



# **CITB CSCS**

## **Card Fraud and Onsite Card Checking Survey**

**Final Report**

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# Introduction

## 1. Background and methodology

The Construction Industry Training Board (CITB) has joined forces with the Construction Skills Certification Scheme (CSCS) to conduct an industry-wide survey aimed at assessing card scheme fraud and card checking procedures on UK construction sites.

The use of fake cards in the construction industry was recently highlighted by the National Crime Agency's prosecution of an organised gang dealing in false identity documentation, which included a number of construction industry certification cards.

All workers on construction sites should hold the correct qualifications and training for the type of work they carry out. Employers need to be confident that if they are shown a card it is legitimate and that the person showing it has the appropriate qualifications to be carrying out their job onsite.

The objective of the survey was to:

- Generate a better understanding of the problems caused by fraudulent cards
- Establish how card checks are carried out onsite and what information is verified
- Identify whether smart technology could be better employed to help tackle card fraud.

The method of an online survey was identified by CITB and CSCS in response to the need to reach a large survey audience within a limited timeframe.

Questions were designed by CITB and CSCS to cover the survey areas of:

### **Skills certification cards in the construction industry**

- Proportion of construction workers who hold a skills certification card
- Types of skills certification card held
- Extent to which cards are checked when going onsite
- Ways in which cards are checked and the information which is checked.

### **Fake skills certification cards in the construction industry**

- Responsibility for checking skills certification cards
- Whether fake cards have been seen onsite in the past 12 months
- Frequency of seeing fake cards
- Percentage of cards which are fake
- Schemes and skills for which fake cards are seen
- Method for detecting fake cards.

### **Profile information**

- Construction worker's role
- Main location of work
- Area of construction work
- Size of business
- Employment status.

The questionnaire was set up on the professional version of SurveyMonkey. The survey link was distributed by CITB and CSCS to:

- CECA
- CIC
- FMB
- HBF
- NFB
- NSCC
- UKCG
- CITB (press office and training groups)
- GMB
- Unite
- UCATT.

In addition:

- CSCS issued two electronic newsletters to 8000 members
- The CITB/CSCS press release was mentioned on Twitter 51 times (tweets, retweets and favourites)
- The press release was published on Construction Enquirer with 3,845 unique page views <http://www.constructionenquirer.com/2015/03/16/contractors-quizzed-over-skills-card-fraud/>.

The press release is detailed at Annex 2.

The survey was live from 17<sup>th</sup> March – 31<sup>st</sup> March 2015.

The total sample base of completed questionnaires returned over the fieldwork period was 1180. This provides a standard error of +/-2.9.

The survey data was downloaded and analysed for the production of this report.

## 2. Analysis

The analysis is based on all 1180 completed questionnaires.

The sample bases detailed throughout the report are dependent upon specific groups of respondents as follows:

- All construction workers (total sample = 1180 respondents)
- Construction workers with a skills certification card (sample = 965 respondents)
- Construction workers with a skills certification card which has been checked onsite (829)
- Construction workers responsible for checking cards (sample = 419 respondents)
- Construction workers responsible for checking cards who have seen a fake card in the past 12 months (75 respondents).

The different standard errors generated by these different sample bases are detailed in Table 1.

**Table 1: Standard errors based on report sample sizes**

Sample profile	Sample base	% of total sample	SE 50% response
All construction workers	1180	100%	+/-2.9
Construction workers with a skills certification card	965	82%	+/-3.2
Construction workers with a skills certification card which has been checked	829	70%	+/-3.4
Construction workers with responsibility for checking skills certification cards	419	36%	+/-4.8
Construction workers with checking responsibility & have seen a fake card in the past 12 months	75	6%	+/-11.3

Data and analysis is provided based on rounding to the nearest whole percentage.

Percentages under 0.5% have been provided as “\*”.

Where calculations have been undertaken on the raw data, this has been based on absolute data rather than percentages. There may be occasions therefore when the data may not appear to sum fully.

Testing for significant differences has been undertaken based on a 95% confidence level on the rounded whole percentages where sub samples comprise at least 50 responses.

Whilst significant differences may not be apparent based on the sample bases for the survey, it cannot be assumed that significant differences would not be apparent if using the same calculations based on larger sample sizes.

Sub samples have been grouped where appropriate for analysis:

Location - North = Northern England, Scotland & Northern Ireland  
 Midlands = Midlands & Wales  
 England = Northern England, Midlands, Southern England & London  
 UK outside of England = Scotland, Wales & Northern Ireland

Industry - Other = Plant, Scaffolding & Demolition

Company size - As specified.

## Report findings

### 1. Skills certification cards

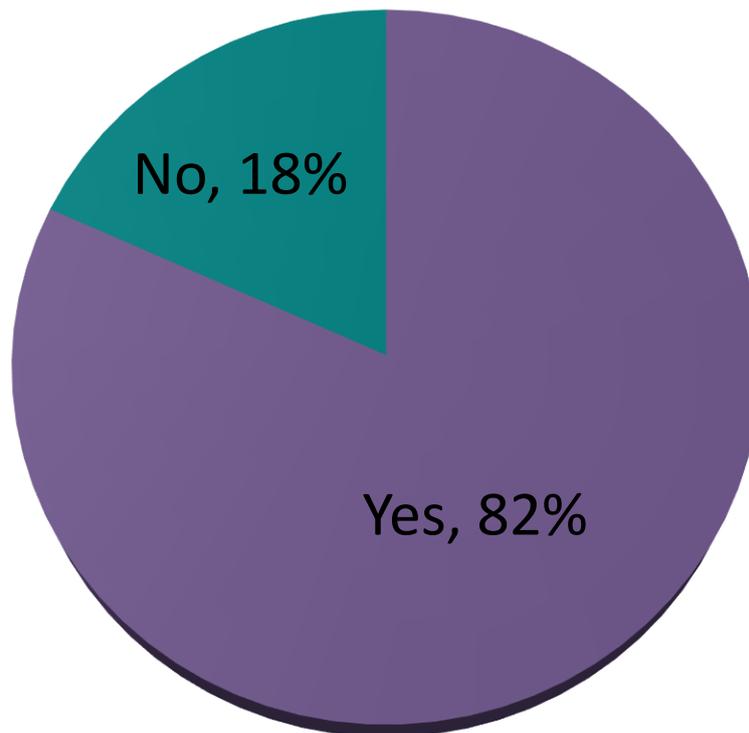
#### 1.1 Possession of a skills certification card

“Do you hold a skills certification card?”

Just over four fifths (82%) of construction workers surveyed hold a skills certification card.

**Graph 1.1:**

**Proportion of construction workers with a skills certification card**



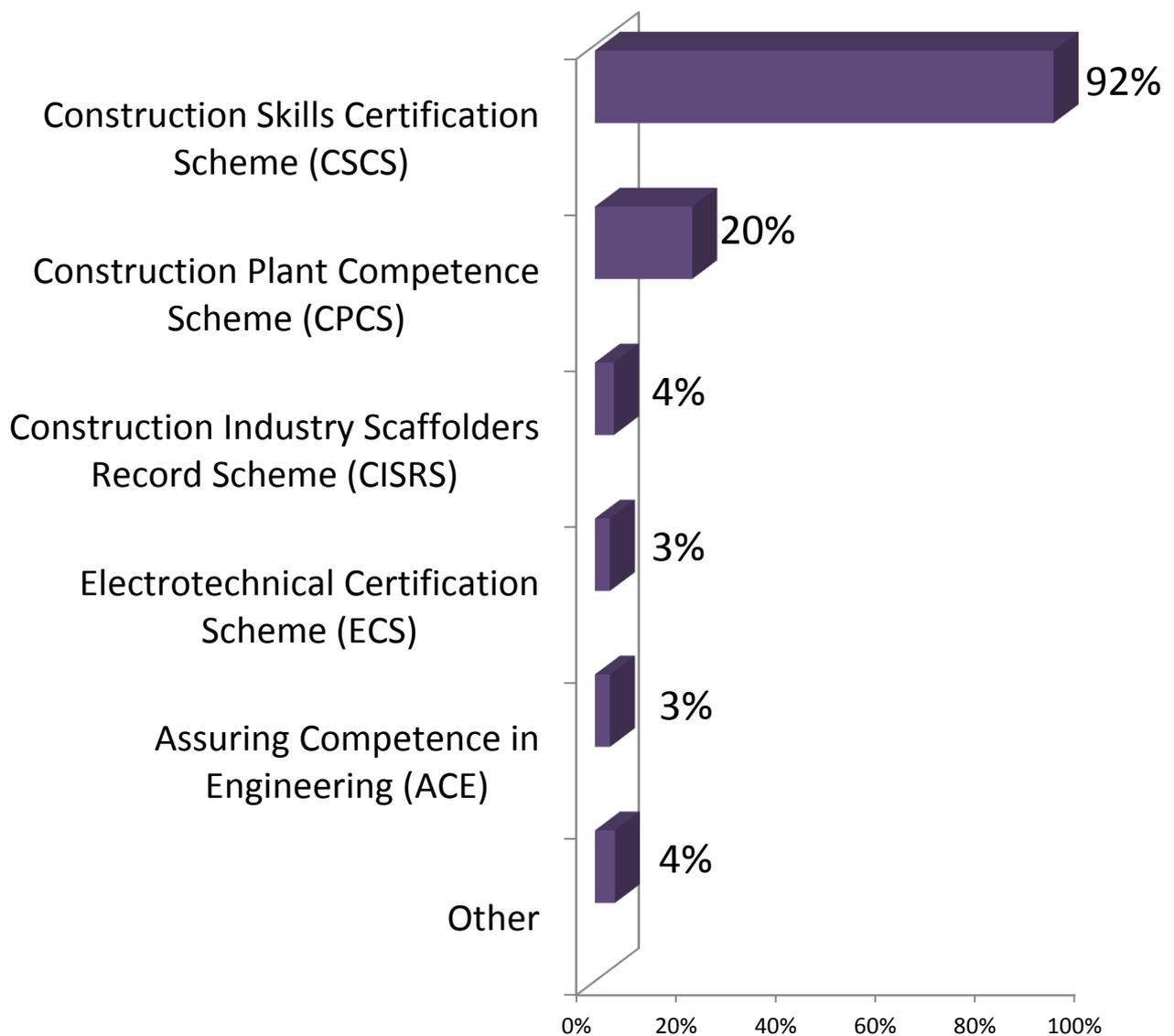
*Sample base = 1180, all construction workers, single response*

## 1.2 Types of skills certification cards held

“Which card/s do you hold?”

