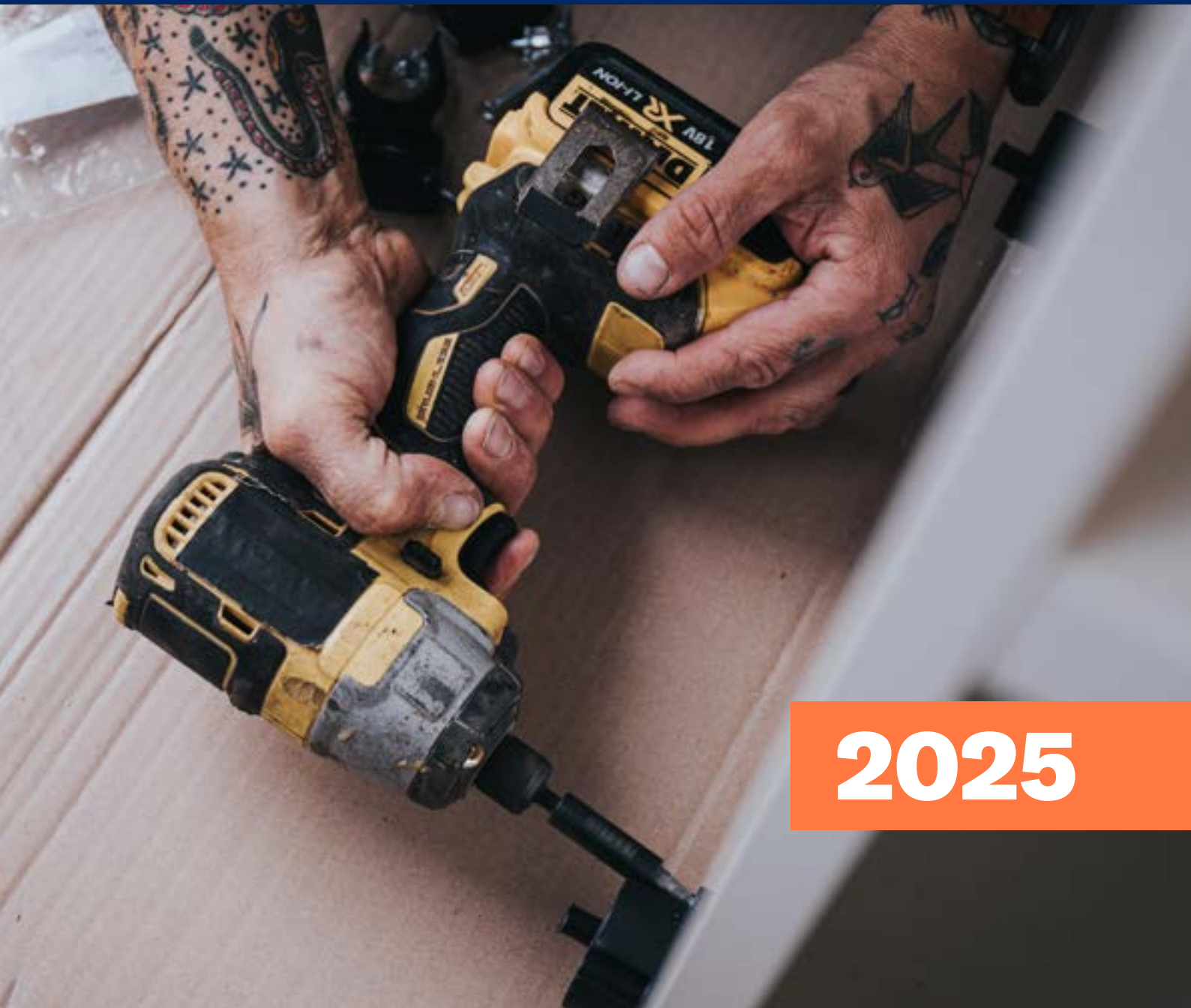




**JEWSON**

# TRADE TRENDS.



**2025**

# WELCOME TO TRADE TRENDS

**Welcome to Trade Trends 2025, the annual report from Jewson that shares the experiences and views of the UK's professional tradespeople.**

To ensure we continue to support customers to grow their businesses and make their professional life easier, we've once again interviewed more than 500 tradespeople and builders to understand what is impacting them every day. The findings are summarised in this, our third Trade Trends report, along with information and suggestions on how to navigate current challenges, streamline operations and take advantage of market opportunities to grow.

