



Department for  
Energy Security  
& Net Zero

# Clean Energy Jobs

Employer Handbook

## Acknowledgements

The Office for Clean Energy Jobs has been established to support the successful delivery of a suitably skilled workforce for the clean energy sectors supporting the Clean Energy Superpower Mission.

This handbook has been prepared by the Office for Clean Energy Jobs, in close collaboration with Department for Education, Department for Work and Pensions as well as the Devolved Governments. Industry support is appreciated in disseminating this information to a broad audience.



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# Purpose of this handbook

*This handbook aims to help employers, particularly in clean energy sectors, to build and develop their workforce by identifying key public sector tools available that employers can access. It covers both UK-wide opportunities, and offers in England, Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland, on the following topics:*

## **1. Recruiting employees**

Programmes that will support more immediate recruitment needs, including means to access an increased talent pool.

## **2. Training (including upskilling and re-training)**

Skills and training offer that could support developing talent that is needed in the workforce.

## **3. Building a talent pipeline**

Ways in which a sustainable talent pipeline could be built in the longer-term.

This handbook aims to help clean energy employers to access government supported training and workforce recruitment and development programmes. It will provide support to build a suitably skilled workforce for employers now and into the future to meet the ambitions of our Clean Energy Superpower Mission.

# Recruiting Skilled Employees

*There are many programmes in place to support employers with their recruitment activities. Some of the key ones are identified below. There may be additional regional and sectoral support available which is not captured below.*

## **Case study: Work Ready**

This was a collaborative and co-funded programme delivered by the Engineering Construction Industry Training Board (ECITB), local employers, the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) and Pembrokeshire College. Through the pilot, semi-skilled workers were provided with 13 weeks of industry-relevant training and a further three weeks of work experience to prepare their entry to the engineering construction industry. The first cohort started at Pembrokeshire College in February 2023 and followed a vocational qualification in fabrication and welding processes, maintenance techniques and hand-fitting skills. 90% of the learners have completed the programme and all of these have been offered employment.

## Apprenticeships

### *Gaining the relevant skills that are required*

Apprenticeships are designed by employers to help apprentices gain the skills and knowledge needed in the workplace. They provide people of all ages with an opportunity to upskill and re-skill, and help them to progress within their chosen career path. They are available from entry to degree level across the UK. An employer will provide a paid job for its duration whilst allowing an apprentice to spend a portion of time undertaking vocational training. There are a broad range of apprenticeships available in occupations crucial for the green economy. Apprenticeships are a devolved policy, which means that authorities in each of the UK nations manage their own apprenticeship programmes.

Employers in the UK with an annual pay bill above £3 million currently pay an apprenticeship levy of 0.5% of their payroll to HMRC and, in England, can use these funds to invest in apprenticeships.

In England, levy-paying employers can currently access a 10% government top up to their apprenticeship service accounts. For employers that don't pay the levy, the government funds 100% of training costs for new apprentices aged 16-21. It also continues to pay 95% of training costs for apprentices over 21. A [range of funding support](#) is offered for apprenticeships in England. This includes £1,000 in additional funding for all employers of apprentices who have been in local authority care, have a learning difficulty or disability or are under 19 years old. A £3,000 bursary is available for care leavers, and grants are available in over 60 apprenticeships for CITB registered employers.



In England, accelerated apprenticeships support those apprentices with relevant industry experience and those progressing from other skills programmes. This enables them to complete apprenticeships in a shorter time period by recognising their prior learning.

In Wales, the Welsh Government funds 100% of training costs for apprentices of any age with businesses of any size - subject to an apprentice following an approved [Welsh Apprenticeship Framework](#) and working in Wales for 51% or more of their time. There is also an [employer incentive](#) to recruit disabled apprentices as well as Supported Shared Apprenticeships for disabled people with wide ranging learning and employment needs. This includes job coaches offering intensive support to the learner to complete an apprenticeship and transition into a job.

Businesses in some sectors in England and Wales can offer flexible or shared apprenticeships respectively. This opens up apprenticeships to businesses which cannot take on an apprentice for the full duration, allowing them to host an apprentice for a shorter placement. The apprentice undertakes multiple shorter-term placements.

Apprenticeships in Scotland support key sectors while providing employment and taking account of demographic change and employer demand. The apprenticeship family in Scotland consists of Foundation, Modern and Graduate Apprenticeships.

In Northern Ireland, the Department for the Economy funds training providers directly to deliver apprenticeship training.

Find out more about apprenticeships in [England](#), [Wales](#), [Scotland](#), and [Northern Ireland](#).

## Jobcentre Plus

### *Filling vacancies*

The national network of local Jobcentre Plus Employer Advisers can help employers recruit the right people for jobs. They work with an organisation to fill vacancies using the most suitable recruitment solution, including:

- Giving advice to help write job descriptions,
- Helping speed up the recruitment process,
- Promoting vacancies in local jobcentres and on social media,
- Allowing use of Jobcentre Plus offices for interviews (where available) and attendance at local recruitment events like jobs fairs to connect directly with jobseekers,
- Planning future recruitments, and
- [Find a Job](#) – a free online jobs site.

The advisers also help provide access to other support, such as Sector-based Work Academy Programmes, work trials, work experience, or Access to Work.

