goals there is a huge need for property professionals, with many opportunities and roles for quantity surveyors and property surveyors to join the Capital and Estates team. Colin says his job is extremely rewarding: “It’s a very mixed and varied work stream. It can go from influencing public procurement policy through my membership of the Government Construction Contracts Committee, all the way to being involved with ‘mega healthcare projects’, which positively impact on the quality of the healthcare being offered to the citizens of Ireland”.

The sense of pride and job satisfaction is immense, says Colin, and that when passing a healthcare building that he was involved with, which is positively impacting on people’s lives, he can feel proud that he had a small part to play in it.

Charles Mitchell,

Technical Advisor, Office of Government Procurement

Charles is a Chartered Quantity Surveyor and a Fellow of the SCSl. He has had a varied career, beginning as a contractor’s QS working on commercial and residential projects, before moving into dispute resolution and expert witness work. He spent a period in education and academia, and lectured in Bolton Street for a while, before eventually joining the public service.

He works in the Construction Procurement Policy Unit of the OGP, which is responsible for the policies surrounding the public works contracts



IT IS GOVERNMENT POLICY NOW THAT NEW SCHOOLS SHOULD BE HEATED WITH ALTERNATIVES TO OIL OR GAS, SUCH AS HEAT PUMPS AND MECHANICAL VENTILATION WITH HEAT RECOVERY (MVHR).

and model forms. He is involved in updating documents on public procurement in line with legislative enactments: “Now I’m more about measuring carbon than I am about measuring bricks and blocks. So I moved into climate action within the built environment at this point and bringing that back into public works contracts and evaluation processes”.

During his postgraduate studies, Charles started a PhD on the integration of the International Cost Management Standard (ICMS) into the public works contracts.

Through this, he ended up researching the OGP thoroughly and found that he liked what the organisation did and felt it was important, so when a role came up in the technical team, he decided to put his hat in the ring.

Now he is coming up to five years in the job: “We’ve done so much. We have so much to do, and there’s something to drive you on a daily basis. It’s no longer just for a contractor or for an employer or a client; you’re now doing it for a) the industry that you’ve grown up with and love, and b) for the State and the citizens, of which you are one”.

One of the biggest projects the OGP is implementing is the integration of building information modelling (BIM) into the CWMF.

One of the major advantages of working in the public sector is job security, and Charles notes that there are firms that he worked for in the past that don’t exist anymore: “I have a nice variance in my workload as well. And I’ve got to see a lot of other things and got to really help shape some of the things I used to teach”.

IT'S VERY DIVERSE; IT COULD EXTEND FROM GRADE A DUBLIN OFFICE BUILDINGS, TO SKELLIG MICHAEL, AND IT INCLUDES OFFICE ACCOMMODATION FOR ALL THE GOVERNMENT DEPARTMENTS.

Advice wise for surveyors thinking about joining the public service, he says know the department you're going into and that opportunities for promotion may be limited by embargoes or other aspects. Know what grade you're going in at too, and that your pay rises will be limited to annual increments.

Where Charles is now is not where he envisioned himself: "If you'd asked me when I came out of Bolton Street many years ago, where do you see yourself at this point in your life? I would have said commercial management or managing surveyor. I wouldn't have seen myself in a Government advisory role".

However, Charles says if he could have talk to his younger self, he would advise him to go into the public sector sooner: "As a young surveyor, I'd cut my teeth out in the private sector and look to get a good range of advice and experience between both contractor and client-based organisations, but then come in once I'm established, once I'm Chartered".

Annemarie Durkan,
Head of Property Advisory Services, Office of Public Works

Annemarie has spent most of her career in public sector surveying. She graduated from Property Economics in DIT Bolton St and joined An Post through the graduate programme in 1997. From there, she went into Dublin City Council's city valuer's office: "The Council was great. I worked on housing and commercial and CPO schemes. I did the Dublin Port Tunnel motorway scheme".



When the role in the OPW came up, she was attracted to the role and responsibilities: "My current job here is the Head of Property Advisory Services. It's a specialist property arm in the OPW. And what we do here is we provide independent valuation and professional property advice. We're internal valuers, really. We've grown considerably and currently have a team of 12".

