

Occupational Mapping Press Release

FFINTO - the Furniture, Furnishings and Interiors Standard Setting and Sector Skills Body has recently published a report which reviews the occupational roles within the sector.

Three primary sources of information were used to produce the report: a workshop attended by representatives from the furniture, furnishings and interiors industry, a web-based questionnaire, and one to one interviews. Contributions from employers, trade associations and learning providers helped to inform the report.

900 companies were encouraged to participate in the survey by being directed to a website via an email link. An on-line questionnaire returned a particularly high response rate of over 7%.

The occupational roles investigated included: Wood machinist, Cabinet Maker, Upholsterer, Soft Furnisher, Soft Furnishing Maker, Furniture Polisher, French Polisher, Restorer, Furniture Designer, Kitchen Designer, Kitchen Installer, Blinds and Shutter Makers and Mattress Maker.

Kitchen Designers and Installers have not had their roles formally identified prior to this report and it will be used to inform future work of the Kitchen, Bathroom and Bedrooms National Training Group. Renee Mascari, Chief Executive of the group said 'The Kitchen, Bedroom and Bathroom National Training Group was set up to recognise and align the skills and development needs of the KBB industry thus making it easy for individuals to choose KBB as a career. In order to develop and deliver the relevant courses so desperately needed by the KBB sector, it was very important to identify the skills required for both Kitchen Design and Kitchen Installation'.

The report serves to update existing occupational maps by acknowledging that job functions are determined by the size and ethos of the company. For any one occupation, some companies employ operatives to complete narrow, discrete functions, whilst other companies may expect the same operative to perform a broader set of skills, encompassing all aspects of the occupation - from the initial brief through to completion paperwork. Some companies also require employees to multiskill – this is particularly evident in wood machining, cabinet making, production assembly and wood finishing.

The report also recognises that the furniture industry is responding to foreign competition by employing lean manufacturing techniques and the redeployment of staff. Occupational roles are therefore currently undergoing change.

These findings will help shape the National Occupational Standards that the National Vocational Qualifications are based upon.

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