Click [here](#) for more information on the Jobcentre Plus recruitment support, vacancy advertising, and employer advice service, including how to easily get in touch.

## Sector-based Work Academy Programmes

*Relevant short-term training to help meet sectoral needs*

### **Case Study: Solar Panel Sector-based Work Academy Programme**

Moulton College teamed up with Northampton-shire based firm GenCarbon and Jobcentre Plus to deliver a bespoke solar panel installation course. Over a three week period, the course delivers practical, hands-on instruction in the installation of photo voltaic (PV) solar panels, alongside health and safety, and teamwork skills. Many who have completed the SWAP have secured full-time employment with GenCarbon.

[Sector-based Work Academy Programmes \(SWAPs\)](#) provide help to recruit skilled people. Lasting up to 6 weeks they are made up of pre-employment training matched to an organisation's needs, a short work experience placement, and a guaranteed job interview.

## Work Experience Placements and Work Trials

*Talent with relevant experience*

For those who are interested in supporting people looking for work, employers can offer [work experience placements](#). Organised by Jobcentre Plus, these are open to young people 18 to 24 years old, and for people aged 25 and over, who don't have recent work history.

A [work trial](#) is a short unpaid period of work offered to a jobseeker on benefits. It's a way for both the employer and jobseeker to see if the job is a good fit. Jobseekers keep their benefits during the trial.

## Skills Bootcamps (England only)

*Upskilling/ reskilling to meet needs*

[Skills Bootcamps](#) have been designed with employers to meet short-to-medium term skill shortages and boost productivity. They are free to learners in England, are flexible, and last up to 16 weeks. Skills Bootcamps give people the opportunity to build up sector-specific skills, with an offer of a job interview with an employer on completion. There are a broad range of Skills Bootcamps available across England, including in skills that support the green economy.

Employers can work with a Skills Bootcamp provider to recruit new staff or train existing employees. Find a list of Skills Bootcamp providers [here](#) to identify local skills organisations to work with. In addition, potential providers can find information on how to qualify onto, and bid

for contracts [here](#), or through contacting their local authority, combined mayoral authority, or local enterprise partnership.

## Employment and Enterprise Bureaus (Wales only)

### *Employment support*

The [Employment and Enterprise Bureaus](#) provide a breadth of employment support and opportunities for further education students to streamline the transition from learning to working. There are a variety of activities, such as employer talks, work experience and industry visits, which employers can support. Employers are encouraged to get in touch with colleges, through the link above, to find out more on how they can form a partnership approach and potentially access a broader workforce.

## Business Wales (Wales only)

### *Business support*

[Business Wales](#), funded by the Welsh Government, provides fully funded impartial information, advice, guidance and support for people in Wales that are starting, running and growing businesses. This includes help with HR advice, business planning, carbon reduction and improvements in productivity through to help with finance.

## Skill Up (NI only)

### *Re-skill and re-train*

[Skill Up](#) offers opportunities for businesses to retrain and upskill their staff by taking advantage of a range of free accredited courses. Courses are available to those aged 18 and over and eligible to work in Northern Ireland to help re-train and re-skill. The programme focuses on supporting people in taking part in learning to improve the skills of the local workforce with courses available, at level 2 – Level 7, through local further and higher education providers.

## Growing Talent Pools

### *Enabling diverse talent pool – utilising opportunity whatever the circumstances*

#### **Case Study: Small eNGO Ethnic Diversity Support (SEEDS) Scheme**

The environment sector is currently one of the least ethnically diverse sectors in the UK. To address this, Wildlife and Countryside Link partnered with Natural England, working with Full Colour to develop a route map for change in the sector. Its aim is to equip organisations to take action to reduce barriers, foster genuinely inclusive cultures and

increase the diversity of the sector. One of the initiatives to support its delivery is the Small eNGO Ethnic Diversity Support (SEEDS) scheme, which has partnered with ten charities for 2024. As smaller organisations are most likely to be struggling with capacity and resource for change and development, Link will support these smaller organisations in steps to build their diversity and inclusivity, strengthening their ability to achieve their charitable goals. This will include one-to-one advice sessions, training and resources to help enable and equip them to break down barriers and progress on their ethnic diversity journey.

There is an opportunity to tap into a significant talent pool of people from groups not currently well represented in green sectors. This is particularly important when so much of the workforce needed is already employed.

There are a variety of programmes available to help support in this journey - below are some of the key ones to consider.

### Care Leavers

The UK Government aids 16-25-year-old care leavers as they move towards independence. Employers can find information on how to support care leavers through the Government-supported [Care Leaver Covenant](#) and its [Inclusive Employer Toolkit](#). Employers can pledge their support and become a signatory to the Covenant. Support can include work experience or career support, paid employment, including apprenticeships, or discounted or free goods and services. In England, employers of apprentices who are in local authority care, or are care leavers, get £1,000 additional funding to support their apprentices. There is also a £3,000 bursary for apprentices, which is tax free and not treated as income in benefits awards. Find more information [here](#).

Details of support available for care leavers from local authorities and central government, and specifically for those on apprenticeships or in employment, can be found [here](#).