The Construction Skills Certification Scheme (CSCS) is significantly the main type of skills certification card held (92%). One fifth of construction workers who hold a skills certification card (20%) hold a Construction Plant Competence Scheme (CPCS) card.

**Graph 1.2:**  
Types of skills certification cards held



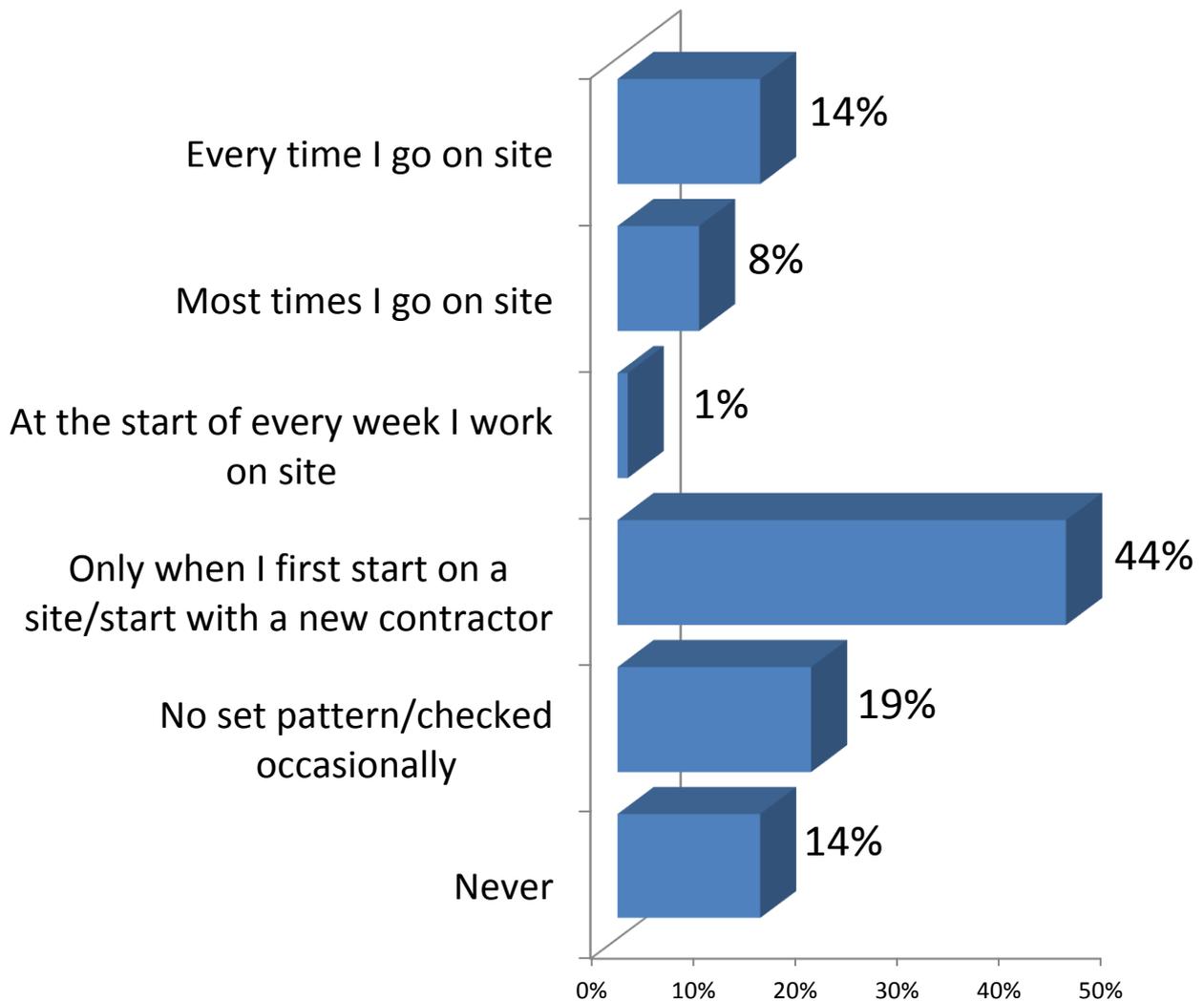
Sample base = 965, all construction workers with a skills certification card, multiple response

### 1.3 Frequency of card checking

“How often is your card checked when entering a construction site?”

86% of construction workers with a skills certification card state that these are checked at some point when entering a construction site. The main frequency of cards being checked is when they first start on a site or start with a new contractor (44%). 22% of construction workers state that their card is checked every time or most times they go onsite. 14% of construction workers state their card is never checked.

**Graph 1.3:**  
Frequency of card checking



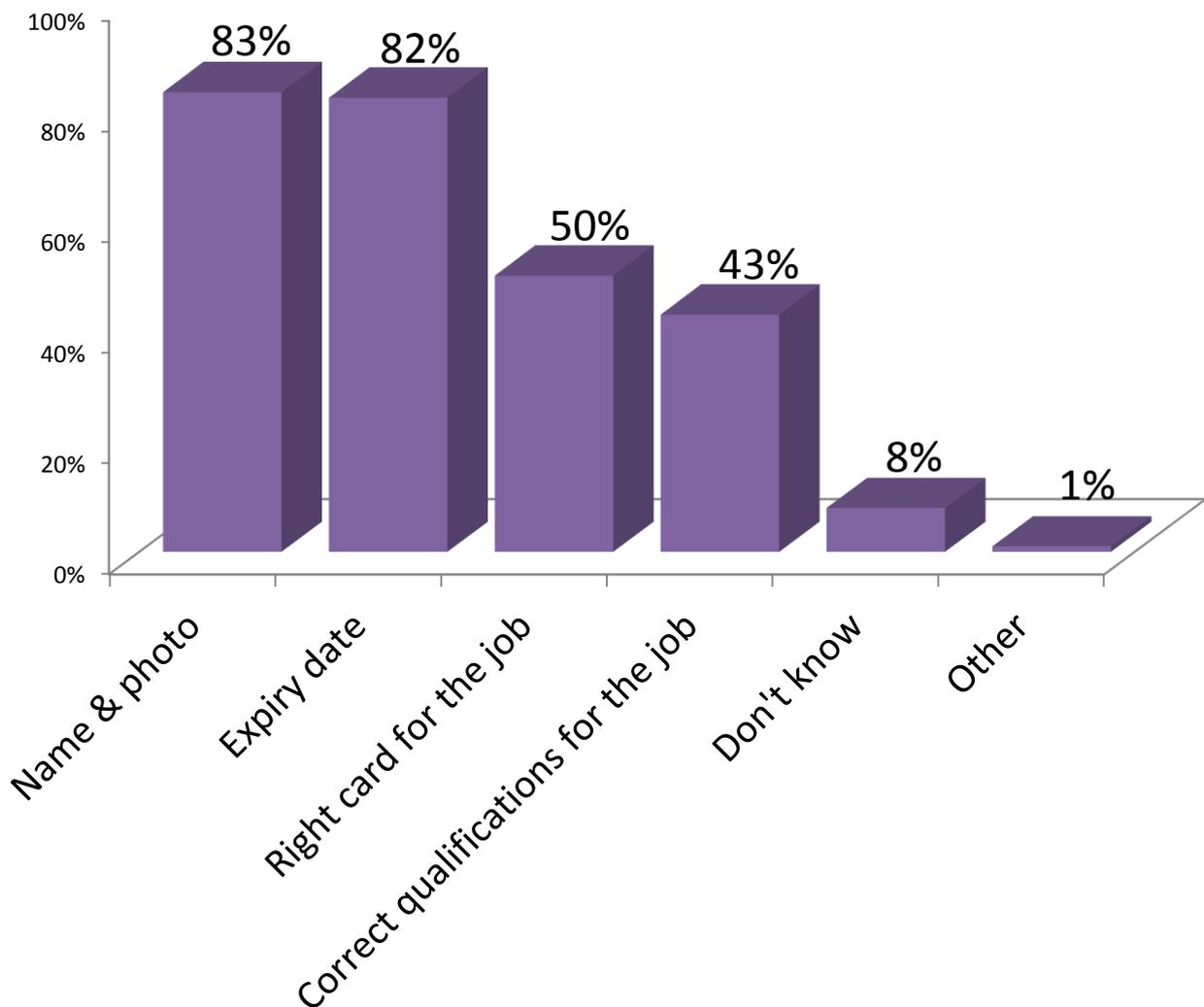
Sample base = 965, all construction workers with a skills certification card, single response

## 1.4 Card details checked

“What is checked on the card?”

