ENERGY & UTILITY SKILLS

Workforce demand estimates – 2026 to 2032
Electricity Networks

Summary report
November 2026



Workforce demand estimates – 2026 to 2032

Electricity Networks

1 About this report 2

1.1 Introduction 2

1.2 From workforce evidence to strategic action 3

2 Industry headlines 4

2.1 Attract: The core workforce requirement 4

2.2 Develop: Potential impact of artificial intelligence and automation on 'At Risk of Reduction' occupations 5

2.3 Retain: Replacement demand sensitivity 5

2.4 Research: Maintaining the credibility of these forecasts 6

2.5 Nations and regions 8

2.6 Skills and occupations 9

3 Impact of artificial intelligence and automation on workforce demands 15

4 Sub-industry forecasts 21

4.1 Manufacturing 21

4.2 Construction and installation 25

4.3 Operation and maintenance 29

4.4 Trade of electricity 33

5 Future labour supply 37

5.1 The UK population 37

5.2 Falling birth rates and the domestic entrant pipeline 37

5.3 Migration and sustaining the working-age population 38

5.4 Implications for the sector 39

6 Potential economic and social benefits 40

7 Conclusions 42

8 Call to action 45

8.1 Ambition, growth and opportunity 45

8.2 Safety is the foundation of delivery 46

8.3 Five commitments for delivery 46

8.4 The immediate commitment 53

Annex 1 – Occupations and example job titles 54

Annex 2 – Methodology 56

A2.1 Current workforce estimates and future employment forecasts 56

A2.2 Retirement and staff turnover assumptions 57

A2.3 Estimating occupational criticality 58

A2.4 AI and automation adoption framework 58

Electricity Networks 2026 – 2032

Skills to deliver the UK's future

ENERGY & UTILITY SKILLS

Turning workforce evidence into action for a resilient electricity networks sector.

Our ambition
A resilient electricity networks sector that keeps the UK healthy, supports growth and protects the environment.

Our Growth
Creating jobs, skills and investment to deliver vital infrastructure across the UK.

Our Opportunity
Good careers. Stronger communities. A cleaner, greener future.

Research
Trusted evidence for action renewed every two years.

Core requirement of **44,300** people by 2032

40% of the current workforce

Robust workforce evidence to guide investment and delivery.

- Credible, transparent forecasts and methodology.
- A consistent framework for monitoring industry progress and the accuracy of our forecasts.
- Insight across sub-industries, geographies, skill levels and occupations.

Trusted insights to inform decisions today and tomorrow.

Attract
Bring new people into the industry.

We forecast **27,400** new jobs by 2032

25% growth in total employment

That's around **3,900** new jobs each year.

- More apprenticeships and training opportunities.
- A diverse and inclusive workforce.
- Rewarding, meaningful careers.

Attracting new talent is essential to deliver a safe, reliable and resilient electricity networks sector.

Develop
Grow skills and embrace new technology.

Core requirement of **17,300** at RQF 3/SCQF 6 by 2032

47% of the current workforce

Split across 12,100 in technical occupations and 5,200 in business support occupations.

- Increase productivity through innovation and technology.
- The adoption of AI and automation could reduce the core requirement by up to 2,280 people.

A more productive, higher skilled workforce that can deliver more.

Retain
Keep and develop our talented people.

We expect **16,900** retirements by 2032

That's **15%** of today's workforce – around **2,400** people each year

- Improve job quality, health, safety and well-being.
- Create clear career pathways and progression.
- Through continuous improvement in workforce retention the industry could mitigate the effect of normal staff turnover by up to **23,900 people**.

Retaining our people protects expertise, builds stronger teams and keeps the sector moving forward.

Real economic impact. Stronger communities.

Growth as a % of current workforce
Scotland = **33%**
England = **24%**
Wales = **23%**
Northern Ireland = **10%**

27,400 new jobs could create **£1.1 billion** of additional earnings.

By 2032, total GVA could reach between **£24 billion** and **£43 billion.**

1 About this report

1.1 Introduction

1.1.1 This report is one in a series that contain current workforce estimates and forecasts for the number of new jobs and people required across the UK energy and utilities sector between 2026 and 2032 inclusive, including:

- **Energy and utilities sector** (containing the aggregate analysis from across all six industries of the sector)
- **Community & domestic low carbon technologies** (including community and district heating, and the installation and repair of domestic gas boilers, heat pumps, smart meters, solar PV and battery storage and EV chargepoints)
- **Electricity networks** (including electrical equipment manufacturing, construction and installation, operation and maintenance and the trade of electricity)
- **Gas networks** (including the manufacture, distribution, construction of gas utility projects and retail trade of gas through the networks)
- **Power generation** (including thermal power and clean energy technologies)
- **Waste and recycling** (including the collection, treatment, disposal and recycling of waste)
- **Water and wastewater** (including the collection, treatment and supply of water; sewerage; the construction of water assets)

1.1.2 This report focuses on the UK's electricity networks industry, which includes:

- Equipment manufacturers
- Construction and installation
- Operation and maintenance (i.e. networks operators)
- Trade of electricity

1.1.3 This industry is defined by a series of Standard Industrial Classifications, which can be found in Annex 2.

1.2 From workforce evidence to strategic action

1.2.1 This report provides a factual estimate of the workforce required by the UK Electricity Networks industry between 2026 and 2032. Its central purpose is to identify the gap between the number and mix of people the industry will require and the workforce available to meet that requirement.

1.2.2 The findings support the four pillars of the Energy and Utilities Skills Strategy 2025-2030[1] in distinct ways:

- **Research** provides the definitions, evidence, methodology and update cycle that make the estimates credible
- **Attract** identifies the core requirement for additional jobs and replacement of people retiring from the workforce
- **Develop** considers how productivity, artificial intelligence, automation and new working methods could reduce or reshape that requirement
- **Retain** shows how movement out of the industry could increase the number of new people who must be recruited.

1.2.3 These pillars are not separate forecasts. **Attract** provides the central workforce requirement, while **Develop** and **Retain** test the factors that could move it. **Research** establishes the credibility of the forecasts.

[1] https://euskills.co.uk/about/our-strategy/

2 Industry headlines

Figure 1: Current workforce estimates and forecast number of new jobs created, retirements and the total core requirement for people by 2032

Sub-Industry	Total employment		New jobs created		Retirements		Core requirement for people		
	2025 baseline	2032	Number	% Growth	Number	% of current workforce	Total	% of current workforce	Average per year
Manufacturing	25,400	28,800	3,400	*13%*	3,500	*14%*	6,900	*27%*	1,000
Construction and installation	19,400	36,200	16,800	*87%*	4,800	*25%*	21,600	*111%*	3,100
Operation and maintenance	49,900	52,900	3,000	*6%*	6,500	*13%*	9,600	*19%*	1,400
Trade of electricity	15,400	19,600	4,200	*27%*	2,100	*13%*	6,300	*41%*	900
Electricity Networks	**110,100**	**137,500**	**27,400**	***25%***	**16,900**	***15%***	**44,300**	***40%***	**6,300**

Note: Figures may not sum to the grand total due to rounding.

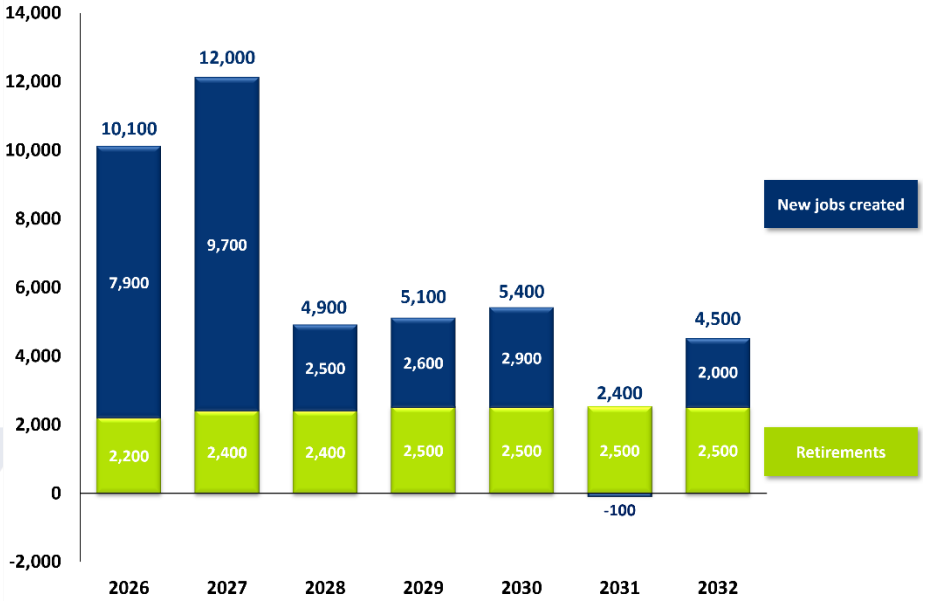
2.1 Attract: The core workforce requirement

2.1.1 Electricity Networks has a core requirement for 44,300 people by 2032, equivalent to 40% of the current workforce. Employment is projected to rise from 110,100 to 137,500, creating 27,400 new jobs (25% growth), alongside 16,900 retirements.

2.1.2 Annual workforce demand is highest in the early years, peaking at 12,000 people in 2027 following 10,100 in 2026. Demand then falls substantially to around 4,900–5,400 per year between 2028 and 2030, drops to 2,400 in 2031, and increases again to 4,500 in 2032.

2.1.3 The variation is driven by new job creation, while retirements remain relatively stable at around 2,200–2,500 people per year.

Figure 2: Core requirement for people by year and cause



Note: Figures may not sum to the grand total due to rounding.

2.2 Develop: Potential impact of artificial intelligence and automation on 'At Risk of Reduction' occupations

2.2.1 Section 3 below systematically assesses how artificial intelligence, automation and associated technologies might affect workforce demand across individual occupations. It applies low, medium and high adoption scenarios across seven dimensions of technological adoption and classifies each occupation according to whether workforce demand is *At Risk of Reduction, Significantly Impacted, Augmented* or subject to *Limited Impact*.

2.2.2 The following occupations are *At Risk of Reduction* in their core workforce requirements as a result of these new technologies:

- 71 - Sales Occupations
- 72 - Customer Service Occupations
- 41 - Administrative Occupations
- 42 - Secretarial and Related Occupations
- 92 - Elementary Administration and Service Occupations
- 34 - Culture, Media and Sports Occupations
- 62 - Leisure, Travel and Related Personal Service Occupations

2.2.3 Together, these occupations have a core requirement of 9,100 people by 2032, equivalent to 21% of the overall core requirement. This identifies the part of the forecast most exposed to potential workforce demand reduction; it does not imply that the core requirement for people by 2032 could be reduced by 9,100.

2.2.4 Our analysis indicates that the potential impact of AI and automation on the *At Risk of Reduction* occupations (listed in paragraph 2.2.2 above) could be:

- 270 people under the low adoption scenario (equivalent to a reduction of up to 3%)
- Between 360–1,090 under the medium adoption scenario (equivalent to a reduction of between 4% to 12%)
- Between 1,180–2,280 under the high adoption scenario (equivalent to a reduction of between 13% to 25%)

2.2.5 These are illustrative sensitivity assumptions rather than forecasts of job losses.

2.2.6 Section 3 presents the detailed occupation-level assessment under each adoption scenario, with the full analytical framework set out in Annex A2.4.

2.3 Retain: Replacement demand sensitivity

2.3.1 In addition to the core requirement for people based on new job creation and retirements, we must consider the extent to which people might leave the workforce in order to take up employment in other sectors of the economy (or move overseas).

2.3.2 For this analysis we have not included any vacancies that may be created by one person leaving their job in the Electricity Networks industry and taking up another position within the same industry.

2.3.3 As detailed in Annex 2.2, we have assumed a proportion of the workforce will leave each year for reasons other than retirement – these annual proportions range from 2% to 5% depending on the occupation.

2.3.4 In total, in addition to the core requirement for 44,300 people by 2032, an additional 23,900 people may be needed to fill vacancies by those who leave the workforce for other reasons

Figure 3: Potential additional vacancies (over-and-above the core requirement)

Sub-Industry	Number	*% of current workforce*
Manufacturing	4,400	*17%*
Construction and installation	5,700	*29%*
Operation and maintenance	9,800	*20%*
Trade of electricity	4,100	*26%*
Electricity Networks	**23,900**	***22%***

Note: Figures may not sum to the grand total due to rounding.

2.3.5 The challenge for the industry will be to minimise these additional vacancies, while recognising that some level of staff turnover is generally considered positive in terms of bringing in a diversity of people, experiences and ideas. Commitment 3: Retain experience and widen access to opportunity in the Call to Action below provides further information on how the sector might achieve improvements in workforce retention.

2.4 Research: Maintaining the credibility of these forecasts

2.4.1 These workforce demand estimates were published for the first time in 2024 and will be updated every two years. Our aim, wherever possible, is to improve the accuracy of these workforce demand estimates with each update.

2.4.2 Part of the update process is a review of our methodology in developing these forecasts. This year, the Energy Networks Association and BEAMA produced an Electricity Networks Sector Group Plan (ENSGP) covering 2026 to 2035[2]. That exercise is the most robust analysis of current and future workforce requirements ever produced for Britain's electricity network industry. As well covering the transmission and distribution of electricity, the ENSGP also covers the manufacture of electrical equipment and the construction and installation supply chain.

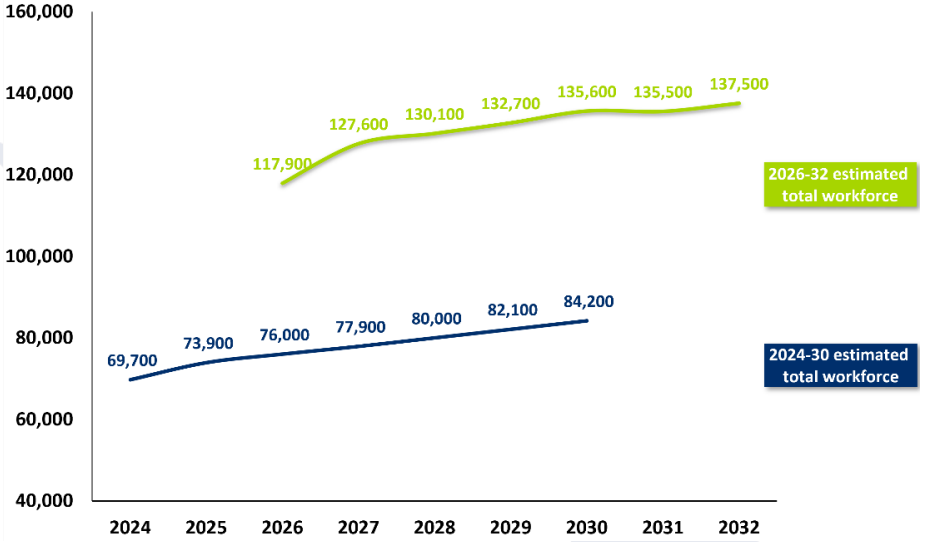
2.4.3 For these 2026 to 2032 forecasts, we have attempted to align with the ENSGP analysis as closely as possible. However, there are some important differences between the approaches used in the ENSGP report and this report which means that these forecasts do differ, including that this report:

- Covers the period between 2026 and 2032
- Includes the workforce in Northern Ireland
- Includes the trade of electricity sub-industry
- Separates staff turnover from retirements (in the ENSGP, both are included in the forecast demand for people)

[2] https://networksgrowthplan.com/

2.4.4 In order to assess how these updated forecasts of total workforce growth have changed since our 2024 forecasts, the figure below presents our latest forecasts side-by-side with those from 2024.

Figure 4: Forecast total workforce for 2026-32 compared to 2024-30 forecast

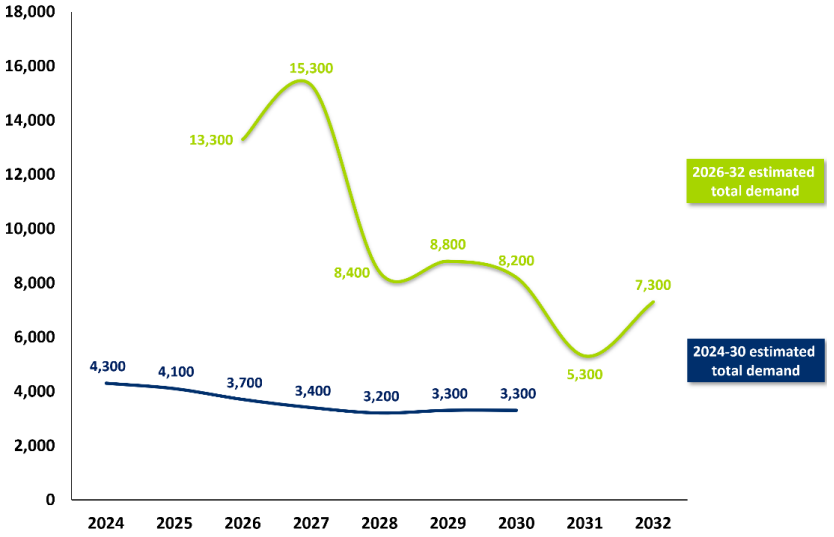


2.4.5 It is clear that our current forecasts of the total workforce have increased substantially compared to our 2024 to 2030 forecasts – this is driven solely by the inclusion of the manufacturing and construction supply chain (to ensure some consistency with the ENSGP).

2.4.6 These changes to our methodology have also increased our forecast of the core requirement for people between 2026 and 2032 compared to our 2024 forecasts – this is driven by two factors:

- The inclusion of the manufacturing and construction supply chain
- New estimates of job creation, derived from the ENSGP, based on planned investment levels across electricity transmission and distribution across Great Britain.

