

# STONEMASONRY SURVEY REPORT

2023



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# Stonemasonry Survey Report 2023

**Principle author:**

Laura Diffey-Higgins, Historic Environment Scotland

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Edinburgh, EH9 1SH.

**Tel:** 0131 668 8600 **E:** [technicaleducation@hes.scot](mailto:technicaleducation@hes.scot)

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# KEY POINTS

- There were 82 respondents from 64 different organisations across 21 different council areas.
- Comments reflected concern on provision of training, lack of support for the sector and the appropriateness of current skills needed to meet demand.
- There are at least 360 skilled stonemasons in Scotland across 138 organisations or businesses.
- Of those 360, 280 have formal qualifications.
- An estimate of total staff in sector is 890 including managers, support staff, stonemasons, and apprentices.
- A suggested upper range is 2200 people employed in the sector across Scotland based on nationally available data (however, this incorporates bricklayers as well as masons).
- 88% of organisations and businesses in the sector are micro or small enterprises.
- 22% of the sector is aged under 24 and 16% is aged over 55.
- Future recommendations include more targeted surveys around age, intention to remain in the sector, and consistent data gathering.

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# OVERVIEW

As of the closing deadline on 28th February 2023, the survey received 82 responses. This is a healthy response rate and although we do not know the exact number of stonemasons in Scotland or number of related organisations, we believe it is likely to represent roughly a 50% sample size. The survey was open for six weeks.

This survey, requested by the Scottish Stonemasonry Short Life Working Group, seeks to understand the nature of the stonemasonry sector in Scotland and to allow us to build a baseline dataset for the sector that will enable better strategic thinking and planning about its future needs. The Scottish Stonemasonry Short Life Working Group, chaired by Historic Environment Scotland (HES), was formed to direct and participate in the research carried out as part of the aims of the HES-commissioned Scottish Stonemasonry Skills and Training Needs Project, to investigate and analyse the sector and its current and future delivery and provision of the Modern Apprenticeship (MA) in Stonemasonry needs.

Information on the sector such as number of stonemasons, location of stonemasons, and number of related businesses or organisations is not available through existing national data capture. This is due to the way that data on stonemasons sits within the Standard Occupational Classification (SOC) codes used by the Office of National Statistics (ONS), (bricklayers and stonemasons sit together under code 5312). This makes it difficult to understand if we have the right amount of people with the right range of skills either now or for the future. As much of our built environment is stone or historic buildings, this is a concern given the challenges around repair and maintenance and adaptation as part of net zero pathways.

## What is stonemasonry?

Stonemasonry is not easily defined and has evolved over millennia. Stonemasonry encompasses a range of knowledge and skills related to the working, use, application, and repair of natural stone.

Current stonemasonry qualification pathways available in Scotland include:

- Banker masonry (dressing of stone from raw or primary processed material to units for building with).
- External fixer masonry (building).
- Internal fixer masonry (building).
- Masonry repair.
- Masonry carving.
- Memorial masonry.
- Masonry cladding.
- Stonemasonry cutting (machine production/processing).

## What size is the stonemasonry sector in Scotland?

As mentioned, official data struggles to provide an estimate of employed staff or number of organisations for the sector. As a result of this survey, we are able to provide a lower-level estimate for the size of the sector, however we must emphasise that exact numbers of stonemasons and organisations cannot be gathered without changes to how data is captured at the national level.

HES has been collating details of known stonemasonry organisations in Scotland; we have 106 organisations listed to date from our collective knowledge of the industry and some basic research. These range from individual operators to large national organisations. From this survey, 32 additional organisations considered themselves to be part of the stonemasonry sector. However, not all of these are direct providers of stonemasonry services. Four of these provide stonemasonry training or are employers of stonemasonry services.

We can say that there are at least **136 stonemasonry-linked organisations or businesses in Scotland**. This is a lower-level estimate and the true number of organisations or businesses who consider themselves to be in the sector is likely to be higher.

Using the numbers provided in the survey, we can also estimate that there are at least **360 practising stonemasons in Scotland**. This total includes stonemasons with formal skills and stonemasons without formal skills. We estimate that there are **110 people undertaking either the 4-year or 2-year stonemasonry apprenticeship training**. Numbers are hard to confirm as there is no single central register of apprentices that is accessible. There are also people who work in the stonemasonry sector as managers and support staff, which brings **the total number working in the sector to nearly 900**. These figures can be seen later in the report.

*We can say with confidence there are at least 360 stonemasons working in Scotland. We acknowledge that this is a low-level estimate based on those who responded to the survey and not the total amount of stonemasons in Scotland. We can also say that there are not more than 2200 stonemasons,<sup>i</sup> according to nationally collected data which measures stonemasons and bricklayers in a lump estimate.*

Other estimates of the number of stonemasons include 500 in Scotland<sup>ii</sup> and 1000 or more across the UK.<sup>iii</sup>

## Respondents

There were 82 respondents to the survey. These responses came from 64 unique organisations or individuals, meaning some organisations or businesses have more than one response linked to them. Several respondents chose not to enter an organisational/business name.

Preliminary work on baselining the sector indicates that there are at a minimum 136 organisations that contribute towards the stonemasonry sector in Scotland. Using this, our estimated response rate is **50% of the sector**. This is a best estimate based on the information we have to date, so please use this figure with caution.

Of the respondents, the largest response group was qualified or experienced stonemasons.

- **36 (44%)** are current qualified or skilled stonemasons.
- **26 (32%)** on behalf of a stonemasonry business.
- **9 (11%)** classed themselves as 'other'.
- **6 (7%)** responded as private individuals.\*
- **3 (4%)** are part of a construction organisation that carries out stonemasonry.
- **2 (2%)** are former stonemasons.

*\*However at least some people in this category appeared to be actively working in or adjacent to the stonemasonry sector.*

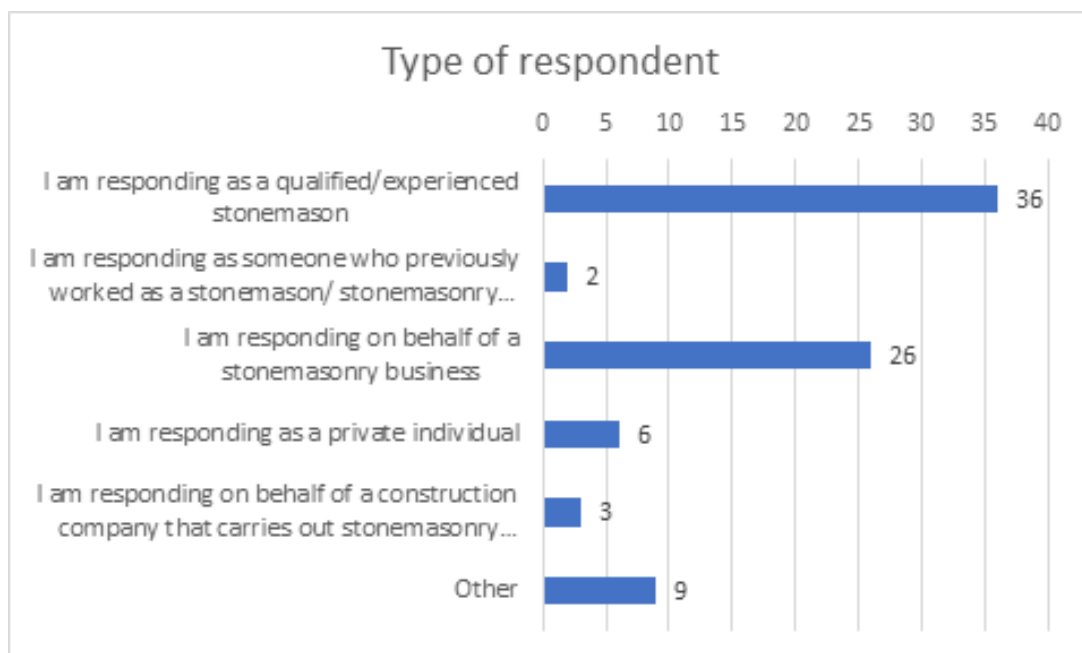


Fig 1: Types of survey respondents.

Those who replied 'other' were asked to add a description. The descriptions were as follows:

"Responding on behalf of a traditional building training organisation and we employ a stonemason (fixer external mainly)."

"Owner of a business that quarries and processes dimensional stone."

"On leave as ill. Letter carving teaching only due to injuries but hope to teach more this year."

"A client who employs stonemasons."

"Apprentice."

"Unemployed former apprentice."

"I am responding on behalf of a local authority."

"I am responding on behalf of Edinburgh World Heritage. EWH has a remit to protect the Outstanding Universal Value of the UNESCO World Heritage Status of Edinburgh's Old and New Towns. There is a significant need for experienced stone masons to carry out high quality conservation repairs to historic buildings within the WHS. We are concerned about the reducing number of skilled masons and the impact this will have on the fabric of WHS buildings in the long term."