In this report, we've delved into the issues that have the biggest impact on small to medium builders and professional tradespeople and the day-to-day running of their business, including:

- The impact of rising costs, from fuel and utilities to inflation and broader economic uncertainty
- Concerns around the skills shortage, and how this is impacting businesses in both their current activities and future planning
- The opportunities open to builders and tradespeople in the drive to make homes more energy efficient and comfortable
- Why tool theft remains a key talking point for the industry
- Perceptions around demand for work, today and for the remainder of the year

Throughout the report, we've drawn comparisons between this year's data and the insights from 2024 to identify which key issues are posing more or less of a threat today.

Jewson is proud to partner the trades and is committed to having a positive and active role in the communities we serve. Our aim is to be the most trusted builders' merchant and materials distributor for UK tradespeople and thanks to our unique structure and the way we operate, we can offer our customers much more than just a wide range of products and expertise – everything you need for a two-storey extension. Whether we're helping you build more sustainable homes through our Building for the Future range, saving you time on quoting with Project Estimator, or getting you the equipment you need through our tool hire service, we're committed to helping you succeed in your business.

We hope this latest Trade Trends report is a useful asset for you and your business.

**Ian Goldsmith, Chief Strategy Officer at STARK Building Materials UK Ltd**

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# CONTENTS

## 04 - SECTION 1: DAY-TO-DAY BUSINESS

04 - Demand for work

05 - Financial concerns

06 - Tool Theft

## 07 - SECTION 2: SOCIAL, ECONOMIC AND POLITICAL REFLECTION

08 - Our Advice

## 09 - SECTION 3: SUSTAINABILITY

09 - A business opportunity

10 - Energy efficient solutions in demand

12 - Sustainability training

14 - Future Homes Standard

15 - Want to know how to talk to your customers about sustainability?

## 16 - SECTION 4: SKILLS SHORTAGE

17 - Skills shortage impact

19 - HERE FOR YOUR NEXT STEPS



# DAY-TO-DAY BUSINESS

## DEMAND FOR WORK

When we looked at current and expected demand for work, the picture that emerged was one of relative stability, with a modest increase in confidence about securing new jobs as we move through 2025.

**Figures show the current demand for work in 2025 is consistent with 2024, with limited change across all levels:**

	2024	2025
People receiving more enquiries	24%	23% - DOWN BY 1% ↓
People receiving the same level of enquiries	51%	54% - UP BY 3% ↑
People receiving fewer enquiries	25%	23% - DOWN BY 2% ↓

**Furthermore, the expected demand for work for the remainder of 2025 shows a slight increase in optimism:**

	2024	2025
People expecting a rise in demand	21%	23% - UP BY 2% ↑
People expecting the same levels of demand	61%	63% - UP BY 2% ↑
People expecting a decrease in demand	18%	14% - DOWN BY 4% ↓

“It’s encouraging to see that amongst tradespeople and builders there’s a perception that demand for work will increase in due course throughout this year.

“At Jewson, we are always working hard to build strong relationships with our customers so that we understand their pain points and can help them to navigate the day-to-day challenges of running their business. One way of doing this is by helping drive greater demand for their services.

“For example, we’re establishing networks at a local level so that tradespeople can connect with one another when projects require a particular skillset that they don’t have. Our branch teams know our customers well and can act as a conduit between them, for example, matching a roofer with an electrician on a mutually beneficial project. These networks also enable builders and tradespeople to signpost their availability when they’re experiencing less demand, providing the opportunity to be snapped up as a sub-contractor with a nearby business.”

