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**connect**  
TRADE UNION

Paddy Kavanagh *General Secretary/Treasurer*



The Secretariat,  
The Labour Court,  
Lansdowne House,  
Lansdowne Road,  
**Dublin 4.**

5<sup>th</sup> March, 2021.

Dear Secretariat,

Please find enclosed an application for a request to examine the terms and conditions of employment in the Electrical Contracting Sector.

Should you require any further information or clarification please do not hesitate to contact the undersigned.

If you could please acknowledged receipt of this application.

Yours faithfully,

Brian Nolan,  
Assistant General Secretary.  
Connect Trade Union.  
Tel; 01 8719 911



THE UNION FOR CRAFT AND SKILLED TECHNICAL, ENGINEERING,  
ELECTRICAL AND CONSTRUCTION WORKERS IN IRELAND





## THE LABOUR COURT

### INDUSTRIAL RELATIONS (AMENDMENT) ACT 2015

#### APPLICATION FOR A REQUEST TO EXAMINE THE TERMS AND CONDITIONS OF EMPLOYMENT IN A SECTOR

Name of applicant:	Connect Trade Union
Address:	6, Gardiner Row,
	Dublin 1
Contact Number:	018747047
Email Address:	<a href="mailto:construction@connectunion.ie">construction@connectunion.ie</a>
Sector:	Electrical Contracting Sector as defined by Appendix 1.
Class, type or group of workers to which the request relates: Workers employed as Electricians or Apprentice Electricians working in the Sector (see Appendix 2)	
Please enter details of the arrangements (if any) by which terms and conditions relating to remuneration and any sick pay scheme or pension scheme, of the workers in the sector to which the request relates are determined: Remuneration and Sick Pay/Pension are currently determined by a National Collective Employment Agreement for the sector which is negotiated by Connect Trade Union and the following employer bodies under the auspices of the National Joint Industrial Council at the Workplace Relations Commission. <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- Association of Electrical Contractors of Ireland</li><li>- Electrical Contractors Association,</li></ul>	
Where the applicant is a trade union of workers, please enter the name and address of any other trade union of workers that is representative of workers in the sector to which the request relates:  Not applicable	
Where the applicant is a trade union of workers, please enter the name and address of any trade union of employers or organisation of employers that is representative of employers in the sector to which the request relates:-  Association of Electrical Contractors of Ireland, Woodview Centre, Main Street, Celbridge Co. Kildare. & Electrical Contractors Association, Construction House, Canal Road, Dublin 6	

Where the applicant is a trade union of employers or an organisation of employers, please enter the name and address of any other trade union of workers that is representative of workers in the sector to which the request relates:-

Not applicable

Signature of Applicant:



Date:

5<sup>th</sup> March 2021

**Note: Please see overleaf important notes for completion of the form.**

**Statutory Declaration in accordance with the Statutory Declarations Act, 1938**

a) Name of Applicant:  
Connect Trade Union

b) Position held by the Declarant:  
General Secretary

c) Registered Address of the Applicant within the State:  
Connect Trade Union, Head Office, 6, Gardiner Row, Dublin 1.

d) Number of workers of the class, type or group to which the request relates who are members of the trade union of workers on whose behalf the request is made:  
10,349

e) Number of workers of the class, type or group to which the request relates who are normally employed in the sector to which the request relates:  
Circa 16,650.

f) The declarant's means of knowledge of the matters referred to at paragraphs (d) and (e):  
(d) refers to the number of workers of the class, type or group who are in membership of Connect Trade Union.  
(e) Report from the Nevin Economic Research Institute (NERI) - (Appendix 3).