Figure 5: Forecast core requirement for 2026-32 compared to 2024-30 forecast



2.5 Nations and regions

2.5.1 England accounts for the majority of demand, requiring 31,500 people between 2026 and 2032.

2.5.2 Scotland has the largest demand outside of England, requiring 9,900 people, equivalent to 51% of its current workforce. Also, Scotland is the only nation with workforce growth (33%) significantly above the UK average (25%).

2.5.3 The South East has the largest workforce requirement at 5,400 people, followed by the North West (4,300), East Midlands (4,100) and East of England (3,900). In relative terms, pressure is highest in the South East at 43%, closely followed by the South West and Yorkshire & The Humber at 42%.

Figure 6: Current workforce estimates and forecast number of new jobs created, retirements and the total core requirement for people by 2032 by nation and region

Nation & Region	Total employment		New jobs created		Retirements		Core requirement for people		
	2025 baseline	2032	Number	*% Growth*	Number	*% of current workforce*	Total	*% of current workforce*	Average per year
England	81,000	100,400	19,400	*24%*	12,100	*15%*	31,500	*39%*	4,500
Northern Ireland	4,900	5,400	500	*10%*	700	*14%*	1,100	*23%*	200
Scotland	19,500	25,900	6,400	*33%*	3,400	*18%*	9,900	*51%*	1,400
Wales	4,700	5,800	1,100	*23%*	700	*15%*	1,800	*38%*	300
United Kingdom	**110,100**	**137,500**	**27,400**	***25%***	**16,900**	***15%***	**44,300**	***40%***	**6,300**
English regions									
East of England	9,400	11,900	2,500	*26%*	1,400	*15%*	3,900	*41%*	600
East Midlands	12,600	14,900	2,200	*18%*	1,900	*15%*	4,100	*32%*	600
London	8,400	10,500	2,100	*25%*	1,200	*15%*	3,300	*40%*	500
North East	6,100	7,000	900	*16%*	900	*14%*	1,800	*30%*	300
North West	11,000	13,700	2,700	*24%*	1,600	*15%*	4,300	*39%*	600
South East	12,400	15,900	3,500	*28%*	1,900	*15%*	5,400	*43%*	800
South West	7,700	9,800	2,100	*27%*	1,200	*15%*	3,300	*42%*	500
West Midlands	8,600	10,700	2,100	*25%*	1,300	*15%*	3,400	*40%*	500
Yorkshire & The Humber	4,800	6,000	1,300	*26%*	700	*16%*	2,000	*42%*	300

Note: Figures may not sum to the grand total due to rounding.

2.6 Skills and occupations

Skill levels

2.6.2 Demand is concentrated at RQF 3, with more than 17,300 people required by 2032, reflecting the sector's reliance on skilled technical occupations.

2.6.3 RQF 3 occupations account for the largest share of workforce growth, with 10,800 new jobs created between 2026 and 2032.

2.6.4 RQF 6 has the second-largest requirement at 7,300 people, followed by RQF 1 at 6,300 and RQF 7–8 at 5,700. Together with RQF 3, these levels account for 36,600 people, around 83% of the core requirement.

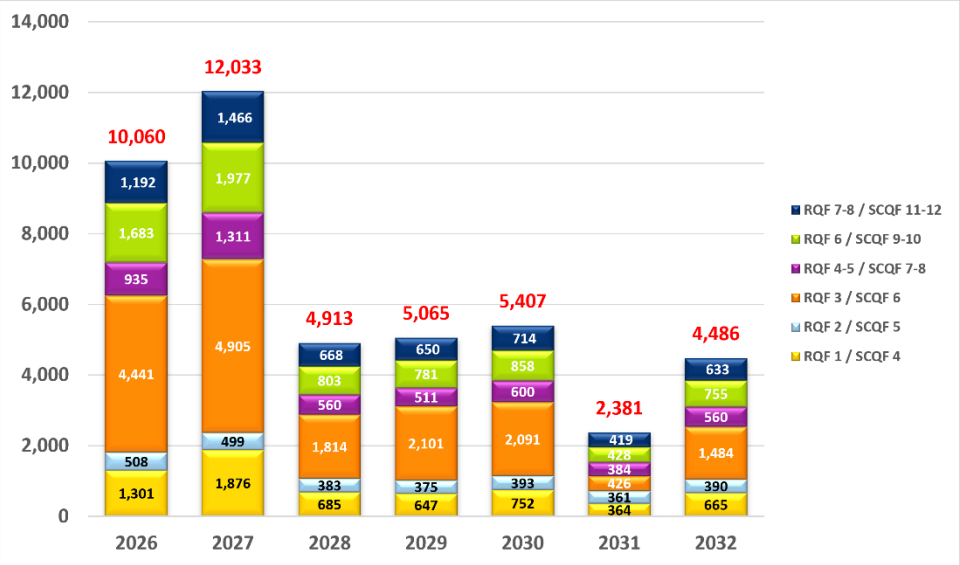
Figure 7: Current workforce estimates and forecast number of new jobs created, retirements and the total core requirement for people by 2032 by skill level

RQF/SCQF Level	Total employment		New jobs created		Retirements		Core requirement for people		
	2025 baseline	2032	Number	% Growth	Number	% of current workforce	Total	% of current workforce	Average per year
RQF 7-8 SCQF 11-12	14,000	17,100	3,100	*22%*	2,600	*19%*	5,700	*41%*	800
RQF 6 SCQF 9-10	22,900	27,700	4,800	*21%*	2,500	*11%*	7,300	*32%*	1,000
RQF 4-5 SCQF 7-8	13,600	16,900	3,300	*24%*	1,600	*12%*	4,900	*36%*	700
RQF 3 SCQF 6	36,700	47,500	10,800	*29%*	6,400	*18%*	17,300	*47%*	2,500
RQF 2 SCQF 5	10,700	12,400	1,700	*16%*	1,200	*11%*	2,900	*27%*	400
RQF 1 SCQF 4	12,200	15,900	3,700	*30%*	2,600	*21%*	6,300	*52%*	900
Electricity Networks	**110,100**	**137,500**	**27,400**	***25%***	**16,900**	***15%***	**44,300**	***40%***	**6,300**

Note: Figures may not sum to the grand total due to rounding.

2.6.5 The next figure breaks these annual numbers down by skill level.

Figure 8: Core requirement for people by skill level and year



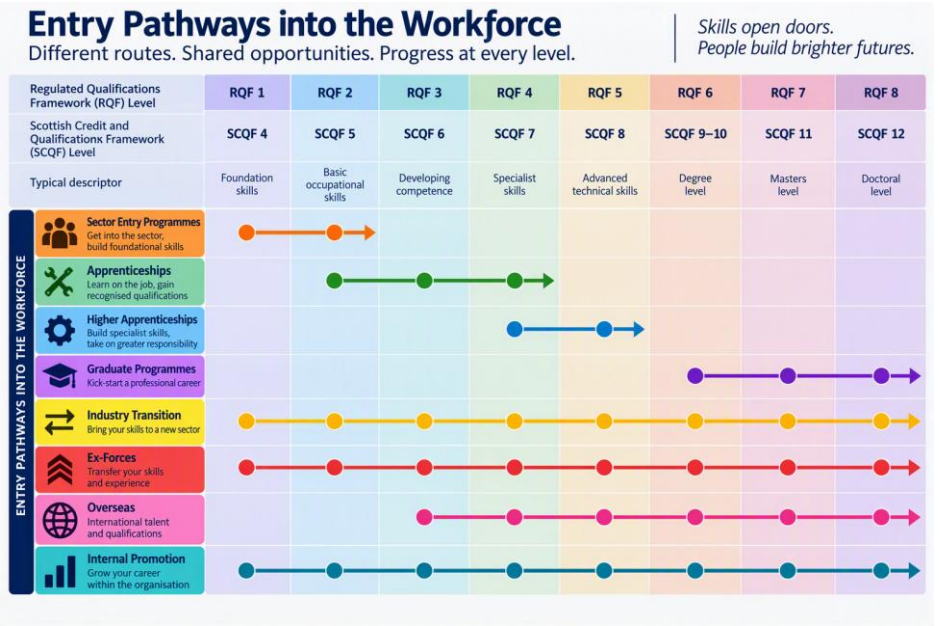
Note: Figures may not sum to the grand total due to rounding.

2.6.6 The entry pathways into the workforce will vary depending upon the skill level of the occupation. Each entry pathway will have its unique characteristics in terms of lead-time to competency and entry point into the workforce.

2.6.7 At skill levels 1 and 2 (4-5 in Scotland), sector entry-type programmes could provide an immediate solution. At skill levels 3-5 (6-8 in Scotland), a number of entry pathways may be appropriate, but lead-times to competency will determine the extent to which they are able to satisfy immediate demands (e.g. with training lead-times of 3 years+ for an apprentice (and the associated need for trainers, assessors and mentors), increasing the volume in the pipeline now will not produce positive outcomes until the turn of the decade).

2.6.8 Transitioning in experienced workers from other sectors will be a priority, as will developing the existing workforce and enabling career progression via internal promotions. However, this process cannot be rushed to point where people are promoted prematurely.

Figure 9: Potential entry pathways into the workforce



2.6.9 Industry will make use of range of different recruitment and training pathways, providing a balanced approach to meeting both short-term and longer-term demands for people.

Occupations

2.6.10 This analysis is based on UK's Standard Occupational Classification system at the two-digit – sub-major group – level.

2.6.11 All our estimates and forecasts have been broken down by 26 occupations – based on the two-digit Standard Occupational Classification taxonomy. Furthermore, these have been grouped into five occupational groups (more information can be found in Annex 1 below):

- **Managerial**: Directors and functional managers
- **Technical Professional**: Typically, science and engineering professional engineers
- **Business Support**: Typically, roles including media, marketing, site security, and specialist roles such as quantity surveyor, estimator and procurement
- **Front Line Technical**: Typically, operative and craft level workers such as Cable Jointer; Overhead Linesperson; Electrical Fitter; CNC Machinist, etc.
- **Other**: In the main, these occupations are generally not directly relevant to the core activities of the industry, but data collection processes may result in a small number of people being reported (e.g. nurses/first aiders, community development specialists, etc.).

2.6.12 Front Line Technical occupations have the largest core workforce requirement at 17,500 people, equivalent to 52% of the current workforce. Business Support has the second-largest requirement at 14,300, followed by Technical Professional occupations at 6,500 and Managerial occupations at 5,700.

2.6.13 Figure 11 below breaks down these broad occupational groups into 26 two-digit SOC.

Figure 10: Current workforce estimates and forecast number of new jobs created, retirements and the total core requirement for people by 2032 by broad occupational group

Broad Occupational Group	Total employment		New jobs created		Retirements		Core requirement for people		
	2025 baseline	2032	Number	% Growth	Number	% of current workforce	Total	% of current workforce	Average per year
Managerial	14,000	17,100	3,100	*22%*	2,600	*19%*	5,700	*41%*	800
Technical Professional	20,200	24,600	4,400	*22%*	2,100	*10%*	6,500	*32%*	900
Business Support	41,700	50,200	8,600	*21%*	5,700	*14%*	14,300	*34%*	2,000
Front Line Technical	33,600	44,800	11,100	*33%*	6,400	*19%*	17,500	*52%*	2,500
Other	600	800	200	*35%*	100	*18%*	300	*53%*	<100
Electricity Networks	**110,100**	**137,500**	**27,400**	***25%***	**16,900**	***15%***	**44,300**	***40%***	**6,300**

Note: Figures may not sum to the grand total due to rounding.

Figure 11: Current workforce estimates and forecast number of new jobs created, retirements and the total core requirement for people by 2032 by occupation

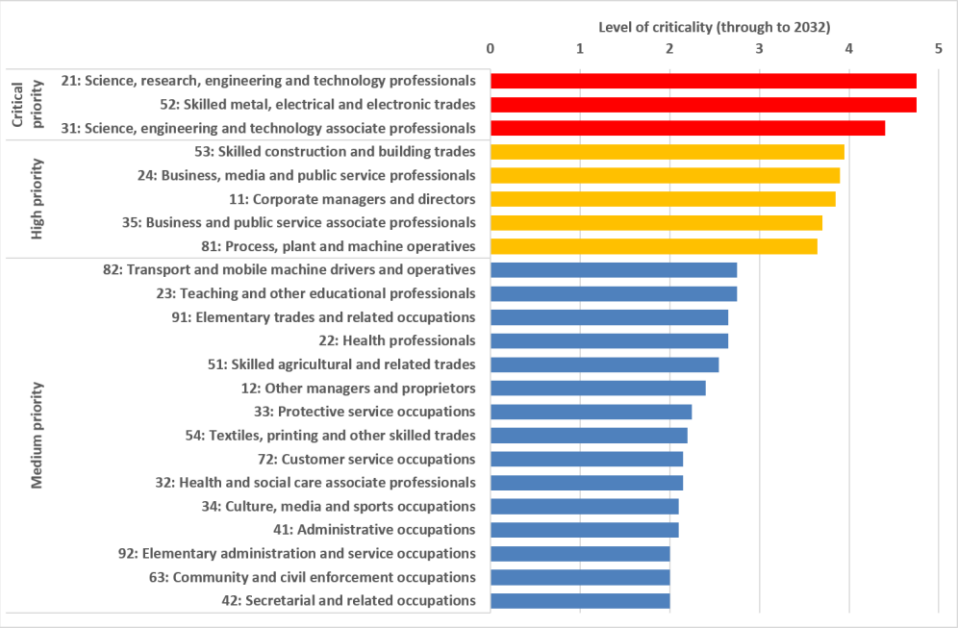
Skill level	Standard Occupational Classification (Sub-Major Group)	Total employment		New jobs created		Retirements		Core requirement for people		
		2025 baseline	2032	Number	% Growth	Number	% of current workforce	Total	% of current workforce	Average per year
RQF 7-8 SCQF 11-12	11 - Corporate Managers and Directors	11,400	14,100	2,600	*23%*	2,200	*19%*	4,800	42%	700
	12 - Other Managers and Proprietors	2,600	3,000	500	*18%*	500	*18%*	1,000	37%	100
RQF 6 SCQF 9-10	21 - Science, Research, Engineering and Technology Professionals	15,500	18,700	3,200	*21%*	1,500	*10%*	4,700	30%	700
	22 - Health Professionals	100	100	<100	*16%*	<100	*14%*	<100	30%	<100
	23 - Teaching and Other Educational Professionals	<100	<100	<100	*57%*	<100	*17%*	<100	74%	<100
	24 - Business, Media and Public Service Professionals	7,300	8,900	1,600	*22%*	1,000	*13%*	2,500	35%	400
RQF 4-5 SCQF 7-8	31 - Science, Engineering and Technology Associate Professionals	4,700	5,900	1,200	*26%*	600	*13%*	1,800	38%	300
	32 - Health and Social Care Associate Professionals	100	100	<100	*43%*	<100	*19%*	100	63%	<100
	33 - Protective Service Occupations	200	200	<100	*19%*	<100	*8%*	<100	27%	<100
	34 - Culture, Media and Sports Occupations	600	700	100	*25%*	100	*10%*	200	35%	<100
	35 - Business and Public Service Associate Professionals	8,100	10,000	1,900	*23%*	900	*11%*	2,800	34%	400
RQF 3 SCQF 6	41 - Administrative Occupations	12,000	14,400	2,500	*21%*	2,000	*17%*	4,500	37%	600
	42 - Secretarial and Related Occupations	800	1,100	200	*29%*	200	*26%*	500	55%	100
	51 - Skilled Agricultural and Related Trades	700	700	100	*9%*	200	*29%*	200	38%	<100
	52 - Skilled Metal, Electrical and Electronic Trades	19,200	24,400	5,200	*27%*	3,100	*16%*	8,300	43%	1,200
	53 - Skilled Construction and Building Trades	3,900	6,600	2,700	*70%*	900	*23%*	3,600	93%	500
	54 - Textiles, Printing and Other Skilled Trades	200	300	100	*56%*	<100	*19%*	100	75%	<100
	61 - Caring Personal Service Occupations	<100	<100	<100	*45%*	<100	*21%*	<100	65%	<100
	62 - Leisure, Travel and Related Personal Service Occupations	100	200	<100	*10%*	<100	*16%*	<100	26%	<100
	63 - Community and Civil Enforcement Occupations	0	0	0	--	0	--	0	--	0
RQF 2 SCQF 5	71 - Sales Occupations	3,100	3,700	500	*17%*	400	*14%*	1,000	30%	100
	72 - Customer Service Occupations	7,300	8,500	1,200	*16%*	700	*10%*	1,900	26%	300
RQF 1 SCQF 4	81 - Process, Plant and Machine Operatives	6,100	7,900	1,800	*29%*	1,200	*20%*	3,000	50%	400
	82 - Transport and Mobile Machine Drivers and Operatives	1,900	2,600	700	*35%*	600	*30%*	1,300	65%	200
	91 - Elementary Trades and Related Occupations	1,900	2,500	700	*36%*	400	*20%*	1,000	56%	100
	92 - Elementary Administration and Service Occupations	2,300	2,900	600	*25%*	400	*17%*	1,000	42%	100
Electricity Networks		**110,100**	**137,500**	**27,400**	***25%***	**16,900**	***15%***	**44,300**	**40%**	**6,300**

Note: Figures may not sum to the grand total due to rounding.

2.6.14 In order to assess how critical each occupation is to success of the industry through to 2032, we have developed a criticality framework based on 11 criteria. Further details of this methodology can be found in Annex 2.

2.6.15 The figure below ranks each occupation in terms of their level of criticality based on this framework – those occupations ranked as low criticality are not shown.

Figure 12: Forecasted level of occupational criticality through to 2032



2.6.16 Three occupations are ranked as critical:

- 21 - Science, Research, Engineering and Technology Professionals
- 52 - Skilled Metal, Electrical and Electronic Trades
- 31 - Science, Engineering and Technology Associate Professionals

2.6.17 These occupations are likely to be major constraints on infrastructure delivery by 2032 because they combine high delivery criticality, existing shortages, long training lead times, regulatory importance and limited scalability. It is likely that immediate intervention is required, including targeted workforce strategies, apprenticeships, retraining programmes, recruitment campaigns and supply-chain action.