### Developing the Young Workforce (Scotland only)

Developing the Young Workforce (DYW) aims to improve connections between young people and employers, to support young people to make the transition into the world of work. DYW Regional Groups facilitate this engagement, supporting young people into opportunities such as work based learning, work inspiration and mentoring. DYW School Coordinators are in place within secondary schools across all 32 Local Authorities. These coordinators bring together tailored, individual support for young people with the needs of employers, and work collaboratively across a range of delivery partners, including third sector organisations. In addition, third sector partners provide targeted support to those at risk of disengaging from school.

Employers, educators, young people and anyone wishing to get involved can explore this further on the [DYW - Scotland webpage](#). In secondary schools, young people can also contact their school coordinator.

## Young Person’s Guarantee (Wales only)

The [Young Person’s Guarantee](#) (YPG) is a key commitment to provide everyone under the age of 25 with support to gain a place in education or training, and help to get into work or become self-employed. Employers across Wales can support by offering opportunities for young people to gain experience or take their first steps into the world of work. This can be through work experience placements, work tasters, apprenticeships or employment. There are a range of employer incentives associated with the YPG.

## Jobs Growth Wales Plus (Wales only)

The [Jobs Growth Wales+ \(JGW+\) programme](#) is a programme for 16-19 year olds not in education, employment or training. It offers employers on the programme a 50% wage subsidy to help pay salary cost of young people placed with the employer for the first six months. Young people on the JGW+ who identify as being disabled and/ or having an additional learning need are also able to access Supported Employment Coaches. These coaches are available to join learners on work placements. JGW+ includes automotive, construction and IT related training programmes.

## Skills for Life and Work (Northern Ireland only)

[Skills For Life and Work](#) is an entry Level training programme available to young people aged 16-17 not in education or full-time employment. Programme eligibility is extended for participants with a disability or who are from an “in care” background. It enables them to develop their skills and get ready for work. It delivers a portfolio of personal development, employability and essential skills, alongside professional and technical training in various occupational areas. Learning takes place both in the classroom and in work-based employer settings. By engaging a young person through the Skills for Life and Work training programme employers can play their part in achieving a motivated and skilled workforce.

## Age-friendly Employer Pledge

Jobcentre Plus works closely with the Centre for Ageing Better, supporting their age-friendly [Employer Pledge](#). This recognises the importance and value of older workers and helps organisations to keep existing employees regardless of age.

## Armed Forces

The UK Government supports the [Armed Forces Covenant](#) and would encourage all businesses and employers to consider what support can be provided. For instance, it may be possible to employ veterans or their partners or spouses.

## Disability Confident Scheme

The Disability Confident scheme helps employers recruit and retain people, and to:

- Challenge attitudes and increase understanding of disability,

- Draw from the widest possible pool of talent,
- Secure high-quality staff who are skilled, loyal and hard-working, and
- Improve employee morale and commitment by demonstrating fair treatment.

It also helps identify those employers who are committed to inclusion and diversity in the workplace.

For more information about signing up for the Disability Confident scheme, and how it can help businesses, check this detailed guidance. For other information on employing disabled people and people with health conditions, click [here](#).

### Disabled People's Employment (Wales only)

In Wales, there is a network of [Disabled People's Employment Champions](#). These champions work at a strategic level with businesses to increase awareness of the availability of talent and skills of disabled people. This includes helping them adapt their recruitment practices and demonstrate how to effectively access the support which is available.

### Access to Work

[Access to Work](#) is an employment support grant scheme that supports disabled people start or stay in work. It can provide practical and financial support for people who have a disability or physical or mental health condition. Support can be provided where someone needs support or adaptations beyond reasonable adjustments. It can pay for practical support for those who are self-employed too. Access to Work can be used for flexible working arrangements, such as hybrid working. This can include:

- Support to work from more than one location; or
- Support for working at home for all or part of an employee's time.

### Access to Work (Northern Ireland)

Access to Work is a flexible programme designed to overcome employment related obstacles faced by people with disabilities. It assists employers and people who are in paid employment, or who have a job to start, through the provision of practical support and by helping to meet the additional costs associated with overcoming work-related obstacles that may result from having a disability.

Further details are at: <https://www.nidirect.gov.uk/articles/access-work-practical-help-work>

### Workable (Northern Ireland only)

Department for Communities delivers the Workable (NI) programme as part of its policy objective to help people with substantial disabilities progress towards employment, move into employment and sustain employment. Workable (NI) provides a flexible range of long-term support to help people with disabilities, who have a lot of barriers to employment, to remain in work. The Workable (NI) programme is currently delivered by a range of local organisations

who have extensive experience of meeting the vocational needs of people with disabilities. Workable (NI) provision can include support such as a Job Coach to assist the worker with the disability and their colleagues to adapt to the needs of the particular job; developmental costs to the employer; extra training and disability awareness training.

Further details are at:

<https://www.nidirect.gov.uk/articles/workable-ni>

### Condition Management Programme (Northern Ireland only)

The Condition Management Programme is a cross departmental work focussed rehabilitation programme which directly targets clients who have health-related barriers to work and are in receipt of Employment and Support Allowance or Jobseekers Allowance. The Condition Management Programme is also available to Workable (NI) and Access to Work participants who require assistance to stay in work or are off work due to health conditions. It utilises health professional expertise and support to help the individual client to progress towards, move into or return to paid employment.

