



OPITO's Skills Manifesto Impact Review

Empowering Progress



INTRODUCTION

OPITO is the global, not-for-profit skills and standards authority for safety-critical industries. With an extensive 50-year heritage, we work closely with governments, regulators, trade unions, trade associations and other pan-sector organisations to design and implement skills programmes for the broader energy industry. We aim to ensure that the global energy transition agenda leaves no one behind, ensuring that every worker, in every role, has the tools and knowledge to thrive.

In June 2024, prior to the UK general election, OPITO published its Skills Manifesto, titled: '**Empowering Tomorrow.**' One year on, this document reviews progress made against the six asks made of the UK Government to progress an equitable and managed expansion of the energy ecosystem.

KEY DEVELOPMENTS

Developments over the past 12-months have heavily influenced UK energy and skills policy.

GB Energy

OPITO welcomes the establishment of GB Energy and its decision to locate its headquarters in Aberdeen. This move demonstrates a clear intent to recognise and draw upon the deep expertise found across the North East's energy sector.

The 'Clean Energy Industries Sector Plan' outlines initial priorities for GB Energy, including its role in investing £8.3bn across clean energy projects, and delivering a £1bn Clean Energy Supply Chain Fund. However, further clarity is still required on GB Energy's long-term strategy, its role in delivering workforce outcomes, and its job creation impact in both traditional and emerging energy sectors.

To build credibility and foster trust, OPITO recommends that GB Energy continues to work in close collaboration with key industry stakeholders, and remains transparent in its rollout. Recognising and supporting the existing supply chain and skilled workforce in Scotland – especially through partnerships with Skills Development Scotland and the Scottish Funding Council – remains critical to its success.

Skills England

OPITO supports the UK Government's launch of Skills England as a vital step toward developing a more inclusive, dynamic, and future-ready workforce. Its mission to coordinate the national skills system, align training with economic priorities, and guide implementation of the Industrial Strategy's workforce agenda is timely and important.

OPITO welcomes Skills England's commitment to collaborative planning with local authorities, employers, and training providers; support for the proposed Growth and Skills Levy; and a focus on productivity and social mobility. These aims are reinforced by the Industrial Strategy's broader commitment to address regional talent disparities and future workforce planning in clean energy and other high-growth sectors.

However, progress has been slow. Persistent mismatches remain between training outputs and employer needs, alongside continued regional imbalances and insufficient funding for adult learning and apprenticeships. The lack of a unified skills implementation framework across devolved administrations also risks fragmentation. Addressing emerging skills – particularly in AI, green manufacturing, and automation – will require faster coordination, more compelling employer incentives, and more agile public-private delivery models.

OPITO's 2024 SKILLS MANIFESTO ASKS



Ask 1: A National Skills Strategy

Create a unified National Skills Strategy for the energy industry, with government leadership and regional input.

What's been delivered:

- The recently published Industrial Strategy outlines an upcoming 'Clean Energy Workforce Strategy' and call for reforming the skills and employment support system across the eight high-growth sectors.
- Strategic coordination and policy advice has continued through the Green Jobs Delivery Group and Energy Skills Accelerator initiatives.
- Skills England has been established, however its role across the entirety of the UK skills landscape - for instance, concerning the devolved nations - is yet to be fully understood or scaled. This implementation being clear is crucial.

What still needs to be done:

- Ensure the forthcoming Clean Energy Workforce Strategy delivers a unified, sector-specific national approach. This must be led by government, shaped by industry, and underpinned by a clear, integrated mandate across UK nations.



Ask 2: The Skills Shortage

Support initiatives like OPITO's Energy Transition Qualifications and introduce incentives to reverse declining employer investment in training.

What's been delivered:

- Broad skills and research and development investments exist, however incentives to reverse declining employer investment in training are still relatively absent.

What still needs to be done:

- The government should explore mechanisms to promote awareness of OPITO's Energy Transition Qualifications through existing skills and training channels and engage with industry stakeholders to assess alignment with national workforce needs.

OPITO's 2024 SKILLS MANIFESTO ASKS



Ask 3: Actions Over Words

Maintain strong support for the North Sea Transition Deal and ensure resource-backed delivery of people and skills-centric energy initiatives.

What's been delivered:

- The government continues to support the North Sea Transition Deal and the Clean Energy Industries Plan, particularly via recent updates on clean energy funding and CCS hubs.