2.6.18 By 2032, these three critical occupations are forecast to account for 9,600 new jobs and a core requirement for 14,800 people.

2.6.19 Five occupations are ranked as high priority:

- 53 - Skilled Construction and Building Trades
- 24 - Business, Media and Public Service Professionals
- 11 - Corporate Managers and Directors
- 35 - Business and Public Service Associate Professionals
- 81 - Process, Plant and Machine Operatives

2.6.20 These occupations present a significant workforce risk and are likely to experience recruitment pressure but are not expected to be a critical bottleneck across the industry. Active monitoring and targeted interventions are required.

2.6.21 By 2032, these five high-priority occupations are forecast to account for 10,600 new jobs and a core requirement for 16,700 people.

2.6.22 In total, some 20,200 new jobs will be created in occupations that are either critical or high priority occupations; requiring more than 31,500 new people to enter their workforces.

2.6.23 Furthermore, we have applied this same methodology to a more detailed taxonomy of occupations – the four-digit Unit Group of occupations.

2.6.24 Five detailed occupations have been identified as being a critical priority for the electricity networks industry over the next seven years. These are listed in Figure 13 below, along with estimates of the current and future workforce, new job created retirements and the core requirement for new people.

Figure 13: Current workforce estimates and forecast number of new jobs created, retirements and the total core requirement for people by 2032 in critical priority occupations (four-digit Unit Group)

Skill level	Standard Occupational Classification (Unit Group)	Total employment		New jobs created		Retirements		Core requirement for people		
		2025 baseline	2032	Number	% Growth	Number	% of current workforce	Total	% of current workforce	Average per year
RQF 3 SCQF 6	5241 – Electricians and electrical fitters	8,400	10,700	2,300	27%	1,400	17%	3,700	44%	500
RQF 6 SCQF 9-10	2123 – Electrical engineers	5,500	6,600	1,100	20%	500	9%	1,600	29%	200
RQF 4-5 SCQF 7-8	3112 – Electrical and electronics technicians	1,600	2,000	400	25%	200	13%	600	38%	100
RQF 6 SCQF 9-10	2481 – Quality control and planning engineers	1,100	1,400	300	27%	200	18%	500	45%	100
RQF 4-5 SCQF 7-8	3113 – Engineering technicians	1,100	1,400	300	27%	100	9%	400	38%	100
Electricity Networks – Critical priority detailed occupations		**17,700**	**22,100**	**4,400**	**25%**	**2,400**	**14%**	**6,800**	**38%**	**1,000**

Note: Figures may not sum to the grand total due to rounding.

2.6.25 These critical detailed occupations are forecast to grow by 4,400 jobs and need 6,800 new people by 2032.

2.6.26 Electricians and electrical fitters will require the most new people to enter their workforce – 3,700 (or 500 per year).

3 Impact of artificial intelligence and automation on workforce demands

3.1.1 Artificial intelligence (AI) is defined as systems that can perform tasks that normally require human intelligence, such as understanding language, recognising patterns, making predictions, or learning from data. AI can augment or automate cognitive tasks by analysing information, generating content, identifying patterns, and supporting decision-making.

3.1.2 Automation is defined as the use of technology to carry out tasks or processes with little or no human involvement. It follows predefined rules and instructions to perform routine activities, producing consistent outputs from the same inputs without learning or adapting over time. Automation is primarily used to replace or streamline repetitive, rules-based tasks.

3.1.3 AI and automation are reshaping many operational and technical roles across the electricity networks.[3] Professionals are increasingly required to have technical AI skills aligned to:

- Real-time optimisation
- Fault detection
- Predictive maintenance
- Dashboard interpretation
- Bias correction in local forecasting models

3.1.4 Traditional roles such as grid engineers and maintenance supervisors are evolving into digitally empowered positions, requiring proficiency in predictive analytics, digital twins, and algorithmic modelling.[4]

3.1.5 Demand for jobs is shifting rather than shrinking, with AI and automation creating new opportunities in data, digital and cyber roles.

3.1.6 The potential exceptions include roles which are highly exposed to automation:

- **Meter Readers**: Smart metering removes the need for routine site visits and manual meter readings
- **Switchboard Operators / Basic Contact Centre roles**: AI-powered customer service, chatbots and automated call routing
- **Business Support Administrators / Project Administrators**: Workflow automation and generative AI
- **Project Planners**: AI-assisted scheduling and project optimisation
- **CAD/BIM Technicians**: Automated design production and digital engineering tools such as digital twin, BIM and AI-assisted design

3.1.7 In most cases, the impact is expected to be reduction in labour requirements for routine activities rather than the complete replacement of the occupation.

3.1.8 The following assessment considers how workforce demand may be affected under different levels of AI and automation adoption within the electricity networks industry. Occupational groups have been classified according to their likely workforce-demand response to AI and automation adoption:

[3] AI skills for the UK workforce, November 2025

[4] Sector Skills Needs Assessment – Clean Energy, Skills England, August 2026

- **At Risk of Reduction** – Fewer workers may be required because AI and automation increase productivity and automate routine tasks.
- **Significantly Impacted** – Workforce demand remains broadly stable, but roles undergo substantial redesign as tasks, skills, responsibilities and workflows change significantly.
- **Augmented** – AI and automation improve productivity, decision-making and performance, but primarily enhance rather than redesign core roles, and demand for workers remains strong.
- **Limited Impact** – Little expected effect on workforce demand because activities continue to depend heavily on physical intervention, human interaction or site-based work.

3.1.9 Both *Significantly Impacted* and *Augmented* occupations are expected to experience widespread adoption of AI and automation. The key difference is that significantly impacted occupations are expected to undergo substantial job redesign, while augmented occupations primarily experience productivity and performance improvements with limited changes to the core nature of the role.

3.1.10 Low, medium and high adoption scenarios have been developed using a seven-dimension framework covering:

- investment and pace of adoption;
- technology maturity and autonomy;
- breadth of deployment;
- depth of workflow integration;
- task automation and augmentation;
- job redesign and skills transformation;
- productivity ambition.

3.1.11 These adoption scenarios describe the extent to which AI and automation are deployed within the industry. The occupational assessment then considers how different occupations may be affected under each adoption scenario.

3.1.12 The scenarios are intended to illustrate a range of plausible outcomes through to 2032 rather than predict a single future state:

- **Low Adoption** — AI and automation adoption remains relatively limited and focused on specific use cases. Organisations deploy individual tools for activities such as information retrieval, reporting, scheduling, basic analytics or administrative support, but these technologies are not extensively integrated into operational workflows. Most work continues to be undertaken using existing processes and workforce-demand impacts are limited.
- **Medium adoption** — AI and automation become mainstream across many organisations and functions. Proven technologies are integrated into business processes and support activities such as planning, monitoring, customer engagement, decision support and predictive maintenance. Roles and skill requirements begin to evolve, productivity improves and organisations increasingly use technology to redesign workflows and operating practices.
- **High adoption** — AI and automation are extensively embedded across organisational processes, operational activities and decision-making. Technologies are integrated with core systems, data and workflows, enabling significant automation, augmentation and workflow redesign. Organisations achieve substantial productivity gains and workforce demand is affected according to the exposure of the occupation group, with impacts ranging from workforce reduction in some roles to significant augmentation in others.

3.1.13 Potential workforce effects are assessed separately through the occupational risk categories and scenario analysis.

3.1.14 It is important to note that higher levels of AI and automation adoption do not automatically result in workforce reductions; impacts vary according to the characteristics of individual occupations and the extent to which tasks can be automated. Actual workforce outcomes will also depend on wider drivers including investment levels, regulatory requirements, infrastructure programmes, technological maturity and future demand for electricity network services.

Figure 14: Assessment of AI and automation risk by occupation

Risk category	Standard Occupational Classification	Occupational Group	Adoption Scenarios		
			Low Adoption	Medium Adoption	High Adoption
At Risk of Reduction	71 - Sales Occupations 72 - Customer Service Occupations 41 - Administrative Occupations 42 - Secretarial and Related Occupations 92 - Elementary Administration and Service Occupations 34 - Culture, Media and Sports Occupations	Business Support	AI is used mainly for document drafting, workflow support and basic customer-service tools. Most activities remain human-led and workforce demand stays broadly stable.	AI is routinely used for customer enquiries, scheduling, reporting and administration. Productivity improves while recruitment demand slows as routine tasks are increasingly automated.	AI is deeply integrated across customer service, administration and commercial support functions. Automated workflows, virtual agents and AI-generated reporting reduce routine work and lower staffing intensity.
	62 - Leisure, Travel and Related Personal Service Occupations	Other	AI supports marketing content creation, communications, travel planning and routine service coordination. Human oversight remains central to most activities.	Generative AI becomes widely used for content development, translation, communications and scheduling activities. Routine tasks are substantially automated, reducing support requirements.	AI automates large elements of content creation, communications production and routine service coordination. Organisations require fewer resources for repetitive support activities due to high levels of automation.
Significantly Impacted	24 - Business, Media and Public Service Professionals 35 - Business and Public Service Associate Professionals	Business Support	AI is used selectively for research, reporting, procurement and project-support activities. Most professional judgement remains unchanged.	AI becomes embedded within project controls, procurement, business analysis, regulatory reporting and stakeholder engagement. Roles increasingly focus on interpretation, validation and exception management.	AI undertakes significant portions of analysis, reporting, forecasting and project-support work. Roles are redesigned around oversight, governance, assurance and decision-making, requiring extensive reskilling but limited workforce reduction.
	54 - Textiles, Printing and Other Skilled Trades	Other	AI-assisted design, drafting and production tools support workflows, although most work processes remain familiar.	Intelligent design and visualisation tools automate parts of content creation and technical-production activities. New digital skills become increasingly important.	AI is integrated throughout production and design workflows. Workers increasingly manage, quality-assure and refine machine-generated outputs rather than creating them manually.
	31 - Science, Engineering and Technology Associate Professionals	Technical Professional	AI is used primarily for diagnostics, asset-data analysis and technical reporting. Existing roles remain largely unchanged.	Advanced analytics, condition-monitoring systems and digital twins become mainstream. Technicians increasingly use AI to identify faults, monitor asset health and support maintenance planning.	AI is deeply integrated into network operations, outage management and asset diagnostics. Roles shift towards data interpretation, intervention planning and oversight of intelligent systems.
	81 - Process, Plant and Machine Operatives	Front Line Technical	Automation largely supports monitoring and reporting functions at network control centres and operational facilities. Most operational activity remains human-led.	AI-enabled monitoring, fault prediction and operational optimisation become widespread. Workers spend less time monitoring systems and more time responding to AI-generated insights.	Extensive deployment of automated monitoring, predictive maintenance and operational optimisation tools significantly changes operational roles. Workers increasingly manage exceptions, incidents and safety-critical interventions rather than routine monitoring activities.

Risk category	Standard Occupational Classification	Occupational Group	Adoption Scenarios		
			Low Adoption	Medium Adoption	High Adoption
Augmented	11 - Corporate Managers and Directors 12 - Other Managers and Proprietors	Managerial	Managers use AI for administrative support, information retrieval and performance reporting. Decision-making remains largely unchanged.	AI supports asset-investment planning, forecasting, workforce planning and operational performance management. Decision-making becomes increasingly data-driven.	AI is embedded across planning, risk management, regulatory reporting and operational decision-making. Managers achieve substantial productivity gains but remain ultimately accountable for strategic decisions and regulatory compliance.
	21 - Science, Research, Engineering and Technology Professionals	Technical Professional	AI assists engineering calculations, data analysis and asset-performance reviews. Impact on working practices is limited.	AI-supported modelling, digital twins and network simulations become common. Engineers use AI to assess asset health, optimise investment and improve network resilience.	AI is deeply embedded in system design, network planning, forecasting and asset-management activities. Engineers become significantly more productive, but demand remains strong due to continued network investment, electrification and infrastructure modernisation.
	22 - Health Professionals 23 - Teaching and Other Educational Professionals 32 - Health and Social Care Associate Professionals	Other	AI supports training preparation, information management and administrative activities, with limited impact on workforce demand.	AI enhances workforce training, knowledge management and professional support activities, increasing demand for digital skills.	AI supports learning, skills analysis and workforce planning, making training and occupational-health activities more data-driven.
	33 - Protective Service Occupations	Business Support	AI-enabled surveillance, monitoring and risk-detection systems support operational security and protective activities.	Intelligent monitoring systems become widespread, improving threat detection and situational awareness. Workforce demand remains stable.	AI significantly improves monitoring, incident detection and response coordination. Human intervention remains essential due to security, resilience and regulatory requirements.
	51 - Skilled Agricultural and Related Trades 82 - Transport and Mobile Machine Drivers and Operatives 52 - Skilled Metal, Electrical and Electronic Trades	Front Line Technical	AI is used for route planning, workforce scheduling and equipment monitoring. Most tasks remain unchanged.	Advanced scheduling, fleet optimisation and predictive maintenance improve operational efficiency. Workers increasingly use digital decision-support tools.	AI enhances inspection planning, vehicle utilisation, vegetation management scheduling and safety management. Significant productivity gains are achieved while demand for field-based workers remains strong.
Limited Impact	53 - Skilled Construction and Building Trades 91 - Elementary Trades and Related Occupations	Front Line Technical	AI is limited to digital work instructions and basic diagnostics, with little change to core physical work.	AI supports maintenance planning and safety management, but network construction and repair remain labour-intensive.	Physical work on overhead lines, cables and substations remains essential. AI improves productivity and safety but has limited impact on workforce demand.
	61 - Caring Personal Service Occupations 63 - Community and Civil Enforcement Occupations	Other	AI provides limited administrative support but has little influence on core activities.	Digital tools improve coordination and information access, although work remains heavily dependent on human interaction and physical presence.	Technology supports planning and information management but does not significantly alter workforce demand due to the inherently interpersonal and site-based nature of the work.

Figure 15: Electricity network AI and automation adoption scenarios



Electricity Networks: AI and Automation Adoption Scenarios

Industry-level assessment through to 2032 across seven adoption dimensions and associated workforce implications

ADOPTION DIMENSION	LOW ADOPTION Targeted and limited	MEDIUM ADOPTION Mainstream integration	HIGH ADOPTION Extensive transformation
Investment and pace	Targeted pilots and isolated business cases; adoption is cautious and uneven.	Sustained investment scales proven uses across several network functions.	AI is a core part of network modernisation, with rapid, strategic scaling.
Technology maturiry and autonomy	Mainly assistive tools for reporting, scheduling and basic asset analytics.	Predictive tools, digital twins and bounded automation support network decisions.	Advanced AI, machine vision, robotics and autonomous systems operate within safety controls.
Breadth of deployment	Use is concentrated in support functions and selected asset-management pilots.	AI spans planning, asset health, outage management, customer service and scheduling.	AI is embedded across planning, control rooms, field operations, customer services and the supply chain.
Depth of workflow integration	Tools sit alongside existing systems; core network workflows remain largely unchanged.	AI connects with asset data, work management and governance in routine workflows.	Operating models are redesigned around integrated, real-time and AI-enabled workflows.
Task automation and augmentation	Selected reporting, administration and analysis tasks are automated or assisted.	Routine monitoring and analysis are automated; engineers and operators retain decisions.	Substantial workflows are automated, with people focused on oversight, assurance and intervention.
Job redesign and skills	Limited role change; basic AI literacy and tool-specific training are introduced.	Roles shift towards data intepretation, validation and digital asset management.	Widespread redesign requires major reskilling, redeployment and new assurance roles.
Productivity ambition	Incremental gains in reporting, scheduling, safety and asset information access.	Material gains arise from predictive maintenance, faster fault response and better planning.	Transformational gains support faster connections, greater network capacity and lower staffing intensity.
ILLUSTRATIVE WORKFORCE-DEMAND IMPLICATIONS — ASSESSED SEPARATELY			
Potential workforce effects	Workforce demand is broadly stable, with small local productivity effects.	Recruitment may slow in routine functions as demand shifts towards digital and technical skills.	Staffing intensity may fall in automatable functions, while investment sustains engineering and field demand.

Workforce effects are downstream consequences of adoption and may differ between occupations and across individual sectors.

4 Sub-industry forecasts

4.1 Manufacturing

Figure 16: Current workforce estimates and forecast number of new jobs created, retirements and the total core requirement for people by 2032 by sub-industry

Sub-Industry	Total employment		New jobs created		Retirements		Core requirement for people		
	2025 baseline	2032	Number	% Growth	Number	% of current workforce	Total	% of current workforce	Average per year
Electricity Networks - Manufacturing	**25,400**	**28,800**	**3,400**	***13%***	**3,500**	***14%***	**6,900**	***27%***	**1,000**

Note: Figures may not sum to the grand total due to rounding.

4.1.1 Manufacturing has a core requirement for 6,900 people by 2032, equivalent to 27% of the current workforce. Employment increases from 25,400 to 28,800, creating 3,400 new jobs (13% growth), while 3,500 retirements create a broadly equal replacement requirement.

4.1.2 Annual workforce demand fluctuates considerably, from a net reduction of 600 people in 2026 to a peak requirement of 1,900 in 2031. Demand is also relatively high in 2027 (1,700) and 2032 (1,600), indicating an uneven recruitment profile.

4.1.3 The variation is driven by new job creation, while retirements remain stable at around 500-600 people per year. New job creation falls to -1,100 in 2026 and -200 in 2029 but rises to 1,400 in 2031 and 1,000 in 2032.

Figure 17: Core requirement for people by year and cause



Note: Figures may not sum to the grand total due to rounding.

4.1.4 England accounts for the majority of Manufacturing workforce demand, requiring 5,500 of the 6,900 people needed by 2032.

