


Making 'green jobs' accessible for everyone

A plan for employers and government



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Recommendations

While the government is committed to growing the green workforce, it has said little so far about how these jobs will be accessible to all groups, whether that is by social group or by the nature of the jobs created. This report sets out what government, employers, training providers and charities that support young people into work can do to make opportunities in the green workforce more accessible.

Through desk research, deliberation groups with young people from low-income backgrounds, and discussions with employers and sector experts, we developed the recommendations below. Further detail on the actions employers can take is set out in our [Employers' action plan](#).



1. Don't always lead with 'green': Education settings and employers should talk about good jobs, not green jobs

Young people from low-income backgrounds want secure, well-paid jobs and are sceptical of greenwashing. We heard that young people from low-income backgrounds feel pressure to focus on careers in traditional professions, and that their parents are concerned about levels of pay and job security in the green economy. When discussing opportunities in the green economy, careers advisers and employers should focus on the quality of the role, rather than solely its 'green' aspects.

There is also a need to recognise that jobs and careers are not binary as we transition towards a greener economy. Many roles can be performed both inside and outside the green economy, but the focus should be on equipping young people with skills that will serve them well as they navigate their wider careers. For example, skilled construction and building trades are the occupations in highest demand in Department for Energy Security and Net Zero's clean energy jobs plan, but there are many skilled construction jobs outside the green economy, and an individual may move between them throughout their career.

Employers and education providers should explain what roles involve, and the benefits they deliver for employees, alongside their social and environmental benefits. Where there are social and environmental benefits, employers should highlight these, but not in isolation from the wider benefits of the role. As discussed below, categorising 'green jobs' is often unhelpful. Further work is needed to engage a wide range of young people to understand which labels (if any) are most useful for grouping opportunities in the green economy.



“

What would motivate me to want a green job is seeing the specifics of why a green job is more beneficial to you, and to society as a whole.

”

Young person





While employers and professionals might have an understanding of what we mean by green jobs and the green economy, this should not shape engagement with young people. To make a wider pool of young people aware of opportunities in the green economy, employers and careers providers need to meet young people where they are. This means that a shift in how we communicate about green jobs needs to be applied across all the recommendations that follow.

2. Think big picture: government could take an expansive view of the green economy and offer strategic leadership

The publication of the [Clean energy jobs plan](#) by the Department for Energy Security and Net Zero's (DESNZ) Office for Clean Energy Jobs is a helpful example of the long-term, strategic thinking needed across the wider green economy. The plan sets out the job roles required to meet the clean power 2030 target, but its focus on energy excludes many other roles. Applying similar methodology across the whole green economy would send a clearer demand signal, provide clarity for charities and training providers that work with young people, and enable them to focus on key growth areas. In particular, mapping the job roles required across local areas would support longer-term planning by education and training providers, and provide greater certainty in careers education.

For DESNZ and Defra, the green skills gap is a major risk to their long-term ambitions. A more strategic, cross-departmental approach to the green economy could mitigate this risk. In particular, the Department for Education and the Department for Work and Pensions could use mapping of the kind outlined above to inform their work and help ensure that skills shortages do not inhibit the ability of other departments to deliver their agendas. As a starting point, the government could refresh and publish the green jobs plan, produced under the previous government but not published.



“

I want to know I'll make a difference.

”

Young person



3. Employers need to lead on closing the skills gap: employers should partner with schools and training providers to expand careers advice and support

We consistently heard from young people that they do not hear about opportunities in the green economy in education settings. Employers should work with schools to deliver awareness-raising activities and promote training opportunities. The recent curriculum reforms, and the inclusion of the core enrichment entitlement, present an opportunity to include education on careers in the green economy beyond geography and science lessons.

Chambers of commerce and careers hubs should play a connecting role, enabling local employers to build relationships with schools and training providers. Charities and other specialist providers involved in careers support can also be key partners in enabling connections between schools and employers, but employers may need to take proactive steps to build knowledge of the green economy in these organisations. Employers should also consider how their employment practices influence the pathways available to young people. Recognising the skills gap, employers should create more entry-level opportunities with training, or expand their apprenticeship offering. There may also be a need to update recruitment practices to make them more inclusive and better equipped to attract new talent.



“

Schools try to flex timetables where possible, but the curriculum was very regimented until recently. It's easing off a bit now.

”

Employer





4. Detail matters: linking training and development opportunities to the local labour market is essential

Support needs to reflect the local labour market and the needs of young people. The key factors for effective interventions were the connection between the intervention and the local labour market, and how adaptable it is to the specific needs of young people. Charities and training providers should engage with local employers to ensure support is well matched to local job needs, and employers should partner with local organisations to help make this happen. In adapting the support offer to individual needs, employers, charities and training providers should consider specific local barriers to accessing support, such as transport.

“

Things are changing rapidly, and there are more expectations that young people will be competent on sustainability issues in order to be in line with organisational priorities.


”

Employer

5. Make it easy for schools to ‘talk the talk’: Employers and the planned new national career service for schools should work with charities and funders to align and extend resources for teachers and careers advisors

Research from the MCS Foundation found that over half of teachers are not confident in explaining the range of green jobs options available to students, or the pathways to become qualified for green jobs, and that 75% do not feel that they have enough resources to support them in talking about green jobs.¹

Employers, training providers, and charities should work together to co-develop an information and resource pack to equip teachers and career advisors with the information and resources they need to confidently talk about green jobs and the pathways to accessing them. The planned new national careers advice support service for schools² will have a key role to play in supporting the dissemination of these resources. The resources should take a broad view of the green economy, aim to provide young people with an understanding of the various factors that impact the transition to a green economy (for example, including finance and supply chains), focus on answering the questions that we know parents and young people have (including routes into different sectors and the relevance of different qualifications), address some of the common questions and misconceptions about the green economy, and be applicable to subjects across the curriculum, going beyond STEM subjects. The approach needs to highlight clear, relatable career pathways, avoiding overly abstract terminology and instead connecting roles to real-world industries and progression routes.



75%
of teachers

do not feel they have enough resources to support them in talking about green jobs

¹ [The MCS Foundation, *Getting Gen Z into green jobs: we need to talk about apprenticeships* \(SHIFT INSIGHT, May 2024\)](#)

² Esmé Kenney, 'Ministers plan new careers service, but current provider plans to bid', *FEWEEK*, (2026) <https://feweek.co.uk/ministers-plan-new-careers-service-but-current-provider-plans-to-bid/>



“

There is a need to focus on critical skills when educating young people, they can then apply these skills in a variety of contexts, including ‘green’, which will include a broad range of jobs due to the greening of the economy. ‘Green’ itself isn’t always the most helpful label.