## Location

In this section you can see the location of the businesses or organisations that our respondents work for.

Most respondents worked for businesses or organisations that are unsurprisingly clustered around the central belt, with the City of Edinburgh having 15 responses. There are 11 local authorities out of the 32 for which we have no respondents.



Fig 2 (left): Coverage map showing all council areas that had at least 1 response. White areas mean no responses were received. Fig 3 (right): Heat map shows distribution of responses. The darker the colour, the greater the number of responses from this area.

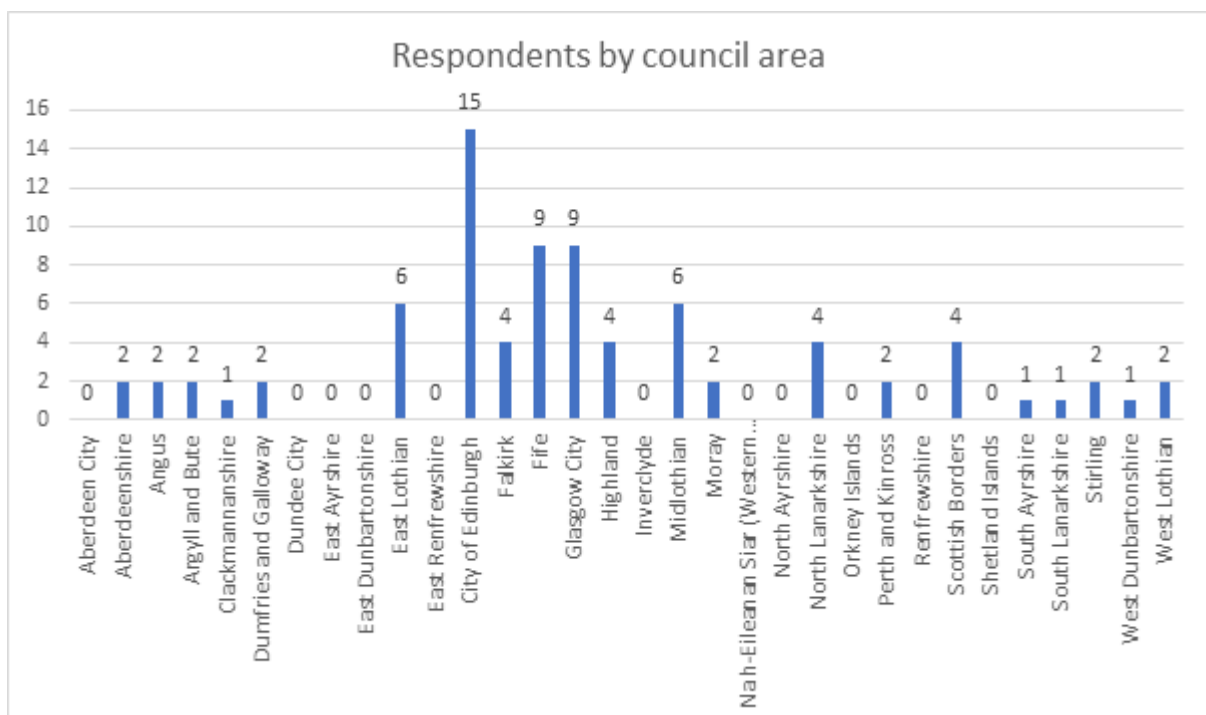


Fig 4: Chart showing responses per local council.



When the survey results are looked at against HES's initial mapping of stonemasonry businesses, we can compare where respondents to our survey are based versus where the stonemasonry businesses that we were already aware of are based (NB: we have no recorded organisations based in Shetland Islands or Orkney Islands):

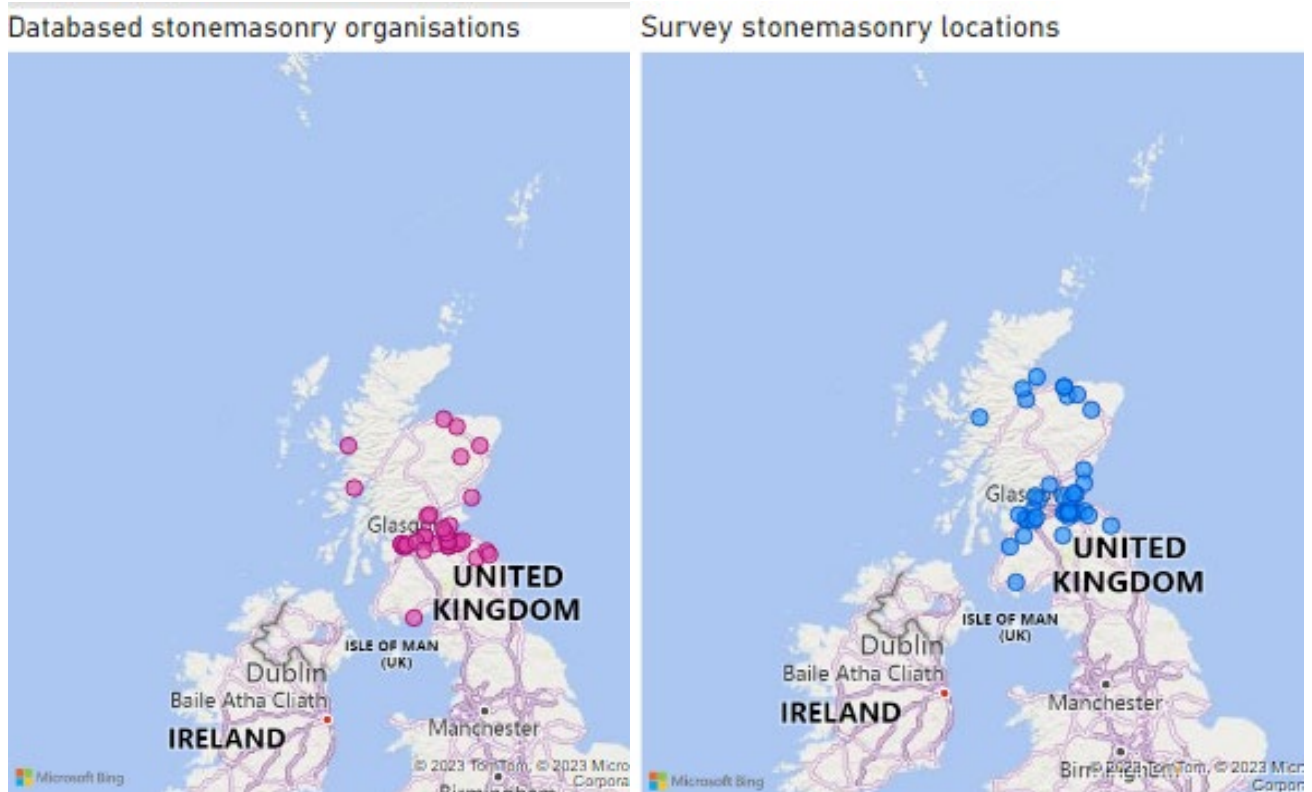


Fig 5: Comparison of stonemasonry organisations/businesses known about by HES (pink) and responses from survey (blue).

## Business information

In terms of the size of business respondents, the majority belonged to a micro enterprise, with 47 (58%) stating this was the case and 16 respondents replying that they worked for a small business (20%). The results are displayed on the chart below. This means 88% of those in the sector work for micro or small enterprises. This total is worth bearing in mind given recent data on resilience of businesses, which indicates the construction sector has been worst hit overall by the combined impact of COVID-19 and the cost-of-living crisis, despite a quick recovery in 2020 and 2021.<sup>iv</sup>

