



GREEN SKILLS DELIVERY GROUP

CHAIR, GORDON PARKES, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR – PEOPLE & CULTURE, NIE NETWORKS

THE SKILLS CHALLENGE!

4 June 2024

Green Skills - background

The skills landscape for employers in NI is extremely challenging and currently driven by the following factors:

- Several sectors showing significant signs of growth in line with the Government's x 10 strategy
- Currently we have almost full employment
- 4,000 people short of the jobs we need to fill currently
- The 16 – 64 working age population is set to decline year on year out to 2070
- Too many individuals in NI are only qualified to level 2 or less
- Only 10% of employers provide apprenticeships
- Not enough employers grow/develop their people
- Not enough females are studying STEM subjects



Green Skills - background

The skills landscape for employers in NI is extremely challenging and currently driven by the following factors:

- Not enough employers provide opportunities for those with disabilities
- Too many of the over 50s population left the workforce after Covid
- Too many young people immigrate due to perceived lack of opportunity and don't return
- Current immigration policies make it difficult to attract skilled overseas employees
- Due to some sectors facing a downturn, there is a perception that we will have people to fill the new roles
- Further Education colleges do not have sufficient resources in relevant trades e.g. electrical and plumbing to facilitate the current and future skills requirements of employers
- A significant number of Green Skills programmes currently exist however occupancy rates are relatively low

We need strong collaboration between employers, government and education to address all of these issues or the opportunities in front of us will be missed!

NIE Networks' investment plans to meet net zero

- As a result of net zero, NIE Networks' work programmes will effectively double over the next 10 years
- Overall investment in the electricity network will be over £3 billion
- We will have over 1,000 new jobs including 400 new apprenticeships
- Our work programmes in overhead lines, cables, plant and civils, connections, transmission and tree cutting are likely to double e.g. overhead lines 2023 - 735km of 11kV per year, 2025 – 2030 - 1,455 km of 11kV per year
- In addition, there will be c£50million of low carbon technology investment related to overhead lines and c25 million related to underground cables
- Around 40 – 50% of work on these projects will be delivered by contracting partners who will also need to significantly recruit, train and develop their people

Green Skills Delivery Group - actions to date

- DfE have established an NI Skills Forum chaired by Kathleen O'Hare
- There are four key sub-committees reporting to the Skills Council, one of which is a Green Skills Delivery Group chaired by Gordon Parkes, Executive Director – People & Culture, NIE Networks
- The Group is employer-led and involves a number of employers, DfE, DAERA, DfC and Further Education
- The first action of this Group was to identify the scope and scale of Green Skills and the skills gaps
- The Group commissioned a 2023 survey undertaken by Energy & Utility Skills

Summary of findings

- Currently c105,000 employees in Green Skills
- Eight different sectors involved in Green Skills:
 - Infrastructure
 - Domestic Low Carbon Technologies & Energy Efficiency
 - Large Scale Energy Production
 - Industrial Processes
 - Circular Economy
 - Transport
 - Agriculture
 - Fisheries
- Renewables underpins all of the above
- A future 28,000 jobs are anticipated (16,000 new jobs (15.2%) and 12,000 replacement jobs) in Green Skills over the next 10 years
- A significant number of training courses already exist in the area of Green Technology
- 13 course types exist and 11 new areas are in development in FE colleges



Courses offered in the area of Green Technology

- **Electrical Energy Storage Systems**
- **Retrofitting**
- **Zero Carbon Engineering**
- **Solar PV**
- **Unvented Training & Assessment**
- **Energy Management & Green Technology**
- **Renewable Energy**
- **Recycling and Waste Management**
- **Installation and Maintenance of Air Source Heat Pumps**
- **Hybrid Electrical Vehicle Maintenance and Repair**
- **Climate Change: Transforming your Organisation for Sustainability**
- **Hydrogen Safety, Hydrogen Fuel Cell Technology, Energy Systems, and Hydrocarbon Refrigeration**
- **City and Guilds F-Gas and Ozone depleting substance**

Green Technologies Development Projects

- Net zero skills academy
- Hydrogen Skills Development
- Hydrogen & Heatpumps
- Digital Construction Industry 4.0
- Sustainability – Circular economy
- Hydrogen Energy Systems
- Zero Carbon Engineering
- Retrofit Short Course Qualifications
- PV Panels Short Course Development
- Renewable Energy
- Retrofitting

Next steps

- Various new employer-led programmes are being pilot tested:
 - A new Joint Utilities Entry Level Programme for those qualified below Level 2
 - *Video*



Next steps

- A new Data Analytics Academy (in partnership with Belfast Met)
- A new Planning Academy (in partnership with NRC)
- A Green Skills Action Plan which is employer-led is being developed by September 2024
- It will focus on key priorities for the short term, medium term and longer term



Level 4 – Renewables Technician

- **Jointing**
 - LV Cables – TBC
 - 11kV Cables – Terminations, Straight-throughs (Plastic Cables only)
 - 33kV Cables - Terminations, Straight-throughs (Plastic Cables only)
- **Operational**
 - Network Appreciation
 - Fault Diagnosis
 - Switching
 - Commissioning
- **Plant**
 - Switchgear Familiarisation
 - Switchgear Installation
 - Switchgear Maintenance
- **Mechanical**
 - Turbine Operators

Level 3 – Green Skills Operative

- **Electrical (can support infrastructure connections)**
 - LV/11kV Jointing (plastic cables only)
 - Testing
 - EV Charger Installation
 - Heat Source Pump Installation
 - PV Panels Installation
- **Hydrogen**
 - Need to understand requirements
- **Plumbing**
 - Servicing heating systems

Questions