”

Employer

6. Make it easy for employers to ‘walk the walk’: apprenticeships and training need to be easy for employers in the green economy, and curricula should widen the scope of green jobs

Upcoming changes to apprenticeship funding, and the growth and skills levy, are a promising start, but further work is needed to create a broad-based entry point into the green economy. Foundation apprenticeships create a new, employment-based training pathway for young people, and could be a key route into the green economy. More broadly, models that lower the risk of taking on an apprentice for small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) in, or connected to, the green economy should be expanded. For example, shared apprenticeships or ‘employ and place’ approaches. This is where a central organisation employs the apprentice and places them in either SMEs, charities or social enterprises. Typically places that do not want to take on the risk or administrative burden of recruiting an apprentice directly.

This kind of approach would require a central organisation to take on the administrative burden, enabling SMEs, charities and sole traders to take on apprentices, or host employees on a placement basis. This could be the responsibility of a single backbone organisation focused on green jobs and the green economy, or it might require different organisations within different sectors (for example, waste, clean energy or sustainable finance). Regardless of how a scheme like this is structured, it would need to be marketed to young people in a way that reflects their priorities and uses language and framing that resonates with them.

As well as enabling SMEs, charities, and social enterprises in the green economy to offer more entry-level positions, apprenticeship frameworks and training programmes should broaden young people’s view of the green economy. By teaching the skills to do a job ‘in a green way’, vocational courses can acknowledge that the same role can be carried out both inside and outside the green economy. Embedding green modules in other training or using placements in an ‘employ and place’ model to expose young people to ‘less obviously green’ roles, would raise awareness of the range of opportunities available. Clear and immediate opportunities include trades such as plumbing or plastering, where young people could transition into careers in retrofit, or roles such as procurement or professional services, where the ‘green’ aspect is growing.



“

Green is a nice wrapper, but a lot of the jobs are just jobs.

”

Employer

What we did



Evidence review

We carried out a review of existing evidence, focused on five questions:

1. What are current definitions of 'green jobs', 'green workforce' and 'green skills'?
2. Do we know how this language affects engagement for young people?
3. What programmes exist to improve access to green jobs?
4. What is the evidence that these programmes are effective, and how robust is this evidence?
5. What existing recommendations are there in this context?

Definitions and example programmes were identified via internet searches, reviews of prominent reports and discussions with sector experts. Reports were sourced through internet searches, searches of academic literature and recommendations from experts.

The findings summarise common definitions of green jobs, the evidence around young people's understanding of these definitions, and how well existing support programmes relate to the evidence on effective employment support for young people. This is not intended to be a comprehensive catalogue of all available programmes but provides an overview of the types of programmes that are available nationally.

Deliberation groups

We ran three deliberation groups, speaking to young people about:

- their understanding of green jobs
- the visibility of different job pathways
- what they think schools, employers and government should be doing to raise awareness of opportunities in the green economy and make these opportunities more accessible.

The three groups were:

- Eleven young people aged 16-18 who were participating in the EY Smart Futures scheme in London
- Sixteen young people aged 11-18, involved in a range of Groundwork-led environmental leadership and social action projects in Greater Manchester
- Seven young people aged 17–21 who are members of Groundwork's youth advisory board

We also spoke to charities, funders, think tanks, employers and other experts as part of this research.

Key findings



Key findings

1. The term 'green jobs' is not always helpful

The evidence review found contradictory evidence about what young people think is meant by 'green jobs'. Some research finds that young people think that green jobs are unattainable because they need advanced degrees, while other research finds that they are unattractive because young people think that green jobs are low-paid and offer little opportunity for progression.

In our research, young people found the term unclear and unfamiliar, but were able to list a broad range of relevant opportunities and did find it clear and accessible once explained. The issue was not the phrase itself. Young people highlighted the need for more work to raise awareness of opportunities in the green economy. The need to 'meet young people where they are' was highlighted, including the potential use of social media in showcasing roles in the green economy and demystifying green jobs. The lack of understanding among young people of the full range of job roles in the green economy suggests that this awareness-raising work should take a broad view, including roles like finance and procurement, as well as more obvious roles in construction and energy.

Alternative phrases, such as 'future jobs' were raised, but they also had their own issues.



2. Young people from low-income backgrounds are more interested in good jobs than green jobs

We consistently heard that the factors that make a green job attractive are not unique: young people want secure, well-paid employment. The attraction of having a positive social impact is also not unique to the green economy, with young people highlighting medical and teaching jobs as examples.

At the same time, the definitions of green jobs consistently link green jobs and “decent jobs”, which offer fair income, job security, safe working conditions, and equal opportunities. This suggests that green jobs will be attractive, but that leading with the “green” aspect is not the best way to promote them. The way that employers and others communicate about opportunities in the green economy needs to be shaped by what attracts young people to these roles, rather than professionals’ perceptions of green jobs or the green economy.



3. How support is implemented is key to supporting young people into employment

The Youth Futures Foundation (YFF) toolkit summarises the available high-quality evidence on the impact, cost and effectiveness of common interventions used to help young people into work. It is not specific to green jobs, but it covers the types of support often used by organisations in the green economy and beyond. No single intervention emerges as a clear winner. The evidence base is mixed. However, there are consistent features of implementation that affect impact: interventions need to reflect the skills needs of local employers and the local labour market; off-the-job interventions should mirror work, not school; and support should match participants' needs (for example, mentors and mentees should be well matched, and basic skills training should be personalised).

In practice, most support schemes involve more than one of these interventions, and their impact is cumulative. It's important that any support programme reflects the local opportunities in the green economy, and is well matched to the needs of the young people it is seeking to support.



It's important that any support programme reflects the local opportunities in the green economy



4. Not enough is being done to address skills gaps

Skills gaps are consistently highlighted as a key barrier to the growth of green industries, and young people are not being made aware of opportunities in the green economy. Further work is needed to address this gap, both by employers and through careers education.

Evidence review



Overview of evidence review



This evidence review summarises common definitions of green jobs, the evidence on young people's understanding of these definitions, and how well existing support programmes align with the evidence on effective employment support for young people. It is not intended to be a comprehensive catalogue of all available programmes, but it provides an overview of the types of programmes available nationally.

Definitions and example programmes were identified through internet searches, reviews of prominent reports and discussions with sector experts. Reports were sourced through internet searches, academic literature searches and recommendations from experts.

Language and definitions

What definitions are people using?

Most UK sources use the Green Jobs Taskforce definition of green jobs as ‘employment in an activity that directly contributes to, or indirectly supports, the achievement of the UK’s net zero emission target and helps mitigate climate risks’.³

Other common definitions include:

- ILO⁴: ‘Green jobs are decent jobs that contribute to preserve or restore the environment, be they in traditional sectors such as manufacturing and construction, or in new, emerging green sectors such as renewable energy and energy efficiency.’
- ONS ‘low carbon jobs’⁵: ‘economic activities that deliver goods and services that are likely to help the UK generate lower emissions of greenhouse gases, predominantly carbon dioxide.’

Many of these definitions exclude job roles that are an important part of the green economy. They often focus on STEM and data roles, while excluding nature-based roles and waste management. Some people therefore advocate a bottom-up approach that looks at whether specific roles are ‘green’.⁶ However, this can still exclude enabling roles (for example, accountants in renewable energy companies).