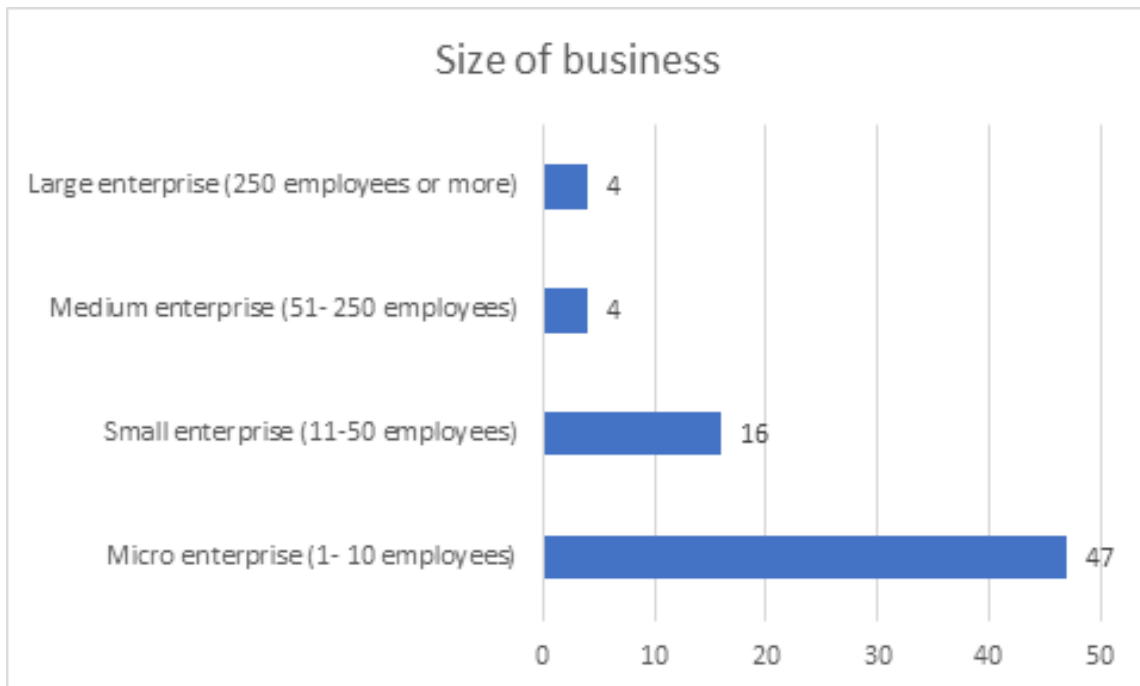


Fig 6: Size of business.

Respondents were asked how much of their focus was on stonemasonry. The majority of respondents, 58 (70%), said that stonemasonry formed over 75% of their work.

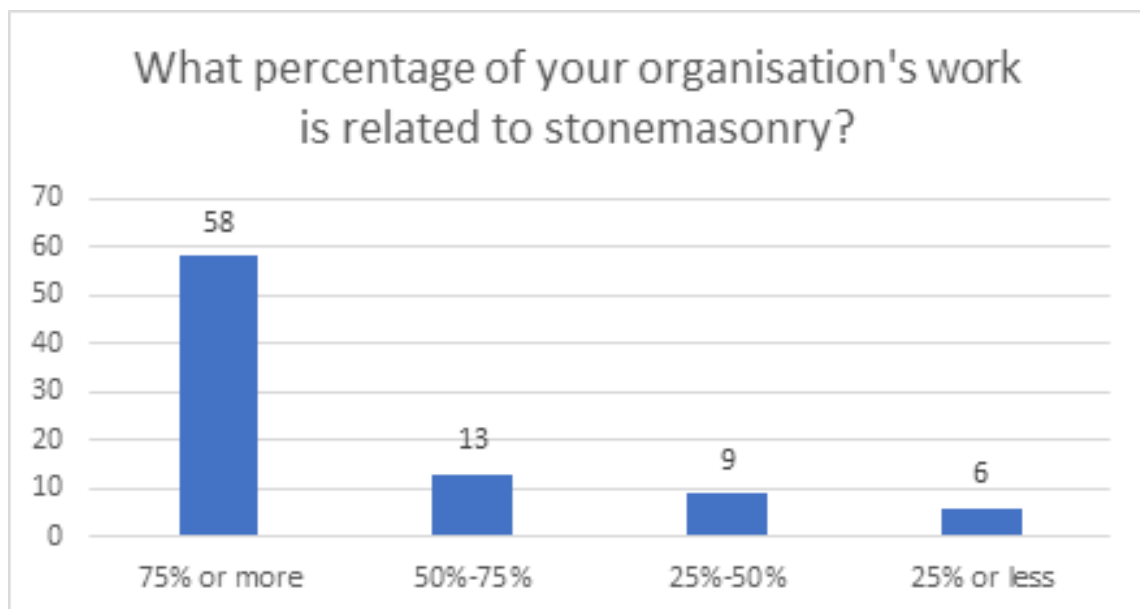


Fig 7: Percentage of work related to stonemasonry.

We also asked what types of work they carried out.

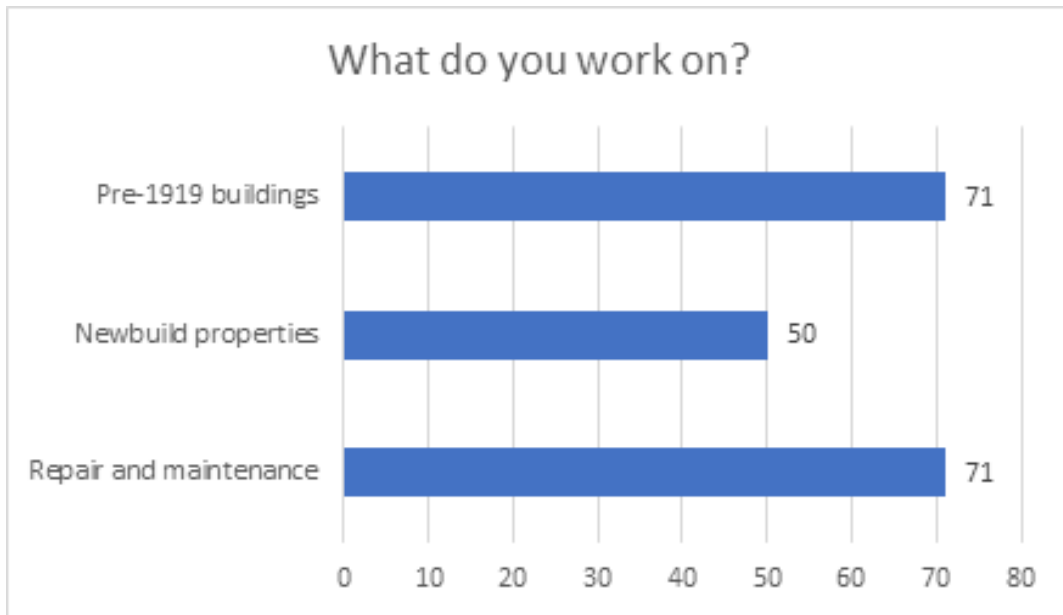


Fig 8: Types of work carried out.

86% of respondents work on pre-1919 buildings (historic buildings) as well as carrying out repair and maintenance. 61% worked on new build properties.

### Skilled and trained personnel

Respondents were asked how many different types of job categories there are in their business or organisation and with what types of qualifications staff possess.

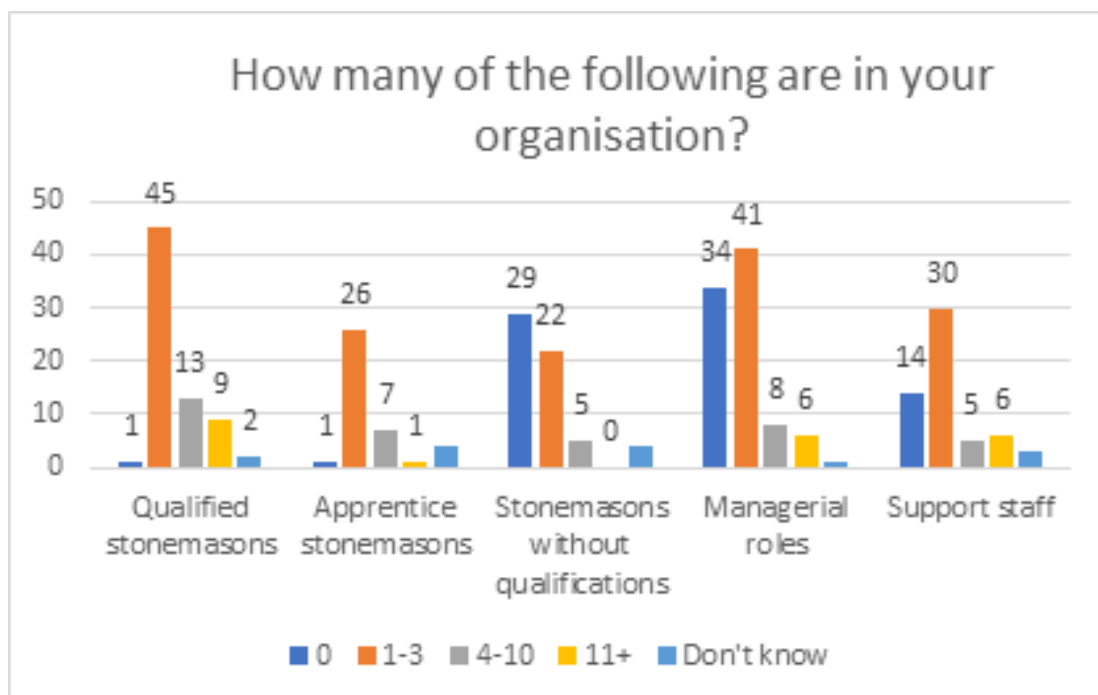


Fig 9: Ranges of numbers for types of employees.