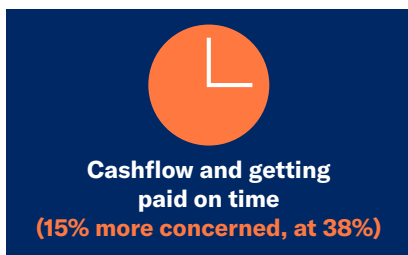
Nicola Todd, Sales Director for Jewson

## FINANCIAL CONCERNS

While the outlook on demand is steady, financial pressures remain a key concern. Rising living costs, slow wage growth, and increasing debt levels are making consumers more cautious with their spending. This, in turn, affects how and when homeowners invest in their properties, something tradespeople and builders are acutely aware of.

As part of our findings, we discovered the biggest business-related concern for small to medium builders and skilled tradespeople is currently the cost of materials – whether that’s them increasing (68%) or fluctuating over a period (53%). This is understandable when, for price sensitive consumers, the cost of materials can be the difference between saying yes or no to a project.

Comparing 2025’s data with 2024’s results, we found the fastest growing business-related concerns are linked to financial worries.



“The last few years have been incredibly turbulent for the industry, following the boom we saw during the pandemic and subsequent drop-off in demand. But there are green shoots of promise, and it’s something we’re noticing amongst Jewson customers, too.

“Just a few years ago many were forced to compete on price, often underselling themselves to win a job. However, more recently, we’re noticing increased confidence. More builders and tradespeople are more confident to quote at the higher end of their estimate and are willing to turn down jobs that won’t be profitable for them. This is encouraging to see, because it shows the industry knows its worth.

“At Jewson, we help to quote projects through Project Estimator, an estimating service which provides builders and tradespeople with a detailed breakdown of all materials, plant and labour required to complete a project, and live, up-to-date material costs to help make savings. Plus, by taking the estimating job off the hands of our customers, we’re giving them the gift of time which can be better spent on delivering great work for current clients and driving new business to help alleviate financial concerns further.”

**Nicola Todd, Sales Director for Jewson**

## TOOL THEFT

Tool theft was identified as the second highest business concern amongst those we spoke to (46%), with more people citing it as a worry than in 2024 (40%).

This growing concern about tool theft is reflected in wider industry data, which suggests it's an issue increasing in frequency.

Research from On The Tools shows that 75% of UK tradespeople have had their tools stolen with 58% saying they worry every day that it will happen to them. The research, which was carried out in 2024, found that 23% of tradespeople have experienced theft three times, with an alarming 15% reporting more than three incidents of theft.

Tool theft has a significant impact on business, in some cases rendering people unable to work at all for long periods of time. That's before considering the financial and time-related implications of having to replace tools, which adds further strain.

**Sam Johnson, Marketing Director for STARK UK, recently visited parliament with On The Tools to support Amanda Martin MP's bill aimed at tackling this important issue.**

He said: "Tool theft is a devastating experience for any builder or tradesperson, and figures sadly suggest it is on the rise. However, the fact that there are growing instances of it occurring could indicate improved levels of police reporting – a positive which should be acknowledged.

"The government has recently said it will work with the police 'to explore ways to tackle tool theft, ensure justice for victims and punish criminals' and that's something we celebrate at Jewson. In March 2025, we met with Amanda Martin MP, to show our support for the Theft of Tools of Trade (Sentencing) Bill she has launched to lead the charge on creating stronger sentencing powers for tool theft. We're putting ourselves at the forefront of this issue, and will work with the industry, official bodies and third parties to accelerate the changes needed to ensure no builder or tradesperson need worry about tool theft in the future."

The Theft of Tools of Trade (Sentencing) Bill, introduced by Amanda Martin, MP for Portsmouth North, aims to impose stricter penalties on tool thieves. The bill proposes classifying tool theft as a crime that causes 'significant additional harm' to victims and seeks to better account for the full financial impact of the event, including vehicle repairs and loss of income.

