

# UK construction industry walking the talent tightrope

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Talent shortages, rather than increased demand, are behind the increase in bricklayers' pay, according to One Way.

An analysis by the construction and rail recruitment specialist found that a lack of available professionals was the major factor behind the huge spike in pay, rather than an increase in demand. This follows reports from the Recruitment and Employment Confederation that bricklayers are being paid up to £1,000 per week in some cases.

Paul Payne, managing director of One Way, comments:

"Firstly, this is excellent news for bricklayers across the UK who are likely to be pretty pleased with their hugely increased earning potential. However, this is a bubble and the rise is solely related to the lack of professionals in the market, rather than any huge uptick in productivity or demand. We've been saying for some time that the market is understocked with available talent and that eventually either productivity would be impacted, or budgets would have to be increased to account for these pay rises."

"What this also highlights is that even a small increase in demand could have a huge impact on the construction industry and could put many projects under enormous pressure. Not many housebuilders or construction firms will have budgeted for the fact that they have to pay bricklayers £1,000 per week and they won't be able to keep up those pay rates for very long. As we've said all along, we need a long-term approach to get more people working in construction and we need it fast. The upcoming apprenticeship levy is a small step in the right direction but we need more immediate action. If not, and we keep walking the tightrope when it comes to talent shortages, then productivity will be affected, Brexit or no Brexit."