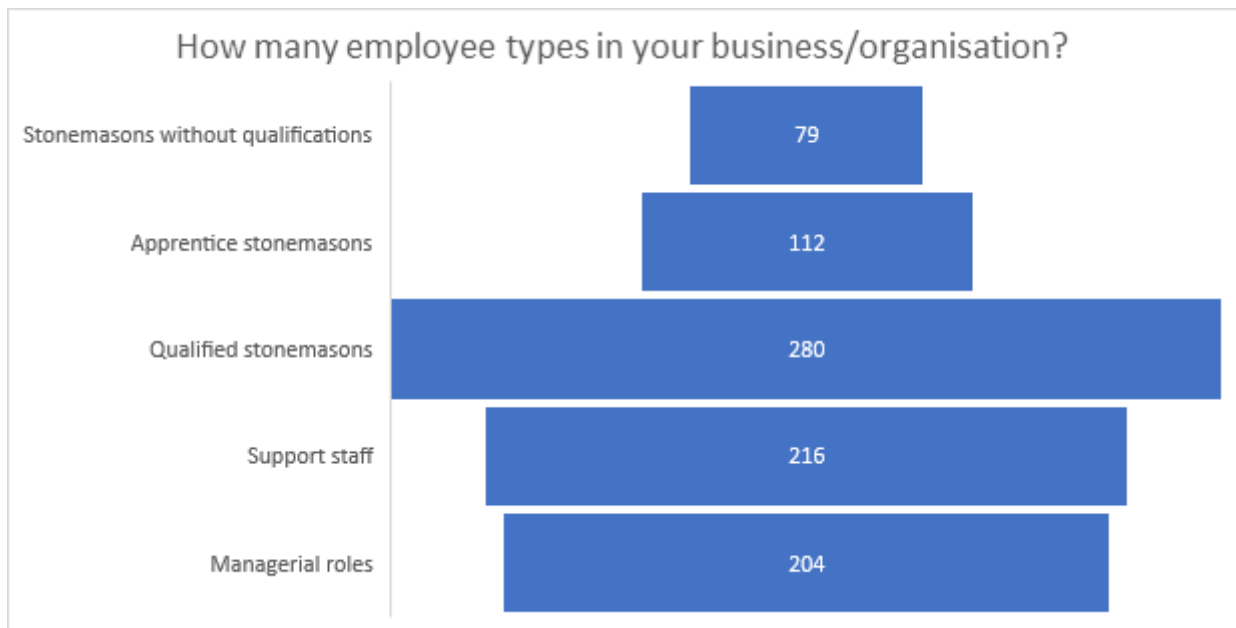


Fig 10: Grouped totals for types of employees.

A simplified version of the above, using the median points for each range, and 11 as base point for the 11+ category shows that according to respondents, there are:

- **280** qualified stonemasons.
- **112** apprentices (only one respondent had no apprentices).
- **79** stonemasons without formal qualifications.
- **204** managerial staff.
- **216** support staff.

This figure is imperfect, as totals include responses from large national organisations such as HES. However, we could put an estimate of a lower limit of 891 people working in the stonemasonry sector. Of these, 359 are practising stonemasons.

### Qualifications

Respondents were asked what skills or qualifications people possessed in their workplace. Many did not know, with around 40% either not responding or not knowing the answer. Due to the high proportion, these figures have not been included on the graph.

The most common qualification type was Advanced Craft, with 209 people estimated to have this skill. 55 people were said to have no qualifications. The range break-down of responses can be seen in the graph below, with estimated totals listed beneath it.



*Fig 11: Totals of numbers for types of qualifications.*

When looking at the response by medians for each range (and 11 for the 11+ category), the estimated totals of staff with various qualifications across the sector are as follows:

- **113** people with SVQ L2.
- **141** people with SVQ L3.
- **72** with HNC/D.
- **209** with Advanced Craft.
- **24** with a BSc.
- **6** with an MSc.
- **68** with other relevant qualifications.
- **55** with no qualifications.

## Demographics

Respondents were asked about the ages of people in their stonemasonry organisation/workplace.

While many respondents chose not to answer the question or did not know (around 40%), those that responded shows that those in the sector were split across the different age ranges, with the most common age range being 25-34 (an estimated 182 out of 802 or 23%).

The range break-down of responses can be seen in the graph below, with estimated totals listed beneath it. Because the response rates were so high, the “don’t know” and “no response” totals have been removed from the graph.

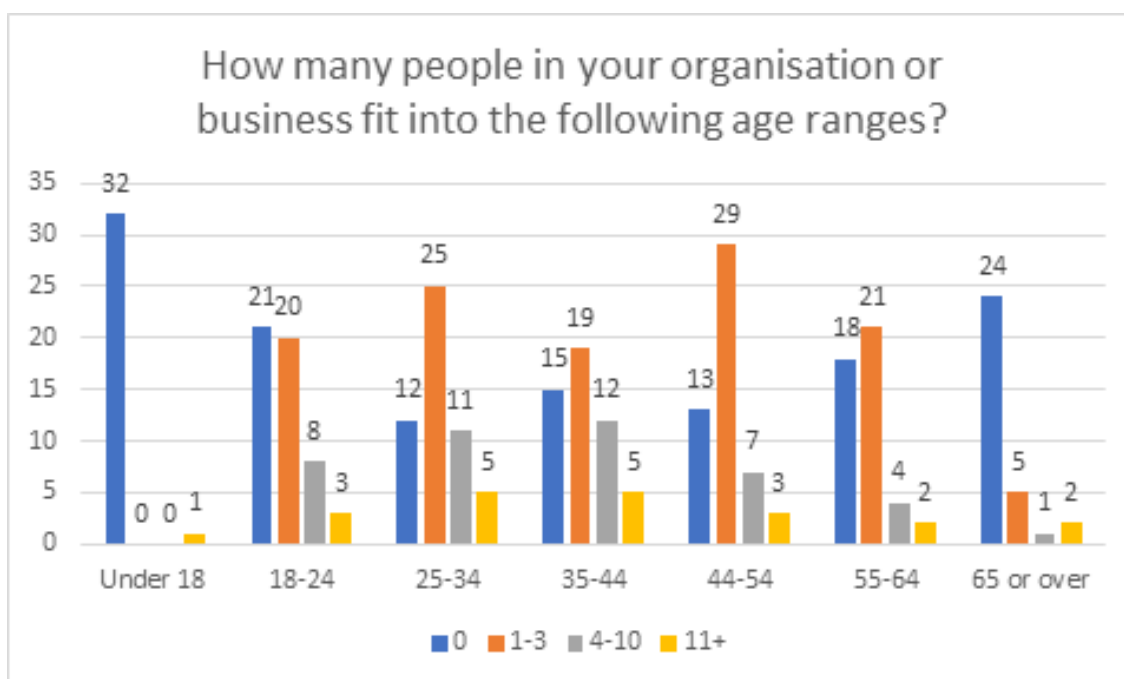


Fig 12: Ranges of employee age.

When looking at the response by medians for each range (and 11 for the 11+ category), the estimated totals of all staff (ie. not just practising stonemasons or apprentices) within specified age ranges across the sector are as follows:

- **44** people are under 18.
- **129** are between 18-24.
- **182** are between 25-34.
- **177** are between 35-44.
- **140** are between 44-54.
- **92** are between 55-64.
- **39** are 65 or over.

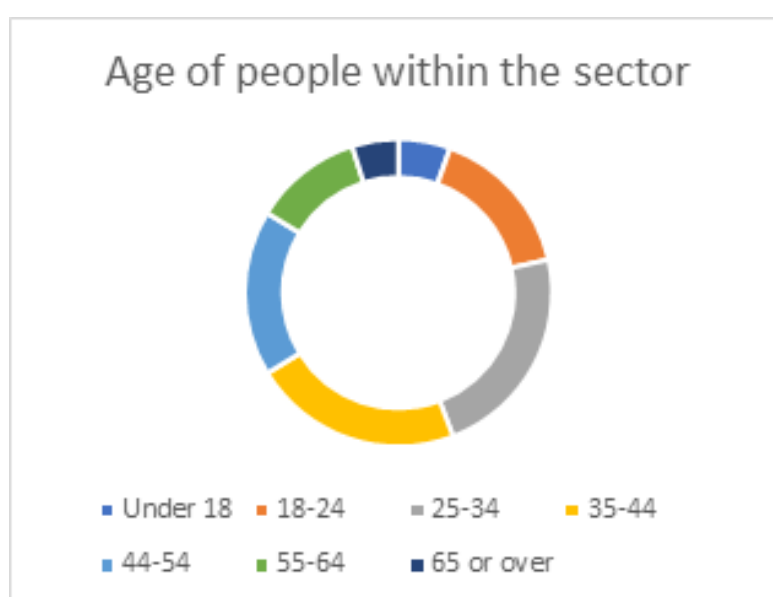


Fig 13: Totals for employee ages.