Name & photo (83%) and expiry date (82%) are the two main details checked on cards. Half of construction workers (50%) state that the card being the right one for the job to be carried out is checked, and 43% that the card holder has the correct qualifications for the job. In total, 58% of construction workers state their card is checked that it is the right card for the job and/or that they have the correct qualifications for the job.

**Graph 1.4:**  
**Card details checked**



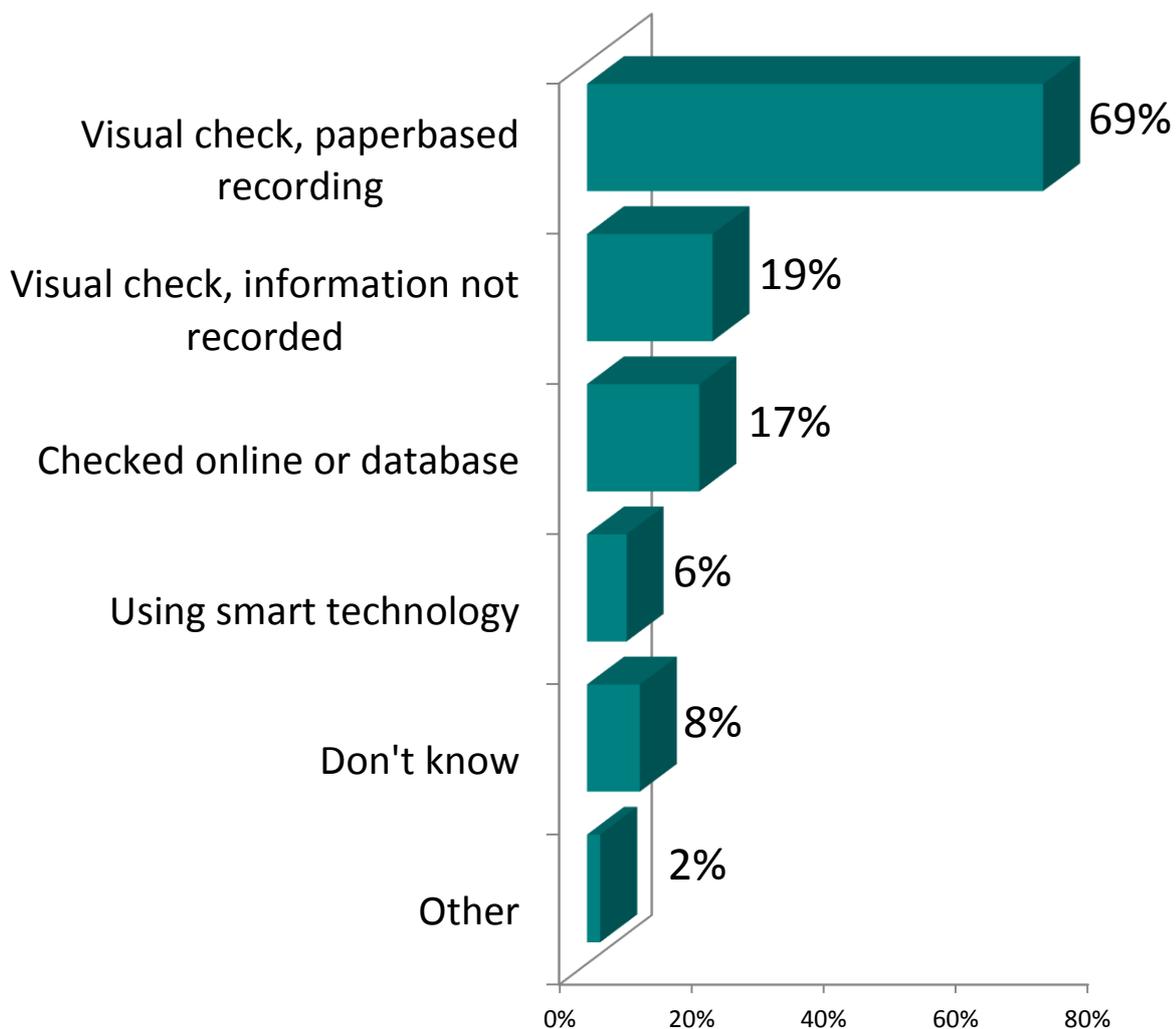
Sample base = 829, all construction workers with a skills certification card who have their cards checked, multiple response

## 1.5 Ways in which cards are checked

“How is your card checked?”

“Paper based recording of information following a visual check is the main way in which cards are checked (69%). 17% of construction workers state their cards are checked online or on a data base and 6% that they are checked using smart technology (card reader, tablet, mobile phone). In total, 21% of construction workers state their card is checked either online or database and/or using smart technology. 19% of construction workers state their cards are visually checked but the information is not recorded.

**Graph 1.5:**  
Ways in which cards are checked



Sample base = 829, all construction workers with a skills certification card who have their cards checked, multiple response

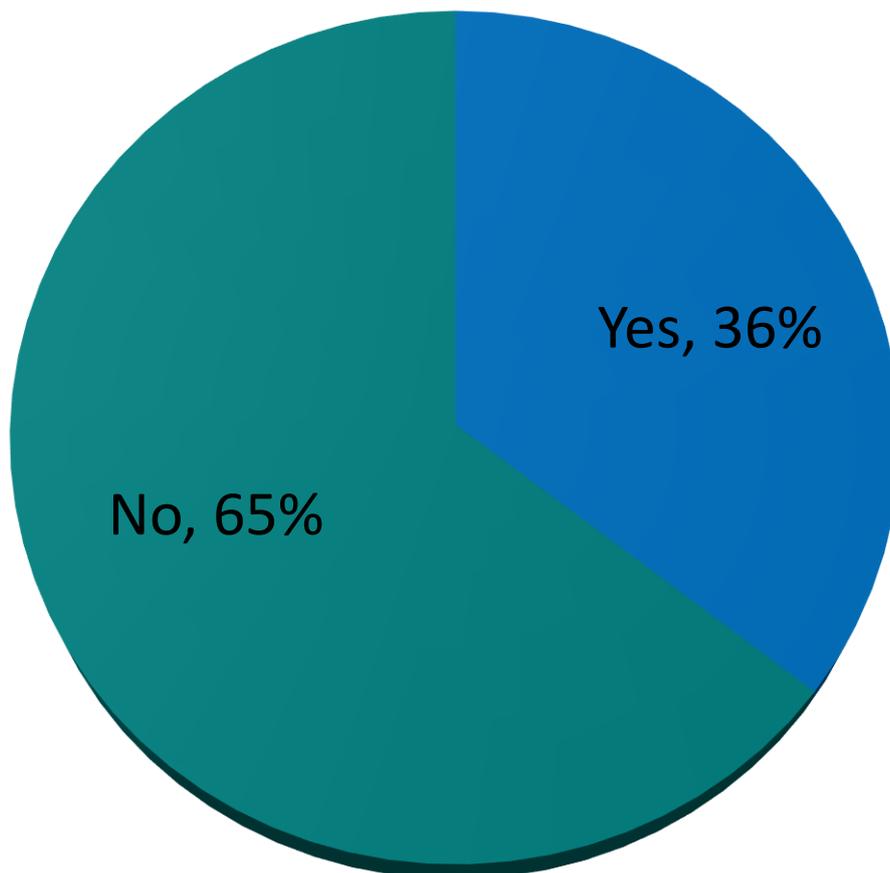
## 2. Fake skills certification cards

### 2.1 Responsibility for checking skills certification cards

**“Are you responsible for checking skills certification cards onsite?”**

Just over one third of all construction workers surveyed (36%) are responsible for checking skills certification cards onsite.