Condition Management Programme is delivered by health and social care professionals working in Condition Management Programme Teams in the five Health and Social Care Trusts. Here is a link to a CMP video - <https://vimeo.com/334646585/080d405f0d>.

### No One Left Behind (Scotland only)

No One Left Behind is Scotland's employability policy. Its vision is to deliver an employability system that tackles inequalities in Scotland's labour market, creating a responsive and aligned approach that helps people of all ages who face the greatest barriers to progress towards, into and to sustain work. This can include young people, parents, disabled people, those who are care experienced and others at risk of finding themselves at some distance from accessing the labour market. Employability services are delivered at a local level and provide person-centred support to suit the needs of the individual. Local Employability Partnerships bring together a range of agencies, organisations, employers, and partners to plan and implement employability provision in their area.

### Fair Work First (Scotland only)

In Scotland, the government promotes Fair Work as a model for innovation and success, benefiting workers, businesses, organisations and wider society, and Fair Work practices as a means by which employers can attract and retain talent. This includes through the Fair Work First policy, which leverages employers' commitment to fair work by applying Fair Work First criteria to public sector grants, other funding and contracts where it's relevant and proportionate to do so. Guidance has been published which provides good practice examples to guide employers' approaches and, importantly, explains the benefits of fair work for workers and organisations.

The Scottish Government is also committed to supporting employers to utilise the resources and support available to embed Fair Work in their organisations. Employers can complete the Fair Work Employer Support Tool, developed by Scottish Enterprise, in conjunction with the Scottish Government, the Fair Work Convention and other partners. It is designed to help employers understand and fully embed the dimensions of Fair Work. In addition, workers can complete the Fair Work Self-Assessment Tool, developed by the Fair Work Convention. It is designed to help workers make an assessment of their own experience of Fair Work and suggest actions they can take to improve on it.

### Partnership Action for Continuing Employment (PACE) (Scotland only)

PACE is the Scottish Government's initiative for responding to redundancy situations. Through providing skills development and employability support, PACE aims to minimise the time individuals affected by redundancy are out of work. Skills Development Scotland leads on the delivery of PACE support on behalf of the Scottish Government in conjunction with a number of key partners, including DWP and local authorities. There are 18 local PACE teams across Scotland to facilitate a speedy and effective response. PACE support is tailored to meet individual needs and local circumstances and includes one-to-one counselling, information on rights and entitlements, help with job search, CV writing, identifying learning and training opportunities, starting and business and coping with redundancy related stress.

### ReAct+ (Wales only)

The [ReAct+](#) programme offers a package of support to help someone unemployed, get back into work quickly. The programme offers employers up to £3,000 for the first 12 months to help cover their wages. It can also pay up to £1,000 for any job-related skills training needed to bring them up to speed. If an employer recruits a young disabled person aged 18-24, an additional £2,000 is available.

### New Futures Network (England and Wales)

[New Futures Network](#) is the specialist employment team in HM Prison and Probation Service. It works with employers and brokers through [three types of partnerships](#) with prisons:

- **Prison Industries** - this sees businesses set up commercial workspaces in prisons, e.g. for manufacturing energy efficient modular housing. These workspaces are staffed daily by serving prisoners who gain transferable skills, experience and qualifications.
- **Release on Temporary Licence** - businesses offer paid work placements in the community to serving suitable, risk-assessed prisoners. Serving prisoners in open prisons can also take up apprenticeships, which they complete with employers after their release.
- **Recruitment for jobs in the community** - employers work with prisons and probation to find talent and offer employment to people at the end of custodial sentences. Prisons have a dedicated member of staff work with potential employers – a Prison Employment Lead. Prisons can also commission bespoke training in sector-specific skills, alongside the core curriculum already taught in prisons.



There are case studies of business taking up these options [here](#). It is possible to register for a conversation with the New Futures Network to explore this opportunity at <https://newfuturesnetwork.gov.uk/register/>

## Universal Credit

[Universal Credit](#) is a single monthly payment for people who are out of work, cannot work, or are in work but on a low income. For those in work, a claimant's earnings are used to calculate the Universal Credit payment received. It is worth recognising that the number of hours a claimant can work and get Universal Credit is not limited.

For example, claimants can:

- Work more than 16 hours a week,
- Increase their contracted hours,
- Get bonus payments,
- Get overtime,
- Have more than one job, and
- Be on any type of employment contract.

When a claimant is employed, their Universal Credit payment reduces as the employee earns. For every £1 earned, their Universal Credit payment goes down by only 55p. If the claimant earns enough to reduce their Universal Credit payment to £0, their payments stop. We tell the claimant when this happens.

Some claimants, depending on their circumstances, are eligible for a '[work allowance](#)'. This is an amount that the claimant can earn before their Universal Credit payment is reduced.

If the claimant earns a different amount each month, their Universal Credit will automatically adjust to reflect the amount earned in that time:

- If someone's earnings reduce in a month then their Universal Credit will usually increase, and
- If their earnings increase, their Universal Credit will usually reduce.

Find out more about [how earnings affect Universal Credit](#).