The ARMD Smart Alarm & Tracker helps protect your vehicle by providing instant alerts and peace of mind. You'll receive immediate phone call and SMS alerts if someone attempts to break into or steal your van and with GPS tracking, you can monitor your vehicle's location directly from your mobile phone around the clock. [ARMD Smart Alarm & Tracker](#)

# SOCIAL, ECONOMIC AND POLITICAL REFLECTION

The last 12 months have brought a mix of social, economic and political developments that continue to shape the environment for tradespeople and small businesses. While some of these changes may feel distant from the day-to-day realities of the trade, they're still having an impact, whether directly or indirectly.

The government's recent budgets have introduced changes to VAT thresholds, National Insurance contributions and inflation measures. Meanwhile, ongoing conflict in Europe and the Middle East continues to disrupt supply chains, and shifts in US leadership have led to changes in tariffs and taxes that affect internationally connected firms.

When we explored builders' and tradespeople's biggest socioeconomic concerns for 2025, the rising cost of living and inflation (58%), rising petrol and fuel prices (56%) and tax and national insurance rises (55%) were ranked highest. They were followed by rising mortgage prices (52%), rising energy prices (49%) and political uncertainty (47%).

Comparing this year's data with last year's, we found the fastest growing socioeconomic concerns in 2025 compared to 2024 are political uncertainty (+20% at 47%) and tax and national insurance rises (+13% at 55%). World conflict and environmental sustainability both saw a 9% increase on 2024, now at 35% and 33% respectively.

While the rising cost of crisis and inflation was highlighted as the biggest socioeconomic concern amongst builders and tradespeople this year (58%), it is down 13% on figures in 2024 (71%).

## Key economic concerns for UK builders and tradespeople

	2024	2025
<b>Rising cost of living and inflation</b>	71%	58% - DOWN 13% ↓
<b>Rising petrol and fuel prices</b>	73%	56% - DOWN 17% ↓
<b>Rising mortgage prices</b>	55%	52% - DOWN 3% ↓
<b>Rising energy prices</b>	65%	49% - DOWN 16% ↓
<b>Political uncertainty</b>	27%	47% - UP 20% ↑
<b>Tax and national insurance rises</b>	42%	55% - UP 13% ↑
<b>World conflict</b>	26%	35% - UP 9% ↑
<b>Environmental sustainability</b>	24%	33% - UP 9% ↑

# OPPORTUNITIES FOR YOU

Despite these factors impacting the industry there are still opportunities available to you to continue growing your business.



## **RISING COST OF LIVING AND INFLATION:**

Promote smaller, more affordable and manageable upgrades to a property, and promote those that offer longer-term value and cost savings, like energy efficiency improvements.



## **RISING PETROL AND FUEL PRICES:**

Focus more closely on hyper-local jobs, use digital or video consultations to cut down on travel, and consider swapping to an electric vehicle.



## **TAX AND NATIONAL INSURANCE RISES:**

Explore technologies that help streamline processes and improve efficiencies to reduce reliance on admin-heavy tasks so your team can focus on fee earning work.



## **RISING MORTGAGE PRICES:**

Many homeowners may be choosing to stay and improve, rather than move, presenting an opportunity to help improve their current properties.



## **RISING ENERGY PRICES:**

Offset the burden of higher operational costs by promoting the benefits of energy efficiency upgrades to properties.



## **POLITICAL UNCERTAINTY:**

Remain up to date with regulations and be transparent about how legislative changes are affecting your business, to build trust and provide long-term guarantees on products and services to continue bringing in work during uncertain times.



## SUSTAINABILITY A BUSINESS OPPORTUNITY

Sustainability continues to be a prominent topic across the industry and according to our findings, it's unlocking new potential for those who want to broaden their business horizons.

Our research found that builders and tradespeople are increasingly aware of the commercial opportunities associated with sustainability, with 54% saying offering services in this field has helped them to win more work – up from 39% in 2024. This uptick suggests sustainable building is no longer a niche market but a mainstream business driver as a result of homeowners actively seeking sustainable solutions.