**Graph 2.1:**  
**Responsibility for checking skills certification cards**



*Sample base = 1180, all construction workers, single response*

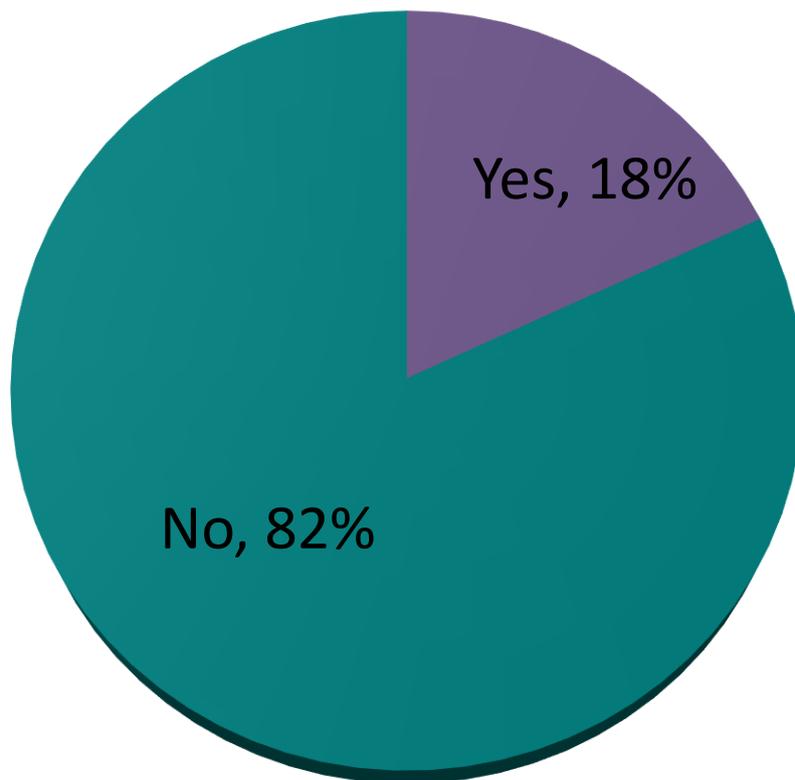
*NB: Chart does not sum to 100% due to rounding: 35.5% have responsibility for checking cards and 64.5% do not have responsibility for checking cards (see introduction)*

## 2.2 Experience of fake cards

**“Have you seen any fake skills certification cards onsite in the past 12 months?”**

Just under one fifth (18%) of construction workers with responsibility for checking cards have seen a fake card onsite in the past 12 months. Over four fifths of those responsible for checking cards (82%) have not seen any fake cards in the past 12 months.

**Graph 2.2:**  
**Experience of fake cards**



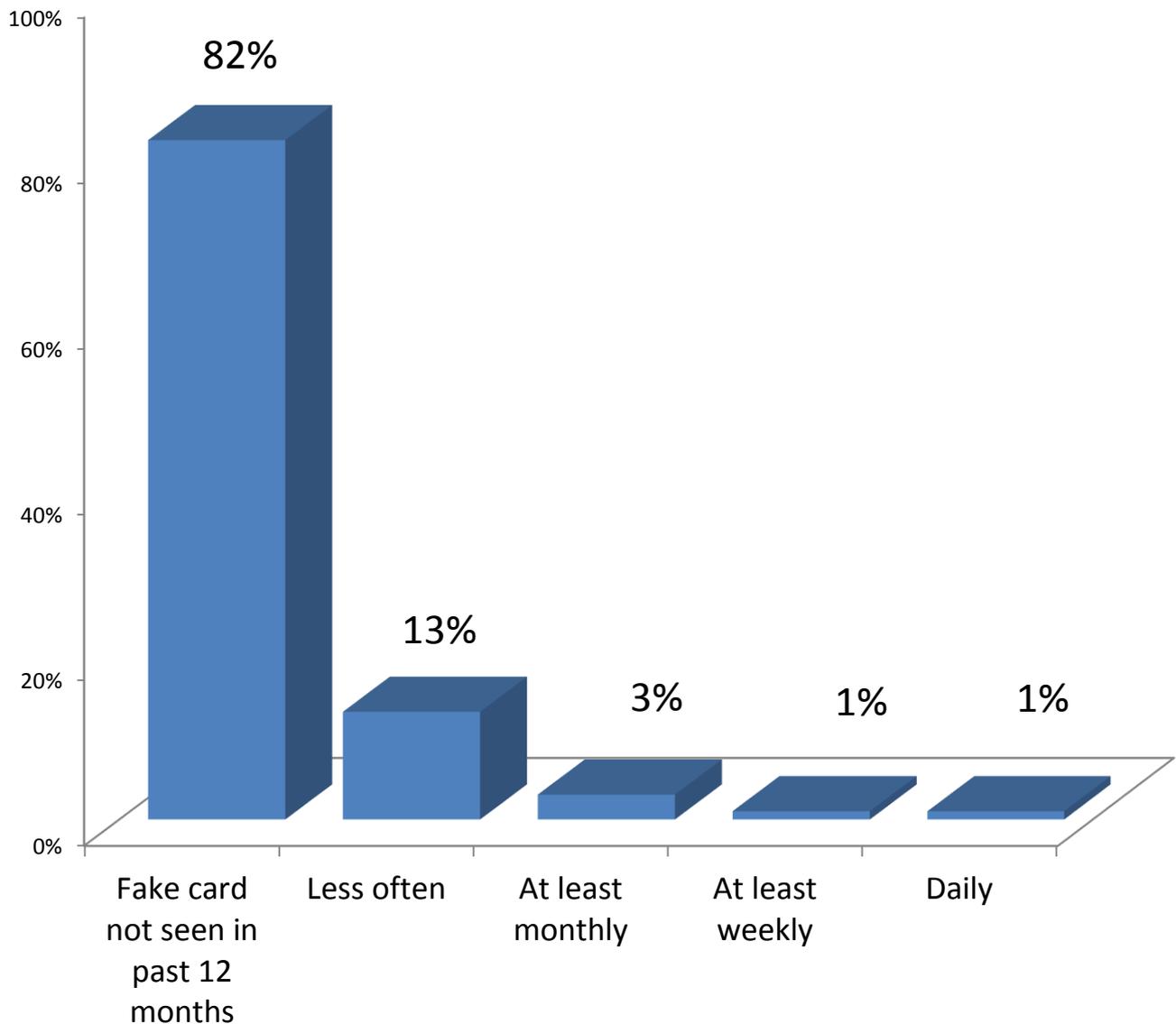
*Sample base = 419, all construction workers with responsibility for checking cards, single response*

## 2.3 Frequency of seeing fake cards

“How often do you see (have you seen) fake cards onsite?”

Of the 419 construction workers who have responsibility for checking skills certification cards, the main frequency is less than monthly (13%). 3% have seen a fake card at least once a month, 1% at least weekly and 1% on a daily basis.

**Graph 2.3:**  
**Frequency of seeing fake cards**



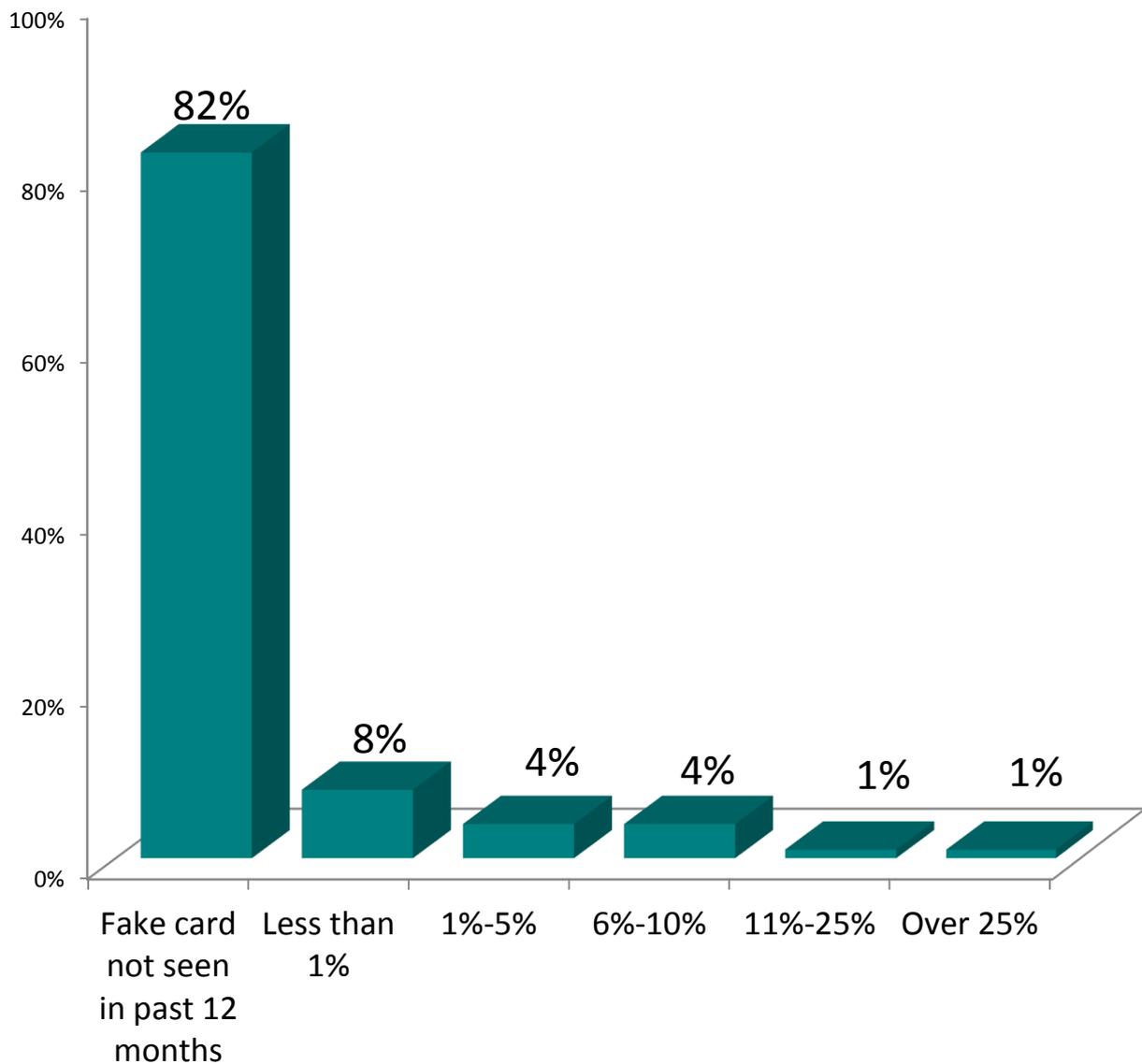
Sample base = 419, all construction workers with responsibility for checking cards, single response

## 2.4 Percentage of cards which are fake

“What percentage of the cards you see onsite are fake?”