To claim Universal Credit, claimants may be asked to look for ways to increase their earnings. This could be by:

- Taking on more work,
- Progressing in their current workplace, and/or
- Searching for additional or alternative work with a different employer.

## National Careers Service

The [National Careers Service \(England\)](#) provides free, current information, advice, and guidance on careers, including green careers, and skills in England. It helps customers make informed choices about their career options, whatever their age, ethnic group, and background. One of the key principles of careers information, advice, and guidance, is that it is person-centred and impartial. The National Careers Service amplifies key sector messages and shares sector information with careers advisers via regular bulletins, webinars, and joint Q&A sessions with industry. Content from employers is welcomed to ensure its accuracy and relevance. In addition, input from employers is also required to help ensure careers advisers have accurate and up-to-date information. To enable sector-specific information and updates to be disseminated to careers advisers, email [national.careersservice@education.gov.uk](mailto:national.careersservice@education.gov.uk).

As part of the government's plans for growth we will be bringing together Jobcentre Plus and the National Careers Service to develop a national jobs and careers service, focused on getting people into work and helping them get on at work. Whilst this is developed, the National Careers Service continues to provide free and impartial careers information, advice and guidance.

Follow these links to find careers services in: [Wales](#), [Scotland](#), and [Northern Ireland](#)

## Skills Development Scotland (Scotland only)

SDS operates Scotland's careers service, providing careers information, advice and guidance digitally, by telephone and face-to-face. SDS runs the digital platform "My World of Work" which is an all-age service, helping individuals explore jobs and careers, assess their skills and get assistance with writing CV's and job applications. SDS careers advisers are based in schools, in SDS offices and in community venues such as libraries and community centres. SDS also has a partnership agreement with DWP in which careers advisers are based in Jobcentres across Scotland.

## Migration

Many foreign nationals, such as those granted settlement or refugee status, or those on family visas or certain other visas, have the right to work in the UK. [Right to work checks](#) show whether an individual is allowed to work for an organisation.

If someone is not already allowed to work for an employer, a variety of [work visas](#) are available. The main visa for recruiting international job candidates is the [Skilled Worker](#) route. This is an employer-sponsored visa, meaning employers will need to support the application and agree to certain duties. More information can be found about this [here](#).

## Scotland's Migration Service (Scotland only)

[Scotland's Migration Service](#) is an online resource that supports Scottish-based employers and inward investors navigate the UK immigration system to help meet their skills and labour needs.

Through the service, employers can access free information and one-to-one legal advice from qualified immigration advisors. The service assists employers who are actively seeking to recruit talent to Scotland and are seeking advice on the options available to employ and/or sponsor international workers, including advice on how to obtain a sponsorship license and remain compliant with legal requirements.

## Business Gateway (Scotland only)

[Business Gateway](#) provides support to both start a business and support and strengthen businesses already operating. This includes support with net zero and rising business costs; access to webinars and events; digital skills, market reports, one-to-one business advice, and business development. This also includes guidance on how to help businesses attract and maintain a highly trained workforce, enabling them to keep pace with changes in technology and working practices.

# Filling Vacancies Through Training

There are different ways to gain the skilled workforce that is needed. Below are a series of programmes that will aid training or upskilling the workforce. There are also some programmes which may be used by individuals to upskill or re-train too, for instance, the Lifelong Learning Entitlement (England) and Personal Learning Accounts (Wales).

It may not always be possible to find the perfect match for specific roles. Upon understanding the roles that are needing to be filled, it may be useful to refer to [occupational maps](#). These show how training options fit together, and possible career progression routes. They can also be used by employers for workforce planning, providing links to occupational standards and technical qualifications. It is worth considering whether there is some on-the-job experience or training available also to supplement to meet organisational needs. This is particularly the case for many green sectors, with some experiencing wholesale transitions.

## Apprenticeships

In the previous section, there is information about how employers can use apprenticeships to recruit talent and train employees.

## Level 2/3 Qualifications (England only)

There are many Ofqual-approved qualifications delivered by further education colleges and independent training providers across England to upskill employees. This includes a range, from basic digital skills to vocational qualifications.

All learners in England are entitled to have the following fully funded: their first full level 2 and/or level 3 if they are aged 19-23; and level 2 English and maths, and level 1 essential digital skills if they are aged 19+.

60% of adult skills provision in England is devolved to Mayoral Combined Authorities so learners should check whether they reside in a [devolved area](#). In non-devolved areas, the following applies (and may be offered in a workplace, if delivered by a relevant provider (normally a local college) and if the training is eligible under the [Adult Skills Fund](#)):

- Learners over 19 who are unemployed, or who earn below £25,000 per year, can study a level 3 course in specific sector subject areas for free, including qualifications related to green skills, via the Government's Free Courses for Jobs offer (learners who earn more than £25,000 may be eligible for an Advanced Learner Loan to fund the course).
- Learners over 19 who are unemployed, or who earn below £25,000 per year can also fully funded to study a level 2 qualification in all sector subject areas. Those who earn over £25,000 can be part-funded.

## Skills Bootcamps (England only)

In the previous section, there is information about how suitable talent can be found by supporting Skills Bootcamps. They can also be used to upskill.