We can say that approximately:

- **22%** of the sector is under 24.
- **56%** of the sector is over 35.
- **16%** of the sector is aged over 55.

For context, according to the Scottish Government 2021 Annual Population Survey, around 13% of the total workforce in Scotland is under 24, and 26% of the workforce is over 55. This varies significantly by industry and sector. The estimated percentage figure for those under 24 in Scotland employed in the construction and building trades is 16%. Therefore, our figure is higher than the national estimate. This could be due to two reasons: a healthy amount of young employees in the stonemasonry sector or a bias in responses which has led to an overinflated figure.

## Comments

Of the 82 respondents, 49 people took the opportunity to comment. Most of the comments were detailed and thoughtful. Some offered help in reforming/improving the sector. Other expressed concern about the future of the industry.

Many expressed concerns about the current state and future prospects of the sector, focusing on inadequate training, the closure of Tetbu College's training course in Edinburgh, and risks to training provision in Glasgow, predicting a risk to our built heritage buildings due to a lack of skilled stonemasons in future. Some comments expressed concern at the number of microbusinesses and there being an excess of work versus actual skill in the sector.

One comment requested that all stonemasons be required to undertake a paid-for spiograph test at the age of 35.

The themes fell broadly under the categories explained below, and one comment could sit under multiple themes.

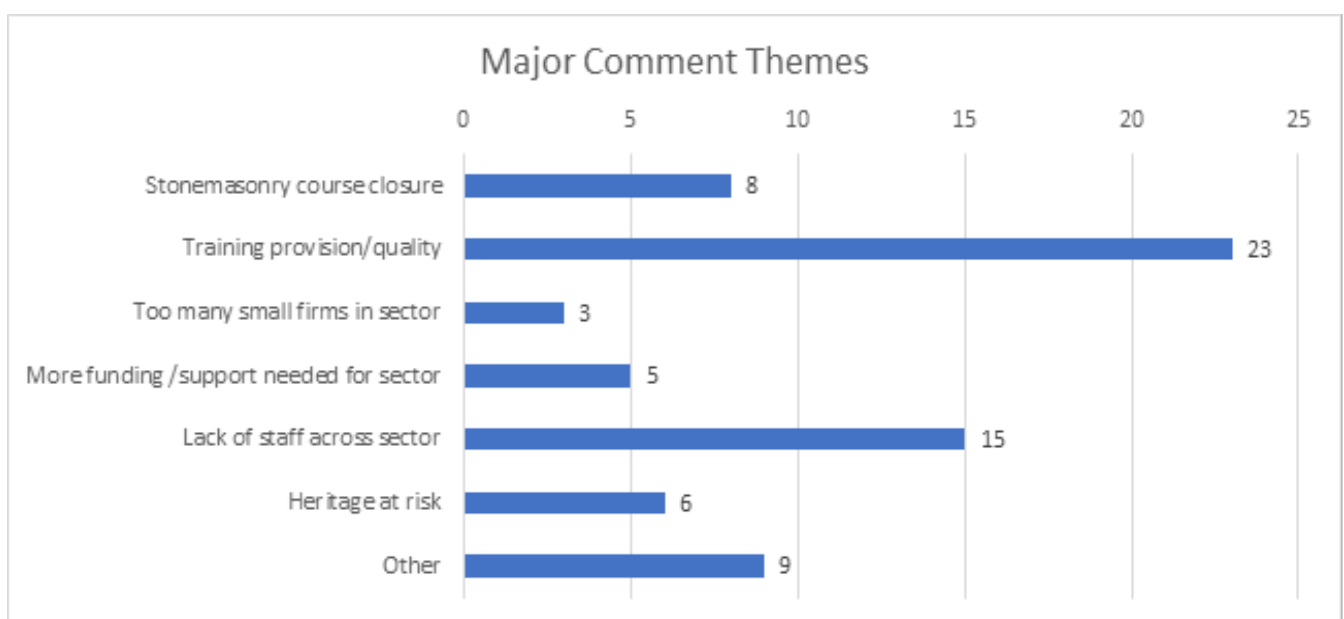


Fig 14: Comments by theme.

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Below are some quotes under the themes (these have been minimally edited):

### Course closure

1. “With the recent notification of closure of Telford colleges stonemasonry department, the training provision is in a dire state. Another nail in the coffin for the industry.”
2. “...as an apprentice waiting to start in Edinburgh and for the many more in and around the area waiting to start or already attending, keeping the Edinburgh Telford collage stone masonry facility open is playing a massive role in keeping the next generation going, along with the city itself being [a] world heritage site.”

### Training provision and quality

1. “Stonemasonry apprenticeship should be trained in the winter months when there’s a van most of the time.”
2. “There is a lack of training for those wishing to engage in memorial masonry provision and refurbishment.”
3. “More training provisions are required that in turn give the stonemasonry sector more qualified operatives that can work in a commercial environment.”
4. “We are granite stonemasons. I have had apprentices in the past and trained them to work with hard stone, but they have to go to college where they work with sandstone. The training they have received at college is good but it is just not relevant to the work we do.”

### Too many small firms in sector

1. “My general observations of the stone masonry sector and how it has transformed over the last 20 years appears to show an industry now made up of very small companies of two to three employees in many cases basically working out of a van. The bulk of time served qualified stonemasons presently working in and around the west of Scotland generally originate from large training companies who were very active in employing apprentices and this in turn has fed and propped up this sector to the present day. Sadly most of these companies are no longer trading and this raises a concern that the smaller companies are unable/unwilling to enter into a formal apprenticeship scheme and as such there is clear evidence of a serious skills shortage.”
2. “The loss of large companies who regularly employed several apprentices at any time and the shift to mostly micro-businesses of one or two stonemasons who have no interest in or lack the resources to employ apprentices has negatively impacted the industry.”

### More funding and support for sector

1. “If funding was made available directly to apprentices to make our industry more inviting, then this would be a good place to start, as there’s no incentive for young people to begin a career in our craft opposed to other more lucrative industries.”
2. “Our stone-built heritage is renowned worldwide—the Scottish Government need to understand this—not least [because] stone built properties provide homes, a magnet for tourism and a real sense of place/wellbeing etc. So some formula of underwriting the costs of delivering Stone masonry training should be found. And, I don’t think it is down to HES to fulfil this role necessarily—the colleges deliver very



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high quality stone masonry training and should be subsidised to continue this provision. It's an endangered craft that threatens homes, tourism and our built heritage. No private training provider could fulfil this role."

### Lack of skilled staff across sector

1. "It is a hard trade and many young people do not want to get involved so the future looks bleak. People who do want to get involved are only interested in cutting stone and the decorative part of the trade. In reality out in the world that is at best 10% of the work you do. A radical rethink of the industry is required."
2. "We have to be very versatile in skill sets particularly in the Highlands. There is insufficient banker masonry work available. This means we do considerable amounts of lime works including harling and pointing to keep productive as well as actual stonework. It would be great to see a more easily accessible memorial masonry credential element available as the actual cutting/carving skills are almost lost in this sector. Most headstones are simply bought from abroad and machine engraved which was never historically the case. This is resulting in generic pieces whereas there are many banker/fixer masons with the skillset but not the formal qualification to produce and fix these in local authority graveyards."

### Heritage at risk

1. "Without a healthy stonemasonry sector, we will be unable to maintain our historic buildings to suitable conservation standards over the long term within the World Heritage Site. This risks withdrawal of the Outstanding Universal Value status by UNESCO. A key draw to thousands of visitors to Edinburgh is the UNESCO World Heritage status, guaranteeing, as it does, a world class historic environment and a wonderful place to visit. Loss of status is highly likely to cause a decrease in visitor numbers, in turn causing a significant effect on the tourist economy of Edinburgh. Loss of prestige internationally will impact on the 'soft power' ability of Scotland to 'punch above its weight' on the global stage as a leader in cultural heritage."

### Other

1. "The demand for stonemasonry has never been greater. Everything needs to be done to keep training going for any potential apprentices."
2. "Every stonemason should have a spiograph test when 35 years old as mandatory. Paid by the CITB. If I was made aware as an apprentice that I would most likely develop silicosis in mid-life. I probably wouldn't have entered the trade."
3. "We are huge advocates of apprentice training and are incredible keen to help the industry in any way we can."
4. "Many qualified stonemasons working in the heritage sector talk about using lime mortars without having any real technical knowledge of the material and why it should be used. As a result there is a profound lack of understanding of the importance of aftercare and protection for fresh mortars."

A full list of comments to date has been included as an appendix to this document.

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## Conclusions and next steps

This survey has gathered a sizeable amount of information about the stonemasonry sector that allows us to better understand the current landscape.

