

Green Alliance

Briefing paper for Day 1 of Lords Report stage on the Skills and Post-16 Education Bill



11 October 2021

Summary

The [Climate Change Committee](#) identified education as a key enabler of the UK's route to net zero by building a skills base ready to meet the demands of the green economy. To meet the government's priorities on net zero and levelling up, the UK therefore needs a clear green jobs and skills strategy.

However, the Skills and Post-16 Education Bill currently makes no reference to the government's net zero or nature recovery targets. This would leave the UK without the skills required to bring about a green industrial revolution and potentially create over a million green jobs.

Green Alliance's [research](#) shows that by [developing green skills](#), the government can [level up UK regions](#) with significant employment challenges. Our [focus groups](#) demonstrate that green jobs are popular with the public, but they need clear investment and clarity from government on green skills.

We welcome government amendment 6, which would ensure jobs relating to climate change and other environmental goals are considered in the development of local skills improvement plans. We encourage you to **support amendment 64 tabled by Baroness Hayman, Lord Knight of Weymouth, Baroness Sheehan and Baroness Morgan of Cotes**, which would complement this at a national level. It would require the Secretary of State to publish a national green skills strategy which includes skills which will directly contribute to or indirectly support climate change and environmental goals.

The Prime Minister has promised a green industrial revolution to bring growth across UK regions, and that the Skills and Post-16 Education Bill would be "rocket fuel" for levelling up the country. **Amendments 6 and 64** would help to marry these goals, aligning the government's workforce strategy with its environmental targets by:

- Integrating the UK's net zero target into the Department for Education's post-16 technical education and training strategy to develop the skills, capabilities and expertise that are necessary for green jobs;
- Mandating that the UK's environmental goals be considered in local skills improvement plans;
- Embedding the government's net zero and biodiversity targets in a national green skills strategy.

“Levelling up” by meeting the challenges of net zero

The government’s priority of transitioning to net zero is reshaping industries, jobs and communities across the UK. The Department for Education has a vitally important role to play in training a workforce that is ready to take on this shift. Demand for a green jobs is already being generated – the [Campaign for Learning](#) highlighted a 27 per cent increase in roles with environmental responsibilities between 2016 and 2019, with growth continuing rapidly. Research shows that with a better green skills offer the government can match this demand to regions facing the most significant employment challenges, while also meeting environmental targets:



- [Onward estimated](#) that transitioning to low carbon and renewable energy sources **could create at least 900,000 jobs** in energy efficiency and low carbon heating by 2030, mostly in the north, Midlands and Scotland.
- [Investment in the “circular economy”](#) – work focused on reusing, repairing, remanufacturing and recycling in order to reduce our resource consumption – could create **450,000 jobs by 2035**. These might include engineers at biorefining plants; skilled repairers; trained remanufacturers; recycling operatives; second hand retail assistants; and circular procurement professionals.
- [Investment in jobs that improve woodland, peatland and urban parks](#) could create **16,050 jobs across the 20 per cent of British constituencies experiencing the most severe unemployment challenges**. This includes a combination of entry level jobs with transferable skills, like machinery operation in land management or hazard assessment in tree cultivation, and roles requiring long term personal development through qualifications and accreditation.

There is broad public support for jobs in the green economy:

- [Centre for Towns](#) recorded **79 per cent support for green jobs** in big cities and 75 per cent in small towns.
- **Half of those aged 18-34** who spoke to [Good Energy](#) said that they wanted a job in the green economy.
- [Our focus groups](#) indicate that while public knowledge of the green economy is low there is **broad enthusiasm in the prospect of green jobs**. However, the public needs evidence that the green economy is not just a short term project by making green jobs and skills the safe option.

The government urgently needs a strategy that matches supply and demand for green skills. This should outline clear routes into the green economy and reassure the public that the net zero economy provides a secure path for their future.

To ensure that the UK’s environmental targets figure as a central consideration in the development of local and national skills strategies, please support these amendments during the debate.

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