

# State of the UK roofing industry

Q3 2024

## Key findings:

- Both workload and level of new enquiries continue to grow.
- Roofing contractors in the new build residential and public non-residential new build sectors are particularly positive about their expected workload in the year ahead.
- Recruiting skilled labour continues to be challenging but total headcount has increased.

Prepared by AMA Research, on behalf of NFRC



# Contents

---

Welcome to the state of the roofing industry survey report.....	3
An introduction by James Talman, NFRC CEO.....	4
Key indicators.....	5
Workload and enquiries by sector.....	6
Workload and enquiries by region.....	7
Employment skills and shortages.....	8
Costs, prices and materials availability.....	9
Market expectations.....	10
Payment terms.....	11

# Charts

---

Chart 1: Key indicators.....	5
Chart 2: Workload by sector – change on previous quarter.....	6
Chart 3: New enquiries by sector - change on previous quarter.....	6
Chart 4: Workload by region – change on previous quarter.....	7
Chart 5: New enquiries by region – change on previous quarter.....	7
Chart 6: Labour indicators.....	8
Chart 7: Areas of skills shortage.....	8
Chart 8: Cost pressures.....	9
Chart 9: Materials shortages.....	9
Chart 10: Market expectations – 12 months.....	10
Chart 11: Market expectations by region – 12 months.....	10
Chart 12: Payment terms and periods.....	11
Chart 13: Actual payment period.....	11



# Welcome to the state of the roofing industry survey report



## About the survey

This report is prepared by AMA Research on behalf of NFRC (The National Federation of Roofing Contractors). This report looks at activity during the three months to September 2024. This survey of NFRC members was conducted between 22 October 2024 and 13 November 2024. Over 130 NFRC members responded to the survey from across all regions. However, due to a lower concentration of NFRC Members in certain regions, such as Wales and Northern Ireland, the sample size is small for some of the breakdowns by location. Therefore, care should be taken when drawing conclusions about specific regions.\*

NFRC is the largest and most influential roofing trade association in the UK, promoting quality contractors and quality products, ensuring that its members are at the forefront of all roofing developments.

## About the author



Jenny Archer is an experienced researcher with 19 years' experience in the field, including 12 years delivering research for the built environment sector. During that time, she has designed, managed and presented many quantitative and qualitative projects, sharing results with the industry through written reports and presentations. She has also been heavily involved in competitor analysis to inform strategic decision making. Jenny joined AMA research in 2024 as Consultancy Research Manager, delivering bespoke consultancy projects for clients. Jenny is a certified member of the Market Research Society.

NFRC actively ensures that all members offer high standards of workmanship and sound business practice through a strict code of practice and vetting procedure, including site inspections and adhering to the Government endorsed standards. The Federation also offers technical advice, guidance to facilitate training requirements and represents member interests to the wider construction industry and government.

\*Please note that this quarter we made some changes to the way in which we categorise the roles that need to be fulfilled within the sector and the material types that contractors might be having difficulty in acquiring. These changes involved offering a not applicable option, for instance for those who have not had any difficulty recruiting or who have not tried to recruit this quarter. These not applicable responses were then excluded from analysis. This change means the percentages for the other roles or materials are slightly higher, but the issue roles, or materials are in line with the results of previous surveys.

In some cases, the 'balanced' percentage may not equal the 'increase' minus 'decrease' percentages due to rounding. Similarly, percentages may not add up to 100 per cent due to rounding or respondents selecting multiple responses.

## Contact us



020 7638 7663  
helpdesk@nfrco.co.uk  
www.nfrco.co.uk



+44 (0)1242 235724  
consultancy@amaresearch.co.uk  
www.amaresearch.co.uk

**"Our mission is to provide standards and guidance to our members, which raises confidence among businesses and householders, and promotes roofing as a skilled, professional sector within the wider construction industry."**

# An introduction by James Talman, NFRC CEO

NFRC's Members were optimistic after the third quarter of 2024, and for good reason. Workload and new enquiries continued to grow across most regions and sectors. The number of our Members reporting growth in their workload has reached its highest level in two years, with 43 per cent reporting an increase and only 13 per cent reporting a decline.

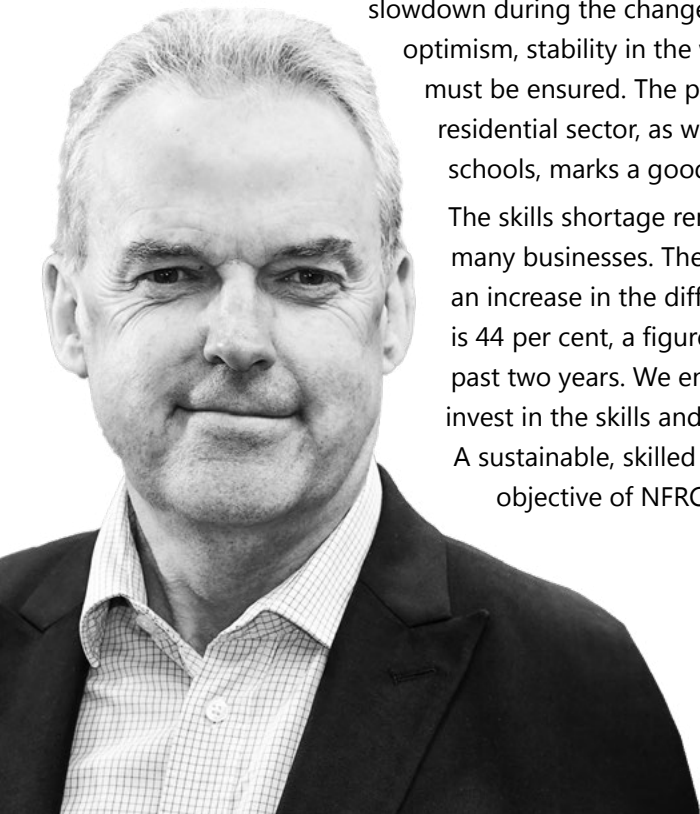
Although optimism has slightly decreased compared to Quarter 2, it is encouraging to see overall positivity among our Members following the general economic slowdown during the change of government. To maintain optimism, stability in the work pipeline and investment must be ensured. The promised investment in the residential sector, as well as hospitals, prisons, and schools, marks a good start.