### Next steps and recommendations

1. We recommend re-running a sector survey regularly with targeted surveys on areas of specific interest e.g. skills. It would also be useful to rerun the demographics section to hone in on ages of practising stonemasons specifically and to ask a question about anticipated future in the sector (e.g. how long they estimate working in the sector for) to better understand how the workforce will evolve.
2. In future we recommend weighting the data based on response rate when we have more confidence in our knowledge of businesses across the sector. We acknowledge the limitations of this survey and know that this is likely to be a partial picture of the sector. Nevertheless, it represents more granularity than we have had to date and represents a good step forward in understanding the nature and health of the sector.
3. Where respondents have given consent, HES will enter the gathered information into our database to update our national picture of the stonemasonry sector. This could be reported on annually.
4. We also have a group of individuals who have given consent to be involved in further survey work and working groups. We will follow up with future studies as needed.

Anecdotally from the survey there is a sense of too much work for current providers and skill levels. There is concern about the number of apprentices coming through into the trade and the appropriateness of skills, which some fear will lead to a degradation of historic buildings. Additionally, the proliferation of micro businesses has been cited as a risk for the sector by some respondents, as these firms are less likely to be able to support apprenticeships.

To conclude, we can now estimate there are at least 360 stonemasons in Scotland and at least 110 apprentices. We know that 30% of all homes in Scotland pre-date 1945 and extremely likely to have stone components. For some council areas, this raises to as much as 50%<sup>v</sup>. Over 200,000 of all buildings in Scotland are pre-1919, and this is a conservative total. While more detailed work is needed to fully understand how many of the buildings around us are made from stone, the challenges are clear: a growing repair, maintenance and retrofit and adaptation need for heritage building stock exists.

This means we need a healthy supply of stonemasons to adapt our homes, workplaces and tourist attractions to ensure our buildings are fit for purpose and resilient for decades to come. Recent research commissioned by Historic England has identified a need for 205,000 workers to focus solely on retrofitting historic buildings every year from now until 2050 in order to meet the UK's net zero targets. This is more than double the number of workers that are estimated to currently have the necessary skills.<sup>vi</sup>

We know that in the future more stonemasons are likely to be required rather than fewer in order to keep up with the rate of wear and tear of our many historic buildings and to adapt them to meet net zero needs. To allow accurate monitoring for this rare skill that is necessary to create, maintain and adapt the buildings in which we live and work, the sector would benefit from continued monitoring to understand pipelines of skilled staff and ideally more granular data collection at the national level.

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## APPENDIX A: METHODOLOGY AND CAVEATS

- This initial survey of the stonemasonry sector in Scotland was intended to encourage a strong response and form a baseline.
- The survey was open for six weeks and aimed at those currently working in the stonemasonry sector or in closely related businesses/organisations.
- It was publicised widely directly by HES, by partners in the sector and in national and local media.
- The survey was made easy to fill in and aimed to minimise non-responses, hence we used ranges for questions on skills and demographics. This means that to produce estimates we used the median points or lower ranges used to produce estimates.
- Weighting has not been used as it is unclear how representative a sample of the total stonemasonry organisations in Scotland this survey contains. We hope to weight future surveys when we have a better understanding of the number of organisations in the sector.
- We have rounded up numbers where sensible e.g. 359 becomes 360, 29.5% becomes 30%.
- We have aimed to explain data gaps or uncertainties with figures where appropriate.

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## APPENDIX B: COMMENTS

Reproduced below. Details that might identify the respondent have been removed from this report. Comments in [square brackets] are clarifying comments inserted by the transcriber.

1. I would say stonemasonry is probably in the worse state as it's even been in for quite some time. Lots of larger companies have split down into many one man and van companies. The level of work quality is generally poor overall and there is a severe lack of availability of trained masons to hire as staff.
2. With the recent notification of closure of Telford colleges stonemasonry department the training provision is in a dire state. Another nail in the coffin for the industry.
3. Our stone built heritage is renowned worldwide- the Scottish Government need to understand this - not least stone built properties provide homes, a magnet for tourism and a real sense of place/wellbeing etc. so some formula of underwriting the costs of delivering Stone masonry training should be found. And I don't think it is down to HES to fulfil this role necessarily- the colleges deliver very high quality stone masonry training and should be subsidised to continue this provision- it's an endangered craft that threatens homes, tourism and our built heritage. No private training provider could fulfil this role. Happy to say more on this if asked.
4. The demand for Stonemasonry has never been greater. Everything needs to be done to keep training going for any potential apprentices etc. I currently have an apprentice who is thoroughly enjoying the craft and benefits from on site training and college release.
5. Training facilities are essential to preserve & maintain historic buildings. It is paramount that the stone masonry apprenticeship training facility continues to be based in Edinburgh. Due to the high demand of this skilled craft and the high numbers finally qualifying through the system it makes it easily accessible for apprentices to access Edinburgh's Telford college.
6. The recent closing of the Edinburgh college stonemasonry department is very sad. With Edinburgh being a heritage site the decision to cut the stonemasonry department all together is shocking, fewer and fewer apprentices are going through college now and before we know it there won't be any qualified experienced masons left leaving Edinburgh vulnerable to decay due to lack of knowledge and skillset to carry out restoration/conservation.
7. My business is steered directly at traditional masonry conservation and restoration works.  
There is a great hunger and desire from youth and adults alike to get into this trade yet it is a daily struggle to get any stonemasons for our contracts when we get busier, I've found generally that there is a real reluctance from masons to advance their crafts from the basics of stone dressing and building, they don't want to look, appreciate or even acknowledge historical context or the symbiotic relationship with stone fabric, mortar composition, bond characteristics, style of construction and most notably surface finishing. Money seems to be the main driver in Stonemasonry in the central belt. A quick "fix" and away to the next job is the norm. The trade appears dumbed down to a "that'll do" attitude so much so that some new stonework is a time bomb for future problems such as dangerous masonry, wet solid

mass and the inappropriate imagery associated to our historic traditional built

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vernacular. When did it become common place for a traditional solid mass rubble wall to be constructed with a hollow cavity and through ties? Face beds stones a norm. That'll do, and posted on Facebook and everybody likes it. There are so many issues with Stonemasonry in Scotland, so much so that I'm looking at moving away from it and concentrating on the traditional lime plastering and harling due to the lack of quality tradesmen. Our built heritage has never been at such risk.

8. Stonemasonry qualifications need to be reassessed to incorporate a broader scope of skills, which are relevant to modern day processing & installation of stone.
9. Saddened to hear that Edinburgh College is closing its Stonemasonry course. I currently have one apprentice attending at the moment.
10. Currently Glasgow city college has pulled the advanced craft year from the apprenticeship programme. This in my eyes is an important part of their learning. This in turn makes a better understanding and hones their skills in the final year before site experience and then the skills test. The SQA has also changed the goal posts so to speak with regards to gathering evidence for them to sit a skills test and we currently have 2 apprentices who should have sat theirs last June still trying to gather the evidence for it to be rejected at every turn as that's not what's required or it has changed so this is rather frustrating as it's held back their increase in wages as they have not done their skills test. It also has a detrimental affect on when companies try to go through a PQQ process and can't provide the highest qualification which will effect their score and may not "win" the work and this may lead to fewer jobs as companies can't get any work.
11. We have recently been made aware Edinburgh College Stonemasonry department will be closing next year. For Edinburgh not to have this facility is ludicrous for many obvious reasons. We sincerely hope something can be done to keep a training centre operational for the future of the trade in Edinburgh and Scotland in general.
12. I think HES traditional masonry training is anachronistic. Masonry moves with technology. Apprentices should be taught with spinners as well as maul and chisel.
13. The training given in Edinburgh is pathetic. The skills test has been made in failable [TC: *Poss. non-failable*]. We taught the world to build and now we are lagging behind, it is a generational thing like many things people don't want to do the hard work anymore but the effort and support put in to the trade is as good as non-existent.
14. We have to be very versatile in skill sets particularly in the Highlands. There is insufficient banker masonry work available when I was an apprentice. This means we do considerable amounts of lime works including harling and pointing to keep productive as well as actual stonework. It would be great to see a more easily accessible memorial masonry credential element available as the actual cutting/carving skills are almost lost in this sector. Most headstones are simply bought from abroad and machine engraved which was never historically the case. This is resulting in generic pieces whereas there are many banker/fixer masons with the skillset but not the formal qualification to produce and fix these in local authority graveyards.
15. Don't know why the folio was introduced. Making it nearly impossible for some apprentices to actually complete the apprenticeship.