Signed;

  
Signature of Person

  
Commissioner for Oaths



**MICHAEL CONDON B.C.L.**  
Solicitor / Commissioner for Oaths  
Holland Condon, Castlecomer,  
Co. Kilkenny, Ireland.  
Phone 056-4441219

## Appendix 1

### **DEFINITION OF THE ELECTRICAL CONTRACTING SECTOR**

The Electrical Contracting Sector means the sector of the economy comprising the following economic activity:—

*The installation, repair, demolition (de-install), fabrication & pre-fabrication commissioning or maintenance of electrical and electronic equipment, including the marking off and preparing for the wiring (whether temporary or permanent) of all electrical and/or electronic appliances and apparatus, fitting and erecting all controllers, switches, junction section distribution and other fuseboards and all electrical communications, bells, telephone, radio, telegraph, x-ray, computer and data cabling, instrumentation, fibre optics and kindred installations; fitting and fixing of metallic and other conduits, perforated cable tray and casing for protection of cables, cutting away of walls, floors and ceilings etc for same; erection, care and maintenance of all electrical plant, including generators, motors, oil burners, cranes, lifts, fans, refrigerators and hoists; adjustments of all controls, rheostats, coils and all electrical contacts and connections; wiring of chassis for all vehicles; erection of batteries and switchboards; erection of crossarms, insulators, overhead cables (LT and HT); fitting of staywires, brackets, lighting arrestors etc and underground mains having regard to any advances in technology and equipment used within the industry.*

*This Sectoral Employment Order will not apply to employees in state and semi-state companies who are engaged in similar activities and are covered by other agreements. Neither will it apply to electricians and apprentices employed directly by manufacturing companies for the maintenance of those companies' plants.*

## **Appendix 2**

### **Class, type or group of Workers to which the request relates to;**

The work in this sector is carried out by highly skilled Electricians and their Apprentices who are trained to standards which are governed by the minimum educational qualifications associated with the Statutory Apprenticeship system.

#### **1. Electricians**

The Electrician must have successfully completed the statutory apprenticeship and therefore hold a National Craft Certificate (or equivalent).

These qualifications may be required in order for an employer to establish his/her status as an "Electrical Contractor".

#### **2. Apprentice Electricians**

The Apprentice must be registered with SOLAS within two weeks of commencing employment as an apprentice and must complete 7 phases of training (on the job and academic studies combined) over a minimum period of 4 years in training.

Upon successful completion of the apprenticeship training the individual will receive the National Craft Certificate or equivalent.

## **APPENDIX 3**



4<sup>th</sup> March, 2021

The Secretary,  
The Labour Court,  
Lansdowne House,  
Lansdowne Road,  
Dublin 4

Dear Secretary,

The analysis in the supporting document for Connect Trade Union's submission to the court was undertaken by Paul Goldrick-Kelly, Economist at the Nevin Economic Research Institute. The analysis deploys data from the Central Statistics Office and Eurostat to ascertain the size of the electrician sector covered by the requested order.

The analysis suggests that Connect Trade Union membership encompasses some 56.9 to 68.5% of the covered workforce within the sector depending on quantifying methodology, with a midpoint estimate of 62.2%.