4.1.5 Northern Ireland requires 600 people, while Scotland and Wales each require around 400.

4.1.6 Within England, the North West has the largest core workforce requirement at 1,000 people, followed by the South East at 900 and East Midlands at 800.

Figure 18: Current workforce estimates and forecast number of new jobs created, retirements and the total core requirement for people by 2032 by nation and region

Nation & Region	Total employment		New jobs created		Retirements		Core requirement for people		
	2025 baseline	2032	Number	*% Growth*	Number	*% of current workforce*	Total	*% of current workforce*	Average per year
England	20,100	22,900	2,700	*14%*	2,800	*14%*	5,500	*28%*	800
Northern Ireland	2,300	2,500	200	*10%*	300	*14%*	600	*25%*	100
Scotland	1,500	1,700	200	*14%*	200	*14%*	400	*28%*	100
Wales	1,500	1,700	200	*14%*	200	*14%*	400	*28%*	100
United Kingdom	**25,400**	**28,800**	**3,400**	***13%***	**3,500**	***14%***	**6,900**	***27%***	**1,000**
English regions									
East of England	1,800	2,000	200	*13%*	200	*14%*	500	*27%*	100
East Midlands	2,800	3,100	400	*14%*	400	*14%*	800	*27%*	100
London	400	400	100	*13%*	100	*14%*	100	*27%*	<100
North East	1,700	1,900	200	*14%*	200	*14%*	500	*27%*	100
North West	3,600	4,100	500	*14%*	500	*14%*	1,000	*27%*	100
South East	3,400	3,800	500	*14%*	500	*14%*	900	*28%*	100
South West	2,200	2,500	300	*14%*	300	*14%*	600	*28%*	100
West Midlands	2,500	2,800	300	*14%*	300	*14%*	700	*28%*	100
Yorkshire & The Humber	1,900	2,100	300	*14%*	300	*14%*	500	*27%*	100

Note: Figures may not sum to the grand total due to rounding.

4.1.7 Front Line Technical occupations have the largest core workforce requirement in Electricity Networks Manufacturing, requiring 2,700 people by 2032.

4.1.8 Business Support has the second-largest requirement at 2,100 people, followed by Managerial and Technical Professional occupations at around 1,000 each.

Figure 19: Current workforce estimates and forecast number of new jobs created, retirements and the total core requirement for people by 2032 by broad occupational group

Broad Occupational Group	Total employment		New jobs created		Retirements		Core requirement for people		
	2025 baseline	2032	Number	% Growth	Number	% of current workforce	Total	% of current workforce	Average per year
Managerial	3,500	3,900	500	*13%*	600	*17%*	1,000	*30%*	100
Technical Professional	4,500	5,100	600	*13%*	400	*9%*	1,000	*23%*	100
Business Support	8,200	9,400	1,100	*14%*	1,100	*12%*	2,100	*26%*	300
Front Line Technical	9,100	10,300	1,200	*13%*	1,500	*16%*	2,700	*30%*	400
Other	<100	100	<100	*11%*	<100	*14%*	<100	*24%*	<100
Electricity Networks – Manufacturing	**25,400**	**28,800**	**3,400**	***13%***	**3,500**	***14%***	**6,900**	***27%***	**1,000**

Note: Figures may not sum to the grand total due to rounding.

4.1.9 Figure 20 shows demand is concentrated in a small number of occupations:

- Process, Plant and Machine Operatives — 1,100 people
- Corporate Managers and Directors — 900 people
- Skilled Metal, Electrical and Electronic Trades — 900 people

Figure 20: Current workforce estimates and forecast number of new jobs created, retirements and the total core requirement for people by 2032 by occupation

Skill level	Standard Occupational Classification	Total employment		New jobs created		Retirements		Core requirement for people		
		2025 baseline	2032	Number	% Growth	Number	% of current workforce	Total	% of current workforce	Average per year
RQF 7-8 SCQF 11-12	11 - Corporate Managers and Directors	3,100	3,500	400	13%	500	17%	900	30%	100
	12 - Other Managers and Proprietors	400	500	100	13%	100	17%	100	30%	<100
RQF 6 SCQF 9-10	21 - Science, Research, Engineering and Technology Professionals	3,100	3,500	400	13%	300	9%	700	22%	100
	22 - Health Professionals	0	0	0	--	0	--	0	--	0
	23 - Teaching and Other Educational Professionals	0	0	0	--	0	--	0	--	0
	24 - Business, Media and Public Service Professionals	1,400	1,600	200	13%	200	12%	300	25%	<100
RQF 4-5 SCQF 7-8	31 - Science, Engineering and Technology Associate Professionals	1,500	1,600	200	14%	100	11%	400	25%	100
	32 - Health and Social Care Associate Professionals	0	0	0	--	0	--	0	--	0
	33 - Protective Service Occupations	<100	100	<100	14%	<100	8%	<100	28%	<100
	34 - Culture, Media and Sports Occupations	100	200	<100	14%	<100	9%	<100	22%	<100
	35 - Business and Public Service Associate Professionals	2,500	2,900	400	14%	300	10%	600	24%	100
RQF 3 SCQF 6	41 - Administrative Occupations	2,400	2,700	300	13%	400	15%	700	29%	100
	42 - Secretarial and Related Occupations	100	100	<100	11%	<100	22%	<100	32%	<100
	51 - Skilled Agricultural and Related Trades	0	0	0	--	0	--	0	--	0
	52 - Skilled Metal, Electrical and Electronic Trades	3,400	3,800	400	13%	500	14%	900	27%	100
	53 - Skilled Construction and Building Trades	800	900	100	13%	100	15%	200	27%	<100
	54 - Textiles, Printing and Other Skilled Trades	<100	<100	<100	15%	<100	14%	<100	24%	<100
	61 - Caring Personal Service Occupations	0	0	0	--	0	--	0	--	0
	62 - Leisure, Travel and Related Personal Service Occupations	0	0	0	--	0	--	0	--	0
	63 - Community and Civil Enforcement Occupations	0	0	0	--	0	--	0	--	0
RQF 2 SCQF 5	71 - Sales Occupations	200	200	<100	15%	<100	13%	<100	28%	<100
	72 - Customer Service Occupations	600	700	100	13%	<100	9%	100	23%	<100
RQF 1 SCQF 4	81 - Process, Plant and Machine Operatives	3,400	3,900	500	13%	600	17%	1,100	31%	200
	82 - Transport and Mobile Machine Drivers and Operatives	1,000	1,100	100	13%	200	24%	400	37%	100
	91 - Elementary Trades and Related Occupations	500	600	100	13%	100	16%	200	29%	<100
	92 - Elementary Administration and Service Occupations	900	1,000	100	13%	100	15%	300	28%	<100
Electricity Networks – Manufacturing		**25,400**	**28,800**	**3,400**	**13%**	**3,500**	**14%**	**6,900**	**27%**	**1,000**

Note: Figures may not sum to the grand total due to rounding.

4.2 Construction and installation

Figure 21: Current workforce estimates and forecast number of new jobs created, retirements and the total core requirement for people by 2032 by sub-industry

Sub-Industry	Total employment		New jobs created		Retirements		Core requirement for people		
	2025 baseline	2032	Number	*% Growth*	Number	*% of current workforce*	Total	*% of current workforce*	Average per year
Electricity Networks – Construction & Installation	**19,400**	**36,200**	**16,800**	***87%***	**4,800**	***25%***	**21,600**	***111%***	**3,100**

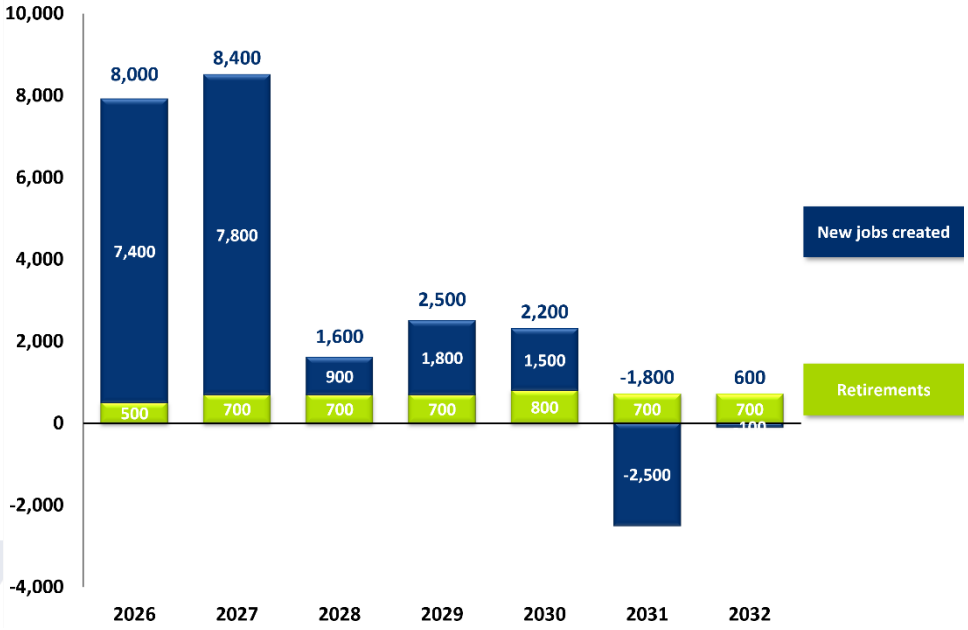
Note: Figures may not sum to the grand total due to rounding.

4.2.1 Construction & Installation has a core requirement for 21,600 people by 2032, equivalent to 111% of the current workforce. Employment increases from 19,400 to 36,200, creating 16,800 new jobs (87% growth), alongside 4,800 retirements.

4.2.2 Workforce demand is highly front-loaded, reaching 8,000 people in 2026 and peaking at 8,400 in 2027. Demand then falls sharply to 1,600 in 2028, before reaching 2,500 in 2029 and 2,200 in 2030.

4.2.3 New job creation drives the volatility in annual demand, while retirements remain comparatively stable at around 500 to 800 people per year. New job creation peaks at 7,800 in 2027, before falling to -2,500 in 2031, resulting in net workforce demand of -1,800 that year.

Figure 22: Core requirement for people by year and cause



Note: Figures may not sum to the grand total due to rounding.

4.2.4 England accounts for 13,800 of the 21,600 people required by 2032.

4.2.5 Scotland has the second-largest requirement at 6,600 people, followed by Wales at 900 and Northern Ireland at 300.

4.2.6 The South East has the largest workforce requirement at 2,700 people, followed by the East of England at 1,900 and the North West and West Midlands at 1,700 each. The South East also faces the greatest relative pressure, with the requirement equivalent to 181% of its current workforce, followed by the East of England at 168% and North West at 166%.

Figure 23: Current workforce estimates and forecast number of new jobs created, retirements and the total core requirement for people by 2032 by nation and region

Nation & Region	Total employment		New jobs created		Retirements		Core requirement for people		
	2025 baseline	2032	Number	*% Growth*	Number	*% of current workforce*	Total	*% of current workforce*	Average per year
England	9,600	20,800	11,300	*118%*	2,600	*27%*	13,800	*144%*	2,000
Northern Ireland	1,300	1,500	100	*7%*	200	*14%*	300	*21%*	<100
Scotland	7,900	12,600	4,700	*60%*	1,900	*24%*	6,600	*84%*	900
Wales	600	1,300	700	*126%*	100	*27%*	900	*153%*	100
United Kingdom	**19,400**	**36,200**	**16,800**	***87%***	**4,800**	***25%***	**21,600**	***111%***	**3,100**
English regions									
East of England	1,200	2,800	1,500	*140%*	300	*28%*	1,900	*168%*	300
East Midlands	1,000	2,300	1,200	*121%*	300	*27%*	1,500	*148%*	200
London	1,000	2,000	1,000	*92%*	300	*25%*	1,300	*117%*	200
North East	600	1,100	400	*88%*	200	*25%*	700	*114%*	100
North West	1,000	2,400	1,400	*139%*	300	*28%*	1,700	*166%*	200
South East	1,500	3,800	2,300	*153%*	400	*29%*	2,700	*181%*	400
South West	1,100	2,100	1,000	*95%*	300	*26%*	1,300	*121%*	200
West Midlands	1,400	2,700	1,300	*99%*	300	*26%*	1,700	*124%*	200
Yorkshire & The Humber	800	1,600	800	*108%*	200	*26%*	1,000	*134%*	100

Note: Figures may not sum to the grand total due to rounding

4.2.7 Front Line Technical occupations have the largest core workforce requirement in Construction & Installation, requiring 11,200 people by 2032.

4.2.8 Business Support has the second-largest requirement at 4,800 people, followed by Technical Professional occupations at 2,900 and Managerial occupations at 2,500.

Figure 24: Current workforce estimates and forecast number of new jobs created, retirements and the total core requirement for people by 2032 by broad occupational group

Broad Occupational Group	Total employment		New jobs created		Retirements		Core requirement for people		
	2025 baseline	2032	Number	*% Growth*	Number	*% of current workforce*	Total	*% of current workforce*	Average per year
Managerial	2,100	4,000	1,800	*87%*	600	*29%*	2,500	*116%*	400
Technical Professional	2,900	5,300	2,400	*83%*	500	*16%*	2,900	*99%*	400
Business Support	4,500	8,300	3,800	*85%*	1,000	*23%*	4,800	*108%*	700
Front Line Technical	9,700	18,300	8,600	*88%*	2,600	*27%*	11,200	*115%*	1,600
Other	200	300	200	*94%*	100	*26%*	200	*120%*	<100
Electricity Networks – Construction & Installation	**19,400**	**36,200**	**16,800**	*87%*	**4,800**	*25%*	**21,600**	*111%*	**3,100**

Note: Figures may not sum to the grand total due to rounding.

4.2.9 Figure 25 shows demand is concentrated in a small number of occupations:

- Skilled Metal, Electrical and Electronic Trades – 4,800 people
- Skilled Construction and Building Trades – 3,300 people
- Science, Research, Engineering and Technology Professionals – 2,000 people

Figure 25: Current workforce estimates and forecast number of new jobs created, retirements and the total core requirement for people by 2032 by occupation

Skill level	Standard Occupational Classification	Total employment		New jobs created		Retirements		Core requirement for people		
		2025 baseline	2032	Number	% Growth	Number	% of current workforce	Total	% of current workforce	Average per year
RQF 7-8 SCQF 11-12	11 - Corporate Managers and Directors	1,800	3,400	1,600	86%	500	29%	2,100	115%	300
	12 - Other Managers and Proprietors	300	600	300	90%	100	29%	400	119%	100
RQF 6 SCQF 9-10	21 - Science, Research, Engineering and Technology Professionals	2,100	3,700	1,700	82%	300	15%	2,000	96%	300
	22 - Health Professionals	<100	<100	<100	200%	<100	39%	<100	239%	<100
	23 - Teaching and Other Educational Professionals	<100	<100	<100	200%	<100	35%	<100	235%	<100
	24 - Business, Media and Public Service Professionals	1,100	2,000	900	82%	200	20%	1,100	102%	200
RQF 4-5 SCQF 7-8	31 - Science, Engineering and Technology Associate Professionals	800	1,600	700	87%	200	19%	900	106%	100
	32 - Health and Social Care Associate Professionals	<100	100	<100	85%	<100	25%	<100	110%	<100
	33 - Protective Service Occupations	<100	<100	<100	70%	<100	12%	<100	82%	<100
	34 - Culture, Media and Sports Occupations	100	100	<100	80%	<100	15%	100	95%	<100
	35 - Business and Public Service Associate Professionals	1,000	1,800	800	87%	200	18%	1,000	104%	100
RQF 3 SCQF 6	41 - Administrative Occupations	1,500	2,800	1,300	85%	400	26%	1,700	111%	200
	42 - Secretarial and Related Occupations	200	400	200	86%	100	38%	300	124%	<100
	51 - Skilled Agricultural and Related Trades	<100	100	<100	85%	<100	49%	<100	134%	<100
	52 - Skilled Metal, Electrical and Electronic Trades	4,300	8,100	3,800	88%	1,100	24%	4,800	112%	700
	53 - Skilled Construction and Building Trades	2,800	5,300	2,600	92%	700	26%	3,300	118%	500
	54 - Textiles, Printing and Other Skilled Trades	100	200	100	99%	<100	25%	100	124%	<100
	61 - Caring Personal Service Occupations	<100	<100	<100	70%	<100	25%	<100	96%	<100
	62 - Leisure, Travel and Related Personal Service Occupations	<100	<100	<100	75%	<100	26%	<100	101%	<100
	63 - Community and Civil Enforcement Occupations	0	0	0	--	0	--	0	--	0
RQF 2 SCQF 5	71 - Sales Occupations	100	200	100	88%	<100	23%	100	110%	<100
	72 - Customer Service Occupations	200	300	100	90%	<100	17%	200	106%	<100
RQF 1 SCQF 4	81 - Process, Plant and Machine Operatives	1,300	2,500	1,200	87%	400	31%	1,600	117%	200
	82 - Transport and Mobile Machine Drivers and Operatives	600	1,100	500	84%	300	42%	800	126%	100
	91 - Elementary Trades and Related Occupations	700	1,200	600	83%	200	28%	700	111%	100
	92 - Elementary Administration and Service Occupations	400	700	300	86%	100	25%	400	111%	100
Electricity Networks – Construction & Installation		**19,400**	**36,200**	**16,800**	**87%**	**4,800**	**25%**	**21,600**	**111%**	**3,100**

Note: Figures may not sum to the grand total due to rounding.

4.3 Operation and maintenance

Figure 26: Current workforce estimates and forecast number of new jobs created, retirements and the total core requirement for people by 2032 by sub-industry

Sub-Industry	Total employment		New jobs created		Retirements		Core requirement for people		
	2025 baseline	2032	Number	% Growth	Number	% of current workforce	Total	% of current workforce	Average per year
Electricity Networks – Operation & Maintenance	49,900	52,900	3,000	6%	6,500	13%	9,600	19%	1,400

Note: Figures may not sum to the grand total due to rounding.