## Northern Ireland Traineeships (Northern Ireland only)

This [traineeship](#) is a full-time Level 2 vocational education and training programme which provides participants with the opportunity to achieve a full level 2 outcome equivalent to up to 5 GCSEs at grade C and above.

Traineeships allow employers to nurture the next generation helping their business to develop a loyal, talented workforce while providing the flexibility to teach trainees job-specific skills aligned to your industry and business.

The programme combines vocational training, structured work placement, transversal skills development and numeracy and literacy qualifications to support an individual's progression into employment or higher levels of education and training and will take one or two years to complete.

## Higher Technical Qualifications (England only)

Higher Technical Qualifications (HTQs) are level 4 and 5 qualifications, including Foundation Degrees, Higher National Certificates, and Higher National Diplomas, that have been approved against employer-developed occupational standards. HTQs can be taught in various ways including full-time, part-time and distance learning. HTQs will play an important part in helping learners prepare for and find green jobs, and ensuring employers meet their business needs including with the transition to net zero. HTQs are available in a wide range of specialist occupations in many sectors including construction, engineering and digital, as well as business functions including legal and accounting, and business management. HTQs can be used by employers to upskill their existing workforce or as part of their recruitment strategy. There are level 4 and 5 qualifications also available that are not HTQs, but these have not been independently approved against employer-developed occupational standards.

## Personal Learning Accounts (PLA) (Wales only)

The [PLA Programme](#) provides support across Wales for eligible individuals to gain higher level skills which will enable them to access a wider range of job opportunities and/or gain employment at a higher level within priority sectors. The training is fully funded by the Welsh Government and delivered through Further Education colleges. Employers are encouraged to promote the programme to employees with a view to supporting their re/up-skilling and career progression.

## Flexible Skills Programme (Wales only)

The [Flexible Skills Programme](#) provides financial support to employers towards upskilling staff including addressing skills gaps. It is aimed at employers who are looking to review their working practices and invest in upskilling their workforce. The programme provides 50% funding to support a range of training topics, including Net Zero elements.

## Skills for Growth (Scotland only)

Skills Development Scotland delivers the Skills for Growth service, helping employers to develop progressive Workforce Development plans. These plans are aligned to business objectives and follows up through Account Managed Relationships. Further information can be accessed [here](#). The SDS Employer Hub has information on the full range of employer skills support, including tools and advice to help employers manage their skills needs, support with upskilling and reskilling, and help with workforce planning to help meet the needs of the rapidly changing world of work. The Employer Hub provides access to tools and information such as:

- creating Skills Action Plans
- defining future skills needs
- assess skills in business
- on demand webinars
- attract talent

More in-depth support is also available from SDS employer-facing teams to help businesses manage their skills needs. Visit the employer hub at <http://www.employers.sds.co.uk> or call 0800 783 6000.

## Assured Skills (Northern Ireland only)

Assured Skills Academies offer the opportunity to work closely with the Department for the Economy (DfE) and Invest Northern Ireland to recruit high-quality employees.

[Assured Skills](#) pre-employment training programme that helps individuals gain the skills they need to compete for guaranteed job vacancies. Academies are delivered by local FE and HE institutions. They provide industry-focused training to equip participants with transferable skills sought by companies. The Academy model is designed to be a short, sharp, versatile intervention. It will provide participants with up-to-date, industry relevant skills that are transferable across many sectors.

## Skills Focus (Northern Ireland only)

This programme provides tailored skills provision to small-to-medium enterprises (SMEs with fewer than 250 employees). Delivered by six Further Education colleges, it aids businesses by increasing the skill levels and employability of the existing workforce.

## InnovateUs (Northern Ireland only)

The InnovateUs programme provides an important first step for small businesses, with fewer than 50 employees, to gain the skills necessary to engage in innovation. The programme is fully funded by the Department for the Economy and delivered by the six local Further Education colleges. Through InnovateUs, small business owners and employees receive tailored mentoring from a college expert and work on projects developing new or modified products, processes or services.

# Resources to Build the Future Talent Pipeline

The green transition is a great opportunity for the future generation to gain a well-paid and skilled job. To entice workforce in the longer term, an employer may find it beneficial to encourage earlier awareness of career options and support developing home grown talent. Earlier and frequent engagement with the skills system may support this. This could be through engaging with local further education providers, schools, independent training providers, etcetera.

## Investment Zones

Investment Zones (IZs) provide local leaders with a £160 million envelope to catalyse local growth and investment. The envelope can be split between tax reliefs to attract businesses to invest in specific sites in the region, and funding for a range of interventions including on skills, research and innovation, and infrastructure. They aim to boost the UK's innovation potential, grow strengths in key industries, and level up communities across the country. IZs have a focus on the governments' five priority sectors: advanced manufacturing, life sciences, green industries, digital and tech and creative industries. For example, the West Midland Investment Zone will bring forward developments at the at the Green Innovation Corridor in Wolverhampton, the North-East Investment Zone will support new investment and innovation in electric vehicle manufacturing, battery production and offshore wind and low-carbon materials, and the East Midlands Investment Zone will support development of the nuclear cluster in Derbyshire.

Investment Zones will play an active role in local labour markets. They will ensure local people are able to access and fully benefit from the jobs they create. This could involve developing the specialist skills needed for high-innovation businesses in emerging sectors. Further information about Investment Zones in England is available [here](#).