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16. Certainly is a dying trade I had a 3year apprenticeship with a stonemasonry company in the early 80s and had 1 week a month at the Telford college over that period. I don't think being at college for 6 months to a year nowadays then being put on a listed building is anywhere near enough experience to work on.
  17. Saddened to hear that the last 2 masonry lecturers have been paid off at Telford college, Edinburgh as part of the council's cost cutting.
  18. I would love to learn more about carving stone for the purpose of teaching. I would be unable to sustain work in this sector by commission as my hands are in too poor condition to do full time.
  19. Stonemasonry in Scotland is detrimental [*TC: poss essential*] to the upkeep of our buildings and without proper training the proper repairs cannot be done.
  20. We need more local Stonemasonry courses to provide training for young lads out of school, we [*need*] funding from government to provide a safe central belt. Buildings are crumbling and due to lack of support stonemasons are thriving as they should. We live in a historic country that needs maintained.
  21. I think it's absolutely shocking that Edinburgh college stonemasonry department is closing our trade is dying as it is this will only make it worse.
  22. I am coming from a point of view as an apprentice. Stonemasonry is experiencing severe underfunding. The facilities are of a fairly low quality and there is very much doubt of an advance craft continuing due to number of staff. While undergoing my apprenticeship, we have barely been shown any sort of craftsmanship, we are very much left to our own devices the majority of time. My father is a stonemason and have worked with him since a young age. i only just started my apprenticeship a couple years ago, due to exposing myself to different career avenues, but always worked alongside him picking up the trade. I feel like stonemasonry isn't taken as seriously as it was during his time in the early years as a mason. Which is somewhat a heart-breaking reality, stonemasonry gave birth to architecture, engineering etc and should be upheld with a historical respect. From this idea, there should be immense funding in keeping the trade alive, through apprenticeships. It's not a dying by any means, there is plenty of work. It's the number of qualified experienced masons that is dwindling. There needs to be a nationwide initiative to stop the impersonation of such a highly skilled trade.
  23. As a major employer in the Scottish construction industry, The University of Edinburgh are very supportive of the training of stonemasons. We have a great deal of listed historic buildings and we value Scottish stonemasons to be part of the refurbishment of our estate.
  24. The loss of large companies who regularly employed several apprentices at any time and the shift to mostly micro businesses of 1 or 2 stonemasons who have no interest in or lack the resources to employ apprentices has negatively impacted the industry. The quality of banker work and building work has dropped in recent years. Perhaps because qualified and experienced stonemasons appear less interested in mentoring trainees. The stonemasonry curriculum at the technical colleges focusses mostly on new build when most of a stonemason's work is in repair and maintenance. Trainees are given very little instruction in how to cut out and replace existing stone or how to rake out and re-point etc. The curriculum also is lacking in training in the preparation and use of traditional lime mortars.

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Many qualified stonemasons working in the heritage sector talk about using lime mortars without having any real technical knowledge of the material and why it should be used. As a result there is a profound lack of understanding of the importance of aftercare and protection for fresh mortars. There is a trend towards ignoring best advice in the selection of appropriate mortars in preference for using stronger hydraulic limes or modified hydraulic limes because they cure more quickly and need less aftercare.

25. There needs to be a push for a good amount of high-quality stonemasons coming through in the future. For the amount of work there is, there are far too many people who know the right process but don't follow it. Everyone needs to be thinking 60-80 years in the future and cement is not the answer. There should be a law against using cement with stone buildings it's that bad. Too much thinking about the money.
26. I am worried about the future of stonemasonry in Scotland after recently hearing that the training of apprentices at Edinburgh college has been abandoned.
27. I would just like to say as an apprentice waiting to start in Edinburgh, and for the many more in and around the area waiting to start or already attending, that keeping the Edinburgh Telford collage stone masonry facility open is playing a massive role in keeping the next generation going along with the city itself being world heritage site making it an ideal location, along with the fact there are many young men who have already waited through the Covid to continue and there to be a back log of catching up, to prolong the start of new apprentices to have waited this long and it be axed is just a disgrace. Right when the trade was beginning to get back to how it used to be.
28. We are huge advocates of apprentice training and are incredible keen to help the industry in any way we can. We currently employ 7 apprentices with a view to take on another 3-4 this year and every year thereafter.
29. We would be very excited to help and work with whichever relevant bodies to help and improve the system, which in my opinion is currently a little flawed. As stone federation members and now one of the larger employers of stonemasons in the country, we would like to use the infrastructure we have available to us and volume of work to train as many future stonemasons as possible and get young people back into work at the highest possible end of quality and standards, in this fantastic trade. The college curriculum is, in my opinion somewhat outdated, with our apprentices not really learning what we'd hope them to be learning while at college. Private employers put a lot of time and finance into generating these tradesmen so to allow private companies to be able to give more feedback or come on a board of sorts to allow input on how the course content and curriculum intensity could run would be amazing. We are targeting to be the biggest private sector producer of apprentices in the country and any means that we can do to help that and help people come into the trade, we would love to discuss.
30. Every stonemason should have a spirometry test [*TC: breathing function test*] when 35 years old mandatory. Paid for by the CITB. If I was made aware as an apprentice that I would most likely develop silicosis in mid life. I probably wouldn't have entered the trade. I'm awaiting tests now and I'm worried sick. The government should impose this as many young men's health is at risk. A national disgrace!!!

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31. We are a sub section of Building Services, within Fife Council, we are very busy with repairs and maintenance works from small jobbing repairs to larger repairs of complete buildings, structures. We routinely employ apprentice masons, we are scheduled to employ 2 new apprentices for 2023. We have concerns regarding local provision for college training, as we have lost Edinburgh College, we now send new apprentices to Stirling. It is hoped that this can be resolved in the future. We as a Council have a keen interest in maintaining our heritage and culture, we expect to continue growing our in house team to allow us to undertake more work, without the need to sub contract works.
32. Not enough apprentices in the industry.
33. Edinburgh World Heritage is concerned about the stonemasonry training provision across Scotland, and in Edinburgh in particular. Ensuring that there are sufficient numbers of young people being encouraged towards stonemasonry as a trade, that there is a healthy provision of places to study and apprenticeship opportunities to ensure a 'pipeline' of people coming into the construction sector, and that there are broad opportunities for stonemasons to build up their skills and experience during the course of their careers, is vital. Without a healthy stonemasonry sector, we will be unable to maintain our historic buildings to suitable conservation standards over the long term within the World Heritage Site. This risks withdrawal of the Outstanding Universal Value status by Unesco. A key draw to thousands of visitors to Edinburgh is the Unesco World Heritage status, guaranteeing, as it does, a world class historic environment and a wonderful place to visit. Loss of status is highly likely to cause a decrease in visitor numbers, in turn causing a significant effect on the tourist economy of Edinburgh. Loss of prestige internationally will impact on the 'soft power' ability of Scotland to 'punch above its weight' on the global stage as a leader in cultural heritage.
34. If the rumoured closure of the Masonry department at Telford goes ahead, I dread to think what will happen to our traditional and historic buildings, and the many businesses that rely on this facility. There aren't enough qualified masons around as it is ( by far the largest factor that limits my business to grow) and with limited capacity at Stirling....then where are they going to be trained? SLCT do a great job providing Lime mortar training, however I strongly disagree with their basic masonry skills courses etc. In my opinion "a little knowledge is dangerous" and the sector needs serious investment and a fundamental shift in how our skills are delivered, developed, funded and ultimately valued. If our businesses and built heritage is to survive, then shifting to the English model of banker or fixer was beyond me. How can anyone who can only build...OR....cut, start their own business if they aren't proficient in all the skills required. This, in my opinion was a foolish decision and will only deter businesses from taking on apprentices. Last year I delivered 5 weeks of training to school leavers in conjunction with another trust, to hopefully encourage them to take up an apprenticeship in Masonry. (I didn't receive one application) but it's no wonder when their average earning potential doesn't compare to a brickie, spark or plumber. If funding was made available directly to apprentices to make our industry more inviting, then this would be a good place to start, as there's no incentive for young people to begin a career in our craft opposed to other more lucrative industries.
35. We have always endeavoured to train Stonemasons. We also are continually training operatives in the art of Stone Working in general whether that be in Quarrying the raw material, processing it using traditional and CNC sawing, Walling production



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and Carving. Many good Stone Masons (Banker) come from this traditional approach to learning the broader elements of the trade as we operate in it. The formal Stone Masonry Apprenticeship as it has been feels like it has been reduced to a now unviable element whilst at the same time Contract Awards give no value whatsoever to those that continue to train the future generation which has encouraged firms to ignore the need to train. At the same time the large Masonry fixing firms of old who would train many Apprentices every year are all long gone and replaced by many single van operators who have no incentive to train nor the ability to manage the disruption and cost. These are the factors we feel over decades have contributed to the slow erosion of the system we see in pieces now. For us, as Quarriers, Manufacturers and Banker Masons we will continue where possible to train Masons but feel that at this delicate point a new Apprenticeship route must be found. We suspect that Apprenticeship skills work needs to be done more in house with a verifier(s) available to assess where necessary via visit/video/photographic evidence perhaps.... meaning that Colleges are no longer needed to house Banker Depts and the associated costs. The Companies benefit from higher funding to manage these elements saved from College cost and also benefit from not losing Apprentices for large blocks of time. The academic studies element of the Apprentice instruction could either be done in shorter college classroom blocks or via online classes. The first point of an Apprenticeship is to allow time for the learner to become familiar with the material and the trade whilst not under absolute pressure to achieve Production Targets..... it is therefore time that is the most valuable resource in the learning process. The modern Apprenticeship was shortened and reduced and reduced and reduced. Take it back to a true 5 years and give time as a student of the craft to become a true Master. This also allows people to value the training and skill learning process and again value this craft.