The skills shortage remains a serious problem facing many businesses. The balance of companies reporting an increase in the difficulty of recruiting skilled labour is 44 per cent, a figure relatively unchanged over the past two years. We encourage Members to continue to invest in the skills and competency of their workforce.

A sustainable, skilled workforce is a key strategic objective of NFRC.

Poor payment practices continue to unfairly strain the finances of our Members during a period of record insolvencies within construction. 45 per cent of respondents said they experienced delays getting paid in Quarter 3 of 2024. The proportion of those not paid within 45 days of a job's completion rose to 39 per cent in Quarter 3, up from 29 per cent in the second quarter. This follows a worrying trend that has seen the proportion of Members not paid within 45 days gradually increase since this survey began in 2020. NFRC will closely monitor the impact of new duties to report payment practices and performance in 2025, which include the total amount of payments not made within a payment period and the percentage of invoices not paid within a period due to a dispute.

NFRC eagerly awaits further details of the government's growth plans, particularly the 2025 spring spending review. We will closely monitor the implementation of the Procurement Act 2023 in February, which aims to ensure a more equitable distribution of government contracts, especially for SMEs. We trust the changes to procurement will further reinforce our sector's optimism and is not merely a virtue signalling exercise for the government.



**James Talman**

NFRC CEO

**NFRC**  
LEADING ROOFING EXCELLENCE

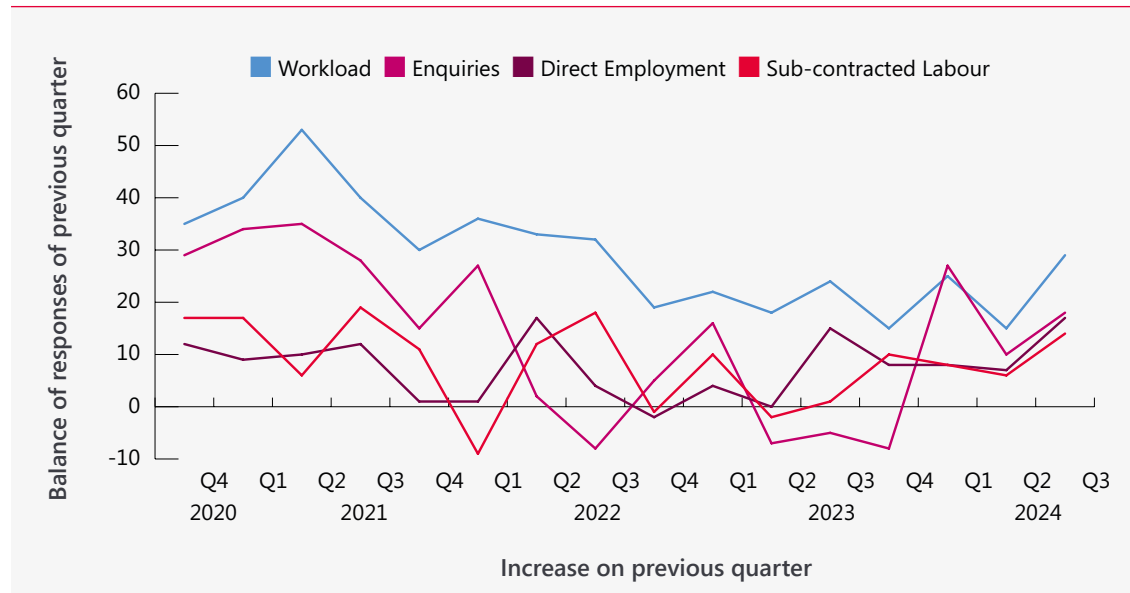
# Key indicators

Key indicators for the roofing sector are positive in Quarter 3 of this year, with perceptions across the metrics recovering from a slight slowdown in the last quarter. Following the general election in June and the new government starting to settle in, the built environment sector as a whole expected work to pick up, as projects put on hold pending the election started on site, leading to greater confidence amongst those operating in the sector.