The team provides a range of property consultancy advice into three main areas of the OPW: property accommodation; flood relief; and, heritage.

The OPW has a substantial portfolio of around 2,500 properties that it manages and maintains on behalf of the State, explains Annemarie: "It's very diverse; it could extend from grade A Dublin office buildings, to Skellig Michael, and it includes office accommodation for all the Government departments, the property estate for An Garda Síochána, and then an awful lot of properties for many State agencies".

And the work is as broad as the property types, she says: "We'd be involved in landlord and tenant services. We advise on rent reviews, lease and letting expiries and renewals. We do a good bit of lease restructuring, regears, surrenders, renegotiation of commercial properties, mainly offices now, but it could extend to any asset class. And we also provide acquisition and disposal services of commercial properties. Apart from that property end, we have the flood relief side and we've a team there also involved in statutory valuation services and that's just mainly compensation under the Arterial Drainage Acts".

Annemarie's team is made up of 12, who are all members of the SCSi, including four members who came in last year: "Three brought substantial experience from highly reputable, successful private sector firms. And then the fourth came and brought invaluable tribunal experience from the public sector. So when we recruit, we're wide open to all types of experience".

Annemarie says the team tries to make the workplace as welcoming as possible: "We try to really have a supportive, inclusive, welcoming environment and we put a strong emphasis on continuing learning and personal development for professional growth. So there's been a lot of mentorship and training, and ongoing professional development here this last few months, so that collectively we can be quite effective in the OPW". Annemarie says the variation of the work is one major advantage of the job: "The work is so varied and diverse, you'd never get bored. You could be on an island off the coast looking at a national monument one week, or the following week you could be dealing with a high-value commercial asset in Dublin".

QUALITY IN QUANTITY

LISA O'SHEA, QUANTITY SURVEYOR AT ORMONDE CONSTRUCTION,
SPEAKS ABOUT HER CAREER, MENTORSHIP AND WORKING IN A CONTRACTOR ROLE.

Lisa O'Shea's surveying journey began when she started her apprenticeship in plastering, which is where she found her love for all things construction. Later, she realised that she wanted to go back to college to do a course in construction studies with quantity surveying.

She admits that at this point she didn't know much about quantity surveying but through a brilliant lecturer, Martin O'Neill, she became more and more interested in this field of work. She says: "He got me completely hooked on quantity surveying. He made it really enjoyable, brought us on site visits and made everything really interesting".

Lisa had originally planned to complete two years of construction studies and continue on with plastering, but after her transformative learning experience, she decided to finish the rest of the course and achieved an honours degree in quantity surveying.

Moving up

After that, Lisa joined a local Kilkenny firm as a quantity surveyor. She spent three years there and then a year in England, before returning to take up a position in Dublin. She has since moved back to Kilkenny and now works with Ormonde Construction. Lisa explains that the company is a fast-paced environment, where they have completed a number of projects in both the public and private sector, ranging from

commercial, retail, and industrial, to the food and beverage, healthcare, educational, sports and leisure, and residential sectors.

Responsibilities

Lisa's role as quantity surveyor involves a variety of responsibilities such as cost estimation, budgeting, tendering, procurement, cost control, valuations on projects, noting variations on site, ensuring that everything is compliant with the Building Control Amendment Regulations (BCAR), and keeping a line of communication open with design teams and clients. Mostly, her work day consists of managing the costs and finances of a construction project: "I am responsible for estimating the cost involved in construction, material, labour, equipment and other expenses required to complete the project. I have moved into the development side of our company now, so I'm more involved in the initial stages of getting projects up and running".

Overcoming challenges

Like most professionals, Lisa is sometimes met with challenges in her role. As a quantity surveyor, she is tasked with managing risks that could potentially impact on finances, timelines and the overall quality of a project. She continues: "As a Chartered Quantity Surveyor, it is my responsibility to recognise, evaluate, and address these risks through effective risk management strategies. The persistent economic instability, driven by factors such as global economic shifts, significantly influences the construction sector. For instance, tariffs imposed on imported materials may inflate expenses, while uncertainty regarding future regulations can lead to project delays".