There have also been efforts to describe a broader taxonomy of job roles, including roles that are not ‘core’ green jobs but enable the net zero transition. For example, the Green Jobs Foundation refers to ‘shades of green’, spanning roles in high-emissions industries that will remain necessary (for example, pollution management) through to new and emerging roles that support the net zero transition (for example, renewable energy data analyst or corporate carbon management).

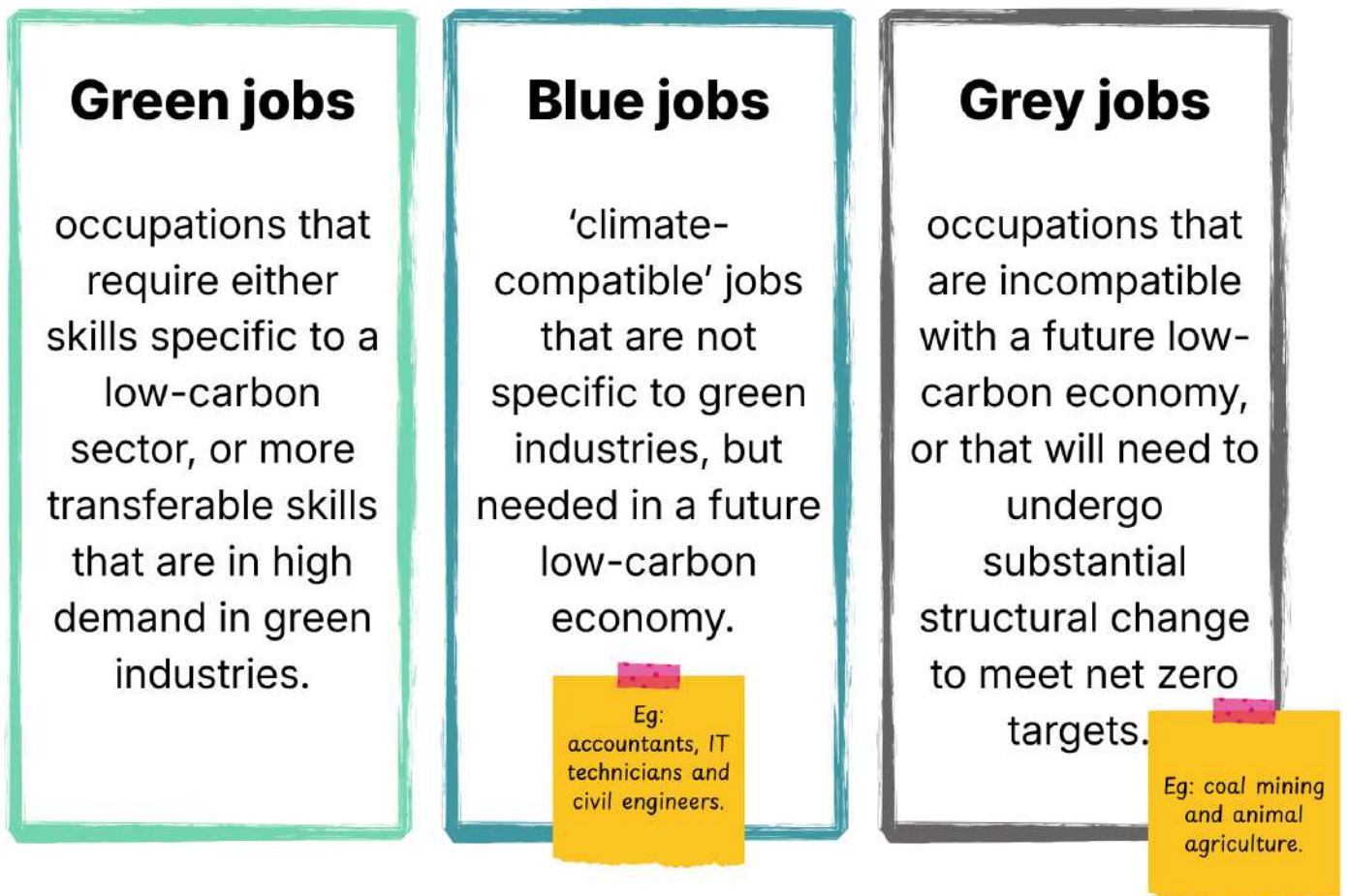
³ [GOV.UK, Green Jobs Taskforce report, \(Independent report, 2021\)](#)

⁴ [International Labour Organization \(ILO\), ‘What is a green job?’, ILO](#)

⁵ [Leah Harris, ‘The challenges of defining a “green job”’, Office for National Statistics, \(Last revised: 2021\)](#)

⁶ [Green Jobs Foundation 2025 Report, Are Green Jobs for Everyone? \(Green Jobs Foundation, 2005\)](#)

The Institute For Public Policy Research (IPPR) refers to green, blue and grey jobs⁷:



Within this framework, some high-carbon occupations can already be considered green jobs because their skills are essential to equivalent low-carbon technologies. One example given is heating installers: their skills are in demand for heat pump installation, and they would need relatively minimal retraining.

⁷ Joshua Emden, Andrew Sudmant, Teresa Farinha, 'Skills matter: Shaping a just transition for workers in the energy sector', *The Institute For Public Policy Research (IPPR)*, (2024)
<https://www.ippr.org/articles/skills-matter>

What might a shared definition look like?

There are some shared components across common definitions:

- **Green jobs contribute to the net zero transition:** they do not necessarily need to be in green industries themselves, but will contain an element connected to the natural environment and/or climate change. This can be through outcomes (for example, generating environmentally friendly goods or services, such as green buildings, clean transport or solar water heating systems) or processes (for example, reducing water consumption, controlling air pollution or improving recycling services). Including both outcomes and processes broadens the definition to include roles that support green industries (for example, green procurement). Referring to contribution also brings some of IPPR's 'blue jobs' into scope where they are within green industries.
- **Green jobs are 'decent' jobs:** definitions often link green jobs to 'decent jobs'- roles that offer a fair income, job security, safe working conditions and equal opportunities.



Are the current definitions a barrier to engagement for young people?

There is evidence that understanding and language can be a barrier to accessing green jobs:

- Public First found that young people think working in the ‘green economy’ is mainly for young people with degrees who studied science at school. Of those polled, 67% thought a degree was a minimum requirement for most green jobs, with 37% saying it should be in a related field and 17% saying it would have to be higher than degree level.⁸
- Catch22 said that the term ‘green jobs’ does not resonate with young people, who think it refers to outdoor work such as gardening.⁹

These findings appear contradictory, but point to a broader lack of clarity among young people about what a green job is, and to inconsistency in how the term is used. Young people may view green jobs as unattainable because of the skills and qualifications required, or as unattractive because of perceptions of low pay and limited progression.