## Freeports

Freeports are special areas that have been created by government to boost investment into parts of the country that have historically missed out. They benefit from generous package of incentives, as well as excellent port infrastructure, and build on the proud industrial heritages of their regions.

All of this enables Freeports to create an attractive business environment with the aim of rebalancing local economies by building new clusters in sectors of the future, spearheading our journey to Net Zero, and creating thousands of long-term, high-quality jobs for local people.



There are 8 Freeports in England and 2 Green Freeports in Scotland, and 2 Freeports in Wales.

1. [East Midlands Freeport](#)
2. [Freeport East](#)
3. [Humber Freeport](#)
4. [Liverpool City Region Freeport](#)
5. [Plymouth and South Devon Freeport](#)
6. [Solent Freeport](#)
7. [Teesside Freeport](#)
8. [Thames Freeport](#)
9. [Forth Green Freeport](#)
10. [Inverness and Cromarty Firth Green Freeport](#)
11. [Anglesey Freeport](#)
12. [Celtic Freeport](#)

The government has confirmed it will continue the Freeports programme across the UK and consider how it can support the Industrial Strategy; and is working on adapting the Freeports model accordingly.

## Institute for Apprenticeships and Technical Education (England only)

Employers can directly shape technical education by working with the Institute for Apprenticeships and Technical Education (IfATE). IfATE supports employers to create and maintain the occupational standards that sit at the heart of the English skills system. These standards are used as the basis for content in apprenticeships, HTQs, T Levels, and other technical qualifications – ensuring learners learn the skills employers need. Employers can find out how to get directly involved with shaping skills training on our website [Home / Institute for Apprenticeships and Technical Education](#).

## Skills England (England Only)

Skills England is a new arms-length body that will bring together key partners to meet the skills needs of the next decade. Skills England will: provide authoritative assessments of national and regional skills needs now and in the future, combining the best available statistical data with insights generated from employers and other key stakeholders; ensure that there is a

comprehensive suite of apprenticeships, training and technical qualifications for individuals and employers to access, which are aligned with skills gaps; work together with Combined Authorities and other places with devolution deals, as well as other regional organisations to ensure that regional and national skills needs are met, in line with the forthcoming Industrial Strategy.

It is by bringing these functions together within a single organisation, with a single feedback loop back into government to help inform funding and policy decisions, that Skills England will affect change. A Bill is currently underway to return IfATE functions to the Secretary of State, and much of IfATE's work is expected to be taken on by Skills England in 2025. The latest on Skills England can be found on its [website](#), including Skills England's assessments of skills needs.

## Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM) opportunities

The government supports programmes to boost opportunities for engagement with STEM sectors and support a more diverse STEM workforce. This includes:

- [The STEM Ambassadors programme](#) (funded by UK Research and Innovation), a nationwide network of over 30,000 volunteers representing over 7,000 STEM related employers. STEM Ambassadors provide engaging and inspiring activities in primary and secondary schools and colleges across the UK. They raise awareness of the diverse range of STEM careers and help young people to develop their STEM skills and interests.
- The [Tomorrow's Engineers Code](#), an initiative run by EngineeringUK and supported by DfE. It is a community of over 300 organisations working toward common goals to increase the diversity and number of young people entering engineering and tech careers.

## Local Skills Improvement Plans (LSIPs) & Employer Representative Bodies (ERBs) (England only)

ERBs lead Local Skills Improvement Plans (LSIPs) across England. Employers can identify their local ERB [here](#).

Employers can tell ERBs what skills they need, and where provision is lacking in the local area. This helps inform the implementation of the current LSIP and the development of the next round in 2025. Employers are encouraged to engage with their local LSIPs. Training providers have a statutory duty to pay due regard to the LSIP when making decisions on their provision. This will help to develop a local talent pipeline aligned with business need.

## Regional Skills Partnerships (Wales only)

In Wales, Regional Skills Partnerships (RSPs) are a pivotal component of the regional skills landscape, providing labour market intelligence. They work with employers to identify skills needs and gaps. This influences Further Education, Higher Education and Schools on the delivery of courses and training to meet strategic needs. RSPs are also supporting City Deal and Growth Deals across Wales, acting as strategic partnerships on all matters relating to employability and skills.

The latest Regional Employment and Skills Plans are available [here](#). Energy Skills Partnership (Scotland only) The [Energy Skills Partnership \(ESP\)](#) is a collaboration between the Scottish government, colleges, and industry. The partnership was established to help deliver skills for the energy, engineering, and construction sectors to students, teaching staff and those working across the energy, construction and automotive sectors, with a focus on the Just Transition to Net Zero. <https://esp-scotland.ac.uk/esp-resources-2/>

### Case Study: Energy Skills Partnership

In a strategic partnership, the Energy Skills Partnership (ESP) collaborated with Panasonic to secure funding for low-carbon technology investments within colleges. This collaborative effort aims to equip colleges with the necessary resources to deliver in-demand skills that will support the transition towards a Net Zero economy. As part of this initiative, four colleges in Scotland have been equipped with Air Source Heat Pumps from Panasonic. This equipment will empower these institutions to not only continue delivering relevant training to current students, but also to upskill existing workforce members in the burgeoning field of heat decarbonisation.

