

## Plugging the Skills Gap: How to build a workforce to decarbonise heat

Central to the UK government's plan to decarbonise heating, in line with the 2050 net zero target, is widespread adoption of clean, efficient heat pump systems, with the government aiming for 600,000 heat pumps to be installed each year from 2028. The [Heat Pump Association](#) estimates a large number of installers are urgently required – with an additional 57,000 needed over the next decade.

[Good, skilled jobs](#) translate into a better experience for households: ensuring world class installation and maintenance services. Plugging the skills gap can spur innovation and inward investment, unlocking the UK's manufacturing potential. There is a role for both government and industry to foster the necessary conditions to meet the challenge.

### Where will the workforce come from?

Addressing the skills and jobs gap will require building upon the skillset of the current heating workforce, as well as encouraging new entrants. With long-term certainty, existing businesses will invest in the skills of their workforce.

Certain heat pump knowledge, skills and experience fit within the existing competences of those who are highly skilled in the heating engineering and plumbing workforce. Additional skills in heat pumps will future proof the workforce. Mechanisms such as Gas Safe certification could play a role in expanding heat pump installation skills via a familiar and trusted setting.

Engagement with Further Education leavers, and others entering (or re-entering) the workplace, can help encourage new market entrants and the next generation of heat pump installers. Apprenticeships present a good option. Research shows that "Gen-Z" want green jobs, and are receptive to the idea of apprenticeships, but don't know enough about the options.

## How to develop the skills and workforce to decarbonise heating

1. Long-term confidence: Ensure long-term confidence through policy stability, funding commitments, clarity of market signals and government messaging, and establishing a policy roadmap for longevity. This will enable businesses to plan and invest in skills for the long-term.
2. Quality skills: Ensure government-backed green skills schemes provide learners with high quality skills which are equivalent to existing occupational standards. Skills should be transferable for the retrofit and heating market, with direct pathways into apprenticeships and work-based learning for those leaving full-time education and entering the industry.
3. Fair pay: Support industry to take a negotiated approach towards fair pay across jobs in domestic heating, setting a “going rate” as seen in other advanced economies.
4. Job security: Where possible, support conditions for more direct employment, apprenticeships, and upskilling.
5. Gender diversity: Adopt and promote best practices in recruitment and employment. Support targeted communications and networking opportunities to promote gender diversity, workplace mentorship schemes, and regular equalities audits.
6. Communications on training opportunities: Support public and industry communications efforts to encourage training and reskilling, including via Further Education. This should include providing clarity to those looking to upskill or reskill on how to become a heat pump installer.
7. Incentivise and support uptake of training opportunities: Provide funding schemes to support the training necessary to scale up the workforce.

**Case Study – Your Energy Your Way:** Low carbon heating installation could present a growth area for women in the renewables sector, with ‘Your Energy Your Way’ recently raising £250,000 to provide skills training and provide employment opportunities for women.

Find out more at [electrifyheat.uk](https://electrifyheat.uk) or reach out to [Leo.Vincent@e3g.org](mailto:Leo.Vincent@e3g.org) to set up a meeting.