More generally, skills gaps are frequently identified as the primary barrier to the growth of green industries.¹⁰ Skills England has said that ‘as the economy transitions to low carbon, without action there is a risk that businesses will be unable to find staff with the necessary skills, thereby slowing the pace of business activity and growth of the green economy’, and has identified language and terminology as a pressing need.¹¹

⁸ [Energy, Climate & Environment, Polling Tables, Qualitative Research, Reports, *New report on young people’s attitudes to jobs in the green economy for The Prince’s Trust* \(PUBLIC FIRST, Elinor Gray, 2023\)](#)

⁹ Catch22, ‘Giving the green light: creating green jobs for all’, Catch22, (2023) <https://www.catch-22.org.uk/resources/giving-the-green-light/>

¹⁰ [Energy, Climate & Environment, Polling Tables, Qualitative Research, Reports, *New report on young people’s attitudes to jobs in the green economy for The Prince’s Trust* \(PUBLIC FIRST, Elinor Gray, 2023\)](#)

¹¹ [Department for Education Skills England Report, *Skills England: Driving growth and widening opportunities* \(Department for Education, 2024\)](#)



In addition to language, barriers to young people accessing green jobs include:

- Not knowing where to access training, and difficulty navigating overlapping local and national offers.
- The cost of training.
- Misinformation and scepticism about some green industries (for example, a perception that the energy sector is not green).¹²
- A lack of clear careers guidance or green skills education.

Many of these barriers are more relevant to narrower, more technical definitions of green jobs than to the enabling roles discussed above.

Alternative definitions

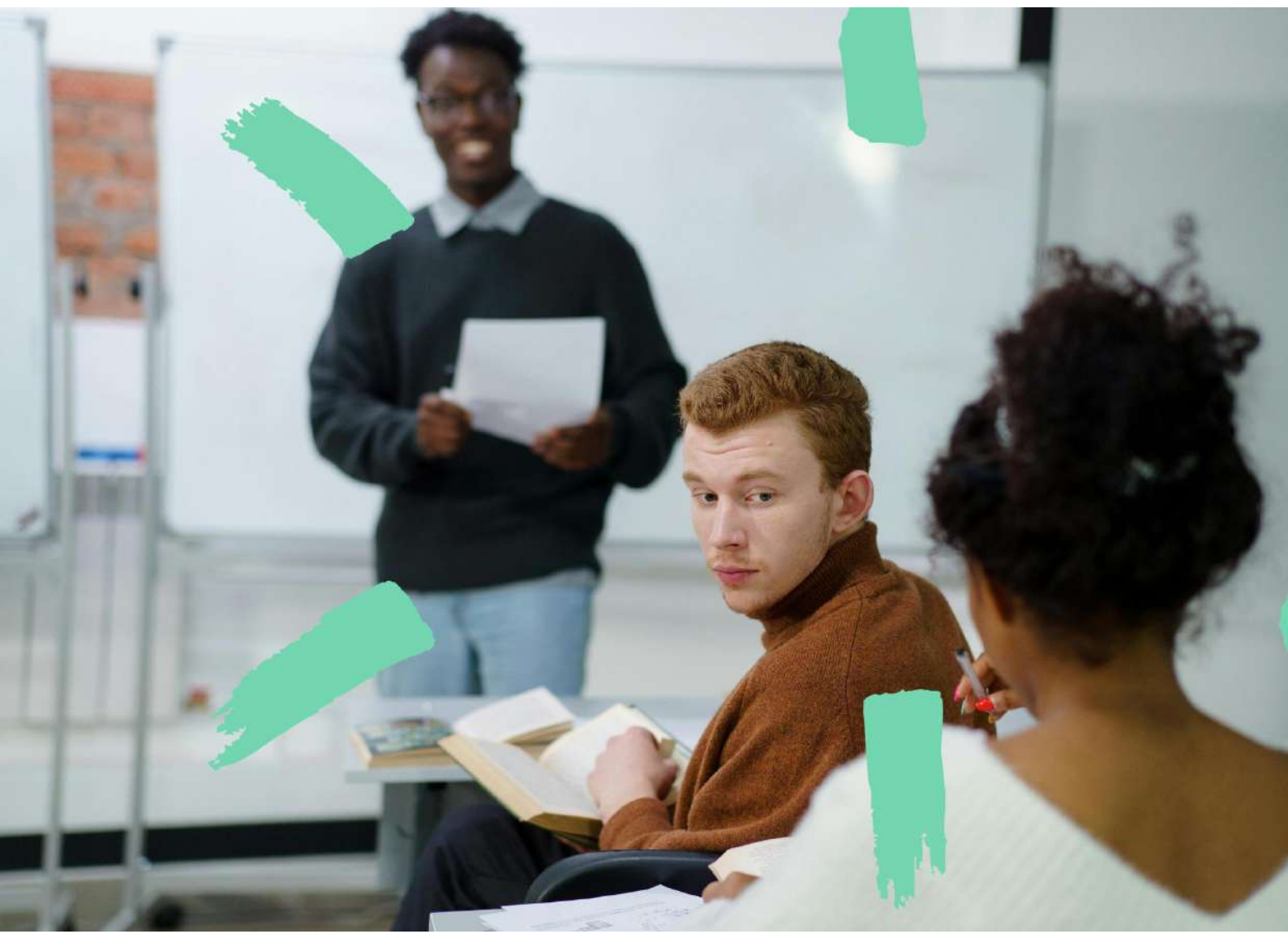
Some sources focus less on ‘green jobs’ and more on ‘future jobs’ or ‘future skills.’ Framing roles around longevity could help to emphasise the opportunities they present for young people.

¹² Catch22, ‘Giving the green light: creating green jobs for all’, Catch22, (2023) <https://www.catch-22.org.uk/resources/giving-the-green-light/>

How effective is the support for young people to access green jobs?

What kinds of support are effective?

Across the sources reviewed, we identified 18 programmes that aim to support young people into green jobs. These relate to seven of the interventions included in the Youth Futures Foundation (YFF) Youth Employment Toolkit, but most programmes include more than one intervention assessed by YFF. YFF's work aims to support marginalised young people to secure and thrive in good work. While these summaries are not specifically focused on supporting young people from marginalised or low-income backgrounds into work, the toolkit does not suggest there is any reason to expect interventions to be more or less effective for particular demographics.



YFF's assessment of cost, impact and strength of evidence is summarised below¹³:

Intervention	Impact	Strength of evidence	Cost
Apprenticeships	High	Low	High
Basic skills training	Low	Medium	High
Life skills training	Low	Medium	Low
Mentoring & coaching	Low	Medium	Medium
Off-the-job training	Medium	Medium	High
On-the-job training	Medium	Low	High
Wage subsidy programmes	Low	Medium	High

You can see more detail about what each of these interventions entails [here](#).

From this table, no specific interventions emerge as clear winners. The evidence base is mixed. However, there are some consistent features of implementation that affect impact:

- Interventions should reflect the skills needs of local employers and the local labour market.
- Off-the-job interventions should mirror work, not school.
- Support should match participants' needs (for example, mentors and mentees should be well matched, and basic skills training should be personalised).