4.3.1 Operation & Maintenance has a core requirement for 9,600 people by 2032, equivalent to 19% of the current workforce. Employment increases relatively modestly from 49,900 to 52,900, creating 3,000 new jobs, while 6,500 retirements account for around two-thirds of the core requirement.

4.3.2 Annual workforce demand is highest in 2026 at 1,800 people before falling to 1,000 in 2027. Demand then stabilises at around 1,300 to 1,400 people per year from 2028 onwards.

4.3.3 Retirements provide a consistent underlying recruitment requirement, at around 900 people per year through to 2031 and 1,000 in 2032. New job creation is more variable, falling from 900 in 2026 to 100 in 2027, before stabilising at around 400 per year from 2028 onwards.

Figure 27: Core requirement for people by year and cause



Note: Figures may not sum to the grand total due to rounding.

4.3.4 England accounts for the majority of workforce demand, requiring 7,400 of the 9,600 people needed by 2032.

4.3.5 Scotland has the second-largest requirement at 1,500 people, while Wales requires 500 and Northern Ireland 200.

4.3.6 The East Midlands and South East have the largest regional workforce requirements at 1,300 people each, followed by the East of England at 1,000 and North West at 900.

Figure 28: Current workforce estimates and forecast number of new jobs created, retirements and the total core requirement for people by 2032 by nation and region

Nation & Region	Total employment		New jobs created		Retirements		Core requirement for people		
	2025 baseline	2032	Number	% Growth	Number	*% of current workforce*	Total	*% of current workforce*	Average per year
England	39,400	41,600	2,200	*6%*	5,200	*13%*	7,400	*19%*	1,000
Northern Ireland	1,100	1,200	100	*9%*	100	*13%*	200	*22%*	<100
Scotland	6,700	7,400	600	*9%*	900	*13%*	1,500	*22%*	200
Wales	2,500	2,700	100	*6%*	300	*13%*	500	*19%*	100
United Kingdom	**49,900**	**52,900**	**3,000**	***6%***	**6,500**	***13%***	**9,600**	***19%***	**1,400**
English regions									
East of England	5,400	5,700	300	*6%*	700	*13%*	1,000	*19%*	100
East Midlands	7,600	8,000	400	*4%*	1,000	*13%*	1,300	*17%*	200
London	3,500	3,700	200	*5%*	500	*13%*	600	*18%*	100
North East	3,500	3,700	100	*4%*	500	*13%*	600	*17%*	100
North West	4,500	4,700	300	*6%*	600	*13%*	900	*19%*	100
South East	6,500	6,900	400	*7%*	800	*13%*	1,300	*20%*	200
South West	2,300	2,500	200	*8%*	300	*13%*	500	*21%*	100
West Midlands	4,100	4,300	200	*6%*	500	*13%*	800	*19%*	100
Yorkshire & The Humber	2,000	2,100	100	*7%*	300	*13%*	400	*20%*	100

Note: Figures may not sum to the grand total due to rounding.

4.3.7 Business Support occupations have the largest core workforce requirement in Operation & Maintenance, requiring 3,400 people by 2032

4.3.8 Front Line Technical occupations have the second-largest requirement at 2,900 people, followed by Technical Professional occupations at 1,700 and Managerial occupations at 1,500.

Figure 29: Current workforce estimates and forecast number of new jobs created, retirements and the total core requirement for people by 2032 by broad occupational group

Broad Occupational Group	Total employment		New jobs created		Retirements		Core requirement for people		
	2025 baseline	2032	Number	*% Growth*	Number	*% of current workforce*	Total	*% of current workforce*	Average per year
Managerial	6,900	7,200	400	*6%*	1,200	*17%*	1,500	*22%*	200
Technical Professional	10,300	11,000	700	*7%*	900	*9%*	1,700	*16%*	200
Business Support	19,300	20,300	1,000	*5%*	2,400	*12%*	3,400	*18%*	500
Front Line Technical	13,100	14,000	900	*7%*	2,000	*15%*	2,900	*22%*	400
Other	300	400	<100	*9%*	<100	*14%*	100	*24%*	<100
Electricity Networks – Operation & Maintenance	**49,900**	**52,900**	**3,000**	***6%***	**6,500**	***13%***	**9,600**	***19%***	**1,400**

Note: Figures may not sum to the grand total due to rounding.

4.3.9 Figure 30 shows demand is concentrated in a small number of occupations:

- Skilled Metal, Electrical and Electronic Trades – 2,000 people
- Science, Research, Engineering and Technology Professional – 1,300 people
- Corporate Managers and Directors – 1,200 people
- Administrative Occupations – 1,200 people

Figure 30: Current workforce estimates and forecast number of new jobs created, retirements and the total core requirement for people by 2032 by occupation

Skill level	Standard Occupational Classification	Total employment		New jobs created		Retirements		Core requirement for people		
		2025 baseline	2032	Number	% Growth	Number	% of current workforce	Total	% of current workforce	Average per year
RQF 7-8 SCQF 11-12	11 - Corporate Managers and Directors	5,200	5,500	300	6%	900	17%	1,200	22%	200
	12 - Other Managers and Proprietors	1,700	1,800	100	6%	300	17%	400	22%	100
RQF 6 SCQF 9-10	21 - Science, Research, Engineering and Technology Professionals	8,200	8,700	500	7%	700	9%	1,300	15%	200
	22 - Health Professionals	100	100	<100	7%	<100	13%	<100	21%	<100
	23 - Teaching and Other Educational Professionals	<100	<100	<100	17%	<100	13%	<100	29%	<100
	24 - Business, Media and Public Service Professionals	4,000	4,200	300	7%	500	12%	700	18%	100
RQF 4-5 SCQF 7-8	31 - Science, Engineering and Technology Associate Professionals	2,100	2,300	200	9%	200	11%	400	20%	100
	32 - Health and Social Care Associate Professionals	<100	<100	<100	14%	<100	15%	<100	29%	<100
	33 - Protective Service Occupations	100	100	<100	4%	<100	7%	<100	12%	<100
	34 - Culture, Media and Sports Occupations	200	200	<100	16%	<100	9%	100	25%	<100
	35 - Business and Public Service Associate Professionals	2,900	3,100	200	7%	300	10%	500	17%	100
RQF 3 SCQF 6	41 - Administrative Occupations	5,900	6,200	300	5%	900	15%	1,200	20%	200
	42 - Secretarial and Related Occupations	500	500	<100	6%	100	22%	100	28%	<100
	51 - Skilled Agricultural and Related Trades	600	600	<100	3%	200	27%	200	30%	<100
	52 - Skilled Metal, Electrical and Electronic Trades	10,100	10,700	600	6%	1,400	14%	2,000	20%	300
	53 - Skilled Construction and Building Trades	200	300	<100	17%	<100	15%	100	32%	<100
	54 - Textiles, Printing and Other Skilled Trades	100	100	<100	22%	<100	14%	<100	37%	<100
	61 - Caring Personal Service Occupations	<100	<100	<100	17%	<100	16%	<100	32%	<100
	62 - Leisure, Travel and Related Personal Service Occupations	100	100	<100	3%	<100	15%	<100	18%	<100
	63 - Community and Civil Enforcement Occupations	0	0	0	--	0	--	0	--	0
RQF 2 SCQF 5	71 - Sales Occupations	1,600	1,700	100	4%	200	13%	300	16%	<100
	72 - Customer Service Occupations	3,500	3,600	100	3%	300	9%	400	12%	100
RQF 1 SCQF 4	81 - Process, Plant and Machine Operatives	1,200	1,400	100	10%	200	18%	400	28%	<100
	82 - Transport and Mobile Machine Drivers and Operatives	400	400	<100	9%	100	24%	100	34%	<100
	91 - Elementary Trades and Related Occupations	600	600	<100	5%	100	16%	100	21%	<100
	92 - Elementary Administration and Service Occupations	600	700	<100	7%	100	15%	100	21%	<100
Electricity Networks – Operation & Maintenance		49,900	52,900	3,000	6%	6,500	13%	9,600	19%	1,400

Note: Figures may not sum to the grand total due to rounding.

4.4 Trade of electricity

Figure 31: Current workforce estimates and forecast number of new jobs created, retirements and the total core requirement for people by 2032 by sub-industry

Sub-Industry	Total employment		New jobs created		Retirements		Core requirement for people		
	2025 baseline	2032	Number	% Growth	Number	% of current workforce	Total	% of current workforce	Average per year
Trade of electricity	**15,400**	**19,600**	**4,200**	***27%***	**2,100**	***13%***	**6,300**	***41%***	**900**

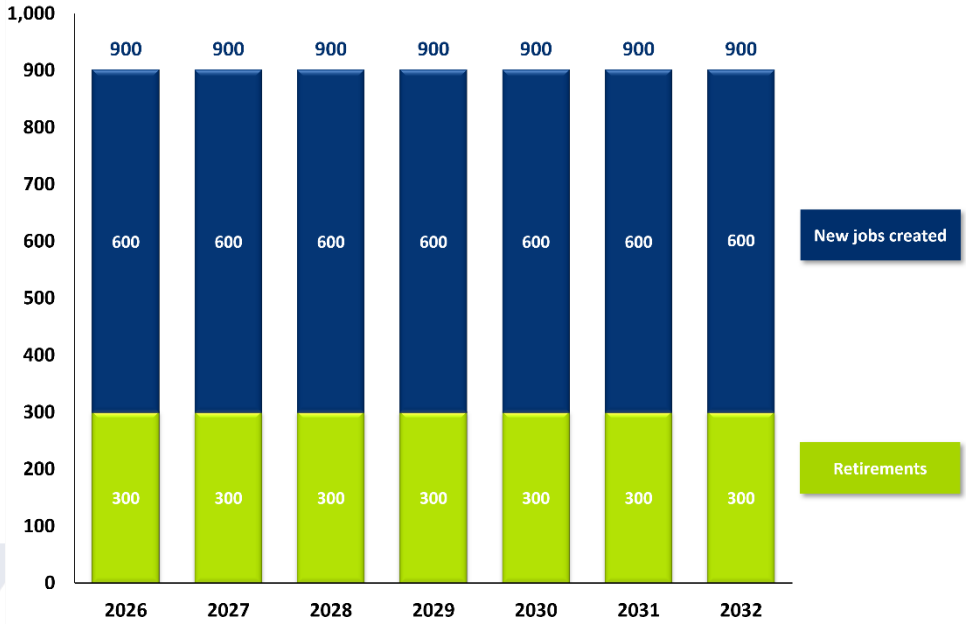
Note: Figures may not sum to the grand total due to rounding.

4.4.1 Trade of Electricity has a core requirement for 6,300 people by 2032, equivalent to 41% of the current workforce. Employment is projected to increase from 15,400 to 19,600, creating 4,200 new jobs (27% growth), alongside 2,100 retirements.

4.4.2 Annual workforce demand is remarkably consistent at around 900 people per year from 2026 to 2032. This suggests a steady recruitment requirement across the full forecast period, with no major peaks or troughs.

4.4.3 New job creation remains constant at around 600 people per year, while retirements contribute a further 300 people annually. New jobs therefore account for around two-thirds of annual workforce demand, with retirements accounting for the remaining third.

Figure 32: Core requirement for people by year and cause



Note: Figures may not sum to the grand total due to rounding.

4.4.4 England accounts for the majority of workforce demand, requiring 4,800 of the 6,300 people needed by 2032.

4.4.5 Scotland has the second-largest requirement at 1,300 people, while Wales and Northern Ireland each require around 100.

Figure 33: Current workforce estimates and forecast number of new jobs created, retirements and the total core requirement for people by 2032 by nation and region

Nation & Region	Total employment		New jobs created		Retirements		Core requirement for people		
	2025 baseline	2032	Number	*% Growth*	Number	*% of current workforce*	Total	*% of current workforce*	Average per year
England	11,800	15,000	3,200	*27%*	1,600	*13%*	4,800	*41%*	700
Northern Ireland	100	200	<100	*27%*	<100	*13%*	100	*41%*	<100
Scotland	3,400	4,200	900	*27%*	500	*13%*	1,300	*41%*	200
Wales	100	200	<100	*27%*	<100	*13%*	100	*41%*	<100
United Kingdom	**15,400**	**19,600**	**4,200**	***27%***	**2,100**	***13%***	**6,300**	***41%***	**900**
English regions									
East of England	1,100	1,400	300	*27%*	100	*13%*	400	*41%*	100
East Midlands	1,100	1,400	300	*27%*	200	*13%*	500	*41%*	100
London	3,400	4,300	900	*27%*	500	*13%*	1,400	*41%*	200
North East	200	300	100	*27%*	<100	*13%*	100	*41%*	<100
North West	1,900	2,500	500	*27%*	300	*13%*	800	*41%*	100
South East	1,100	1,400	300	*27%*	100	*13%*	400	*41%*	100
South West	2,100	2,700	600	*27%*	300	*13%*	900	*41%*	100
West Midlands	700	800	200	*27%*	100	*13%*	300	*41%*	<100
Yorkshire & The Humber	200	200	<100	*27%*	<100	*13%*	100	*41%*	<100

Note: Figures may not sum to the grand total due to rounding.

4.4.6 London has by far the largest requirement among the English regions at 1,400 people, followed by the South West at 900 and North West at 800.

4.4.7 Business Support has the largest core workforce requirement at 3,900 people by 2032.

4.4.8 Technical Professional occupations have the second-largest requirement at 1,000 people, while Managerial and Front Line Technical occupations each require around 700. Together, these four major groups account for virtually all workforce demand.

Figure 34: Current workforce estimates and forecast number of new jobs created, retirements and the total core requirement for people by 2032 by broad occupational group

Broad Occupational Group	Total employment		New jobs created		Retirements		Core requirement for people		
	2025 baseline	2032	Number	*% Growth*	Number	*% of current workforce*	Total	*% of current workforce*	Average per year
Managerial	1,500	1,900	400	*27%*	300	*19%*	700	*46%*	100
Technical Professional	2,500	3,200	700	*27%*	200	*10%*	1,000	*37%*	100
Business Support	9,700	12,300	2,600	*27%*	1,300	*13%*	3,900	*40%*	600
Front Line Technical	1,700	2,100	500	*27%*	300	*16%*	700	*43%*	100
Other	<100	100	<100	*27%*	<100	*17%*	<100	*44%*	<100
Electricity Networks — Trade of Electricity	**15,400**	**19,600**	**4,200**	***27%***	**2,100**	***13%***	**6,300**	***41%***	**900**

Note: Figures may not sum to the grand total due to rounding.

4.4.9 Figure 35 shows demand is concentrated in a small number of occupations:

- Customer Service Occupations – 1,200 people
- Administrative Occupations – 900 people
- Science, Research, Engineering and Technology Professionals – 800 people

Figure 35: Current workforce estimates and forecast number of new jobs created, retirements and the total core requirement for people by 2032 by occupation

Skill level	Standard Occupational Classification	Total employment		New jobs created		Retirements		Core requirement for people		
		2025 baseline	2032	Number	% Growth	Number	% of current workforce	Total	% of current workforce	Average per year
RQF 7-8 SCQF 11-12	11 - Corporate Managers and Directors	1,400	1,700	400	27%	300	19%	600	46%	100
	12 - Other Managers and Proprietors	100	200	<100	27%	<100	19%	100	46%	<100
RQF 6 SCQF 9-10	21 - Science, Research, Engineering and Technology Professionals	2,200	2,800	600	27%	200	10%	800	37%	100
	22 - Health Professionals	0	0	0	--	0	--	0	--	0
	23 - Teaching and Other Educational Professionals	0	0	0	--	0	--	0	--	0
	24 - Business, Media and Public Service Professionals	800	1,100	200	27%	100	13%	400	40%	<100
RQF 4-5 SCQF 7-8	31 - Science, Engineering and Technology Associate Professionals	300	400	100	27%	100	12%	100	39%	<100
	32 - Health and Social Care Associate Professionals	<100	<100	<100	27%	<100	16%	<100	43%	<100
	33 - Protective Service Occupations	<100	<100	<100	27%	<100	8%	<100	35%	<100
	34 - Culture, Media and Sports Occupations	200	200	100	27%	<100	10%	100	37%	<100
	35 - Business and Public Service Associate Professionals	1,800	2,200	500	27%	200	11%	700	39%	100
RQF 3 SCQF 6	41 - Administrative Occupations	2,100	2,700	600	27%	400	17%	900	44%	100
	42 - Secretarial and Related Occupations	100	100	<100	27%	<100	24%	100	52%	<100
	51 - Skilled Agricultural and Related Trades	<100	100	<100	27%	<100	31%	<100	58%	<100
	52 - Skilled Metal, Electrical and Electronic Trades	1,400	1,800	400	27%	200	15%	600	43%	100
	53 - Skilled Construction and Building Trades	100	100	<100	27%	<100	16%	<100	43%	<100
	54 - Textiles, Printing and Other Skilled Trades	0	0	0	--	0	--	0	--	0
	61 - Caring Personal Service Occupations	<100	<100	<100	27%	<100	17%	<100	44%	<100
	62 - Leisure, Travel and Related Personal Service Occupations	0	0	0	--	0	--	0	--	0
	63 - Community and Civil Enforcement Occupations	0	0	0	--	0	--	0	--	0
RQF 2 SCQF 5	71 - Sales Occupations	1,200	1,500	300	27%	200	15%	500	42%	100
	72 - Customer Service Occupations	3,100	3,900	900	27%	300	11%	1,200	38%	200
RQF 1 SCQF 4	81 - Process, Plant and Machine Operatives	100	100	<100	27%	<100	19%	<100	47%	<100
	82 - Transport and Mobile Machine Drivers and Operatives	0	0	0	--	0	--	0	--	0
	91 - Elementary Trades and Related Occupations	100	100	<100	27%	<100	18%	<100	45%	<100
	92 - Elementary Administration and Service Occupations	400	600	100	27%	100	16%	200	43%	<100
Electricity Networks — Trade of Electricity		**15,400**	**19,600**	**4,200**	**27%**	**2,100**	**13%**	**6,300**	**41%**	**900**

Note: Figures may not sum to the grand total due to rounding

5 Future labour supply

5.1 The UK population

5.1.1 These population projections are based on assumptions about fertility, mortality and migration. They are not forecasts of future government policy, economic conditions or global events. The principal long-term assumptions are:

- annual net international migration of 230,000 from mid-2027 onwards;
- long-term fertility of 1.42 children per woman;
- continuing improvements in mortality.