## Built Environment – Smarter Transformation (BE-ST)

The Scottish Government-funded [BE-ST Innovation Centre](#) focuses on accelerating the built environment's transition to net zero carbon by supporting impactful collaboration between industry, public sector, academic, and citizen stakeholders. BE-ST offers a range of services to employers and students across the built environment in Scotland to equip the sector with the knowledge, skills and confidence to drive sustainable development and innovation forward in the sector. With a focus on low carbon learning, passivhaus build techniques and fabric first retrofitting, they work with schools, colleges, universities and employers across Scotland to support the sector to reach Net Zero.

### Case Study: BE-ST

[BE-ST's Passivhaus Practical Training](#) programme, delivered with Coaction, offers hands-on practical training in Passivhaus with our training rigs and supports participants to undertake rapid upskilling in areas such as designing for construction, risk assessment in design, problem solving, what good looks like and how to achieve airtightness.

Participants have particularly benefited from getting the opportunity to put theoretical knowledge into practice and from the insights and wealth of knowledge of the trainers. BE-ST has trained over 3,000 in Fabric First practices so far.

## Climate Ambassadors (England only)

The Climate [Ambassador programme](#), part of the [Department for Education Sustainability and Climate Change Strategy](#), enables employers to engage directly with education settings. In collaboration with the [Sustainability Support for Education service](#), Climate Ambassadors will help all education settings build [climate action plans by 2025](#). Quality climate education and green skills are one of the four key pillars of climate action plans.

Education settings need a wide variety of skills, including project and change management, communications and technical sustainability and climate expertise, to help them develop and deliver meaningful climate action plans.

Employers can support the programme by including Climate Ambassadors as part of their employee volunteering schemes. This supports employers' community engagement and social value goals and provides employees with opportunities to 'give back', further their own positive sustainability impacts and enhance their climate skills and knowledge.

Find out more about becoming a partner of the scheme at <https://climateambassadors.org.uk>.

## Learning For Sustainability (Scotland Only)

Learning Sustainability is Scotland's approach to teach children and young people about climate change and sustainability. In June 2023, the Scottish Government published a refreshed Learning for Sustainability Action Plan to ensure that every place of education becomes a sustainable learning setting by 2030 ("Target 2030" vision).

A total of 25 actions are committed to in the Action Plan, including the development of new LfS related qualifications and the promotion of how LfS qualifications and pathways can lead to high quality careers, including green jobs resulting from the transition to net zero.

## Careers and Enterprise Company (England only)

The CEC has a central mission to support schools and colleges to help all young people find their best next step. CEC Careers Hubs convene employers with schools and colleges to raise awareness of the world of work and pathways into different careers. The Employer Standards have been developed to support employers to engage effectively with education. The standards include how employers can provide meaningful opportunities for young people to gain experiences of the workplace and how to support young people to understand and build the essential skills desired by employers. To find out more, see [here](#).

## National Occupational Standards (NOS)

National Occupational Standards (NOS) are recognised internationally as a trusted brand, founded upon well-established robust quality assurance systems that facilitate movement of skills across borders.

The Devolved Governments continue to work on maintaining the National Occupational Standards (NOS) which underpin Modern Apprenticeships and many qualifications. The Governments of Northern Ireland, Scotland and Wales remain committed to assuring the future of NOS for the benefits of employers and learners across the UK. They believe NOS is central to building the skilled workforce the UK needs now and in the future.

Standards Setting Organisations are required to consider the green and net zero agenda during all NOS development or review activity.

## Institutes of Technology (IoTs) (England only)

IoTs are prestigious, business-led collaborations delivering training tailored to the needs of the local economy. IoTs bring existing education providers and employers closer together to significantly increase the number of learners with higher technical skills. Visit [this website](#) to find out how to work with a local IoT to meet workforce needs, improve productivity and innovation, and support local and national economic growth.

## Additional Education Provisions for Young People

### T Levels (England only)

T Levels help young people develop technical and practical skills for the workplace. T Levels are for learners aged 16 to 19 in England who have finished their GCSEs. They combine classroom learning with an industry placement hosted by employers. This enables an employer to build a talent pipeline for future employees and apprentices and ensures that they have the skills suited to business needs.

An industry placement can be completed in one block, day release, or a mixture. It may be possible to form employer partnerships to jointly host industry placements, including employers within the supply chain. Find out more [here](#).

### Junior Apprenticeships (Wales only)

The Junior Apprenticeships Programme is a two-year programme which has been developed to offer Year 10 and Y11 learners (aged 14-16) the opportunity to gain a Level 2 qualification alongside hands-on work experience. It enables learners to become employable with the skills to progress onto a higher-level vocational course or apprenticeship at the age of 16. The programme supports learners to undertake GCSEs in Maths and English or First Language

Welsh whilst studying for a Level 2 qualification in a range of vocational pathways. Contact Colegau Cymru for further information.

### Foundation Apprenticeships (Scotland only)

A Foundation Apprenticeship (FA) qualification provides a balance of academic and employer-led work-based learning experiences for senior phase pupils in S5-S6, aiming to close the gap between the classroom and workplace.