¹³ Youth Futures Foundation, 'Youth Employment Toolkit', Youth Futures Foundation

How well does existing support align with the evidence?

We identified 18 programmes. We know others exist, but this review grouped programmes into the following categories:

Programme category	Programmes included
Apprenticeships	6 specific green apprenticeships were launched in 2023, and 200 were updated to include green skills
Online learning	EY & Microsoft Green Skills Passport StayNimble launchpad Skills Bootcamps
In-person skills training	City & Guilds training programmes King's Trust Achieve programme Bright Green Future
Employer-led training provision	Grid for Good Sector-based Work Academy Programme RE:GEN Academy
Immersive on-the-job training	New to Nature Groundwork Green Jobs Pathfinder Kickstart/Race for Nature
Information & signposting	Green Careers Hub Net Zero Careers Accelerator DWP Green Jobs Awareness campaign Green Skills Library Catch22 Energise

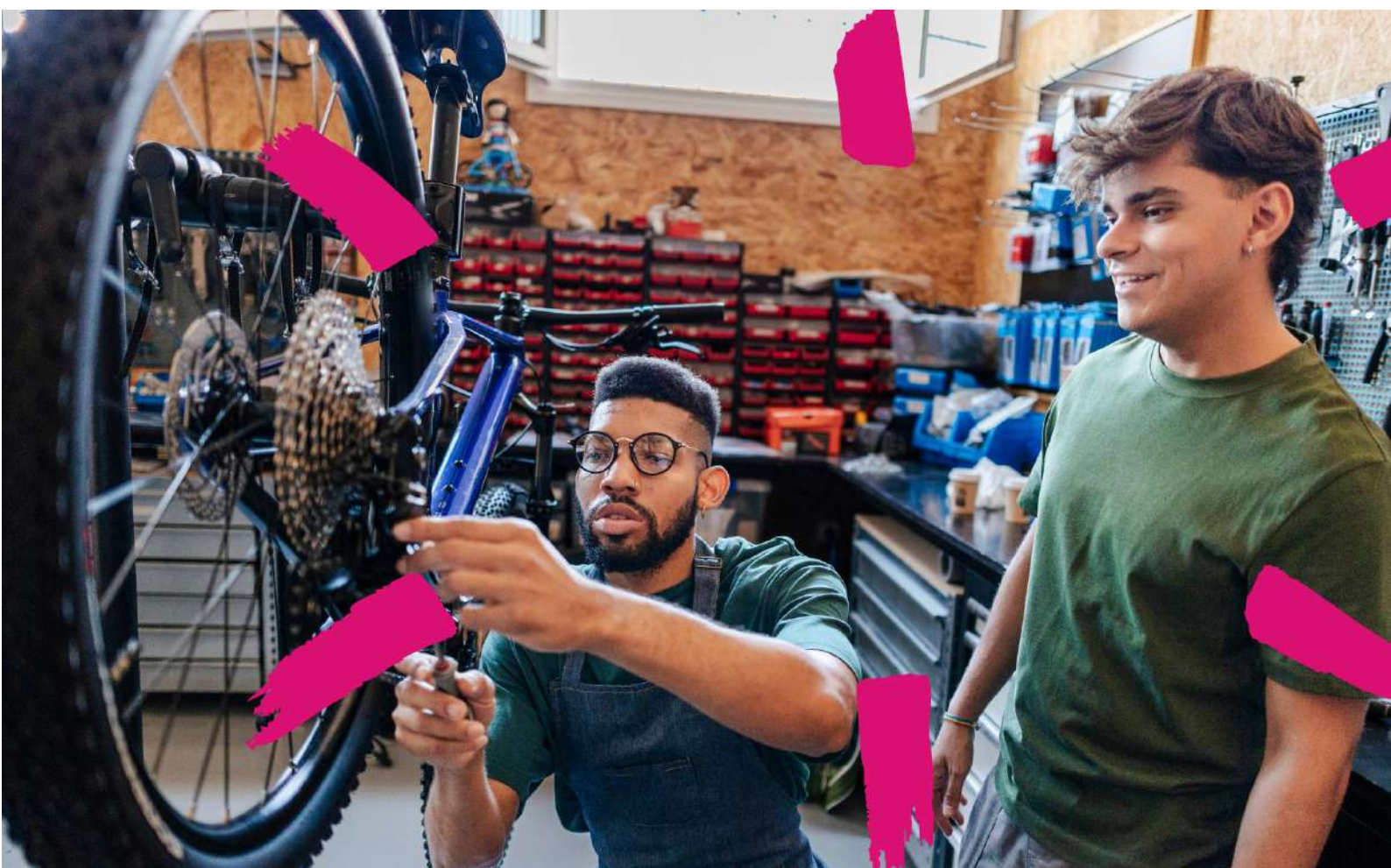
The majority of existing support programmes include more than one of the interventions assessed by YFF, and it is important to note that the impact of these interventions is cumulative.

Programmes included	Basic skills training	Life skills training	Mentoring & coaching	Off-the-job training	On the job training	Wage subsidy programme
Online learning						
EY & Microsoft Green Skills Passport	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Stay Nimble Green Jobs Launchpad (closed)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Skills Bootcamps	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
In-person skills training						
City & Guilds Green Skills and Sustainability training	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
King's Trust Achieve	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Bright Green Future	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Employer-led training provision						
Grid for Good	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Sector-based Work Academy Programme (SWAP)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
RE:GEN Academy	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Immersive on-the-job training						
New to Nature	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Groundwork Green Jobs Pathfinder	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Kickstart/Race for Nature	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Information & signposting						
Green Careers Hub	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Net Zero Careers Accelerator	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
DWP Green Jobs Awareness Campaign	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Green Skills Library	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

It is not possible to review the effectiveness of individual programmes because there is limited published detail on how they are implemented. However, based on the implementation factors above, programmes that (a) reflect the local labour market and (b) are tailored to participants' needs are more likely to be effective. This suggests that programmes involving local employers (for example, Grid for Good) and personalisation (for example, New to Nature) are more likely to deliver impact than those that do not (for example, Green Skills Library).

This applies both across and within categories. For example, the Net Zero Careers Accelerator includes tailored advice, so we would expect it to have greater impact than the green skills library or skills bootcamps. This does not undermine the value of less adaptable online programmes: they often focus on helping young people move to the next stage of a pathway that ultimately aims for them to secure a job or an apprenticeship. If a programme does not significantly increase a young person's chance of employment shortly afterwards, that may not be a problem if it supports them to access the next stage of training. From the available evidence, it was not possible to assess this.

Across categories, the principles of good implementation can be applied to different extents. For example, the Energise programme was designed in partnership with a local employer, despite being an information service early in the pathway to a green job. In contrast, the Achieve programme does not involve local employers and could be delivered in a way that is disconnected from the local labour market.