Paul Goldrick-Kelly  
Economist

Nevin Economic Research Institute

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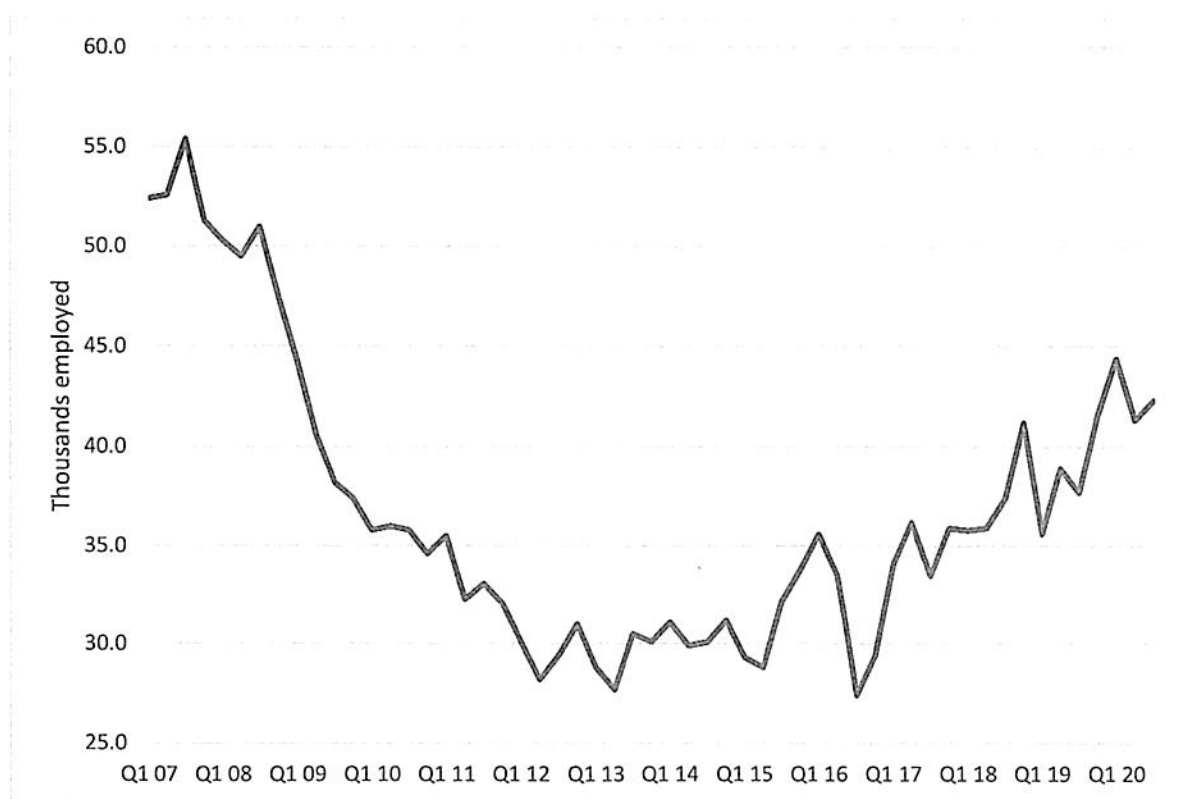
## Electrical Contracting Sector size Estimates

### Labour Force Survey

The CSO's Labour Force Survey (LFS) is a detailed quarterly release from which most up to date labour market statistics are drawn. Among other indicators, the LFS breaks employment down by occupational group according to the Standard Occupation Classification 2010. Using the most detailed breakdown, we can identify the occupational group *Electrical and Electronic Trades* which encompasses the workers who would be subject to this SEO.

The *Electrical and Electronic Trades* occupation group comprises "Workers in electrical and electronic trades install wiring in road and rail vehicles and aircraft and assemble, install, maintain, test and repair electrical and electronic equipment, components and systems concerned with lighting, signalling, telecommunications, radio and television and other commercial, industrial and domestic functions."<sup>1</sup>

**Figure X Numbers employed in Electrical and Electronic Trades 2007Q1 to 2020Q3**



Source: CSO (2020) Labour Force Survey

Figure X shows that, despite a general recovery trend in occupation numbers following the last recession, the latest available data (third quarter 2020) show that the sector remains nearly 24% smaller than at its peak in the third quarter of 2007. These data indicate that 42,300 individuals were employed in this group between July and September 2020, a fall of 13,100 relative to this maximum.

However, these data refer to people within this occupation group who work in a number of economic sectors. More relevant here, is the proportion of the group that works in Construction. According to previously available data, some 15,550 of this group were employed in Construction in the second

<sup>1</sup> ONS [Standard Occupational Classification 2010 Volume 1 Structure and descriptions of unit groups](#)

quarter of 2018. This accounted for 43.2% of employment within the occupation. Extrapolating the observed trend for workers in construction to account for larger proportions of the overall *Electrical and Electronic Trades* group produces an estimate of 21,200.<sup>2</sup>

Other LFS data indicate that approximately 71.4% of people employed in construction were classed as employees in the third quarter of 2020. This results in an estimate of some 15,100 employees.

### **Structural Business Statistics**

An additional source of data comes from the CSO's Structural Business Statistics (SBS) dataset. This data describes enterprises according to economic sector.<sup>3</sup> The SBS is an amalgamation of several datasets, including data from the annual Building and Construction Inquiry (BCI). This dataset covers private firms with 10 or more persons engaged, alongside a sample of smaller firms.