More than a third (36%) of builders and tradespeople say more homeowners have been asking them about energy efficient building solutions, up from just a fifth (19%) last year. As such, offering services to increase the energy efficiency of homes, for example through installing and upgrading insulation, windows and doors or renewable heating, can act as a vital differentiator for your business to gain a competitive advantage.

“We’re definitely seeing a shift in mindset among our customers when it comes to sustainability. It’s no longer seen as just a regulatory box to tick; it’s becoming a real value-add, both for tradespeople and the homeowners they serve.

“More and more, tradespeople recognise that offering sustainable options helps them win work, especially as end users become more aware of the long-term benefits of having more comfortable and energy-efficient homes.

“There’s also a growing understanding that sustainability isn’t just about materials; it’s about creating better spaces to live in. And that’s where we see the real change. People want to build and renovate in ways that care for both the environment and the wellbeing of the people living in those homes.”

**Sabrina Passley, Head of Sustainability for STARK UK**

## ENERGY EFFICIENT SOLUTIONS IN DEMAND

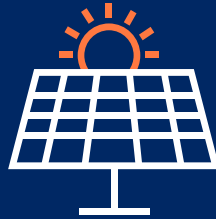
According to our findings, the sustainable products and materials customers are asking builders and tradespeople about most frequently are:

### Air source heat pumps



**52%**  
(2024: 50%)

### Solar PV



**47%**  
(2024: 45%)

### Enhanced insulation



**33%**  
(2024: 65%)

“Insulation is one of the cheapest and quickest ways to have the biggest impact on energy usage and reducing bills, and it gives a great return on investment. Products such as solar PV and air source heat pumps can be a bit more daunting, with a steeper upfront investment before savings in energy bills come through, but it is encouraging to see continued conversations between tradespeople and their customers about sustainable solutions.

“There has recently been a push from the UK government to encourage the adoption of heat pumps, yet many homeowners in the UK remain reluctant to switch from traditional gas alternatives. In our position as part of the STARK Group, it’s interesting to compare attitudes in the UK with those we see in Denmark and other areas of Scandinavia, where there has been a huge uptake in heat pumps - even in countries with harsh winters and a heavier reliance on central heating. We are tackling any potential hesitations and misconceptions by educating our customers, so that they can address any concerns with homeowners directly.

“Renewable solutions pose a huge opportunity for tradespeople and builders who are early adopters, and it has been encouraging to see installers switching to sustainable solutions and moving away from gas boilers altogether to differentiate themselves.

“Here at Jewson, we have a team dedicated to exploring what’s coming down the line with sustainable, energy efficient technologies, ensuring we’re staying on top of changing building regulations and well prepared for what happens next. Being part of STARK Group means we can almost see into the future - we’re learning from our European counterparts who are years ahead of the UK in terms of sustainability and regulations, meaning we can plan for scenarios and model the outcomes in case similar regulations come our way, enabling us to take a lead in the UK and get ahead of the curve.”