In the roofing sector, a balance of 29 per cent of respondents\* reported overall growth in workload in the third quarter of this year, with workload reaching its highest level since Quarter 3 2022. Compared to the previous quarter, a higher proportion of roofing contractors reported an increase in workload (43 per cent in Quarter 3 compared to 38 per cent in Quarter 2), with a smaller proportion reporting a decline (13 per cent in Quarter 3 compared to 23 per cent in Quarter 2). New enquiries also saw growth this quarter, though at a slower rate than workload – a balance of 18 per cent reported growth in this area.

The balance of both direct headcount and subcontracted labour levels increased in Quarter 3 this year to 17 and 14 per cent respectively. In both cases, compared to Quarter 2 of this year, we see more roofing contractors reporting that their headcount (either direct or subcontracted) has stabilised with a smaller proportion reporting a decrease. In Quarter 3 of this year, 8 per cent reported a decrease in direct headcount and 12 per cent in subcontracted labour compared to 17 and 18 per cent respectively in the previous quarter.

Chart 1: Key indicators



\*N.B. Balance of respondents refers to the percentage reporting an increase minus the percentage reporting a decline.

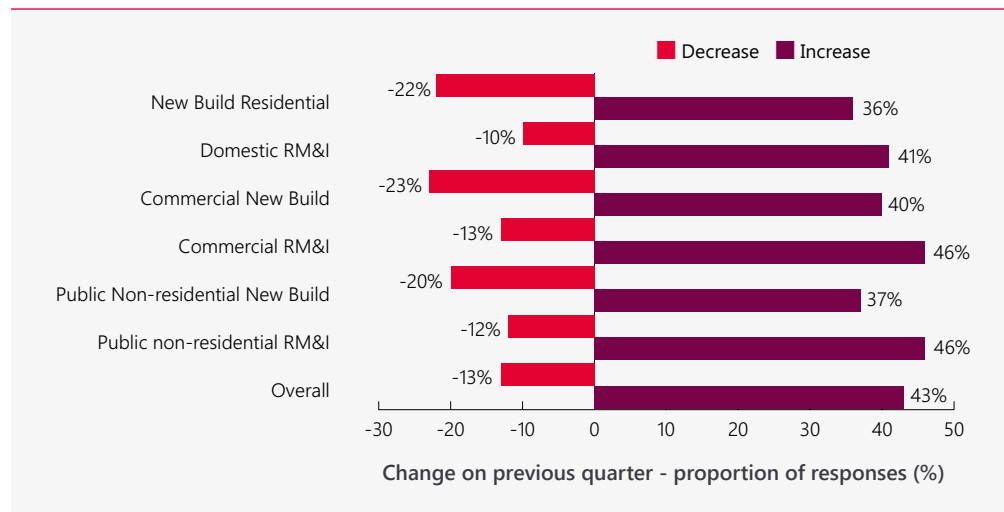


# Workload and enquiries by sector

Workload continues to increase, with some roofing sectors experiencing stronger growth than others. The residential, commercial and public non-residential repair, maintenance and improvement (RM&I) sectors are showing the strongest growth in workload, with only between 10 and 13 per cent reporting a decline in workload. When comparing the results for Quarters 2 and 3 2024, the greatest improvement has been seen in the new build residential sector. The proportion of respondents working in this sector reporting an increase in workload during Quarter 3 remains amongst the lowest of the sectors at 36 per cent but has increased from 25 per cent in Quarter 2. Additionally, the proportion reporting a decrease in the new build residential sector has improved. This has resulted in a balance figure of 14 per cent – an increase of 22 per cent on the previous quarter.

When comparing current workload with the same period in 2023, most sectors, with the exception of commercial new build and public non-residential new build, saw an improvement in the balanced per cent compared to the previous quarter.

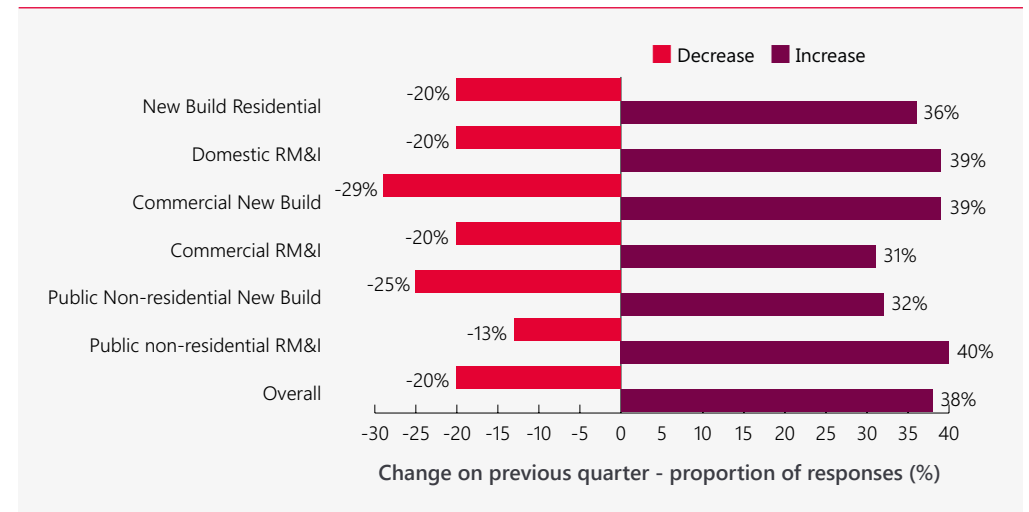
**Chart 2: Workload by sector – change on previous quarter**



Firms saw an overall balanced increase in enquiries of 18 per cent in the third quarter of this year. This is particularly influenced by improvements in the level of enquiries in the public non-residential RM&I sector, which saw a balanced increase of 27 per cent in Quarter 3 – a 13 per cent increase on the previous quarter. Roofing contractors working in the new build residential sector and the public non-residential new build sector reported an increase in enquiries, rising to 36 per cent and 32 per cent, respectively, from 22 per cent last quarter.