5.1.2 The 2024-based projections indicate that the UK population is projected to remain broadly stable through to 2040. However, this stability masks two labour supply pressures:

- declining birth rates, resulting in fewer young people entering the workforce;
- continued reliance on migration to sustain population growth and the working-age population.

5.1.3 These pressures become increasingly apparent after 2030, particularly in sectors with ageing workforces and long training lead times.

5.2 Falling birth rates and the domestic entrant pipeline

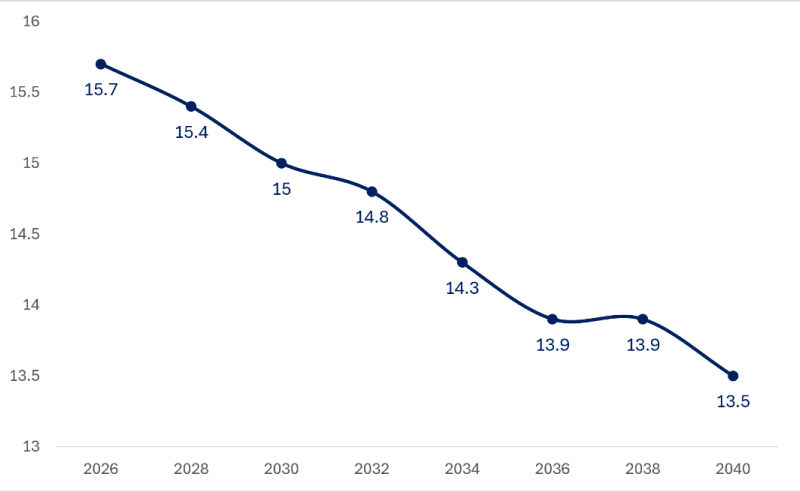
5.2.1 Birth rates in England and Wales have fallen steadily since the early 2010s. The total fertility rate declined from 1.94 children per woman in 2012 to 1.39 in 2025, including a fall from 1.41 in 2024.[5]

5.2.2 These lower birth rates will directly affect workforce entrants during the period covered by this analysis:

- people entering employment at age 18 in 2032 were born in 2014;
- those entering at age 18 in 2040 were born in 2022;
- young people entering apprenticeships at age 16 between 2032 and 2040 were born approximately between 2016 and 2024.

5.2.3 Reflecting these demographic trends, the number of people aged under 20 is projected to fall from 15.7 million in 2026 to 13.5 million by 2040.

Figure 36: Population projections for people aged 0-19 from 2026 to 2040 in millions[6]



[5] Births in England and Wales: 2025, ONS, September 2026

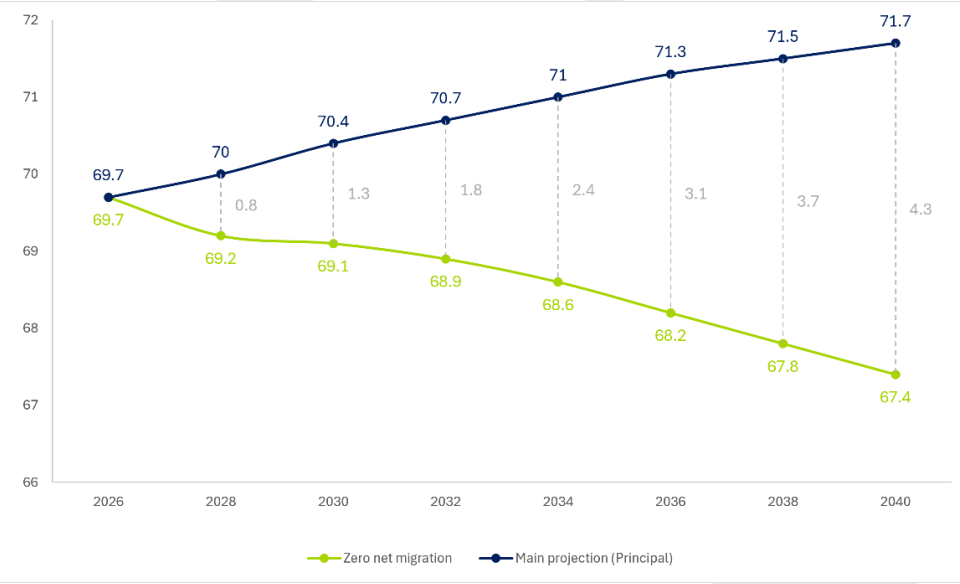
[6] UK Population Projection Explorer, ONS, April 2026

5.2.4 This decline indicates that fewer young people will be available to enter employment and training during the 2030s, resulting in a tighter domestic talent pipeline. As a result, workforce demand will increasingly need to be met through higher retention, retraining, productivity improvements and, where appropriate, migration.

5.3 Migration and sustaining the working-age population

5.3.1 Under the principal projection, migration is the sole source of long-term population growth. The UK population is projected to increase from around 69.7 million in mid-2026 to 71.6 million by 2040.

Figure 37: UK population projections under principal and zero net migration scenarios from 2026 to 2040 with the widening population gap shown in millions[7]



5.3.2 Under the zero net migration variant, the population begins to decline as deaths exceed births, falling towards 67 million by 2040. This illustrates the extent to which future population growth is dependent on migration.

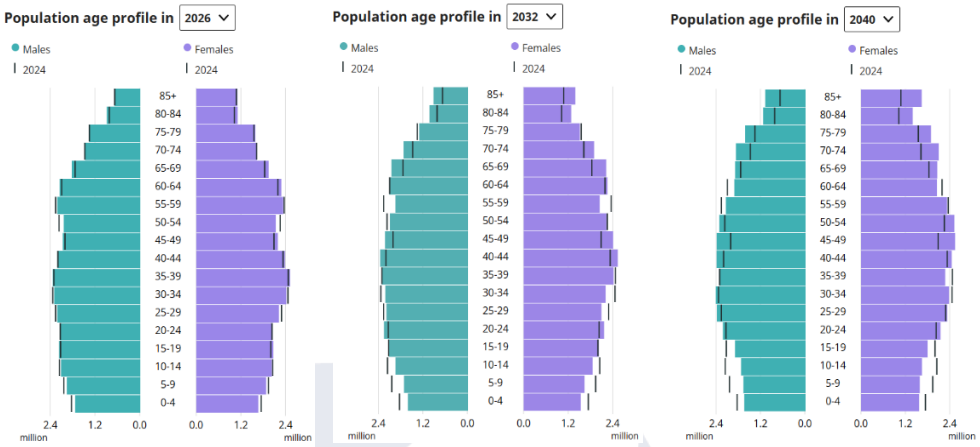
5.3.3 In 2025, there was an estimated net migration of 204,000.[8] This was two-thirds lower than a year earlier (649,000). Net migration remains an important contributor to population and workforce growth, but the decline from 649,000 to 204,000 within a year demonstrates that migration flows can change rapidly in response to policy, economic and international factors. This introduces uncertainty for sectors that rely heavily on migration to meet workforce requirements.

5.3.4 Figure 38 illustrates how the UK's age structure is projected to change between 2026 and 2040. The base of the population pyramid narrows over time, reflecting lower birth rates and a reduced flow of future labour market entrants. At the same time, older age groups become larger as life expectancy improves and larger cohorts move into later life. The working-age population remains substantial throughout the projection period, but its age profile shifts upwards. This suggests that workforce pressures are likely to arise less from an overall shortage of people and more from increasing replacement demand as larger cohorts approach retirement while fewer younger workers enter the labour market.

[7] UK Population Projection Explorer, ONS, April 2026

[8] Long-term international migration, provisional: year ending June 2025, ONS, May 2026

Figure 38: UK population age profile, 2026, 2032 and 2040[9]



5.4 Implications for the sector

5.4.1 Future labour supply will be shaped by a narrowing domestic entrant pipeline and continued reliance on migration.

5.4.2 As the youth population declines, energy and utilities employers will face growing competition for engineering and technical talent from construction, advanced manufacturing, transport, defence, digital and wider infrastructure sectors.

5.4.3 Migration can also provide targeted labour supply in occupations facing shortages. The Migration Advisory Committee found that sponsored engineering workers are concentrated in younger age groups, particularly between ages 26 and 35, while the domestic engineering workforce is more evenly distributed across the working-age population.[10]

5.4.4 Migration can also help where training lead times are long, skills are internationally transferable and recruitment supports time-limited infrastructure delivery. However, it should not be considered a substitute for sustained domestic workforce development.

5.4.5 The principal workforce challenge from 2032 onwards is therefore not overall population decline, but the interaction of four factors:

- a smaller domestic entrant pipeline;
- high replacement demand from an ageing workforce;
- increasing competition for technical skills;
- continued dependence on migration to sustain labour supply.

[9] UK Population Projection Explorer, ONS, April 2026

[10] Professionals in IT and engineering, Migration Advisory Committee, May 2025

6 Potential economic and social benefits

6.1.1 Attracting and recruiting the required 44,300 people could cost the industry an estimated £183 million just in recruitment costs alone[11] (excluding any additional training or other costs incurred once new recruits are on-boarded).

6.1.2 However, the economic benefits to the industry and to UK PLC are significantly higher.

6.1.3 Assuming that each of the 27,400 additional people in the workforce earns the median salary for their occupation[12], this could create an estimated £1.1 billion of additional earnings entering the economy by 2032. Approximately 14% of this - c£162 million - would be paid out to the 5,400 new recruits in entry-level occupations.

Figure 39: Estimated additional salaries paid out to new recruits by 2032

Skill level	Standard Occupational Classification	Additional jobs by 2032	Median Salary	New Income Generated
RQF 7-8 SCQF 11-12	11 - Corporate Managers and Directors	2,600	£63,350	£167,016,191
	12 - Other Managers and Proprietors	500	£40,799	£19,384,064
RQF 6 SCQF 9-10	21 - Science, Research, Engineering and Technology Professionals	3,200	£52,297	£168,271,604
	22 - Health Professionals	<100	£46,131	£664,286
	23 - Teaching and Other Educational Professionals	<100	£47,479	£246,891
	24 - Business, Media and Public Service Professionals	1,600	£49,513	£78,118,191
RQF 4-5 SCQF 7-8	31 - Science, Engineering and Technology Associate Professionals	1,200	£35,945	£43,569,754
	32 - Health and Social Care Associate Professionals	<100	£29,652	£1,194,946
	33 - Protective Service Occupations	<100	£42,806	£1,137,679
	34 - Culture, Media and Sports Occupations	100	£36,510	£5,174,015
	35 - Business and Public Service Associate Professionals	1,800	£41,404	£76,593,501
RQF 3 SCQF 6	41 - Administrative Occupations	2,500	£30,787	£75,712,732
	42 - Secretarial and Related Occupations	200	£28,388	£6,652,576
	51 - Skilled Agricultural and Related Trades	100	£28,980	£1,733,178
	52 - Skilled Metal, Electrical and Electronic Trades	5,200	£39,942	£209,199,942
	53 - Skilled Construction and Building Trades	2,700	£35,764	£96,998,747
	54 - Textiles, Printing and Other Skilled Trades	100	£29,208	£3,040,553
	61 - Caring Personal Service Occupations	<100	£26,859	£499,470
	62 - Leisure, Travel and Related Personal Service Occupations	<100	£27,911	£382,297
	63 - Community and Civil Enforcement Occupations	0	£32,945	£0
RQF 2 SCQF 5	71 - Sales Occupations	500	£26,121	£13,551,923
	72 - Customer Service Occupations	1,200	£28,485	£32,883,141

[11] Based on recruitment costs of: Managerial = £9,000; Technical Professional = £6,000; Front Line Technical = £3,500; Business Support = £2,100; Other = £2,000.

[12] Source: Earnings and hours worked, occupation by four-digit SOC: ASHE Table 14, 23rd October 2025.

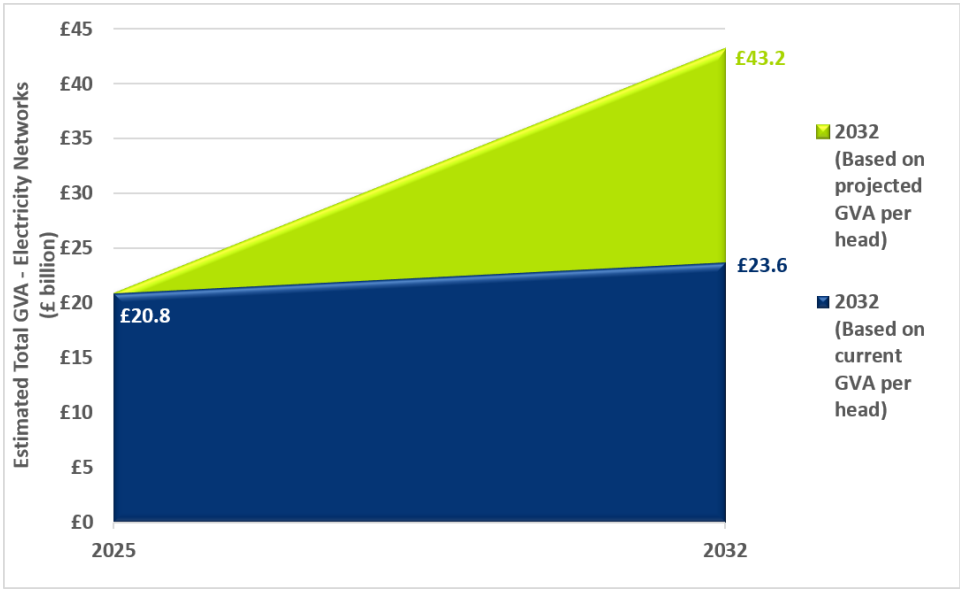
Skill level	Standard Occupational Classification	Additional jobs by 2032	Median Salary	New Income Generated
RQF 1 SCQF 4	81 - Process, Plant and Machine Operatives	1,800	£31,158	£55,249,440
	82 - Transport and Mobile Machine Drivers and Operatives	700	£36,869	£25,088,381
	91 - Elementary Trades and Related Occupations	700	£28,259	£18,901,418
	92 - Elementary Administration and Service Occupations	600	£27,486	£16,205,586
Electricity Networks		27,400	--	£1,117,470,507

Note: Figures may not sum to the grand total due to rounding.

6.1.4 An approximate estimate of the total GVA of the electricity networks industry in 2025 is £21 billion (based on output per worker in the electricity and gas industry multiplied by the total workforce).

6.1.5 By 2032, total GVA could reach between £24 billion (based on 2025 output per worker) and £43 billion (based on annual growth of 9% in output per worker – continuing the growth trajectory seen over the past five years)[13].

Figure 40: Estimated total GVA created by the electricity networks industry (£ billions)



[13] Energy & Utility Skills' estimate of GVA per head in the electricity networks industry is based on Output per job, UK, ONS, 18th August 2026 and headcount estimates produced for this analysis.

7 Conclusions

7.1.1 The electricity networks industry faces a substantial workforce challenge over the period to 2032. The workforce is projected to grow from 110,100 to 137,500, creating 27,400 additional jobs. Combined with around 16,900 retirements, the industry has a core requirement for 44,300 people over the forecast period, equivalent to 40% of the current workforce and an average of around 6,300 people per year.

7.1.2 The core requirement is heavily front-loaded, with demand reaching 10,100 people in 2026 and peaking at 12,000 in 2027 before falling substantially from 2028. New job creation drives this variation, while retirements remain relatively stable at around 2,200 to 2,500 people per year. In addition, staff turnover could create a further 24,000 vacancies by 2032 if people leave the industry for employment elsewhere or overseas, emphasising the importance of retention alongside attraction.

7.1.3 The scale and nature of workforce demand varies considerably between sub-industries. Construction and Installation has the largest core requirement, requiring 21,600 people by 2032, equivalent to 111% of its current workforce and driven primarily by the creation of 16,800 additional jobs. Operation and Maintenance requires a further 9,600 people, while Manufacturing and Trade of Electricity have core requirements of 6,900 and 6,300 respectively.

7.1.4 Demand is distributed across the UK but varies considerably across nations and regions. England accounts for 31,500 of the 44,300 people in the core requirement, while Scotland faces the greatest relative pressure among the four nations, requiring 9,900 people, equivalent to 51% of its current workforce. Within England, the South East has the largest requirement at 5,400 people and faces the greatest relative pressure, with its core requirement equivalent to 43% of the current workforce.

7.1.5 Professional, technical and vocational skills remain central to delivery. RQF Level 3 / SCQF Level 6 has the largest core requirement, with 17,300 people needed by 2032, followed by RQF Level 6 at 7,300 and RQF Level 1 at 6,300. RQF Level 1 faces the greatest relative pressure, with its core requirement equivalent to 52% of the current workforce.

7.1.6 Front Line Technical occupations account for the largest workforce requirement, with 17,500 people needed by 2032 and the greatest relative pressure at 52% of the current workforce. Business Support occupations have the second-largest core requirement at 14,300 people, followed by Technical Professional occupations at 6,500. Together, these three groups account for around 86% of the industry's core requirement.