8% of construction workers responsible for checking skills certification cards state that less than 1% of the cards they see are fake. 4% state that between 1-5% are fake and 4% that between 6-10% are fake. 2% state that over 10% are fake.

**Graph 2.4:**  
Percentage of cards which are fake



Sample base = 419, all construction workers with responsibility for checking cards, single response

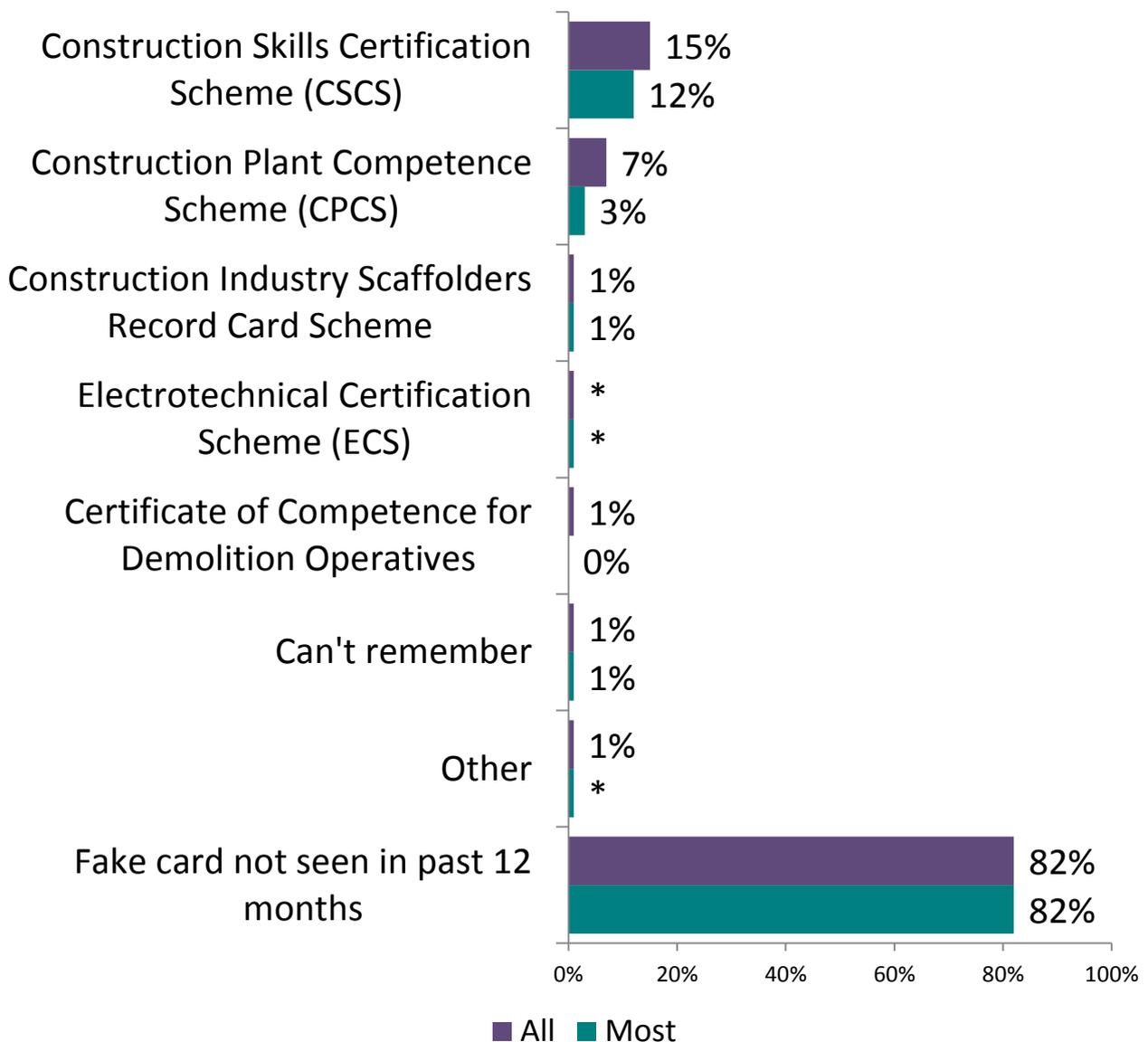
## 2.5 Schemes for which fake cards are seen

“Which schemes have you seen fake cards for?”

“Which ONE scheme have you seen MOST fake cards for?”

Of the 419 construction workers with responsibility for checking skills certification cards, CSCS is the main fake card. 15% of construction workers have seen a fake CSCS card and 12% state this is the main fake card which they have seen. 7% of construction workers have seen a fake CPCS card, and 3% state this is the main fake card which they have seen.

**Graph 2.5:**  
Schemes for which fake cards are seen



Sample base = 419, all construction workers with responsibility for checking cards, single response for most card, multiple response for all cards, \* = Less than 0.5%

## 2.6 Skills for which fake cards are seen

“Which skill levels have you seen on fake cards?”

“Which ONE skill level have you seen MOST on fake cards?”

Unskilled workers (10%) and skilled workers (10%) are the two main skill levels which construction workers have seen on fake cards.

Unskilled workers (9%) is the skill level which has been seen most on fake cards.

1% of construction workers have seen supervisor skills on fake cards and 1% have seen manager skills on fake cards.

**Graph 2.6:**  
Skills for which fake cards are seen



Sample base = 419, all construction workers with responsibility for checking cards, single response for most card, multiple response for all cards, \* = Less than 0.5%

## 2.7 Ways fake cards were detected

“How were the fake cards detected?”

The three main ways in which fake cards were detected are no record of the individual when the card was checked online (51%), a poor quality fake card (51%) and the photo not matching the person showing the card (41%). In total, 57% of respondents state they have detected fake cards by checking online, contact centre confirmation and/or smart technology.

**Graph 2.7:**  
**Ways fake cards were detected**



*Sample base = 75, all construction workers with responsibility for checking cards who have seen a fake card in the past 12 months, multiple response*

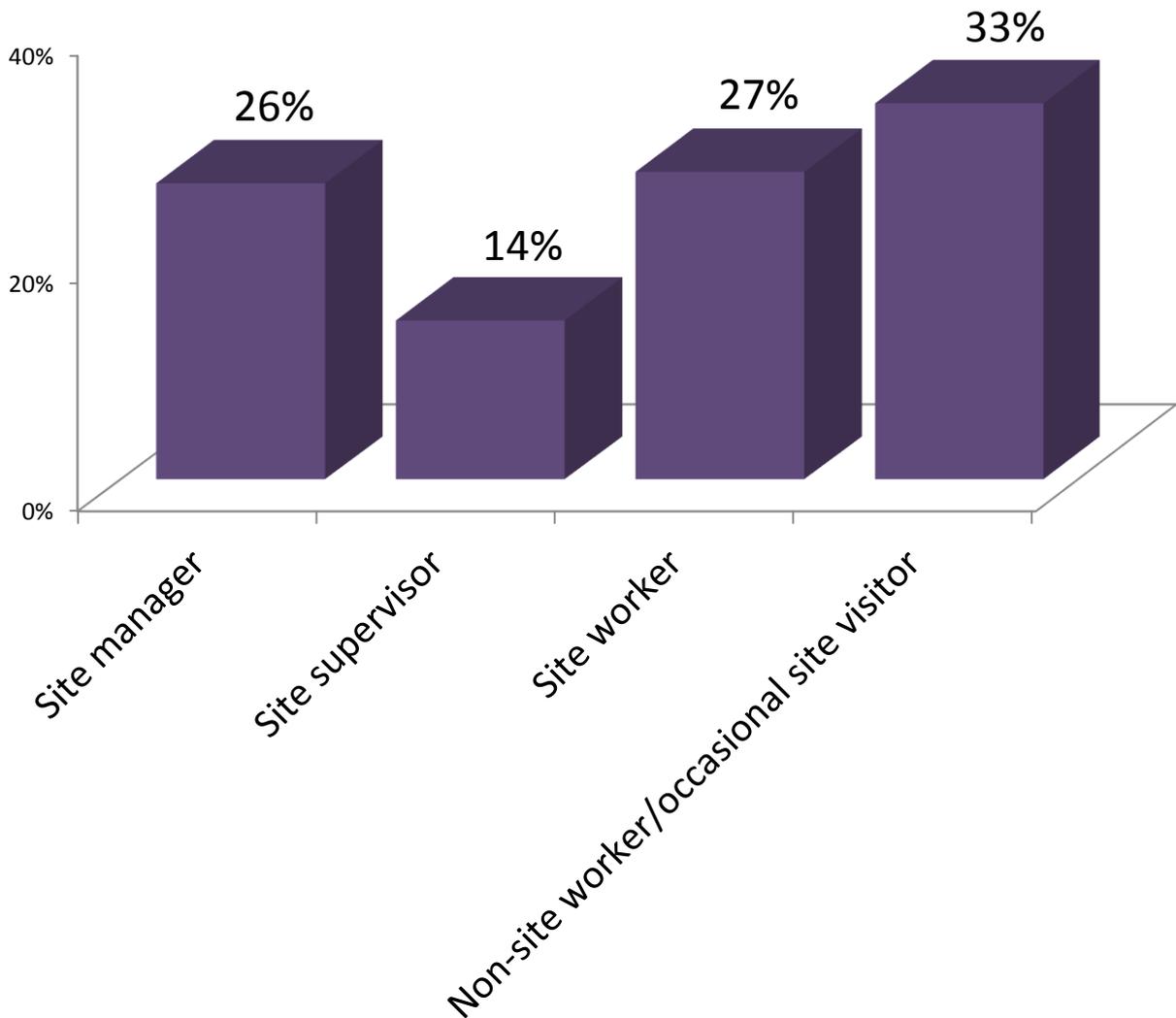
### 3. Profile of construction workers

#### 3.1 Construction worker role

“What is your role?”