In comparison with new enquiries in the same quarter 2023, the proportion reporting growth has increased across all sectors. For example, a balance of 5 per cent reported an increase in new build residential enquiries compared to the same quarter last year, up from -22 per cent in the previous quarter.

**Chart 3: New enquiries by sector - change on previous quarter**

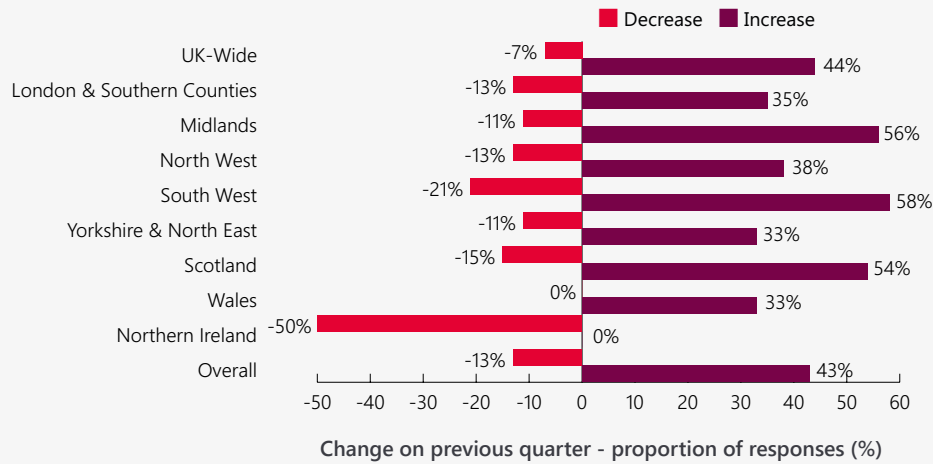


# Workload and enquiries by region

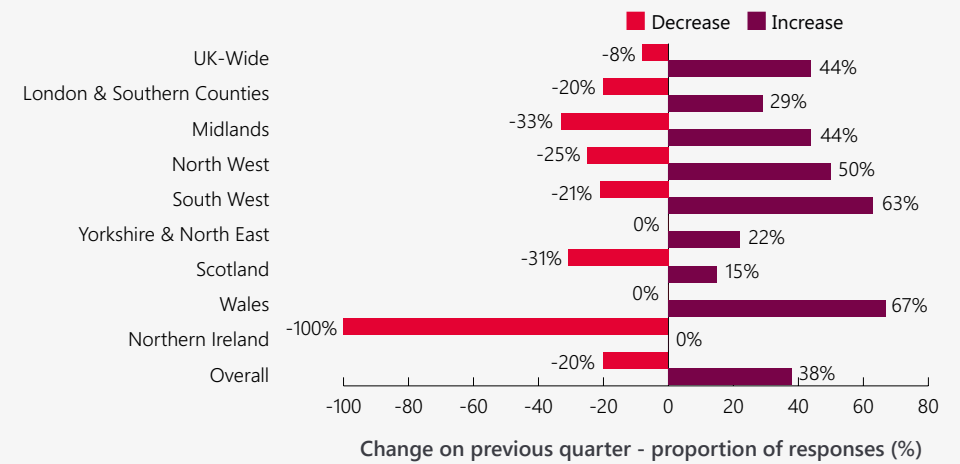
This quarter companies primarily working across the South West, the Midlands and Scotland saw the strongest growth, with over one-half seeing an increase in workload. This compares to the previous quarter when, in the South West and the Midlands, 36 per cent and 40 per cent respectively reported an increase in workload and in Scotland, no respondents reported an increase\*. Those working across the UK also reported a balanced increase in workload this quarter of 37 per cent. In comparison with the same period last year, most companies reported growth in workload, especially those operating across the UK, where 67 per cent reported an increase. Those operating in the North West reported a balanced decline of 13 per cent in workload compared to the same period in 2023.

This quarter saw an overall balanced increase in new enquiries of 18 per cent, although this varies by region. Growth in the level of new enquiries was strongest in the South West, where 63 per cent reported an increase in the level of enquiries and only 21 per cent a decrease, giving a balanced figure of 42 per cent. Those operating UK-wide also experienced good growth, reporting a balanced figure of 36 per cent. The weakest regional growth in new enquiries was experienced in Scotland, where only 15 per cent of roofing contractors report growth across this metric, resulting in a balanced figure of -15 per cent.

**Chart 4: Workload by region – change on previous quarter**



**Chart 5: New enquiries by region – change on previous quarter**



\*Please note the number of responses varies between regions. In Quarter 2 there were a lower number of responses from Scotland than in Quarter 3.