To confront this challenge, Lisa makes sure to keep herself informed about economic trends and develop flexible cost strategies in line with potential fluctuations: "By closely monitoring the market and fostering transparent communication with suppliers, I strive to effectively manage expenses and minimise the adverse effects of economic uncertainty on our projects".

She also brings attention to the problem of labour shortages in the industry and says: "It's a big issue for everybody in the industry at the moment. There's not enough people going into construction from school".

Elevate

Aside from her role as quantity surveyor, Lisa is very involved in the SCSi. She is the chairperson for the SCSi South East Region, is involved with the House Building Committee and the Quantity Surveying Committee, and is a mentor for the Society's Elevate programme. Lisa explains that: "It's mentoring for young women surveyors and it's a really good programme. It gives you somewhere to go for a bit of guidance".

Lisa is mentoring two fellow surveyors at the moment and helps them with a large range of issues such as the APC journey to becoming Chartered, networking and everyday issues in the industry.

Lisa lives in Carlow, and is married with two stepchildren and three dogs. She enjoys going to the beach with her dogs and taking trips in her camper van with her family.

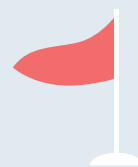


SURVEYOR PROFILE

Rebecca Pollard
Journalist
and sub-editor



MORE THAN A CHORE



PLANNING YOUR CPD FOR THE YEAR IN A PROACTIVE WAY WILL ENSURE THAT YOU MEET THE STANDARD FOR COMPLIANCE, WHILE TAKING ON LEARNING THAT YOU ENJOY AND FIND VALUABLE.



My initial reaction to being asked to write this article was, why me? I have therefore decided to use the task as an opportunity to undertake my CPD requirements with a more positive attitude this year, particularly considering the recent amendments to the Building Control Act 2007, which could result in my being removed from the register for non-compliance with the statutory CPD system.

A proactive approach

As professionals, we all recognise the importance of CPD, but many of us see it as a chore and fail to adequately plan our annual CPD requirements. This invariably results in a last-minute rush to secure and record the necessary minimum hours to ensure compliance with SCSi professional membership CPD requirements. For 2024, I am going to take a more proactive approach and plan my CPD at the beginning of the year, and I will record my experience on a regular basis throughout the year. In making my plan I will use as my guide the SCSi CPD Framework document published in

January 2022, in which there are a number of factors that I must take into consideration, including obtaining a minimum of 10 hours of formal, structured CPD, i.e., those with clear learning objectives and outcomes. In terms of my own objectives, I very much enjoyed the ADR Seminar last November and I hope to develop my experience around mediation and dispute resolution at future events. I would also like to develop my knowledge and experience of the role of the expert witness. My plan has gotten off to a good start as I intend to claim one hour of formal CPD for writing this article.

Informal CPD

The next criterion that I must take into consideration is that 'Members are required to undertake a maximum of 10 hours of informal CPD'. Most of my experience in this area has been through my involvement with various SCSi committees on a voluntary basis. I have found this to be a very rewarding experience and I would encourage members to get involved with either the professional and/or social activities of the SCSi.

One area of informal CPD that I have never tried is construction industry-focused podcasts, so this is an area for me to develop in 2024. Another important part of the member's

annual requirement is to obtain a minimum of at least one hour of CPD relating to ethics and at least one hour relating to sustainability. Obtaining at least one hour of CPD relating to sustainability is going to be my biggest challenge, but I am hopeful that I will find a learning activity that will stimulate an interest in this topic.

SCSi activities

The Education and CPD Committee is in the process of establishing a working group with the purpose of developing a range of online and face-to-face activities to help members in this area of their professional development. I am going to volunteer to help in the development of this learning material, but if you are also interested in contributing to the debate, then please contact the SCSi Education Department.

Final steps

I submitted my CPD log for 2023 on Monday, January 29, 2024, and hopefully I have achieved the minimum criteria, but if I am subject to audit, then I am required to co-operate with any request for information relating to my CPD compliance and submit this information by a deadline date specified by the SCSi. Update! I have just received an email enclosing my SCSi CPD Completion Certification for 2023, so I am good to go for 2024.

THE LAST WORD

Michael Mooring LLM Dip Arb
MRICS MSCSI
Chair, SCSi Standing Committee
on Education and CPD



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