Two fifths of construction workers surveyed (40%) have either a site manager (26%) or a site supervisor (14%) role. Just over one quarter (27%) are site workers and 33% are non-site workers/occasional site visitors.

**Graph 3.1:**  
Role of construction worker



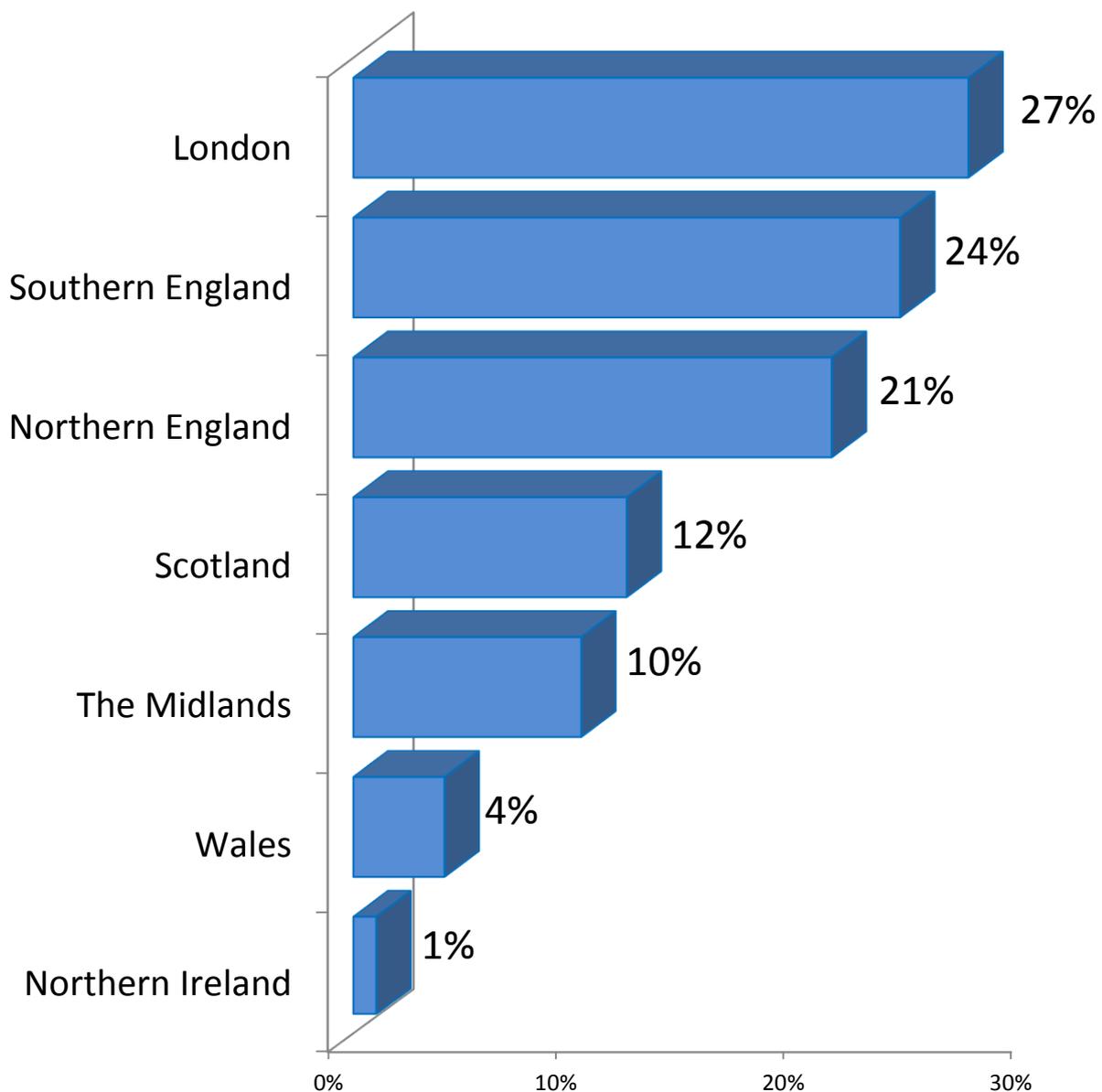
Sample base = 1180, all construction workers, single response

### 3.2 Main work location

“Where do you mainly work?”

Just over half of construction workers surveyed (51%) work mainly in the South; London (27%) or Southern England (24%). Just over one third (34%) work mainly in the North; Northern England (21%), Scotland (12%) or Northern Ireland (1%). 15% work mainly in Midlands; Midlands England (10%) or Wales (4%).

**Graph 3.2:**  
**Main work location**



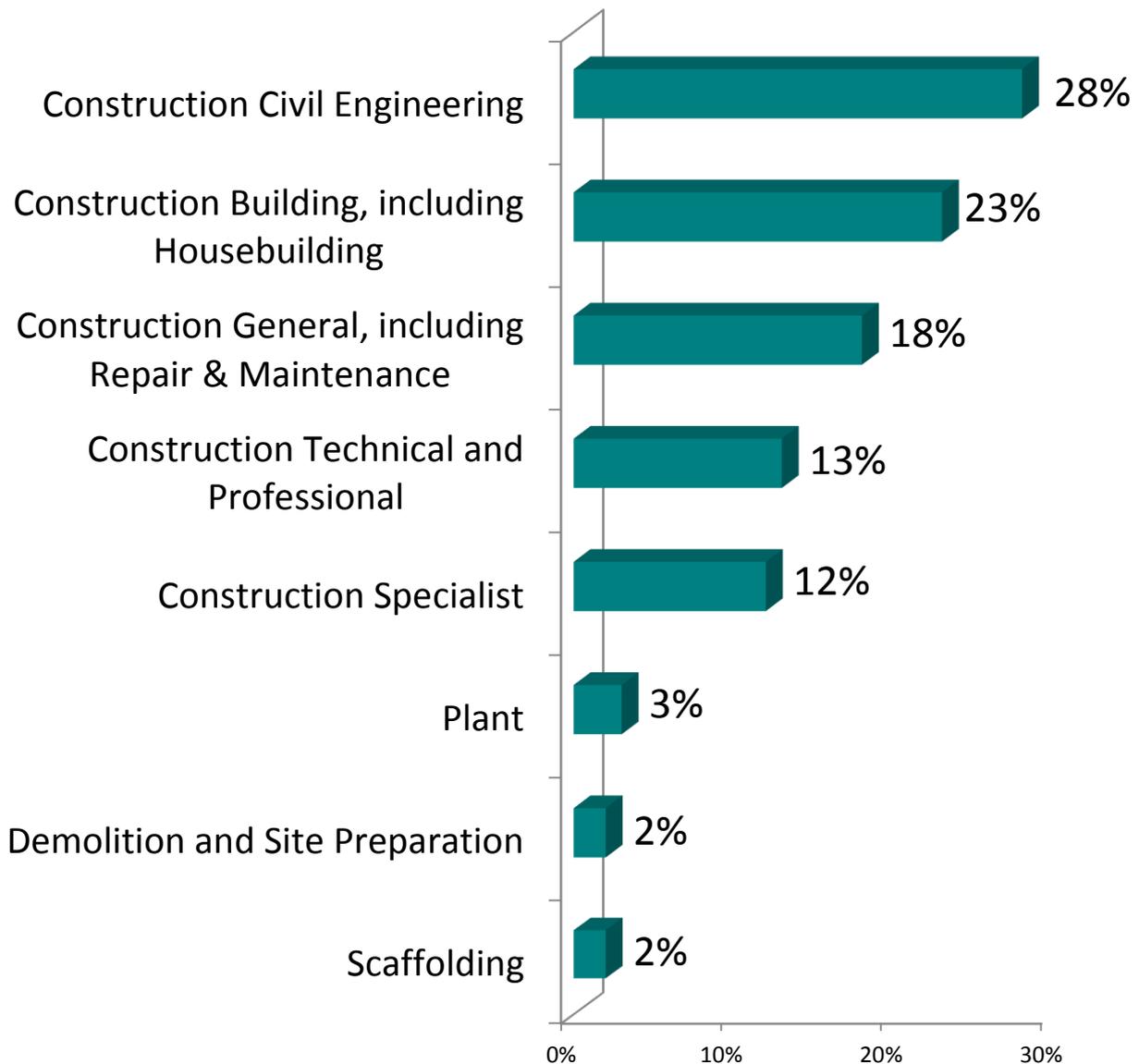
Sample base = 1180, all construction workers, single response

### 3.3 Area of construction

“What area of construction do you mainly work in?”