7.1.7 Three broad occupational groups are assessed as critical to delivery:

- Science, Research, Engineering and Technology Professionals
- Skilled Metal, Electrical and Electronic Trades
- Science, Engineering and Technology Associate Professionals

7.1.8 These critical occupational groups are forecast to create 9,600 additional jobs and require 14,800 people to enter their workforces by 2032. A further five occupational groups are assessed as high priority. Together, critical and high-priority occupational groups account for around 20,200 additional jobs and require more than 31,500 people to enter their workforces, highlighting the concentration of workforce pressure in occupations central to infrastructure delivery.

7.1.9 At a more detailed level, five occupations are identified as critical priorities. Together, they are forecast to create 4,400 additional jobs and have a core requirement for 6,800 people by 2032. Electricians and electrical fitters have the largest requirement at 3,700 people, followed by electrical engineers at 1,600, with electrical and electronics technicians, quality control and planning engineers and engineering technicians also featuring among the industry's critical workforce needs.

7.1.10 Future labour supply is likely to become more constrained as the domestic entrant pipeline narrows. The number of people aged under 20 is projected to fall from 15.7 million in 2026 to 13.5 million by 2040, while the industry will continue to compete with other sectors for engineering and technical talent. Migration can help address occupation-specific shortages, particularly where training lead times are long, but is unlikely to substitute for sustained domestic workforce development.

7.1.11 AI and automation are expected to change how work is undertaken more than overall employment levels. Seven occupational groups, with a combined core requirement for 16,200 people, are identified as at risk of workforce-demand reduction. Under the high-adoption scenario, the analysis indicates a potential reduction of between approximately 2,110 and 4,050 people within these occupations. Across much of the workforce, however, technology is more likely to reshape roles, skills and working practices or augment workforce capability, particularly in engineering, technical and safety-critical activities.

7.1.12 No single recruitment or training route can deliver the number and mix of people required. Industry will need to use a range of entry pathways, including sector-entry programmes, apprenticeships, graduate programmes, industry transitions, experienced-hire recruitment and internal progression. Lead times to competence mean that expanding some pipelines will not meet immediate demand, making the transition of experienced workers, development of the existing workforce and retention of critical skills particularly important.

7.1.13 Meeting this workforce requirement would also bring substantial economic benefits. Attracting and recruiting the 68,300 people represented by the core requirement and potential additional turnover vacancies is estimated to cost around £271 million before training and onboarding costs. The 27,400 additional jobs are estimated to generate approximately £1.1 billion in additional earnings, while the industry's total GVA could increase from approximately £21 billion in 2025 to between £24 billion and £43 billion by 2032, depending on future output per worker.

7.1.14 The workforce requirement is therefore both a significant delivery challenge and an important economic opportunity. Meeting it will require coordinated action to attract new people, expand safe routes to competence, retain experience and critical knowledge, support workforce mobility and use technology responsibly to increase delivery capacity. Workforce investment will need to be planned alongside investment in the physical network if the industry is to secure the people required to expand, operate and maintain the UK's electricity network infrastructure.

8 Call to action

8.1 Ambition, growth and opportunity

8.1.1 The UK's electricity networks industry is entering a period of significant expansion and investment. Employers and their supply chains must expand and modernise network infrastructure while continuing to maintain safe, reliable and resilient electricity networks that underpin the UK's economy and energy system.

8.1.2 The industry is expected to deliver major programmes of work to expand, reinforce and modernise electricity networks, increase network capacity and connect new sources of generation and demand. At the same time, companies must continue to operate, maintain and repair essential network infrastructure that households, businesses and the wider economy rely upon every day.

8.1.3 Delivering this ambition will require a skilled, productive and adaptable workforce. The challenge is not simply one of replacing retiring workers or filling vacancies. It is about ensuring that the industry has the capability, capacity and competence required to design, manufacture, construct, install, operate and maintain increasingly complex electricity network infrastructure and systems.

8.1.4 The opportunity extends across every nation and region of the UK. It includes engineering, science, environmental management, operations, construction, project delivery, digital and data professions, skilled technical trades and a wide range of supporting occupations. It creates opportunities for young people entering the labour market, experienced workers progressing within the sector, people transitioning from related industries and those who have traditionally faced barriers to employment.

8.1.5 Workforce investment must be treated as a critical enabler of industry outcomes rather than a consequence of them. Infrastructure investment and workforce investment must be planned together. Employers, governments, regulators, education and skills providers, professional bodies and supply-chain partners all have a role to play in ensuring that workforce capability grows at the pace required.

8.1.6 The commitments that follow bring together three interconnected themes:

- **Ambition**: delivering safe, reliable and resilient electricity networks while expanding and modernising the infrastructure required to support future electricity demand.
- **Growth**: ensuring the industry has the workforce capacity and capability required to deliver future investment and operational requirements.
- **Opportunity**: creating pathways that enable people and communities across the UK to access rewarding, long-term careers in the electricity networks industry.

8.1.7 This approach reflects the four interconnected pillars of the Skills Strategy 2025–2030:

- **Research:** developing the insight, evidence and intelligence needed to understand workforce demand, identify emerging challenges and support informed decision-making
- **Attract:** raising awareness of sector careers, broadening access to opportunities and attracting the diverse talent needed to meet future workforce requirements
- **Develop:** supporting the continuous development of a safe, skilled and productive workforce through learning, progression and skills development

- **Retain:** creating the conditions for people to build long-term careers within the sector by supporting inclusion, progression, wellbeing and workforce resilience

8.1.8 Equality, Diversity and Inclusion, AI and Technology, and Productivity provide cross-cutting themes through which activity under the four pillars should be considered.

8.2 Safety is the foundation of delivery

8.2.1 Safety and occupational competence must remain the foundation of workforce growth. They are not barriers to expansion, new entry routes, productivity improvement or technological change. They are the conditions that enable these changes to be delivered responsibly and sustainably.

8.2.2 Engineering professionals, engineering technicians and skilled electrical trades are among the occupations most critical to delivery. Across the three broad occupational groups identified as critical, 14,800 people will be required to enter their workforces by 2032. Many of these roles demand specialist expertise, recognised competence and substantial periods of training and workplace development.

8.2.3 Expanding the workforce must not dilute occupational standards, reduce the quality of training or lead to people being deployed before they are competent. Employers must also avoid placing unsustainable pressure on the trainers, assessors, mentors and supervisors responsible for supporting new entrants and developing the existing workforce.

8.2.4 The same principle applies to artificial intelligence, automation and other digital technologies. Technology should be adopted where it can improve safety, quality, productivity or service. However, safety-critical and regulatory decisions must remain subject to clear human accountability. Data, models and automated outputs must be appropriately validated and assured, and affected workers must be supported to develop the capabilities required by redesigned roles.

8.3 Five commitments for delivery

8.3.1 The scale and timing of demand mean that no single organisation can close the workforce gap independently. Employers must lead, supported by coordinated action from supply-chain organisations, governments, regulators, education and skills providers, trade unions, professional and standards bodies, and the Energy & Utility Skills Partnership.

Commitment 1: Plan and invest against evidenced workforce demand

8.3.2 The workforce requirement is immediate, significant and unevenly distributed. Demand varies by occupation, sub-industry, region and year.

8.3.3 Employers and supply-chain organisations should convert the forecasts into practical, funded and regularly updated workforce plans covering:

- Critical occupations and job roles
- Annual and regional demand
- Recruitment, retention and progression
- Routes to occupational competence
- Training, supervision, mentoring and assessment capacity

- Dependencies on suppliers, contractors and other infrastructure sectors

8.3.4 Plans should be reviewed as investment profiles, delivery schedules and labour-market conditions change. Regulation, price controls, procurement and contracting arrangements should give employers and their supply chains sufficient visibility and certainty to invest ahead of demand.

8.3.5 Primary ownership sits with:

- **Employers and supply-chain organisations** should produce, fund and deliver workforce plans
- **Governments and regulators** should align policy, regulation, investment and contracting arrangements with credible workforce delivery
- **The Energy & Utility Skills Partnership** should maintain the shared evidence base and provide a consistent framework for workforce planning

8.3.6 Alignment with the 2025-2030 Skills Strategy and EUSP CEO Council 2026/27 priorities:

- This commitment principally supports the **Research** pillar. It also supports the **Develop** and **Retain** pillars because effective workforce plans must address competence, progression and retention
- It directly aligns with the priorities to:
  - Update workforce demand estimates so that industry and government plan using one set of workforce-planning assumptions (**G2**)
  - Champion workforce and skills decisions based on nationally recognised, employer-informed evidence (**P1**)
  - Use industry evidence to inform regulation, price controls and contracting periods for long-term workforce planning (**UK1**)
- It also supports the wider priorities to maintain a current research programme (**G3**) and strengthen evidence-led workforce planning through partnership (**P2**)

Commitment 2: Expand safe routes to competence

8.3.7 Demand is concentrated in skilled technical, engineering and vocational occupations. Apprenticeship and graduate routes cannot meet the earliest demand on their own because some pathways take three years or more to produce an occupationally competent worker.

8.3.8 Employers, education and skills providers, governments and standards bodies should jointly increase the capacity and range of routes into competent employment by:

- Increasing apprenticeship and graduate provision in critical occupations
- Expanding trainer, assessor, mentor, supervisor, facility and placement capacity
- Scaling sector-entry programmes linked to genuine vacancies and progression opportunities
- Developing funded modular provision aligned with sector-specific occupational requirements
- Creating progression routes for experienced workers whose capability is not fully represented by prior academic attainment
- Supporting career transitions from sectors with transferable skills
- Using targeted migration where urgent shortages cannot be filled domestically within the required timeframe

8.3.9 Every pathway must lead towards clearly defined occupational competence. Faster entry must not mean weaker standards or premature deployment into safety-critical work.

8.3.10 Primary ownership sits with:

- **Employers** should provide vacancies, placements, mentors, assessors and progression opportunities
- **Education and skills providers** should expand responsive provision and demonstrate how learning leads to recognised competence
- **Governments** should improve the flexibility, accessibility and consistency of skills funding across the UK
- **Regulators, professional bodies and standards organisations** should protect competence and quality while enabling proportionate innovation in delivery
- **The Energy & Utility Skills Partnership** should coordinate occupational profiles, standards, pathway design and cross-sector transferability

8.3.11 Alignment with the 2025-2030 Skills Strategy and EUSP CEO Council 2026/27 priorities:

- This commitment principally supports the **Develop** pillar. It also supports **Attract**, by creating credible entry routes, and **Retain**, by enabling progression and continued development.
- It directly aligns with the priorities covering:
  - Occupational profiles and occupational mapping (**G6**)
  - Standards and workforce competence (**G7**)
  - Expansion of Sector Entry provision and learner places (**P6**)
  - Flexible routes towards RQF Level 3 competence through apprenticeship units (**P7**)
  - Protection of safety and competence during apprenticeship reform (**UK2**)
  - Alternative progression routes for experienced workers into RQF Level 4 and above (**UK5**)
  - Simpler and more consistent apprenticeship funding, administration and delivery (UK6)
  - Removal of disincentives for frontline workers to become trainers and assessors (**UK7**)
- It also supports:
  - Development of a Youth Guarantee model (**G8**)
  - Effective use of skills investment and the levy (**P8**)
  - Sustainable routes from economic inactivity and unemployment into the sector (**UK3**)
  - Place-based adult skills investment (**UK4**)
  - Pathways for skilled workers moving from other industries (**P10**)

Commitment 3: Retain experience and widen access to opportunity

8.3.12 Employers should treat retention, succession and knowledge transfer as essential infrastructure-delivery activities by:

- Identifying retirement and turnover exposure in critical roles
- Strengthening career development and internal progression
- Protecting time for experienced workers to train and mentor others
- Improving job quality, inclusion, wellbeing and workforce experience

- Retaining unsuccessful applicants and displaced workers within the wider sector talent pool
- Opening routes for people who are unemployed, economically inactive, under-represented or moving from other industries

8.3.13 UK-wide action should be combined with place-based delivery so that people can access genuine vacancies, appropriate support and clear progression from entry-level roles into skilled employment.

8.3.14 Primary ownership sits with:

- **Employers** should improve retention, succession, progression and knowledge transfer
- **Governments and public employment services** should connect employment, welfare, careers and skills policy to evidenced sector demand
- **Education and skills providers** should create accessible entry and progression pathways that reflect regional labour markets
- **The Energy & Utility Skills Partnership** should coordinate talent referral, inclusion, attraction and cross-sector transition activity

8.3.15 Alignment with the 2025-2030 Skills Strategy and EUSP CEO Council 2026/27 priorities:

- This commitment principally supports the **Retain** and **Attract** pillars. It also supports **Develop** through mentoring, knowledge transfer and career progression.
- It directly aligns with the priorities to:
  - Retain skilled people and unsuccessful candidates within the sector and its supply chains (**G9**)
  - Launch the evaluated Inclusion Measurement Framework, supported by best practice and recommendations (**P9**)
  - Create pathways for skilled workers moving from industries undergoing programme-driven transitions (**P10**)
  - Reduce economic inactivity and unemployment while strengthening progression from entry-level roles into apprenticeships and skilled occupations (**UK3**)
- It also supports:
  - Development of the Youth Guarantee model (**G8**)
  - Access to careers, routes, tools and insight through the sector platform (**P4**)
  - Inclusive attraction and recruitment activity through Destination Energy (**P5**)
  - Progression by experienced workers into higher-level opportunities (**UK5**)
  - The use of experienced workers as trainers and assessors (**UK7**)

Commitment 4: Adopt technology responsibly to increase safe delivery capacity

8.3.16 Digital technologies, automation, artificial intelligence, smart assets, advanced monitoring systems and digital twins are expected to change tasks, skills and working practices across the electricity networks industry. Many technologies have the potential to improve network planning, fault detection, predictive maintenance, asset management, network resilience and workforce productivity. However, technology should augment workforce capability rather than be viewed solely as a substitute for labour.

8.3.17 Employers should adopt AI, automation and digital technologies where they can demonstrably improve delivery. Implementation should be governed by:

- Task-level assessment of safety, competence and operational risk
- Workforce involvement in workflow and job redesign
- Clear human accountability for safety-critical and regulatory decisions
- Validation and assurance of data, models and automated outputs
- Structured reskilling and redeployment
- Measurement of productivity, quality, safety and service outcomes.

8.3.18 Where technology releases capacity, employers should seek to redirect it towards higher-value, safety-critical or shortage-constrained work. Adoption should respond to clearly defined operational needs rather than an assumption that technology automatically substitutes for labour.

8.3.19 Primary ownership sits with:

- **Employers** should select appropriate use cases, manage risk, redesign work and reskill affected workers
- **Regulators** should establish clear and proportionate expectations for assurance, accountability and evidence
- **Education and skills providers** should embed relevant digital and AI capabilities within technical and professional learning
- **The Energy & Utility Skills Partnership** should gather evidence, share effective practice and identify common implications for occupations, standards and workforce planning

8.3.20 Alignment with the 2025-2030 Skills Strategy and EUSP CEO Council 2026/27 priorities:

- This commitment principally supports the **Develop** pillar because it addresses new capabilities, occupational competence, reskilling and the redesign of work.

  It also supports **Research**, through evidence and workforce intelligence, and **Retain**, where reskilling and redeployment allow people to continue contributing within the sector.
- The commitment also advances the Skills Strategy's cross-cutting themes of **AI and Technology** and **Productivity**. These are cross-cutting themes rather than additional strategic pillars.
- No single 2026/27 priority corresponds directly and comprehensively to responsible AI and automation adoption. The commitment nevertheless supports the priorities covering:
  - Research and evidence needed to identify emerging workforce challenges (**G3**)
  - Occupational profiles and occupational mapping (**G6**)
  - Continuous improvement in standards and workforce competence (**G7**)
  - Workforce and skills decisions based on employer-informed evidence (**P1**)
  - Investment in skills and improved productivity (**P8**)
  - Protection of competence and safety as skills provision changes (**UK2**)
- This supporting alignment should not be interpreted as making any one of these priorities a standalone AI or automation priority

Commitment 5: Champion the people delivering the UK's future

8.3.21 Workforce growth will depend not only on creating opportunities but also on making those opportunities visible, credible and attractive. The industry and its partners should champion, amplify and celebrate the people and teams who design, manufacture, build, operate and maintain the UK's electricity network infrastructure.

8.3.22 This should include:

- Creating a shared, evidence-led account of the contribution made by the electricity networks workforce
- Using authentic stories from employees, apprentices, career changers, trainers, mentors and supply-chain teams
- Showcasing the breadth of technical, professional, operational and support careers available across the UK
- Recognising employers and partnerships that widen access, uphold competence and improve workforce experience
- Connecting communications to genuine jobs, training, work experience and progression opportunities
- Making careers information accessible to young people, educators, careers advisers, jobseekers and workers in transition
- Measuring whether activity improves awareness, engagement and entry into the industry, rather than reporting communications reach alone.

8.3.23 This is more than a communications commitment. It supports attraction by showing people where opportunities exist, development by making pathways and competence requirements clear, and retention by recognising the contribution of the existing workforce and demonstrating that the industry offers meaningful, long-term careers.