The NACE sector of construction can be divided into subcategories, including *Electrical Installation* (Sector code F.4321).<sup>4</sup> According to Eurostat, this sector includes "installation the installation of electrical systems in all kinds of buildings and civil engineering structures in electrical systems".<sup>5</sup>

Both persons engaged and employee numbers increased from their low point in 2012 to the latest available data in 2018. The former category includes employees, along with proprietors, partners and family members working for enterprises and excludes agency workers. Employee numbers increased faster than overall numbers engaged, growing from 70.6% in 2012, to 83.7% of persons engaged in 2018. This reflected a near doubling in employee numbers between 2012 and 2018, from 9,407 to 18,237 people.

**Table X Employment and Enterprise data for *Electrical Installation* 2009-2018**

	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018
Persons Engaged	17,612	14,509	13,821	13,320	14,164	15,997	16,479	17,653	20,612	21,798
Employees	13,745	10,696	9,969	9,407	10,347	12,372	12,788	14,067	16,868	18,237
Employees as a % of persons engaged	78.0%	73.7%	72.1%	70.6%	73.1%	77.3%	77.6%	79.7%	81.8%	83.7%
% of total employees in Construction	14.3%	15.3%	16.3%	16.9%	17.8%	18.4%	17.4%	16.6%	17.2%	17.2%

Source: Eurostat (2020) Structural Business Statistics

<sup>2</sup> Within the previously available data, the proportion of the occupational group working in construction had gone from around 30% to over 40% between 2015 and 2018. In previous years, this cohort accounted for just over half of employment in *Electrical and Electronic Trades* though this occurred at the low point for the occupational group as a whole. Applying this range of estimates between 30% and 50% to the data leads to a range between 12,700 and 21,200. Given broader trends, in apprenticeship numbers etc, estimates at the upper end of this range are more likely.

<sup>3</sup> This NACE sectoral data is distinct from the previously used LFS SOC2010 data, which classifies by occupation.

<sup>4</sup> The NACE Sector Construction is divided into three main subdivisions, including *Specialised Construction Activities* F.43. This is referred to as the two-digit classification. This can be broken down further into more specific 3 and 4 digit classifications. *Electrical Installation* is a 4 digit subcategory class F.4321.

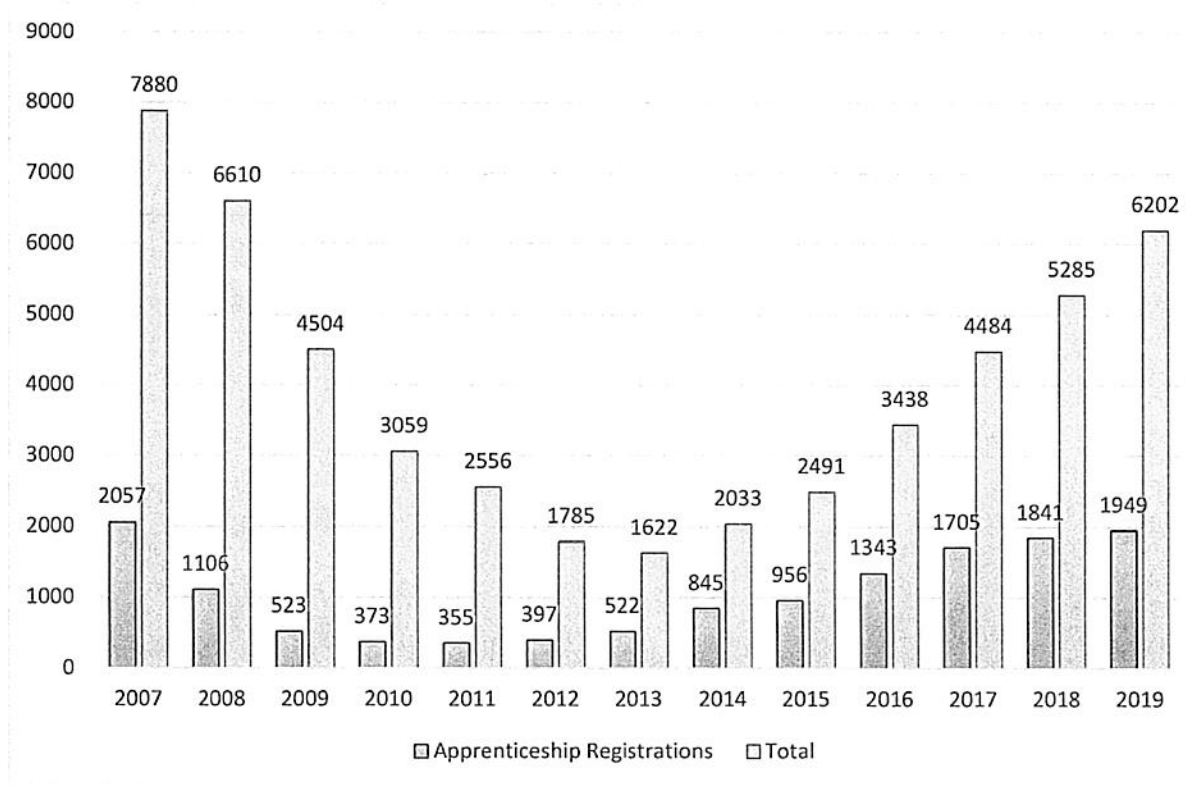
<sup>5</sup> More detail is available at [Eurostat Metadata Statistical Classification of Economic Activities in the European Community, Rev. 2 \(2008\)](#).