36. I will refrain from commenting given the business is involved in HES commissioned research into existing provision and delivery of the MA in Stonemasonry and may be construed as conflict of interests.
37. More provision should be done for units at college. As a contractor I am restricted to do some things as it is all depending on what work is out there for us. For example, rose windows doesn't come that often so expect a contractor to do this whilst the apprentice is on site is a bit unrealistic in my opinion.
38. Not enough stonemasons in Scotland. When you do find any they are too fond of the Monday Club, have alcohol issues etc. More needs to be done to bring young boys into the trade and train them properly. The way apprentices are currently taught isn't working, they should be learning in the job but don't seem to want to do the hard work. Companies aren't getting enough funding to take on apprentices especially now with the cost of living increasing dramatically.
39. We as a business understand the requirement for the need of more stonemasons to come through and help maintain our built environment. Speaking with other business owners there isn't enough support from governing bodies that make apprenticeships attractive for employers. More needs to be done, just look at the colleges and the situation with Glasgow and Edinburgh. We have two 2nd year apprentices and we are being told Glasgow will not be hosting advanced craft next year, which quite frankly is shocking. The trade is not attractive enough for school leavers to want to take part in either. As a business owner and having a genuine passion for what we do I am worried about the future of our craft.

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40. If work confirmation was more fixed I would happily rebuild a team.
41. Scotland is greatly lacking commitment from businesses to train stonemasons. We already have a problem with the lack of skilled masons and I can only see this getting worse.
42. We carry out training for memorial masons.
43. I think that there should be a split in the training for apprentices between banker work and the site work of the building as there is a clear difference in the skill.
44. Stonemasonry apprenticeship should be trained in the winter months when there's a van is most of the time, unable to work in the private in commercial sector. I believe this is why most companies don't send young guys to college anymore because they need them in the good months to make money.
45. More training provisions are required that in turn give the stonemasonry sector more qualified operatives that can work in a commercial environment. I know HES and the NTS have training provisions but they are only thereafter able to work on those bodies sites, they are not trained to be part of the commercial world.
46. Extremely disappointed that the College in Edinburgh closed down and it appears that there are doubts regarding the long-term future of Glasgow College. The Stone Federation has already had initial discussions about taking all training within the Federation, as it is quite clear that more rather than less training is required to maintain the trade for the future.
47. We are Granite stonemasons. I have had apprentices in the past and trained them to work with hard stone, but they have to go to college where they work with sandstone. The training they have received at college is good, but it is just not relevant to the work we do. There needs to be provision for Granite training in the NE. Lime: I am in a fortunate position since I was trained by my father who used lime during his apprenticeship in the 1950s. The current training and literature regarding lime simply does not represent traditional practices.
48. My general observations of the stone masonry sector and how it has transformed over the last 20 years appears to show an industry now made up of very small companies of two to three employees in many cases basically working out of a van. The bulk of time served qualified stonemasons presently working in and around the west of Scotland generally originate from large training companies for example Hunter and Clark, McGlashins, Thorn Campbell Etc who where [*sic*] very active in employing apprentices and this in turn has fed and propped up this sector to the present day. Sadly most of these companies are no longer trading and this raises a concern that the smaller companies are unable/unwilling to enter into a formal apprenticeship scheme and as such there is clear evidence of a serious skills shortage. Perhaps there needs to be an urgent focus on assisting small companies with grants and incentives to employ apprentices and ensure that they gain the practical skills and formal qualifications to maintain this sector going forward.
49. The training provided for Stonemasonry in Scotland needs to be simplified greatly. Two pathways should be available, Banker Masonry and Fixer Masonry. The apprenticeship is a very small part of a masons career. Once the apprenticeship is completed, the mason will learn many different aspects of the trade during their

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carrier and different pathways will open ie: carving, internal or external fixing, banker masonry etc. The employers could provide the practical test material and the tests be verified by an assessor rather than at the college and the theory work would be done at the college as a way of reducing costs possibly.

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## APPENDIX C: SURVEY QUESTIONS

1. Do you consent to our Data Protection statement? Please note the section that explains how we will be storing some of this data in a Scottish stonemasonry database.
2. I consent to Historic Environment Scotland sharing selected data (non-personal data) I provide in this survey with relevant industry and government partners.
3. Are you answering this as a private individual, on behalf of a business or organisation that provides stonemasonry services, or as a qualified/experienced stonemason?
4. What is the name of your business or organisation?
  - a. What is the name of your business or organisation?
  - b. What is your postcode? This should be the postcode of the stonemasonry business that you work at, or if you are a sole trader please use the postcode of the address your business is registered at.
5. Please tell us what the contact details are for your business or organisation.
6. In your opinion, how much stonemasonry work are you involved in?
  - a. Stonemasonry forms 75% or more of my/our business or organisation. Please select only one item: Yes No Don't know.
  - b. **Stonemasonry forms 50%-75% of my/our business or organisation.** Please select only one item: Yes No Don't know.
  - c. **Stonemasonry forms 25%-50% of my/our business or organisation.** Please select only one item: Yes No Don't know.
  - d. **Stonemasonry forms less than 25% of my/our business or organisation.** Please select only one item: Yes No Don't know.
  - e. **We provide repair and maintenance services.** Please select only one item: Yes No Don't know.
  - f. **We work on new build properties.** Please select only one item: Yes No Don't know.
  - g. **We work on pre-1919 buildings.** Please select only one item: Yes No Don't know.
7. Which of these categories best describes your business or organisation? Please select all that apply.
  - Micro enterprise (1- 10 employees).
  - Small enterprise (11-50 employees).
  - Medium enterprise (51- 250 employees).
  - Large enterprise (250 employees or more).
8. Please tell us how many people in your business or organisation fit into the following categories:
  - a. **Qualified stonemasons.** Please select only one item. 0 1-3 4-10 11+ Don't know.
  - b. **Apprentice stonemasons.** Please select only one item. 0 1-3 4-10 11+ Don't know.
  - c. **Stonemasons without formal qualifications.** Please select only one item. 0 1-3 4-10 11+ Don't know.
  - d. **Management.** Please select only one item. 0 1-3 4-10 11+ Don't know.
  - e. **Support staff.** Please select only one item. 0 1-3 4-10 11+ Don't know.

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9. Please tell us how many people you work with have any of the following qualifications:
- SVQ Level 2.** Please select only one item 0 1-3 4-6 7-10 11+ Don't know.
  - SVQ Level 3.** Please select only one item 0 1-3 4-6 7-10 11+ Don't know.
  - HNC/D.** Please select only one item 0 1-3 4-6 7-10 11+ Don't know.
  - Advanced Craft.** Please select only one item 0 1-3 4-6 7-10 11+ Don't know.
  - BSc.** Please select only one item 0 1-3 4-6 7-10 11+ Don't know.
  - MSc.** Please select only one item 0 1-3 4-6 7-10 11+ Don't know.
  - Other qualifications relevant to stonemasonry.** Please select only one item 0 1-3 4-6 7-10 11+ Don't know.
  - No qualifications.** Please select only one item 0 1-3 4-6 7-10 11+ Don't know.
10. How many people in your business or organisation fit into the following age groups?
- 18 or under.**
  - 18 - 24.**
  - 25 - 34.**
  - 35 - 44.**
  - 44 - 54.**
  - 55 - 64.**
  - 65 or over.**
- Please select only one item 0 1-3 4-10 11+ Don't know.
11. Are there any comments you would like to make about stonemasonry in Scotland? We are especially interested in your views on stonemasonry training provision.
12. Are you happy for us to contact you with further questions about stonemasonry in Scotland? If so, please give us your email address.



HISTORIC  
ENVIRONMENT  
SCOTLAND

ÀRAINNEACHD  
EACHDRAIDHEIL  
ALBA

Historic Environment Scotland  
Longmore House, Salisbury Place  
Edinburgh EH9 1SH

0131 668 8600  
[historicenvironment.scot](http://historicenvironment.scot)

Historic Environment Scotland – Scottish Charity No. SC045925  
Registered Address: Longmore House, Salisbury Place, Edinburgh EH9 1SH.

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