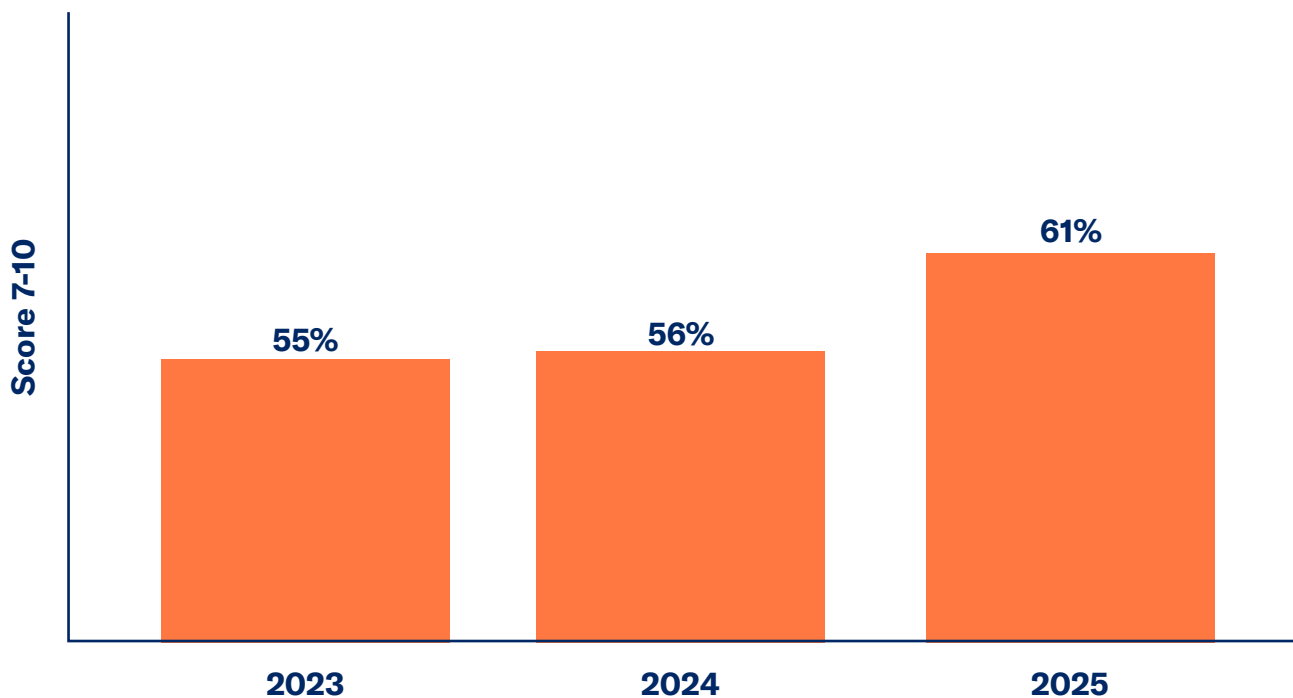
**Ian Goldsmith, Chief Strategy Officer at STARK Building Materials UK Ltd**

## ENERGY EFFICIENT SOLUTIONS IN DEMAND

The research found that sourcing sustainable products is more important than ever before for merchant customers when it comes to their choice of supplier.

### How important is sustainability on a scale of 1-10 in your choice of building materials supplier?

\*Figures are based on score of between 7 and 10, where 1 is not important and 10 is very important.



“Data is becoming one of the most valuable assets available when it comes to sustainability, because it’s something we’re constantly learning more about. For example, with an increasing focus on greenwashing there is a growing dependency on data to verify sustainability claims, with an increased demand for insight on carbon emissions data coming from EPDs (Environmental Product Declarations). As such, we’re working closely with our suppliers to improve reporting and make it easier for our customers to gather the insights they need to integrate sustainable solutions into their projects. Manufacturers and suppliers that can offer these insights in a clear and simple way are valuable to us as a merchant, as they allow us to empower our customers and give them a USP over their peers.”

**Sabrina Passley, Head of Sustainability for STARK UK**

## SUSTAINABILITY TRAINING

As more sustainable and energy-efficient solutions enter the market, it's becoming increasingly important for builders and tradespeople to stay up to date with the latest technologies. Being able to confidently explain the benefits of these solutions to homeowners can make a real difference when it comes to winning work.

According to our research, three in five builders and tradespeople plan to start or continue sustainability training this year – holding steady with last year's figures. However, that also means two in five aren't currently planning to upskill in this area.

According to the research, three out of five builders and tradespeople intend to start or continue upskilling in sustainability training – the same level as last year. This also means it's something two in five aren't planning.