What still needs to be done:

- Concerns persist about the pace of delivery and funding for people-centric workstreams. The skills funding component must be ring fenced, ensuring that support across regions is even. Reports from the National Audit Office and the Energy Systems Catapult highlight this.
- To support effective delivery of national strategies, like the North Sea Transition Deal, the government is encouraged to introduce clear, time-bound milestones and strengthen transparency through enhanced progress reporting.



Ask 4: Social Mobility

Promote STEM and creative education pathways to strengthen the future clean energy workforce.

What's been delivered:

- Continued government commitment to STEM education is visible through the STEM Learning programme and T-level expansion.
- Whilst STEM pathways are supported, there is minimal mention of creative education in the broader energy context.
- The Industrial Strategy commits to 'good jobs' and social equity, but energy-specific social mobility efforts are not systematically defined.

What still needs to be done:

- The government should build on STEM investment by explicitly incorporating creative education pathways and defining energy specific social mobility goals to help ensure a diverse, equitable pipeline into clean energy careers.

OPITO's 2024 SKILLS MANIFESTO ASKS



Ask 5: Future Demand

Ensure adequate apprenticeship funding and support organisations to integrate apprentices post-training.

What's been delivered:

- The UK Government has pledged over £30bn per year by 2035 for clean energy, including apprenticeship pipelines (especially in nuclear, offshore wind, and hydrogen).
- Built into key publications, including the Industrial Strategy and the Clean Energy Industries Sector Plan, is reference to the forthcoming Growth and Skills Levy, the planned 'successor' to the current Apprenticeship Levy.

What still needs to be done:

- Systematic integration of apprentices into long-term employment and cross-sector guidance remains underdeveloped. The government needs to accelerate implementation of the Growth and Skills Levy and ensure clean energy apprenticeship funding is matched with long-term integration support. This will enable cross-sector pathways and sustained employment beyond training.



Ask 6: Stability

Provide a clear, stable policy environment for the energy sector out to 2030+ to foster long-term investment and skill development.

What's been delivered:

- Recent strategies, e.g. Clean Power 2030 and the Strategic Spatial Energy Plan, aim to improve long-term visibility.

What still needs to be done:

- Industry feedback confirms ongoing concerns over clarity, timelines, and reactive policymaking. The government should translate strategic plans into clear, time bound policy frameworks with cross-party backing. This will give industry the long-term certainty needed to invest confidently in infrastructure, innovation, and workforce development to 2030 and beyond.

WHAT OPITO HOPES TO SEE IN 2026

By 2026, OPITO wants government to deliver a unified, sector-specific Energy Workforce Strategy, coordinated across UK nations and shaped by industry. Stronger incentives for employer investment in training is a necessity, as is recognition of the role of portable and modular training interventions, like OPITO's Energy Transition Qualifications. This must be supported by secure, ring-fenced skills funding for people-centric energy transition initiatives. The skills pipeline should expand beyond STEM to include creative and inclusive pathways, with clear social mobility goals embedded. Apprenticeship funding must be matched with long-term integration into employment and cross-sector pathways, supported by accelerated rollout of the Growth and Skills Levy. Finally, government must provide a stable, transparent, time-bound policy environment with cross-party backing to give industry the certainty to invest confidently in skills, infrastructure, and innovation through 2030 and beyond.

CONCLUSION

OPITO's Skills Manifesto, and associated Impact Review, represent more than statements of intent; they are frameworks guiding the evolution of skills across the energy industry. As we navigate the complexities of energy transition and digital transformation, the need for a skilled, adaptable, and inclusive workforce is paramount.

To unlock the full potential of the UK's clean energy workforce, government must deliver a unified, sector-specific Clean Energy Workforce Strategy that is coordinated across UK nations, shaped by industry, and backed by clear mandates and accountability. This should be supported by the accelerated implementation of the Growth and Skills Levy, support for OPITO's Energy Transition Qualifications, and the integration of creative and inclusive education pathways alongside STEM. Long-term employment pathways must be strengthened, particularly through improved apprenticeship integration and cross-sector mobility. Above all, government must provide stable, time bound policy frameworks with cross-party backing. This will give industry the confidence to invest in infrastructure, innovation, and people through to 2030 and beyond.

OPITO remains committed to leading this transformation by placing people at the centre of progress. Continued investment in workforce development, high-quality training, and cross-sector collaboration is not only a strategic necessity, but a shared responsibility.

By working together with government, industry, educators, and communities, we can build a future-ready workforce that drives innovation, supports sustainability, and ensures a just transition. Empowering people is the foundation for empowering the energy future.



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Working together to develop a safe and skilled energy workforce.

