

Briefing on green jobs

June 2021



Summary

Green Alliance recently commissioned two pieces of research exploring green jobs:

- Labour market analysis of where green jobs will be in the UK, and their role in levelling up
- Public opinion about jobs in nature, the circular economy and the wider 'green economy'.

Together, the results show valuable win-win-win solutions for the top issues on the government's agenda: net zero, levelling up and covid recovery. By creating green jobs across the country, and especially in areas with significant employment challenges, the government can stimulate and level up economies, as well as reverse nature decline and sequester carbon.

Our research also shows that green jobs are popular with the public, and that, with the right messaging, people will support investment in green skills and projects.

Green jobs will be in areas with significant employment challenges

Green jobs should be at the heart of the government's levelling up programme. The towns struggling most with underemployment before the pandemic will have the highest labour market risk when the economy fully opens again. However, these areas - places like County Durham, Copeland, Wolverhampton, and Ashfield - have the highest potential for environmental improvements and, therefore, for green jobs growth.

- The government can create at least 16,000 new jobs across 126 British constituencies facing the most significant employment challenges coming out of the pandemic.
- Improving the quality and quantity of urban parks could create 11,000 jobs in constituencies with the greatest labour market challenges, and in areas with limited access to green spaces.
- Two thirds of the best land for tree planting can be found in constituencies with higher than average labour market challenges, with 112,000 hectares of this land being in 'Red Wall' areas.

Systematic changes will enable the environment to deliver green jobs. Making climate and nature integral to economic policy, for example, through a net zero test, will meet the prime minister's G7 environmental commitments. To help level up the UK by delivering more green jobs, the government should:

1. **Widen the scope of the Levelling Up Fund** to include environmental regeneration that will allow regions with labour market risks to create more green jobs.
2. Equip the **UK Infrastructure Bank to deliver green jobs** by allowing it to invest in natural capital projects.
3. The government should **publish a long term environmental investment plan** setting out the role it sees for public and private investment.
4. **Support local authorities to recognise potential environmental economic projects.** The Green Jobs Taskforce should also work with local authorities on skills strategies that reflect dynamic local environments.
5. **Ensure green economic governance by the Treasury.** This can start with making sure jobs in the environment sector are captured in an updated set of Standard Industrial Codes.

Green jobs are popular but the public still needs to be convinced

Public First ran ten focus groups in towns and cities across Britain, concentrating particularly on recent graduates and older, lower skilled workers. These revealed three main insights:

- Public knowledge of the green economy is very low, but there is still broad enthusiasm in the prospect of green jobs.
- People still need to be convinced that green jobs are not just a short term political trend.
- The public's priority is good jobs which must go together with green work.

To break down the barriers to wider uptake in the green economy, we recommend the following:

1. Increase knowledge for people and training providers, including **a government led framework of green jobs mapping required skills and competencies.** This can inform higher and further education course providers.
2. **Support green retraining with strategic funding** to universities to launch graduate level courses, and grants to individuals for work mapped to the framework. The government could also replicate the digital bootcamp model for green skills.
3. **Increase job security for retrainers through maintenance loans** and expand eligibility criteria of job centre courses to cover green skills.
4. **Better match skill demand and supply,** through Local Enterprise Partnership led convening on local labour markets.

Further reading and information

- Public First's report on behalf of Green Alliance: [Good, green jobs: how to engage with public on green jobs](#)
- Green Alliance's policy insights paper: [Jobs for a green recovery: levelling up through nature](#)
- WPI Economics' full report: [Green renewal – the economics of enhancing the natural environment](#)
- An interactive [data hub](#) of labour market risk and environmental opportunity with downloadable data at a constituency level.

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