Just over half of construction workers surveyed (51%) work in either Construction Civil Engineering (28%) or Construction Building, including Housebuilding (23%).

**Graph 3.3:**  
Area of construction



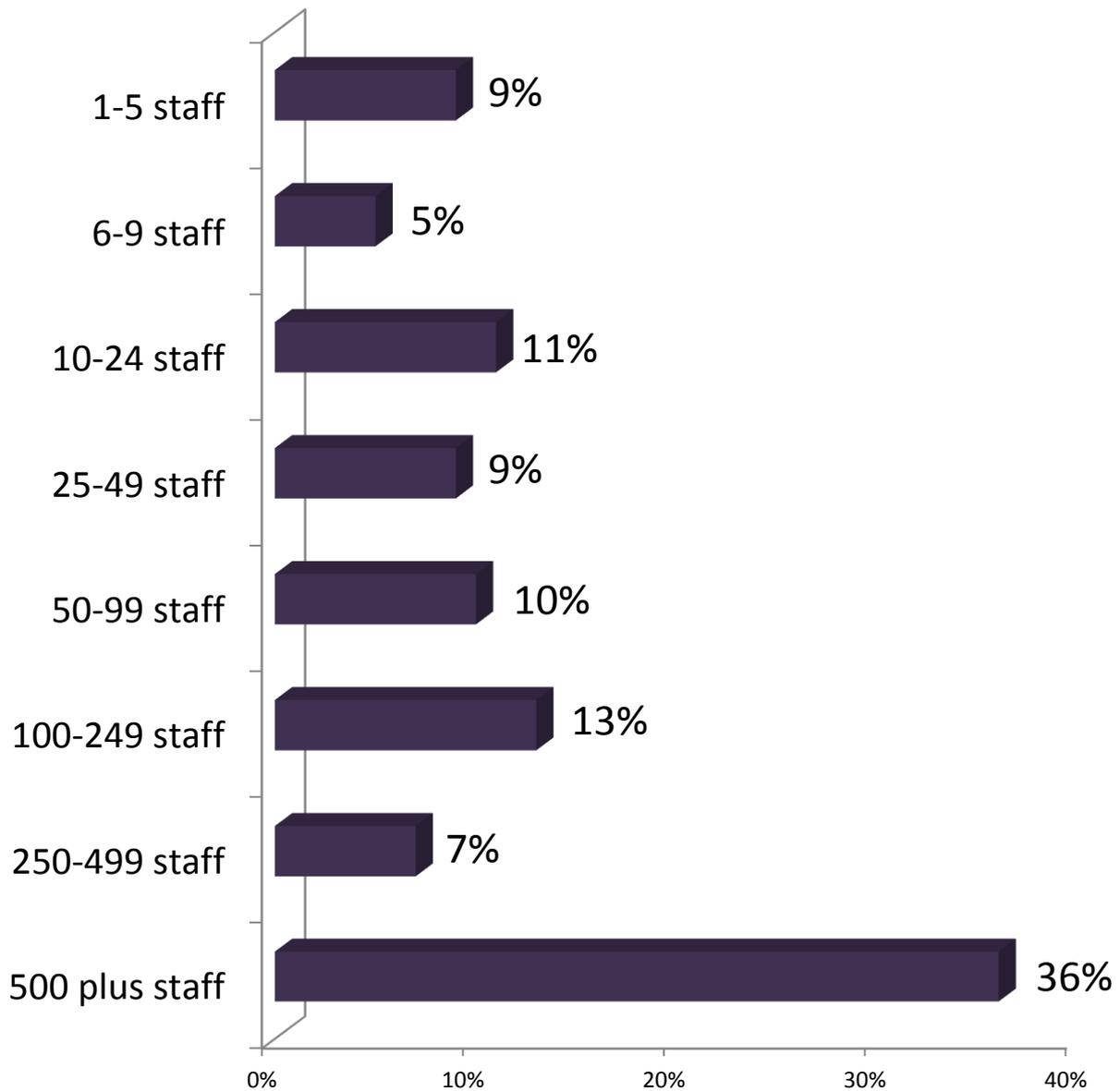
Sample base = 1180, all construction workers, single response

### 3.4 Size of business

“What size of business do you work in?”

Just over one third of construction workers surveyed (36%) work in a business which employs 500 or more members of staff. One quarter (25%) work in businesses with less than 25 members of staff.

**Graph 3.4:**  
Size of business



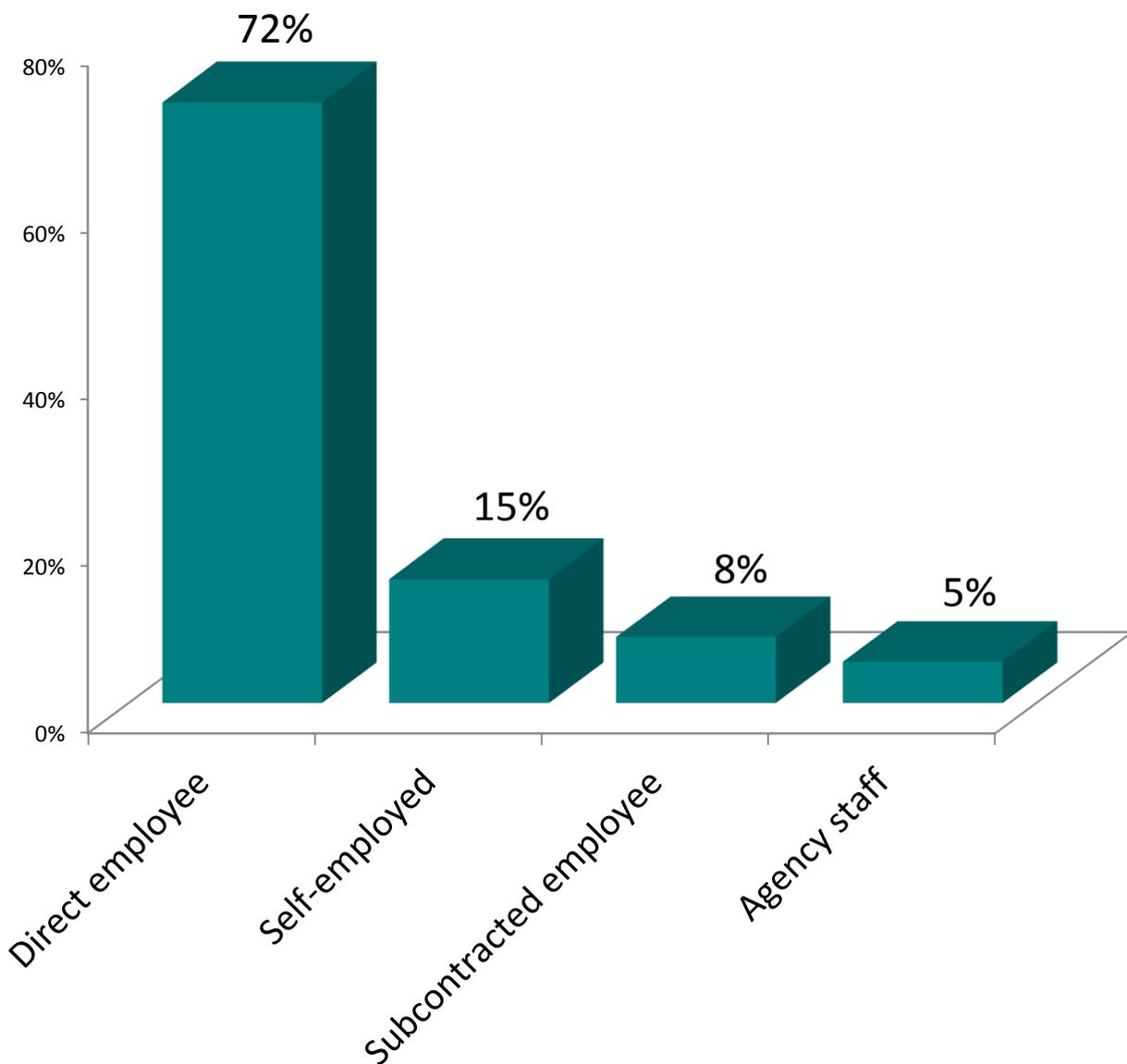
Sample base = 1180, all construction workers, single response

### 3.5 Employment status

“What is your employment status?”

Nearly three quarters of construction workers surveyed (72%) are direct employees. 15% are self-employed, 8% are subcontracted employees and 5% are agency staff.

**Graph 3.5:**  
**Employment status**



Sample base = 1180, all construction workers, single response

## Annex 1: Cross-tabulated tables

**Table 1.1: Holding of a skills certification card**

**Table 1.1a: Holding of a skills certification card by job role**

Holding of a skills certification card	Site manager	Site supervisor	Site worker	Non-site worker/ visitor
	Sample base = 307	Sample base = 165	Sample base = 321	Sample base = 387
<b>Hold skills certification card</b>	<b><u>91%</u></b>	<b><u>94%</u></b>	78%	72%

Site managers and Site supervisors are more likely to hold a skills certification card than Site workers and Non-site workers/occasional site visitors.