Existing recommendations



Recommendations in the reports reviewed can be broadly grouped in five categories:

1. Setting strategic direction

These recommendations are generally aimed at central and local government. They focus on government providing a clear signal of future plans and priorities to enable employers and training providers to take a long-term view. The LGA report specifically calls for clarity around the future of net zero devolution and the role of local government. To a degree, the current government has done this through the industrial strategy and 10-year infrastructure strategy, and through the requirement for local areas to develop local growth plans.

2. Raising awareness

These recommendations are generally focused on either a national awareness campaign or on increasing the emphasis on green jobs in careers education. The awareness campaign recommendations sometimes also include a call for an online information platform, similar to the Green Careers Hub or Net Zero Careers Accelerator.

In the context of careers education, recommendations include integrating net zero and climate change into the curriculum (particularly before young people make GCSE or equivalent choices, and within STEM subjects) and improving careers education in relation to the green economy.

3. Shifting language and focus

The Green Jobs Foundation report recommends shifting language from 'green jobs' to 'green pathways'. More in line with the wider research is Public First's recommendation that, when promoting green jobs to young people, employers should emphasise pay, progression and security, rather than focusing solely on environmental purpose.

4. Improving career pathways

Recommendations on career pathways generally focus on entry-level roles. They include calls for on-the-job training and paid placements, as well as creating more entry-level roles and pre-apprenticeship training opportunities. The Green Jobs Taskforce called for a UK-wide body with national representation to ensure momentum and coherence on workforce transition, a role that Skills England could fulfil. The taskforce also recommended improving continuity of careers advice and pathways through collaboration between government, industry and the education sector.

5. Strengthening links between employers, training providers and charities

Several reports call for closer collaboration between employers, training providers and charities. This includes working together to meet demand, smooth progression along pathways, and establish placement and mentoring schemes. Charities are generally mentioned in the context of sector partnerships that create learning and progression opportunities.

Conclusions of evidence review



Young people's understanding of what green jobs are is mixed, and there is no consensus on which job roles and industries are included. Existing definitions generally agree that green jobs (a) contribute to the net zero transition (through outcomes or processes) and (b) are good-quality jobs. An alternative approach is to frame roles around longevity and long-term prospects by referring to 'future' industries, jobs or skills. There is limited evidence on which definitions and framings resonate most with young people.

The evidence on how to support young people into work does not point to a single best intervention or combination of interventions, which makes it difficult to judge the effectiveness of existing programmes. However, the evidence is clearer on implementation. Support is more likely to be effective when it is accessible, adaptable to individuals' needs and reflective of the local labour market. This suggests that standard online training courses will often be less effective than tailored, employer-led programmes. That said, online programmes and information services may still add value if they help young people move to the next step of a pathway that ultimately leads to a green job. There is also a clear need to 'meet young people where they are', including through co-developing interventions with the groups they are designed to support.

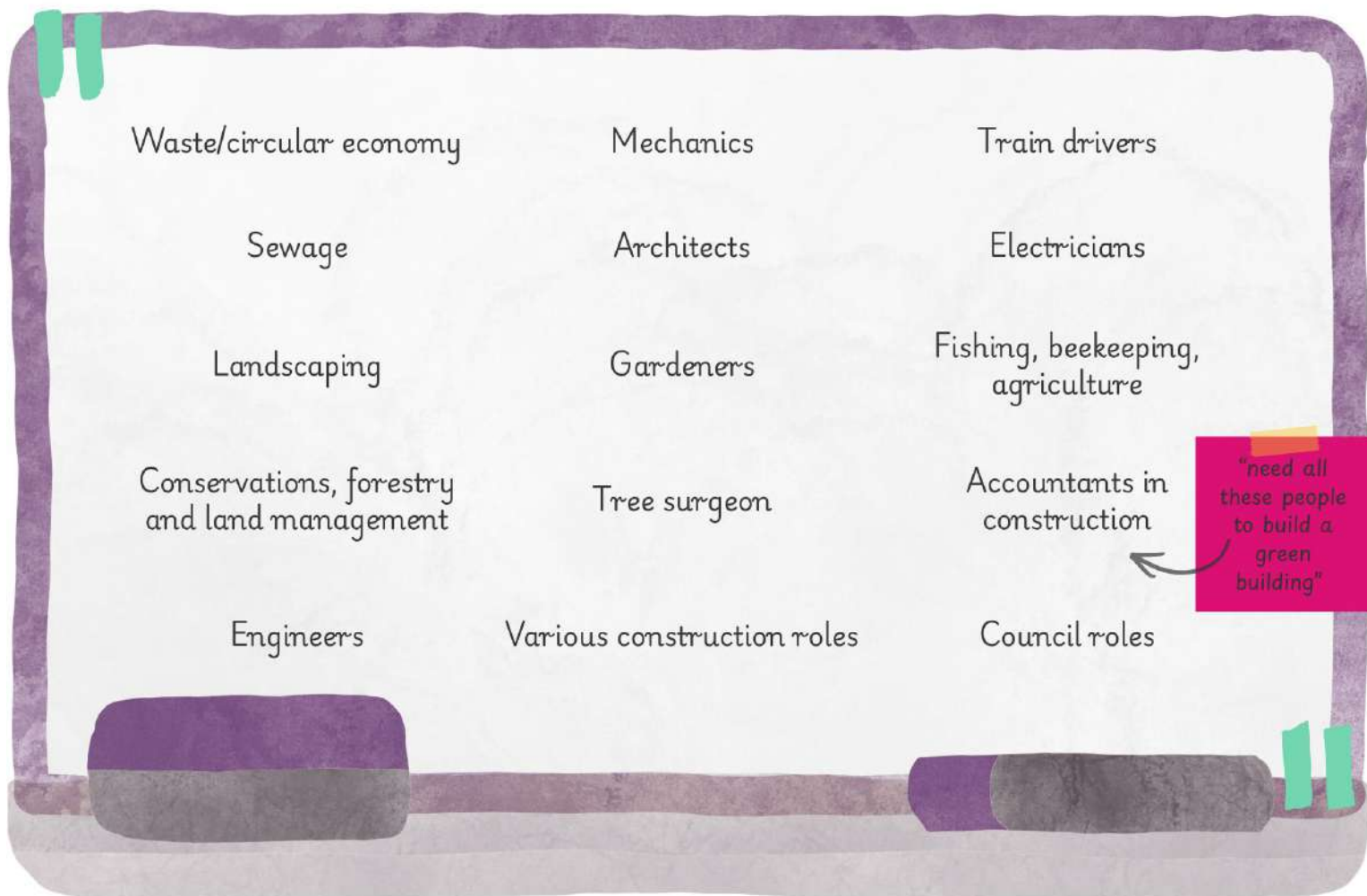
Deliberation groups summary



This section summarises what we heard from the groups of young people we spoke to. It reflects what we heard and does not comment on the accuracy or practicality of their answers.