For those committed to the cause, there are multiple perceived benefits of doing so. The majority think training is important to keep up with the times (67%, up from 59% in 2024), and because it's good for the environment (47%, up from 24% in 2024). More than a third (37%, up from 29% in 2024) think sustainability skills building is important because it will help them win more work, and three in ten (30%, up from 21% in 2024) think it will help raise the profile of their business.




**3 in 5** builders and tradespeople plan to train in sustainability this year

### What do you see as the key benefits of sustainability training?

	2024	2025
<b>Keeping up with the times</b>	59%	67% - UP 8% ↑
<b>It's good for the environment</b>	24%	47% - UP 23% ↑
<b>I'll win more work</b>	29%	37% - UP 8% ↑
<b>It will help raise the profile of my business</b>	21%	30% - UP 9% ↑
<b>The need to comply with regulations</b>	54%	40% - DOWN 14% ↓



“As the construction industry moves toward a low-carbon future, there’s a growing opportunity - and responsibility - for tradespeople to upskill in sustainable building practices. At STARK Building Materials UK, we’re proud to play a key role in supporting this shift across the UK in various ways.

“For example, our dedicated Sustainability Centres located in Norwich and Luton are designed to offer customers advice and inspiration on low carbon alternatives and sustainable solutions. Each centre has a Sustainability Ambassador on hand to give specialist advice and guidance on our Building for the Future, low-carbon, sustainable product range, which features 1,500 sustainable products across 50 ranges from 34 suppliers. Spanning every stage of a build – from foundation to finish – the range includes solutions with lower embodied carbon, increased recycled content, water-saving features, energy performance benefits, biodiversity gains and more.

“We’ve a wealth of sustainability insights available via in-branch demos and QR code learning materials, and we’re also working closely with suppliers to tap into their own training workshops on areas like installing low carbon insulation, and sustainable drainage solutions.”

**Sabrina Passley, Head of Sustainability for STARK UK**



## FUTURE HOMES STANDARD

The Future Homes Standard (FHS), which is due to be announced in Autumn 2025, is designed to ensure that new build homes in England will produce 75-80% fewer carbon emissions than those built under current regulations. It also includes Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG) as a mandatory requirement for new developments in England, stating they must demonstrate a 10% increase in biodiversity compared to the pre-development state, to ensure new homes protect and enhance the natural environment.

Last year, we found that less than a quarter of builders and skilled tradespeople were aware that the FHS was being introduced. This year, the figure has increased to around a third (32%) of the trade. But while there is broader knowledge of its impending introduction, there is increased concern about certain challenges it might present, with almost a fifth more people (19%) thinking it will lead to more paperwork and admin.

“It is encouraging to see that there is a growing awareness around the Future Homes Standard, however the drop in those feeling they need to comply with regulations suggests that, for many, it still feels distant or unclear in its impact. The most notable shift is in the perceived challenges, with concerns about paperwork more than doubling, and business costs and training needs also rising. This highlights a sentiment that tradespeople understand a change is coming, but they’re unsure how to navigate it. Our role is to help bridge that gap, by making compliance simpler, offering practical product solutions, and supporting upskilling through our Sustainability Centres, expert advice in-branch and supplier training.”

Sabrina Passley, Head of Sustainability for STARK UK

### What challenges might the Future Homes Standard present to your business?

	2024	2025
More paperwork and admin	14.5%	34% - UP 19% ↑
Increased business costs	29.5%	32% - UP 2.5% ↑
Need for training/upskilling	17.5%	21% - UP 4% ↑

## WANT TO KNOW HOW TO TALK TO YOUR CUSTOMERS ABOUT SUSTAINABILITY?

The key is to keep it practical and personal. Sustainability is not just about materials or upfront costs; it's about how the homeowner will live in the building beyond the work you do for them.

You can help shape discussions with customers about sustainability by:



### Focusing on comfort, health and efficiency

Explain that sustainable choices often lead to warmer, more efficient homes with better air quality, lower energy bills, and less waste.

For example, insulation results in fewer cold spots, lower heating bills, and more year-round comfort.