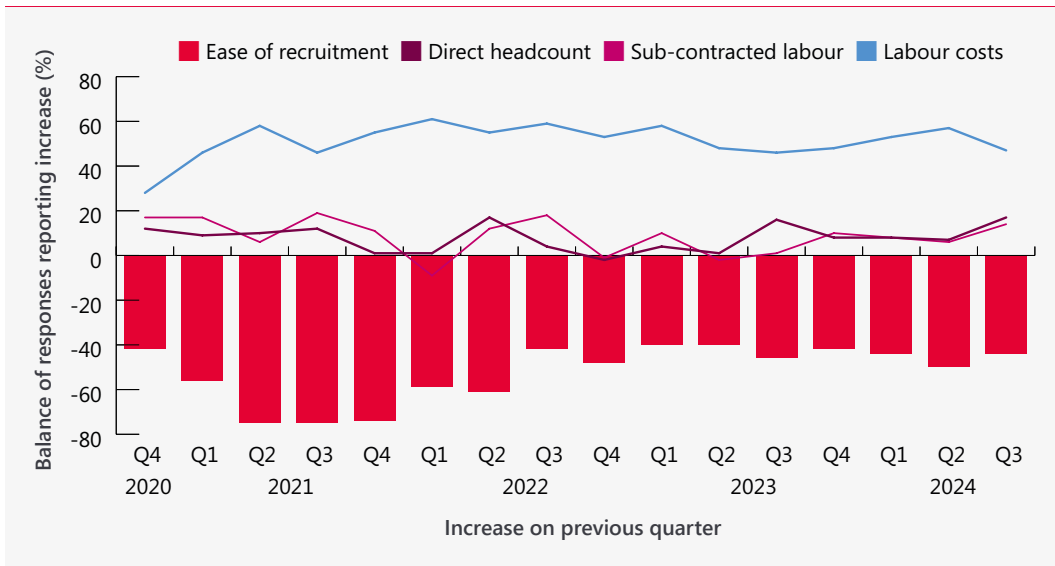


# Employment skills and shortages

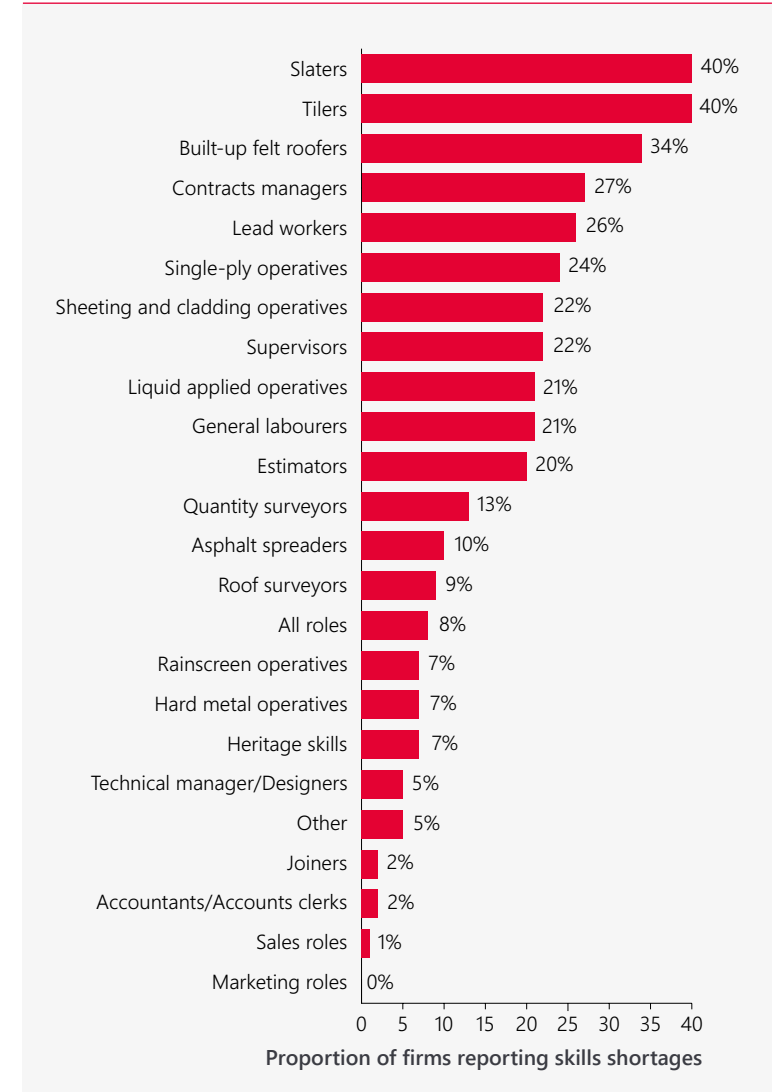
Skilled labour recruitment challenges continue to be an issue for a significant proportion of roofing contractors. The balance of companies reporting an increase in difficulty of recruiting skilled labour is 44 per cent, similar to levels seen in the first quarter of this year but a decrease from 50 per cent in Quarter 2. Those working in public non-residential new build and RM&I sectors found recruitment the most challenging in Quarter 3 – 54 per cent and 52 per cent respectively reported that recruitment of skilled workers was harder this quarter.

