



Unemployment rate amongst surveyors 26% and rising

Number of graduate surveyors halves in 18 months

President of SCS expresses concern at brain drain from sector.

Embargo 3pm Sunday 29th March 2009. New figures released by the Society of Chartered Surveyors show that there has been a 26% fall in employment amongst surveyors between January 2008 and January 09.

The President of the Society of Chartered Surveyors Sean McCormack described the figure as alarming. He said the fact the figure was expected to rise to over 30% by June was a cause of deep concern to his members and underlined the need for immediate government action.

The latest figures are based on the responses of 247 firms all over the country. Based on those findings it's estimated up to 750 chartered surveyors and graduate surveyors - those who do not have chartered status - have lost their jobs in that period.

Sean McCormack said; "This is not a time for platitudes and hand wringing at rising unemployment. Our members need to see the government taking decisive action now before the situation deteriorates further. In a pre-budget submission* last week we called on the government to tackle the crisis in the banking system, to re-prioritise elements of the public capital programme and to address the country's infrastructure deficit. Right now - with falling tender prices providing excellent value for money - is the time to act, not two years down the line when the skills and experiences our members have accumulated over the last twenty years will be lost and it will be more difficult to take advantage of any upturn."

The survey shows that graduate members of the profession have been particularly badly hit by the recession with the fall in employment since January 2008 amongst those working to attain chartered status as high as 43%. This figure is projected to rise to 53% by June. This means that the number of graduate surveyors in employment in January 08 will have halved over an 18 month period.

Amongst chartered surveyors, the Quantity Surveying division recorded the steepest fall in employment at 19%. While graduates in the Quantity Surveying, General Practice and Building Surveying divisions saw falls of 41%, 48% and 53% respectively.

* Full submission available at http://www.scs.ie/press_submissions/submissions

On a regional basis Munster, at 19%, recorded the greatest fall in employment amongst chartered surveyors, while Ulster saw the lowest fall at 11%. Amongst graduate surveyors Ulster and Dublin were the two areas worst affected with falls of 48% and 45% respectively.

McCormack said the society was continuing to put measures in place to assist affected members. "While we will do our utmost to assist members experiencing difficulties we need the government to step up to the plate and introduce innovative policies. Many other governments, most notably the US and UK have come forward with anti-recession stimulus measures to assist the private sector, investing in infrastructural works, schools, hospitals etc. A reduced VAT rate would help make energy efficiency improvements to homes cheaper, while a similar initiative of repair and upgrade for commercial properties should also be considered."

McCormack concluded; "Challenging times also provide opportunities. Now things like reforming stamp duty on commercial and residential property - both new and second hand for the latter, expanding the "Home Choice Loan" scheme run by Local Authorities and sorting out the housing list have never been more desirable or achievable".

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Note to editors:

- Dating back to 1895 and incorporated in 1993, the Society of Chartered Surveyors is the largest body in Ireland representing both the construction and property industries. It now represents some 2,200 qualified chartered surveyors as well as more than 1,000 probationers countrywide who are undergoing their assessment of professional competence in order to achieve the gold standard of chartered status. Members of the Society are typically professionals employed in planning & development, building, rural and other specialist surveyors, as well as general practice surveyors working in the valuation area.