### Talk lifetime value, not just upfront cost

Many sustainable products may have a higher purchase price but save money over time. Help the homeowner understand the long-term payback, whether that is from reduced energy bills, water savings, or better durability.



### Make it relatable

Use simple comparisons, such as:

“This upgrade could save you X per year on your bills.”

“You’ll get more consistent heating across your whole home.”

“This will help reduce mould and improve the air your family breathes.”



Remember to keep it simple, stay curious, and don't underestimate your influence:

**Use the support available:** Visit Jewson branches and tap into the expertise and product info in-branch; we're here to help you build your knowledge.

**Lead the conversation:** More and more homeowners expect advice on energy savings, materials, and long-term value. By raising these points early in your conversations with them, and asking the necessary questions, you set yourself apart as a forward-thinking, trusted professional.

**Stay up to date:** Regulations are changing, whether it's the Future Homes Standard, Biodiversity Net gain or changes in Part L. Staying informed on regular updates helps protect your business and gives you an edge.



## SKILLS SHORTAGE

The UK has ambitious targets in place when it comes to building. After Labour came to power in 2024, they promised to build 1.5 million new homes and a “generation” of new towns, with a pledge to build 300,000 homes annually.

While this presents a wealth of benefits for the industry, there is lingering concern amongst builders and tradespeople that the current skills shortage could become a bigger issue, with more than half (54%) saying they think the skills gap will worsen this year, compared to 49% who felt the same in 2024. In fact, only 3% think the skills shortage will improve – down from 5% last year.

The sector has an aging workforce with many experienced tradespeople and builders retiring and fewer young people entering the field. There is also increased demand for skilled labour in specialist fields like sustainable construction, which requires more tailored training that many workers haven’t yet undertaken.

## SKILLS SHORTAGE IMPACT

Builders and tradespeople expect the skills shortage to affect their businesses in several ways.

**19%**

believe it will drive up labour costs due to increased competition.

**18%**

say they'll struggle to take on as much work.

**11%**

report they can't complete projects as quickly, with many already hitting capacity.

When asked how they plan to respond:

**16%**

said they'll take on less work, possibly to maintain quality over quantity.

**19%**

plan to explore new talent routes, such as apprenticeships or subcontractors.

**13%**

are prepared to offer higher wages to attract skilled workers.



“The skills shortage continues to present an issue for the construction industry, and much more needs to be done to solve the problem.

“Apprenticeships are a fantastic opportunity for anyone looking to learn a trade, but increased flexibility in their format could achieve quicker, more widespread results to bring more people into the industry. For example, changes could be made to allow apprentices to qualify one module at a time – rather than having to complete a full course – so they can take the skills they have learned and put them into practice straight away before moving onto the next step. This benefits both the learner, and businesses looking for new talent.

“We also need to do more to encourage people to consider a career in construction from a young age. Sharing more stories about the role models in our industry – whether that’s women, different ethnic groups, people with disabilities, or other socioeconomic backgrounds – will show that everyone has a role to play, and will help people understand the opportunities and rewards of a career in the sector.

“At Jewson we work with local colleges to provide them with tools, materials and training to help the next generation of talent become engaged with construction, and futureproofing the sector by overcoming the skills shortage is a mission we’re deeply committed to. However, more needs to be done at a government level to achieve true change.”

**Leigh Hill, Regional Director for Jewson**





## HERE FOR YOUR NEXT STEPS

The construction industry is going through an evolutionary period, with changing regulations, more demand for sustainable solutions and promises from the government to invest in skills and new talent. All of this presents new opportunities for tradespeople and builders to grow their businesses. At Jewson, we're proud to partner the trades, and are committed to providing you with all the products, services and advice you need to get ahead, even as the industry changes around us.

Reach out to your local branch manager today to find out how we can support you, or use any of our help resources below.

### **Helpful resources:**

[Jewson](#)  
[Building for the Future](#)  
[Project Estimator](#)  
[On The Tools](#)  
[Band of Builders](#)  
[Federation of Master Builders](#)