What jobs do young people think of when you ask them to list 'green jobs'?

At the beginning of the sessions, we asked young people to list any green jobs they could think of. The jobs they listed were:



Interestingly, young people often described what you would be working on (for example, engineers working on solar panels and wind turbines), as well as specific careers and job roles.

No young people mentioned finance, investing or procurement, despite the importance of investment and supply chains in enabling the green transition.

What industries do young people think include green jobs?

We asked small groups of young people to rank the following job roles and industries, from most likely to least likely to include green jobs.

Construction

IT

Marketing

Energy & utilities

Education

Legal

Healthcare

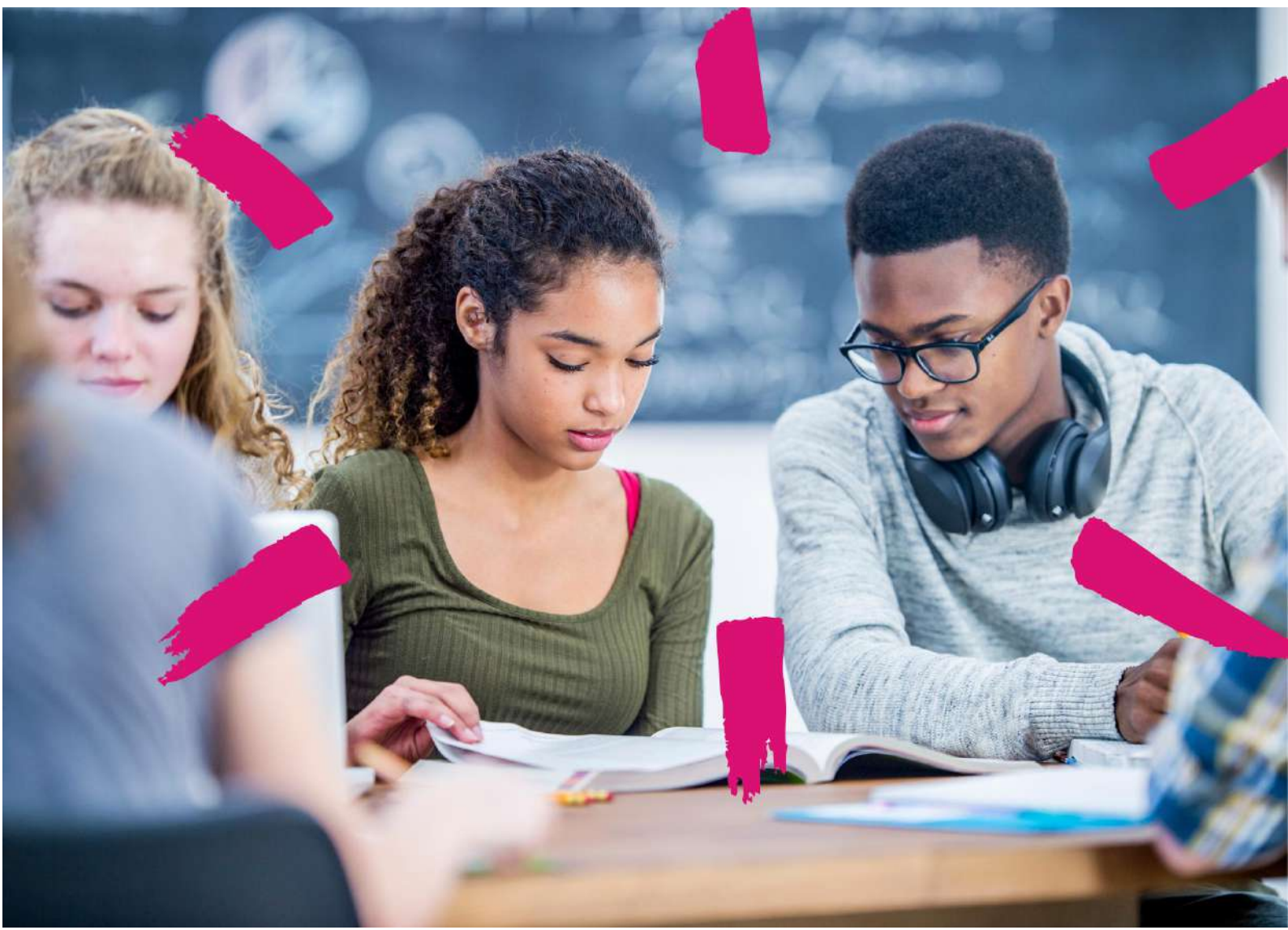
Consumer products

Waste

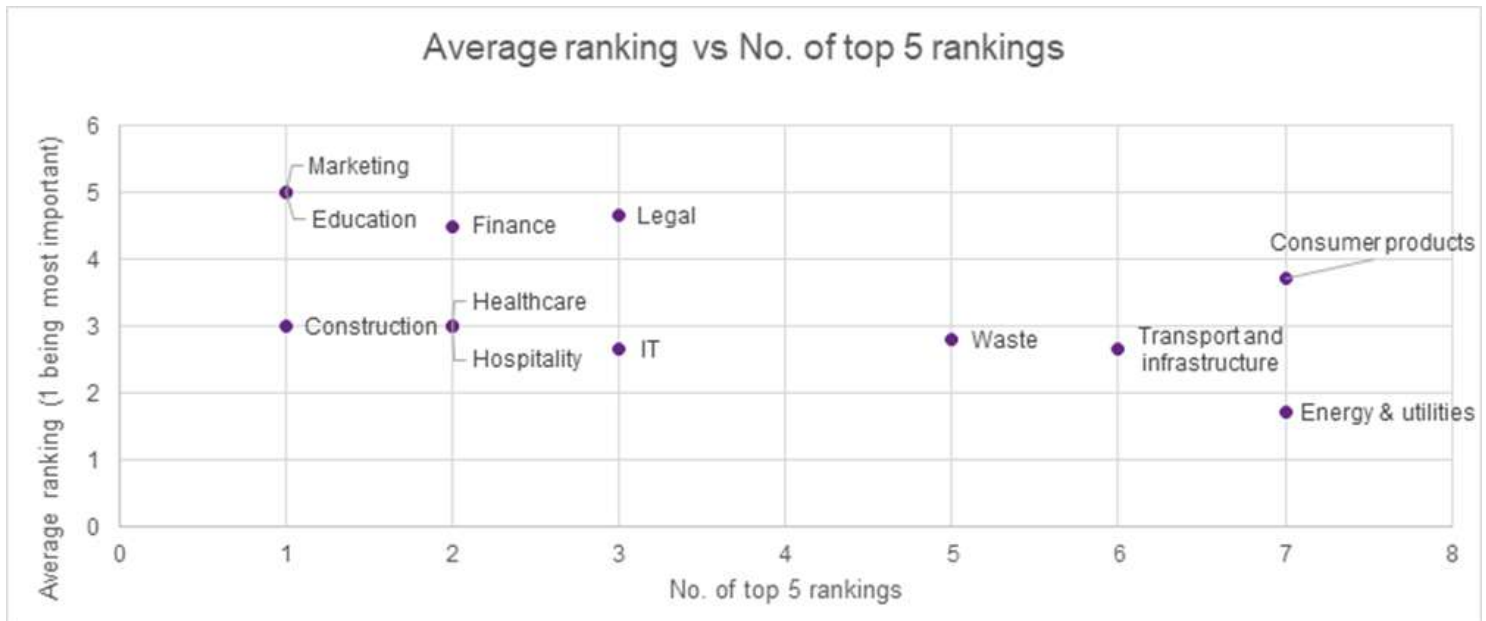
Finance

Hospitality

Transport and
infrastructure



Each of these industries was listed in the top five most likely by at least one group. The table below sets out the number of times each category was included in the top five, and the average ranking of each category (with 1 being the most likely to include green jobs).