**Table 1.1b: Holding of a skills certification card by location**

Holding of a skills certification card	North	Midlands	South	London
	Sample base = 402	Sample base = 174	Sample base = 288	Sample base = 316
<b>Hold skills certification card</b>	80%	82%	85%	81%

There are no significant differences regarding location and the likelihood of having a skills certification card.

**Table 1.1c: Holding of a skills certification card by area of work**

Holding of a skills certification card	Building	Civil Engineering	Specialist	Technical	General	Other
	Sample base = 275	Sample base = 327	Sample base = 144	Sample base = 149	Sample base = 208	Sample base = 77
<b>Hold skills certification card</b>	77%	<b><u>93%</u></b>	76%	84%	75%	79%

Civil Engineers are those most likely to hold a skills certification card. In addition, Technical workers are more likely to hold a card than general workers.

**Table 1.1d: Holding of a skills certification card by employment status**

Holding of a skills certification card	Direct employee	Sub-contracted employee	Agency staff	Self-employed
	Sample base = 847	Sample base = 96	Sample base = 56	Sample base = 181
<b>Hold skills certification card</b>	84%	85%	77%	<b><u>72%</u></b>

Self-employed construction workers are less likely than direct employees and sub-contracted employees to hold a skills certification card.

**Table 1.1e: Holding of a skills certification card by company size**

Holding of a skills certification card	1-5 staff	6-9 staff	10-24 staff	25-49 staff	50-99 staff	100-249 staff	250-499 staff	500+ staff
	Sample base = 101	Sample base = 61	Sample base = 130	Sample base = 106	Sample base = 118	Sample base = 153	Sample base = 87	Sample base = 424
<b>Hold skills certification card</b>	69%	66%	75%	79%	72%	84%	86%	91%

Construction workers in companies with 1-9 staff are less likely to hold a skills certification card than those with 100+ staff. Those in companies with 10-24 staff are less likely to hold a card than those in companies with 250+ staff. Construction workers in companies with 25-49 staff are less likely to hold a card than those in companies with 500+ staff. Construction workers in companies with 50-99 staff are less likely to hold a card than those in companies with 100+ staff. Construction workers in companies with 500+ staff are more likely to hold a skills certification card than those in companies with under 250 staff.

**Table 1.3: Proportion of construction workers whose card is never checked**
**Table 1.3a: Proportion of construction workers whose card is never checked by job role**

Frequency of card checking	Site manager	Site supervisor	Site worker	Non-site worker/ visitor
	Sample base = 280	Sample base = 155	Sample base = 251	Sample base = 279
<b>Never checked</b>	10%	8%	12%	<b><u>23%</u></b>

Construction workers who are non-site workers or who are occasional site visitors are significantly less likely to have their card checked.

**Table 1.3b: Proportion of construction workers whose card is never checked by location**

Frequency of card checking	England	UK outside of England
	Sample base = 804	Sample base = 161
<b>Never checked</b>	12%	<b><u>22%</u></b>

Skills certification cards are more likely to never be checked outside of England.

**Table 1.3c: Proportion of construction workers whose card is never checked by area of work**

Frequency of card checking	Building	Civil Engineering	Specialist	Technical	General	Other
	Sample base = 212	Sample base = 303	Sample base = 109	Sample base = 125	Sample base = 155	Sample base = 61
<b>Never checked</b>	<b><u>17%</u></b>	10%	12%	<b><u>19%</u></b>	<b><u>19%</u></b>	7%

Building workers, Technical workers and General workers are more likely to never have their card checked than Civil Engineers and Other workers.

**Table 1.3d: Proportion of construction workers whose card is never checked by employment status**

Frequency of card checking	Direct employee Sample base = 710	Sub-contracted employee Sample base = 82	Agency staff Sample base = 43	Self-employed Sample base = 130
<b>Never checked</b>	16%	11%	NA	11%

There are no significant differences regarding employment status.

**Table 1.3e: Proportion of construction workers whose card is never checked by company size**

Frequency of card checking	1-9 staff Sample base = 110	10-24 staff Sample base = 97	25-49 staff Sample base = 84	50-99 staff Sample base = 85	100-249 staff Sample base = 129	250-499 staff Sample base = 75	500+ staff Sample base = 385
<b>Never checked</b>	15%	<b>26%</b>	12%	9%	16%	12%	12%

Construction workers in companies with 10-24 staff are most likely to never have their card checked compared with all other company sizes with the exception of 100-249 staff.

**Table 2.2: Proportion of construction workers who have seen a fake card in the past 12 months**

**Table 2.2a: Proportion of construction workers who have seen a fake card in the past 12 months by role**

Fake card seen onsite in past 12 months	Site manager Sample base = 210	Site supervisor Sample base = 85	Site worker Sample base = 44	Non-site worker/ visitor Sample base = 80
<b>Yes, fake card seen</b>	19%	14%	NA	19%

There is no significant difference regarding role and the likelihood of those with responsibility for checking having seen a fake card in the past 12 months.

**Table 2.2b: Proportion of construction workers who have seen a fake card in the past 12 months by location**

Fake card seen onsite in past 12 months	North Sample base = 126	Midlands Sample base = 60	South Sample base = 110	London Sample base = 123
<b>Yes, fake card seen</b>	12%	7%	17%	<b>30%</b>

Fake card seen onsite in past 12 months	England Sample base = 347	UK outside of England Sample base = 72
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<b>Yes, fake card seen</b>	<b><u>20%</u></b>	<b>8%</b>
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London is the region where construction workers with responsibility for checking cards are most likely to have seen a fake card in the past 12 months.

Construction workers in the Midlands are less likely to have seen a fake card than those in the South.

Construction workers with responsibility for checking cards in England are more likely to have seen a fake card in the last 12 months than those in the UK outside of England.

**Table 2.2c: Proportion of construction workers who have seen a fake card in the past 12 months by area of work**

Fake card seen onsite in past 12 months	Building	Civil Engineering	Specialist	Technical	General	Other
	Sample base = 120	Sample base = 158	Sample base = 39	Sample base = 25	Sample base = 57	Sample base = 20
<b>Yes, fake card seen</b>	24%	15%	NA	NA	14%	NA

There is no significant difference between industry and likelihood of having seen a fake card.

**Table 2.2d: Proportion of construction workers who have seen a fake card in the past 12 months by company size by employment status**

Fake card seen on site in past 12 months	Direct employee	Sub-contracted employee	Agency staff	Self-employed
	Sample base = 326	Sample base = 24	Sample base = 21	Sample base = 48
<b>Yes, fake card seen</b>	17%	NA	NA	NA

Sample bases are too small for comparison by employment status.

**Table 2.2e: Proportion of construction workers who have seen a fake card in the past 12 months by company size**

Fake card seen onsite in past 12 months	1-24 staff	25-99 staff	100-499 staff	500+ staff
	Sample base = 81	Sample base = 84	Sample base = 84	Sample base = 170
<b>Yes, fake card seen</b>	16%	8%	<b><u>29%</u></b>	18%

Construction workers in companies with 100-499 staff are more likely to have seen a fake card than those in companies with less than 100 staff.

Construction workers in companies with 25-99 staff are less likely to have seen a fake card than those with 500+ staff.



## Annex 2: Press release

### **CITB and CSCS launch survey to assess construction card fraud**

The Construction Industry Training Board (CITB) has joined forces with the Construction Skills Certification Scheme (CSCS) to conduct an industry-wide survey aimed at assessing card scheme fraud and card checking procedures on UK construction sites.

The use of fake cards in the construction industry was recently highlighted by the National Crime Agency's prosecution of an organised gang dealing in false identity documentation, which included a number of construction industry certification cards.

All workers on construction sites should hold the correct qualifications and training for the type of work they carry out. Employers need to be confident that if they are shown a card it is legitimate and that the person showing it has the appropriate qualifications to be carrying out their job onsite.

The survey will focus on:

- Getting a better understanding of the problems caused by fraudulent cards
- How card checks are carried out onsite and what information is verified
- Whether smart technology could be better employed to help tackle card fraud.

Anyone who works in construction can take part in the survey [here](#).

The survey will close on 31 March 2015.

Braden Connolly, Head of Product Management at CITB said: "It is essential that steps are taken to stamp out the fraudsters. CITB continues to share intelligence and work with the authorities wherever the evidence suggests criminal activity is taking place.

"The survey will help us better understand the scale of the problem and assist us in tackling it. We hope it will also raise awareness of card fraud and encourage industry to carry out thorough card checks and to report suspect cards to CITB."

CSCS Chief Executive Graham Wren said: "Unless people use consistent and accurate methods of checking cards to certificate workers' training and qualifications, the schemes cannot fulfill the roles they were designed for. The smart technology within CSCS cards is a simple and cost-effective way to do this, and we are keen to find out more about how it is being utilised on sites across the UK."

ENDS



Ask for Research Limited  
Pell Wall Court, Pell Wall  
Market Drayton, TF9 2AD  
Tel: 01630 658000,  
Fax: 01630 655955

Website: [www.askforresearch.co.uk](http://www.askforresearch.co.uk)  
Email: [info@askforresearch.co.uk](mailto:info@askforresearch.co.uk)