Despite these recruitment challenges, total headcount in terms of both direct and sub-contracted labour saw a small increase this quarter. We continue to see a persistent trend in challenges around the recruitment of slaters and tilers. In the third quarter of this year, around two-fifths reported these as the main areas of skills shortages, a continuing trend from the previous quarter.

**Chart 6: Labour indicators**



**Chart 7: Areas of skills shortage**



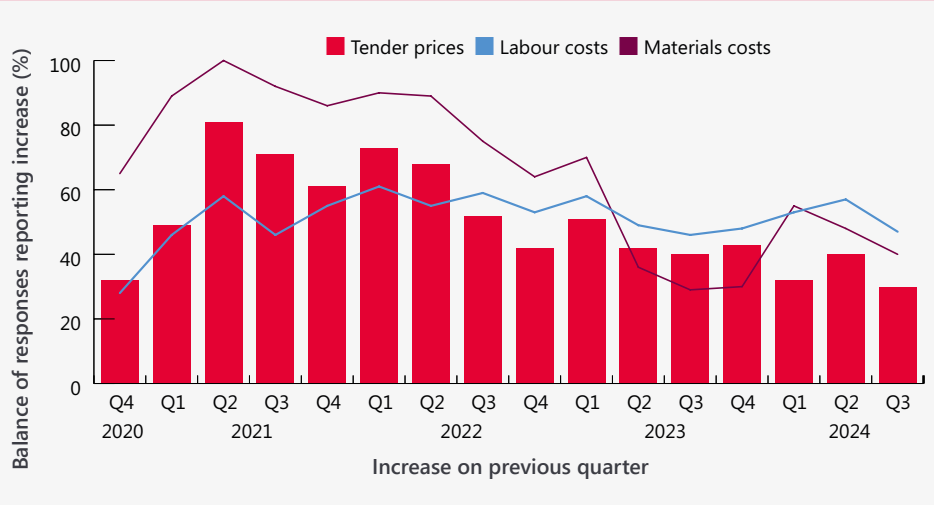


# Costs, prices and materials availability

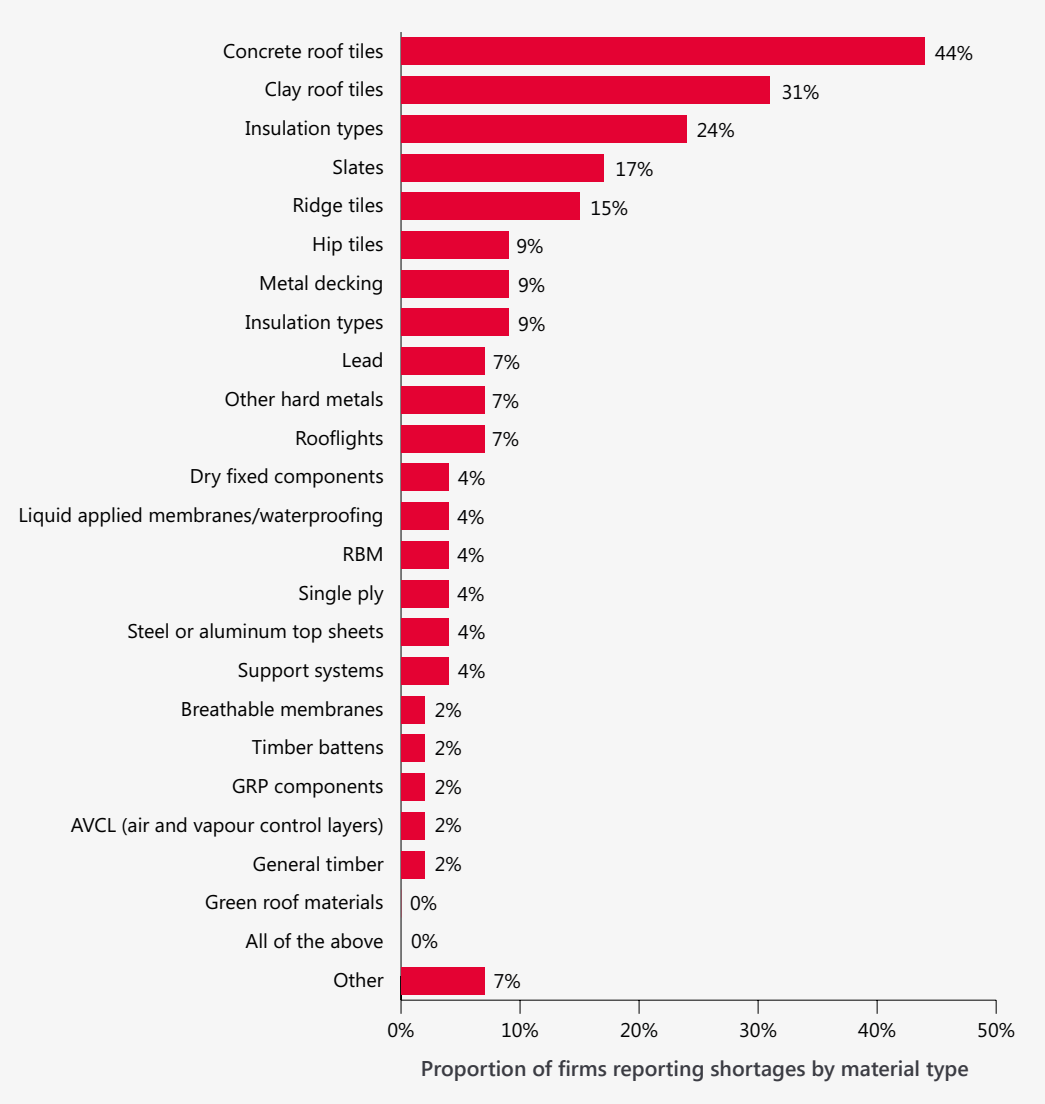
Labour costs appear to have stabilised this quarter. Almost one-half of respondents (49 per cent) report that their labour costs have increased and 48 per cent that they have stayed the same during the third quarter of this year, compared to 60 per cent and 37 per cent, respectively, in the previous quarter. With respect to tender prices during this quarter, a smaller proportion of respondents report an increase (35 per cent compared to 45 per cent in the second quarter).