8.3.24 Primary ownership sits with:

- **Employers and supply-chain organisations** should provide authentic workforce stories, career information and examples of effective practice
- **Trade unions, employee networks and workforce representatives** should help ensure that communications accurately reflect the work and the workforce experience
- **Education, careers and employment partners** should bring these messages to schools, colleges, universities, jobseekers and local communities
- **The Energy & Utility Skills Partnership** and sector communications networks should coordinate and amplify a consistent industry narrative

8.3.25 Alignment with the 2025-2030 Skills Strategy and EUSP CEO Council 2026/27 priorities:

- This commitment principally supports the **Attract** pillar

  It also supports **Retain**, through recognition and an authentic employee proposition, and **Develop**, by explaining career pathways, progression and competence requirements
- It directly aligns with the priorities to:
  - Align communications and marketing with the agreed CEO Council priorities (**G10**)
  - Deliver coordinated sector attraction and recruitment activity through Destination Energy (**P5**)

- It also supports the priorities to:
  - Deepen partnerships and clarify engagement routes (**G4**)
  - Support worker transitions through the North Sea Worker service (**G5**)
  - Use occupational profiles to make careers and pathways clearer (**G6**)
  - Retain candidates and skilled people within the sector talent pool (**G9**)
  - Provide access to careers, routes, tools and insight through the sector platform (**P4**)
  - Promote inclusive workforce practice and recommendations (**P9**)
  - Make transition pathways visible to workers in adjacent industries (**P10**)
  - Strengthen entry routes and progression from economic inactivity or unemployment into skilled work (**UK3**)

Summary of strategic alignment

8.3.26 The following table distinguishes between:

- **Direct alignment:** the commitment would materially contribute to delivery of the priority
- **Supporting alignment:** the commitment contributes to the priority but would not deliver it by itself

Commitment	2025-2030 Skills Strategy alignment	EUSP CEO Council 2026/27 priority alignment (Direct)	EUSP CEO Council 2026/27 priority alignment (Supporting)
1. Plan and invest against evidenced workforce demand	**Primary:** Research. **Supporting:** Develop and Retain.	G2, P1, UK1	G3, P2
2. Expand safe routes to competence	**Primary:** Develop. **Supporting:** Attract and Retain.	G6, G7, P6, P7, UK2, UK5, UK6, UK7	G8, P8, UK3, UK4, P10
3. Retain experience and widen access to opportunity	**Primary:** Retain and Attract. **Supporting:** Develop.	G9, P9, P10, UK3	G8, P4, P5, UK5, UK7
4. Adopt technology responsibly to increase safe delivery capacity	**Primary:** Develop. **Supporting:** Research and Retain. **Cross-cutting:** AI and Technology; Productivity.	No single priority directly covers the full commitment	G3, G6, G7, P1, P8, UK2
5. Champion the people delivering the UK's future	**Primary:** Attract. **Supporting:** Retain and Develop.	G10, P5	G4, G5, G6, G9, P4, P9, P10, UK3

8.3.27 The mapping identifies the priorities to which each commitment makes the clearest direct or supporting contribution. It does not imply that a commitment is solely responsible for delivering those priorities. The four pillars are interconnected, and action under one commitment may contribute to outcomes across more than one pillar.

8.4 The immediate commitment

8.4.1 The workforce requirement is not a distant 2032 issue. There are significant, immediate workforce requirements, while many technical and professional pathways can take years to produce an occupationally competent worker.

8.4.2 The industry and its partners should therefore commit now to:

1. **Produce funded workforce and supply-chain plans** for critical occupations, regions and delivery programmes
2. **Expand training, supervision, mentoring and assessment capacity** ahead of demand
3. **Scale entry, progression and transition routes** without weakening competence or safety standards
4. **Retain experienced workers and protect critical knowledge** through succession planning, progression and mentoring
5. **Adopt AI, automation and digital technologies responsibly**, with clear human accountability
6. **Champion the people and opportunities behind network investment**, connecting communications to genuine jobs, training and careers
7. **Report progress collectively**, using shared workforce outcomes and escalating barriers that individual organisations cannot resolve

8.4.3 By their next workforce-planning cycle, major employers and participating supply-chain organisations should be able to demonstrate how their plans:

- Respond to evidenced occupational demand
- Increase routes to competence
- Protect safety
- Expand delivery capacity
- Support retention

8.4.4 The industry's infrastructure programme will move only as quickly as the workforce behind it. Investment in people must therefore be planned, funded and governed with the same urgency as investment in the network itself.

Annex 1 – Occupations and example job titles

Skill Level	Standard Occupational Classification	Occupational Group	Example job titles
RQF 7-8 SCQF 11-12	**11 - Corporate Managers and Directors**	Managerial	Chief Executive Officer; Managing Director; Operations Director; Other Directors
	12 - Other Managers and Proprietors	Managerial	Functional Managers
RQF 6 SCQF 9-10	**21 - Science, Research, Engineering and Technology Professionals**	Technical Professional	Power Systems Engineer; All types of Design Engineer; Protection & Control Engineer; Cable Systems Engineer; HVDC Engineer; SCADA Engineer; OT Cyber Security Specialist; Commissioning Engineer
	22 - Health Professionals	Other	Occupational Health Adviser; Site Paramedic
	23 - Teaching and Other Educational Professionals	Other	Apprenticeship Trainer/Lecturer; Education Manager
	24 - Business, Media and Public Service Professionals	Business Support	Quantity Surveyor; Construction Project Manager; Chartered Land/Wayleave Surveyor; Infrastructure Planning and Consents Professional; Regulatory Affairs Manager; Quality Assurance Manager; Public Relations Manager; Project/Programme Manager
RQF 4-5 SCQF 7-8	**31 - Science, Engineering and Technology Associate Professionals**	Technical Professional	Electrical & Electronics Technician; Substation Technician; Protection & Control Technician; HVDC Technician; SCADA Technician; Cable Design Technician; CAD/BIM Technician; IT Operations Technician
	32 - Health and Social Care Associate Professionals	Other	Occupational Health Technician; Workplace Health Trainer; Employee Assistance Programme Counsellor; Vulnerable Customer Outreach Worker; Community Development Officer; Health & Safety Officer
	33 - Protective Service Occupations	Business Support	Critical Infrastructure Security Manager; Fraud Analyst; Fire Safety Officer
	34 - Culture, Media and Sports Occupations	Business Support	Technical Author; Copywriter; Translator; Corporate Videographer; Aerial/Drone Photographer; Technical Illustrator
	35 - Business and Public Service Associate Professionals	Business Support	Estimator; Project Planner; Project Support Officer; Data Analyst; Buyer/Procurement Officer; Business Development Manager; HR Adviser; Standards and Regulatory Inspector
RQF 3 SCQF 6	**41 - Administrative Occupations**	Business Support	Business Support Administrator; Project Administrator; Finance Officer; Credit Controller; Payroll Administrator; Purchase Ledger Clerk; Stock Controller; Despatch Clerk; Logistics Coordinator
	42 - Secretarial and Related Occupations	Business Support	Executive Assistant; Personal Assistant; Legal Secretary; Receptionist
	51 - Skilled Agricultural and Related Trades	Front Line Technical	Utility Arborist; Arboricultural Consultant; Vegetation Management Arborist; Countryside Ranger; Grounds Maintenance
	52 - Skilled Metal, Electrical and Electronic Trades	Front Line Technical	Cable Jointer; Overhead Linesperson/Linesworker; Substation Electrical Fitter; Industrial/Maintenance Electrician; Protection Panel Wirer; Mechanical Fitter; Welder/Fabricator-Welder; CNC Machinist
	53 - Skilled Construction and Building Trades	Front Line Technical	Steel Erector; Bricklayer; Carpenter/Joiner; Plumber; Heating and Ventilation Installer; Construction Foreman; Site Construction Supervisor
	54 - Textiles, Printing and Other Skilled Trades	Other	Digital Printer; Depot Canteen Chef
	61 - Caring Personal Service Occupations	Other	Pest Control Officer; Vulnerable Customer Care Worker
	62 - Leisure, Travel and Related Personal Service Occupations	Other	Business Travel Adviser; Reservations Agent; Project-Accommodation Housekeeper; Depot/Office Caretaker; Facilities Caretaker
	63 - Community and Civil Enforcement Occupations	Other	Not applicable

Skill Level	Standard Occupational Classification	Occupational Group	Example job titles
RQF 2 SCQF 5	**71 - Sales Occupations**	Business Support	Telesales Executive; Field Sales Representative; Meter Reader; Debt Collector; Sales Supervisor
	72 - Customer Service Occupations	Business Support	Customer Service Representative; Complaints Officer; Vulnerable Customer Adviser; Contact Centre Dispatcher; Switchboard Operator; Customer Service Supervisor
RQF 1 SCQF 4	**81 - Process, Plant and Machine Operatives**	Front Line Technical	Transformer Assembly Operative; Switchgear Assembly Operative; Routine Panel Wirer; Cable Manufacturing Operative; Routine Electrical Tester; Cable Layer
	82 - Transport and Mobile Machine Drivers and Operatives	Front Line Technical	HGV Driver; Low-Loader Driver; Mobile Crane Operator; Excavator Operator; Fork-lift Truck Driver; Dumper Driver
	91 - Elementary Trades and Related Occupations	Front Line Technical	Groundworker; Trench Digger; Cable-Pulling Operative; Jointers Mate; Electrician's Mate; Fitter's Mate; Construction Labourer; Civil Engineering Labourer; Craft Attendant
	92 - Elementary Administration and Service Occupations	Business Support	Security Guard; Gatehouse Security Officer; Warehouse Operative; Stores Assistant; Delivery Operative; Canteen Assistant

Annex 2 – Methodology

A2.1 Current workforce estimates and future employment forecasts

A2.1.1 Current workforce estimates use the latest available baseline for each sub-industry. Forecasts are presented for 2032 and represent the best estimate based on information available at the time of publication, including known policy, investment and project plans. As with all forecasts, uncertainty increases over time and future workforce requirements may differ if assumptions, investment decisions, delivery timescales or economic conditions change.

A2.1.2 For the Manufacturing, Construction and Installation, and Operation and Maintenance aspects of the electricity networks industry, we have aligned as far as possible to the Electricity Networks Sector Group Plan (ENSGP)[14], which produced employment estimates based on the latest known investment plans for electricity transmission and distribution.

A2.1.3 However, the workforce demand estimates contained in this report and those in the ENSGP are not directly comparable, principally in four important areas:

- This report focuses on the period between 2026 and 2032, whereas the ENSGP covers the ten years between 2026 and 2035.
- This report includes the workforce demands of the Northern Ireland electricity networks industry
- This report also includes the trade of electricity sub-industry
- In this report, the forecasts for retirements have been separated from those for staff turnover – in the ENSGP, both are included in the forecast demand for people

A2.1.4 Data relating to the Northern Ireland and the trade of electricity workforces have been taken from Lightcast.

A2.1.5 The electricity networks industry is defined by the following Standard Industrial Classification (SIC) codes:

Standard Industrial Classification
Manufacturing
2711 – Manufacture of electric motors, generators and transformers
2712 – Manufacture of electricity distribution and control apparatus
2732 – Manufacture of other electronic and electric wires and cables
2790 – Manufacture of other electrical equipment
2651 – Manufacture of instruments and appliances for measuring, testing and navigation
2511 – Manufacture of metal structures and parts of structures
Construction & Installation
4222 – Construction of utility projects for electricity and telecommunications
4299 – Construction of other civil engineering projects not elsewhere classified
4321 – Electrical installation
4399/9 – Specialised construction activities (other than scaffold erection) not elsewhere classified
3320 – Installation of industrial machinery and equipment
7732 – Renting and leasing of construction and civil engineering machinery and equipment
Operation & Maintenance
3512 – Transmission of electricity
3513 – Distribution of electricity
3314 – Repair of electrical equipment
7112 – Engineering activities and related technical consultancy
7490 – Other professional, scientific and technical activities not elsewhere classified

[14] https://networksgrowthplan.com/

Standard Industrial Classification
Trade of electricity
351 – Trade of electricity

A2.1.6 Note that not all employees in these SIC codes have been included in our definition of the electricity networks industry's workforce. In some SIC codes Energy & Utility Skills has only taken a proportion of the total workforce, reflecting that some SIC codes also serve industries other than electricity networks.

A2.1.7 Estimates are rounded to the nearest 100. As a result, the sum of sub-industries and tables may not equal published totals. Users should exercise caution when interpreting small differences between estimates and forecasts or changes over time, as these may reflect the effects of rounding rather than underlying variation.

A2.2 Retirement and staff turnover assumptions

A2.2.1 Retirement forecasts have been calculated on the assumption that the proportion of the current workforce in each occupation who are aged 55+ will retire over the next ten years – therefore, Energy & Utility Skills has taken one-tenth of that percentage as the annual retirement rate (see the table opposite).

A2.2.2 Staff turnover, although not an element of the core requirement for people, is based on the assumption that a small proportion of the workforce will leave the industry each year to take up employment in other sectors. Leavers through staff turnover that remain in the energy & utilities sector are not reported in this analysis (as they do not need to be replaced).

Standard Occupational Classification	Annual Retirement Rate	Annual Staff Turnover Rate
11 - Corporate Managers and Directors	2.3%	2%
12 - Other Managers and Proprietors	2.3%	2%
21 - Science, Research, Engineering and Technology Professionals	1.2%	2%
22 - Health Professionals	1.8%	2%
23 - Teaching and Other Educational Professionals	1.7%	2%
24 - Business, Media and Public Service Professionals	1.6%	2%
31 - Science, Engineering and Technology Associate Professionals	1.5%	2%
32 - Health and Social Care Associate Professionals	2.0%	2%
33 - Protective Service Occupations	1.0%	2%
34 - Culture, Media and Sports Occupations	1.2%	2%
35 - Business and Public Service Associate Professionals	1.4%	2%
41 - Administrative Occupations	2.1%	5%
42 - Secretarial and Related Occupations	3.0%	5%
51 - Skilled Agricultural and Related Trades	3.8%	2%
52 - Skilled Metal, Electrical and Electronic Trades	1.9%	2%
53 - Skilled Construction and Building Trades	2.0%	2%
54 - Textiles, Printing and Other Skilled Trades	1.9%	2%
61 - Caring Personal Service Occupations	2.1%	5%
62 - Leisure, Travel and Related Personal Service Occupations	2.1%	5%
63 - Community and Civil Enforcement Occupations	1.9%	5%
71 - Sales Occupations	1.8%	5%
72 - Customer Service Occupations	1.3%	5%
81 - Process, Plant and Machine Operatives	2.4%	2%
82 - Transport and Mobile Machine Drivers and Operatives	3.3%	2%
91 - Elementary Trades and Related Occupations	2.2%	2%
92 - Elementary Administration and Service Occupations	2.0%	2%

A2.3 Estimating occupational criticality

A2.3.1 Our approach to assessing the absolute and relative criticality of each occupational group (2-digit SOCs) and detailed occupation (4-digit SOCs) is based on the weighted average of each occupations scores against the following 11 criteria.

Criterion	Description
Occupational relevance to the industry	Importance of occupation to the industry
Infrastructure delivery criticality	Importance of occupation to infrastructure delivery
Workforce shortage severity	Current or forecast workforce shortage level
Training lead time	Time required to reach competency
Replacement demand risk	Exposure to retirement and attrition
Regional concentration risk	Geographic availability constraints
Supply chain dependency	Reliance on contractors/subcontractors
Scalability of workforce	Ability to rapidly increase workforce numbers
Technology substitution potential	Potential for AI, robotics or automation to reduce workforce requirement
Regulatory / safety criticality	Importance to safety-critical or regulated activities
Future system relevance	Importance to future digital, DSO and whole-system requirements

A2.3.2 Each occupation is given a rating out of five against each criterion set out above and each score is multiplied by a weighting. The overall weighted average is then calculated and assigned to a level of criticality:

Score	Level of criticality	Suggested response
4.0 - 5.0	Critical priority	Immediate intervention required
3.0 - 3.9	High priority	Active monitoring and targeted interventions
2.0 - 2.9	Medium priority	Longer-term workforce planning
<2.0	Lower priority	Monitor only

A2.4 AI and automation adoption framework

A2.4.1 Our approach to assessing the impact of AI and automation on the future workforce is based on three adoption scenarios (low, medium and high adoption) assessed across seven dimensions of AI and automation adoption, as set out in the table below.

A2.4.2 Potential workforce effects are assessed separately and are not a defining characteristic of AI and automation adoption. Workforce impacts may vary between occupations operating under the same adoption scenario.

A2.4.3 The distinction between Significantly Impacted and Augmented occupations is important. Occupations classified as Significantly Impacted are expected to experience substantial changes to role content, responsibilities, skills and workflows, resulting in meaningful job redesign. Occupations classified as Augmented may also experience significant AI and automation adoption, but technology primarily enhances productivity, decision-making and performance while the core nature of the role remains broadly unchanged.

Risk Category	Definition
At Risk of Reduction	Fewer workers may be required because AI and automation increase productivity and automate routine tasks.
Significantly Impacted	Workforce demand remains broadly stable, but roles undergo substantial redesign as tasks, skills, responsibilities and workflows change significantly.
Augmented	AI and automation significantly improve productivity, decision-making and performance, but primarily enhance rather than redesign core roles, and demand for workers remains strong.
Limited Impact	Little expected effect on workforce demand because activities continue to depend heavily on physical intervention, human interaction or site-based work.

Dimension	Low Adoption	Medium Adoption	High Adoption
1. Investment and pace	Selective, cautious and uneven; scaling remains slow	Sustained investment in proven cases; adoption accelerates	Strong strategic investment; rapid scaling is prioritised
2. Technology maturity and autonomy	Established, low-risk tools; mainly assistive or rule-based	Mature predictive, generative and workflow tools; bounded autonomy	Agentic AI, machine vision, robotics and autonomous systems expand
3. Breadth of deployment	Selected teams, support functions and isolated operational uses	Multiple core and support functions; adoption still varies by organisation	Most feasible functions, supply-chain areas and lifecycle stages
4. Depth and operating-model integration	Tools sit alongside existing processes; pilots and local solutions dominate	Tools enter business-as-usual workflows, data platforms and governance	Processes are designed around AI; systems coordinate across workflows
5. Task automation and augmentation	Assists workers, removes discrete routine tasks and improves information access	Automates task clusters while augmenting judgement and decisions	Automates substantial sequences or selected end-to-end processes
6. Job redesign and skills	Local working-practice changes and basic AI literacy; little formal redesign	Material role redesign, structured upskilling and some redeployment	Widespread redesign, substantial reskilling and new oversight roles
7. Productivity ambition	Incremental gains in efficiency, quality, safety or service	Material productivity and capacity gains pursued across functions	Transformational gains; higher output, faster delivery or lower labour intensity

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