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Senior Quantity Surveyor Market Insight

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Market Insight: Senior Quantity Surveyors Scotland Housebuilding Sector

At a glance: Demand is high from Quantity Surveyor level upwards, with experienced Senior Quantity Surveyors in Scottish housebuilding now commonly positioning around £70,000 to £72,000 where they bring proven residential development experience.

Overview:

The market for Quantity Surveyors and Senior Quantity Surveyors within Scotland's housebuilding sector is under significant pressure.

Demand is high from Quantity Surveyor level upwards, with national and regional developers competing for commercially strong individuals who can manage live developments, control cost, support procurement and protect margin across increasingly complex residential build programmes.

This is particularly evident within housebuilding, where the skill set required is highly specific. Employers are not simply looking for general commercial experience. They need individuals who understand plot delivery, subcontract procurement, phased site programmes, build cost movement, margin protection and the pace of live residential development.

As a result, experienced Senior Quantity Surveyors with proven housebuilding credentials are now commanding stronger packages and are often considering multiple options when they enter the market.

Salary Positioning:

Salary expectations for Senior Quantity Surveyors within Scottish housebuilding have moved upwards. For experienced candidates with strong residential development experience, the market is now more commonly sitting around £70,000 - £72,000 + package.

Some employers are still advertising in the low to mid £60,000s, however this is becoming increasingly challenging where the brief requires:

- Proven PLC or regional housebuilder experience.
- Strong subcontractor procurement capability.
- Confidence managing multiple live developments.
- Robust CVR, forecasting and margin control experience.
- The ability to work effectively with site, technical, land and senior operational teams.

Candidates who can demonstrate this level of experience are often positioning themselves towards the upper end of the market, particularly where there is a clear expectation that they can make an immediate impact.

Salary Snapshot:

Role Type	Lower Market	Typical Market	Upper Market
QS Permanent Salary	£50,000	£55,000 - £60,000	£65,000
SQS Permanent Salary	£65,000	£70,000 - £72,000	£80,000
Contract Day Rate	£350	£375 - £400	£450

Contracting remains a practical option for housebuilders requiring short-term support, maternity cover, urgent project recovery or additional resource during periods of increased site activity. Day rates will vary depending on project complexity, regional knowledge and how quickly the individual is required to add value.

Hiring Reality:

The strongest demand is sitting at Quantity Surveyor level and above, with Senior Quantity Surveyors in particularly short supply.

The most challenging candidates to source are those with genuine end-to-end housebuilding experience. Employers are especially interested in individuals who have supported developments from pre-construction budgeting and procurement through to live site delivery, final accounts and completion.

The pressure is increased by competition from contractors, infrastructure businesses and wider construction employers, many of whom are also targeting commercially experienced candidates and driving salary expectations upwards.

For housebuilders, the challenge is not simply finding available Quantity Surveyors. The real challenge is finding commercial professionals who can operate with the pace, accuracy and stakeholder awareness required in residential development.

Skills Most in Demand:

The most sought-after Senior Quantity Surveyors in the housebuilding market are those who can demonstrate:

- Subcontract procurement, including tendering, package buy-out and supply chain management.
- Cost reporting, CVRs, forecasting and margin protection across multiple developments.
- Valuations, payment notices, final accounts and cash flow management.
- Strong working knowledge of groundworks, roads and sewers, timber frame, brickwork, M&E and finishing trades.
- Experience managing high-volume residential developments and phased site delivery.
- Confidence working closely with site management, technical teams, commercial directors and operational leadership.
- A strong understanding of build costs, plot profitability and development viability.

Candidate Expectations:

Senior Quantity Surveyors are increasingly assessing opportunities on more than salary alone.

While base salary remains important, candidates are also paying close attention to:

- Strength of land pipeline.
- Stability of future development programme.
- Reporting structure and level of autonomy.
- Car allowance and bonus potential.
- Flexibility across office, site and home working.
- Regional travel expectations.
- Quality of leadership and commercial support.
- The company's reputation for delivery and internal progression.

Developers with a strong land bank, clear growth plans and a well-defined commercial structure are often better placed to attract and retain experienced candidates.

Recruiter Insight:

When hiring Senior Quantity Surveyors, employers should be clear from the outset about the scale and shape of the role.

The most useful information to share early includes:

- Number of live developments.
- Annual plot output.
- Build type.
- Regional patch.
- Reporting line.
- Commercial team structure.
- Level of support from assistants or buyers.
- Future pipeline and site starts.

This helps candidates assess the opportunity properly and reduces the risk of salary or role misalignment later in the process.

It is also important to screen beyond job title. The strongest candidates will be able to provide specific examples of cost recovery, procurement strategy, subcontractor performance management, variation control, design change impact and protecting profitability across live developments.

Summary:

Scotland's housebuilding sector remains highly competitive for experienced commercial talent.

Demand is high from Quantity Surveyor level upwards, with Senior Quantity Surveyors particularly candidate-short. Salary expectations for proven housebuilding SQS candidates are now commonly landing around £70,000 - £72,000, with stronger packages required where employers need immediate impact, PLC experience and established regional subcontractor knowledge.

Housebuilders that move quickly, communicate the strength of their development pipeline and offer a competitive overall package will be best positioned to secure the strongest commercial talent in the market.