A balance of 40 per cent report higher materials costs during Quarter 3 compared to 48 per cent in Quarter 2, providing further indication that price inflation pressures are continuing to subside. Pressures around the availability of materials are also continuing to ease with, on balance, 2 per cent of respondents rating the general availability of materials easier this quarter. This is a slight reduction on Quarter 2 where a balance of 6 per cent reported availability of materials easier; however, this is largely due to the majority of respondents (3 in every 4) reporting that materials availability in Quarter 3 has remained the same compared with the second quarter of this year. Where firms report difficulties acquiring materials, concrete and clay roof tiles are the most challenging to source.

**Chart 8: Cost pressures**



**Chart 9: Materials shortages**



# Market expectations

Around two-fifths of respondents (39 per cent) report that they expect workload to increase in Quarter 4, down from 48 per cent in the second quarter of this year. When considering the 12 months ahead, the picture is mixed: 42 per cent of roofing contractors expect their overall workload to increase and 15 per cent expect it to decrease, resulting in a balanced figure of 27 per cent. This compares to a balanced figure of 33 per cent in Quarter 2 when 48 per cent and 15 per cent of roofing contractors reported that they expected their overall workload to increase and decrease respectively. Those working in the new build residential sector and public non-residential new build sectors are the most positive about expected increases in workload, perhaps as a result of the increase in enquiries within these sectors during Quarter 3.

Regional expectations of workload over the next 12 months are varied. Roofing contractors primarily operating within the Midlands and UK wide are the most positive, with 63 percent and 57 per cent, respectively, reporting that they expect workload to increase over the next year.



Chart 10: Market expectations – 12 months

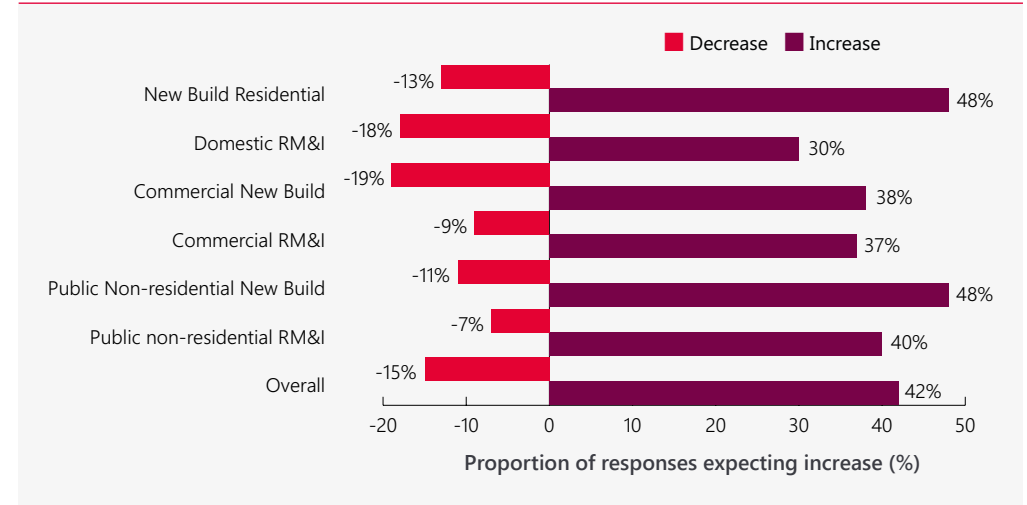
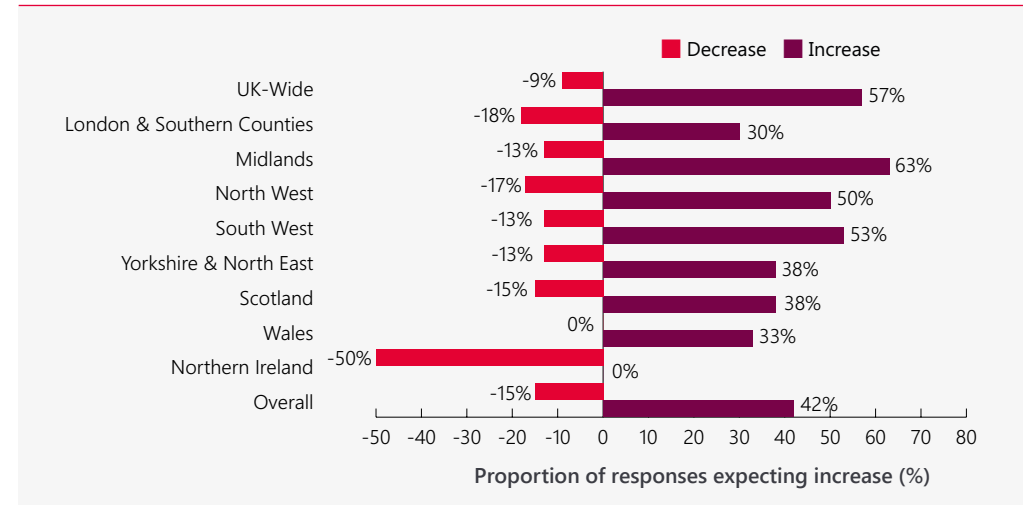