According to LFS data, employee numbers in the broader construction sector were similar in 2020 to 2018 data.<sup>6</sup> This implies that approximately 18,200 employees worked in the *Electrical Installation* subsector in 2020.

**Apprenticeship Data**

The SEO will also cover registered apprentices employed by electrical contractors. Department of Further and Higher Education, Research, innovation and Science show a significant increase in new apprenticeship registration and total apprentice numbers from lows in 2012/2013 to 2019. 2019 figures of 1,949 new registrations and 6,202 apprentices in total are still significantly below pre-crisis levels.

**Figure X Electrical Apprenticeships 2007 to 2019**



Source: Department of Further and Higher Education, Research, innovation and Science (2020) Apprenticeship Action Plan 2021-2025 Consultation Paper

<sup>6</sup> Growth in the sector can be calculated as between 0 and 2%. This depends on whether one compares average data for 2020 (incorporating the three quarters of data available) to the 2018 average, or whether the 2018 average is compared to the third quarter for 2020 figure. To account for quarterly volatility, we use the former estimate.

## Electricians outside the SEO remit

This SEO will not apply to:

1. **Electricians employed by public bodies:** including the state, local authorities and semi-state companies.
2. **Electricians employed in the manufacturing sector**
3. **Self-employed electricians with no employees**

The two data sets here variously include or exclude these groups. The up to date LFS estimate is constructed from occupational data within construction and thus excludes electricians working in manufacturing (group 2). This classification process should also exclude workers employed in public sector bodies like ESB and Dublin Bus. Similarly, applying estimates for employee numbers should exclude the self-employed (group 3). A further semi-state adjustment is required for these data.

The latter dataset constructed from the BCI excludes public bodies in data collection (group 1).<sup>7</sup> The data are sectoral defined within Constructions and therefore exclude electricians in Manufacturing (group 2). The 2018 data presented here relate to employees, thus excluding the self-employed.

## Estimating Connect representation within the sector

Connect trade union represent 10,349 workers in the electrical contracting sector.

Since the estimates covered in the previous sections exclude public bodies, the self-employed and individuals working outside of construction, they should approximate the population covered by this SEO.

The sectoral estimate arising from the CSO's Labour Force Survey (LFS) dataset amounts to approximately 15,100 workers covered by this Sectoral Employment Order. This covers employees whose occupation is classified within the *Electrical and Electronic Trades* group also working within the *Construction* sector.

The sectoral estimate using the structural business statistics data amounts to approximate 18,200 workers. We note that this economic sector definition is tied to the primary activity of the economic unit, and not the work/job titles of employees. Thus, this estimate likely represents the upper limit of sectoral numbers, incorporating others within the sector who might not be employed as electrical contractors.

Range	Connect members in the sector	Estimate of Sector size 2020	% represented by Connect
Lower range	10,349	15,100	68.5%
Upper range		18,200	56.9%
Middle		16,650	62.2%

Thus, we conclude that Connect trade union represents between 56.9% and 68.5% of workers covered by this SEO. This produces a mid-range estimate of 62.2%.

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<sup>7</sup> <https://www.cso.ie/en/methods/surveybackgroundnotes/buildingandconstructioninquiry/>