This suggests that industries more traditionally associated with sustainability and the environment are consistently ranked in the top five, and among the most likely to include green jobs: energy and utilities, transport and infrastructure, waste, and consumer products. Industries that are less traditionally associated with sustainability, such as marketing, education, legal and finance, are less consistently included in the top five and are seen as less likely to include green jobs. Construction was ranked in the top five less often.

Young people explained their rankings and highlighted the different perspectives they approached this from. Some highlighted the importance of technology and innovation in achieving net zero. Others mentioned reducing plastic in packaging and the importance of recycling (though they were not familiar with the term 'circular economy').

One young person highlighted that 'any sector can have a green job' but noted that this could make it difficult to know where to start if you are interested in green jobs. It was also highlighted that some roles and sectors are inherently green, but that green roles in other sectors are less embedded or less integral to the sector.

What kinds of green jobs are promoted in education settings?

It was highlighted that the label 'green jobs' is unclear and can be confusing. It is not a term that young people hear in school, college or university. It was described as making young people think of rural jobs in agriculture or conservation, without giving the full picture of the range of roles available. Young people were more likely to have heard about sustainability, and universities had made some aware of jobs in corporate sustainability.

Technical careers, including engineering, are promoted, but the link is not made to the green economy. In contrast, some young people discussed learning about sustainability and the environment without any link being made to jobs or career opportunities.

University careers support was better connected to the green economy, and one attendee mentioned a sustainable careers fair. It was highlighted that this might be too late, as people are already committed to a degree course.



What would make a green job attractive?

Most factors that make green jobs attractive are not significantly different from those that make jobs appealing in general. These included good pay, job security, and wider benefits (for example, a pension). Some motivators mentioned specifically for green jobs included having a positive impact, particularly where that impact is tangible in the role. However, this applies to many purpose-led careers. It was mentioned that 'lots of young people want good jobs, and that includes morally good'.

One issue that was highlighted was the perception that the 'green' aspect of roles was seen as additional, rather than core to the role. Young people saw a risk in focusing on the 'green' aspect, rather than the core responsibilities and skills of the role, and there was a concern that taking on a green role was a risk where others in the same industry are not doing the same. It was raised that the 'green' aspect would need to be well integrated into the kinds of roles that people are already interested in.

There was also some scepticism about the level of impact that some green jobs have. In some sectors, such as green finance, where the 'green' aspect of the role is less tangible than in roles like forestry or waste management. Young people were also highly aware of greenwashing, and the fact that organisations might want to appear sustainable to attract investors or customers. Green jobs were viewed as more attractive when they were in an ethical/green organisation.

There was a perception among some young people that green jobs are low-paid, and that they require unpaid internships/work experience to access. This made them less attractive, and it was raised that the salaries of green jobs should reflect the specific expertise/training needed.

It was also mentioned that taking on a green job might lead you to feeling like you had to make other life sacrifices (e.g. not flying and not eating meat) to avoid being seen as hypocritical. There being 'too many layers' was unattractive, and there was a concern that the scale of the challenge of climate change might make these jobs feel overwhelming.

How could we promote green jobs to young people?

The phrase 'green job' was described as accessible, but the need to make young people more aware of opportunities in the green economy was highlighted. This was especially true for roles that were viewed as 'less obviously green'. It was acknowledged that the wide range of job roles included within 'green jobs' means that the language necessarily has to be vague but the usefulness of this was questioned.

Young people suggested that this awareness-raising should start young (in Years 5 and 6) and include work in schools (more detail below), as well as activity on social media. Suggested topics included:

- The types of green job roles that exist across different industries, including those not traditionally associated with sustainability such as finance.



What would a good pathway look like?

In addition to promoting green jobs, we asked what a good pathway would look like, and the roles that schools, employers and government should play in supporting young people into green jobs. Their suggestions reflect the young people's experience and expertise. It is unsurprising that we heard more ideas for schools than for employers or government, as this is the area young people know most about. We also did not discuss the practicality of achieving this ideal system.

Schools

1. Start awareness raising young (Year 5 and 6)
2. Deliver nature-based learning in schools to build young people's interest in the environment
3. Offer related clubs/activities so that young people can gain relevant skills and experience
4. Ensure that careers advisers are well informed about opportunities in the green economy, and the range of pathways into these roles
5. Deliver a range of awareness raising activities:
6. For e.g.: Assemblies, trips, career advice/fairs and connecting students to relevant volunteering and work experience opportunities
7. Integrating sustainability and the green economy into relevant subjects (beyond Geography lessons), including PSHE
8. Ensure that relevant qualifications are available at GCSE/equivalent levels to allow young people to develop the right skills for green jobs
9. Engagement with parents was also raised as important, especially addressing any stigma around salaries in the green economy - with perceptions that green roles are low paid

Employers

10. Engage with relevant opportunities in schools outlined above, especially with schools in more deprived areas
11. Create relevant work experience opportunities
12. Ensure that opportunities are accessible by providing financial support or incentives
13. Advertise green jobs widely
14. Offer apprenticeships and graduate schemes that are linked to job roles in the green economy
15. Offer young people advice at key decision points, such as when choosing GCSEs or A-Levels
16. Offer mentoring opportunities with mentors in green jobs
17. Ensure that application processes are accessible and not overly onerous on young people

Government

- Engage in similar activities to employers, and provide support to schools to deliver the activities outlined above
- The role of government in incentivising the creation of green jobs was also highlighted
- Provide free courses/training that develops transferable skills that are relevant to the green economy
- Incentivise employers and education providers to create and promote green job pathways
- Include number or percentage of graduates in the green economy as a metric for university rankings

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This report was written by Andy Harrison, Head of Delivery and Learning, Groundwork, and James Sommerville, Head of Policy, NPC.

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Groundwork is a national charity supporting practical action to create a fair and green future where people, places and nature thrive. We work with local communities and businesses to build capacity and resilience, tackle hardship and support a just transition to net zero that helps nature recover, reduces inequality, and leads to better work and healthier lives.

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About Everyone's Environment



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