Chart 11: Market expectations by region – 12 months

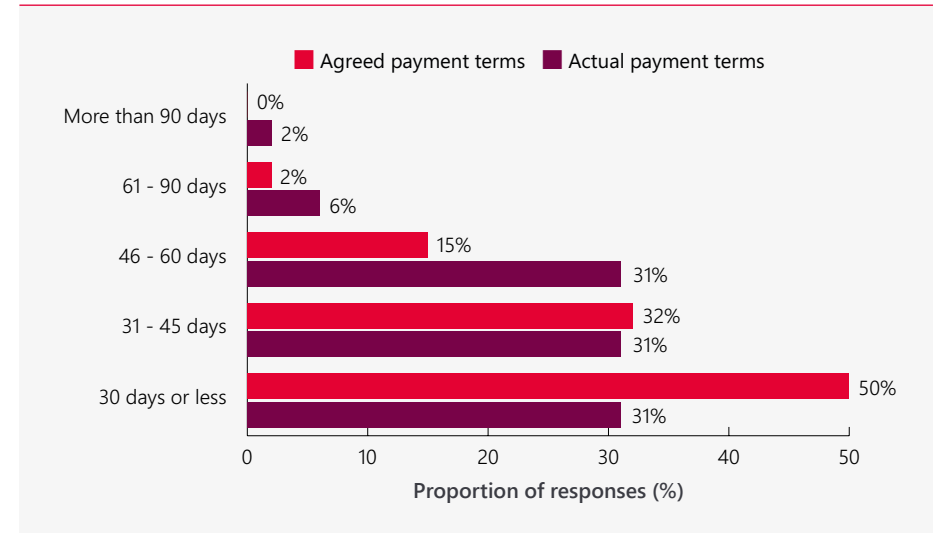


# Payment terms

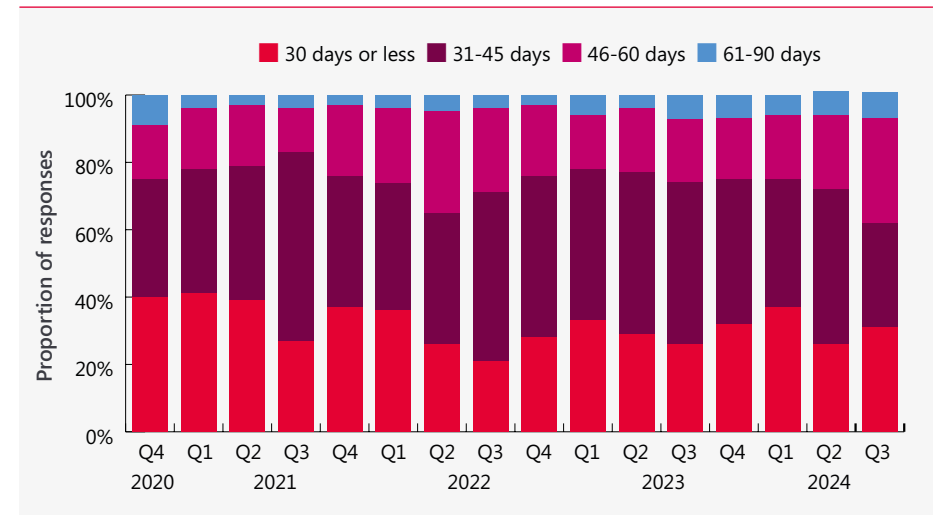
Late payment of due accounts continues to be an issue for a large proportion of respondents, with 45 per cent indicating that they experienced delays in payment in the last quarter. Over four-fifths of respondents (82 per cent) report that their firms' set payment terms are under 45 days, but less than two-thirds (61 per cent) received payment within that time period. The proportion of respondents reporting that their companies receive payment within 45 to 60 days has increased this quarter to around one-third (31 per cent) from 22 per cent in the previous quarter.



**Chart 12: Payment terms and periods**



**Chart 13: Actual payment period**





LEADING ROOFING EXCELLENCE

020 7638 7663

helpdesk@nfrc.co.uk

www.nfrc.co.uk



AMA Research

AMA Research is proud to have partnered with NFRC to produce this State of the UK Roofing Industry report.

+44 (0)1242 235724

consultancy@amaresearch.co.uk

www.amaresearch.co.uk

**Download the previous report**

