

Key Issues

A number of key issues became evident during our Sector Skills Agreement research programmes:

- Renewing the vocational qualifications structure to meet the needs of a 21st century business.
- Overcoming the ageing workforce, resulting largely from the structural changes arising since privatisation of the energy and water industries.
- Attracting and retaining higher level skills, especially in Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM subjects).
- Rebuilding the sector attractiveness.

These key issues have now been turned into Projects which we are delivering in conjunction with our employers.

This leaflet provides a brief outline of these Projects.

We are continuing to develop further initiatives as a result of our Sector Skills Agreement research.

These Projects have come to fruition due to the support and commitment of our employers. To become involved in these, or future skills development programmes, please contact Energy & Utility Skills.

Energy & Utility Skills is the Sector Skills Council for the electricity, gas, waste management and water industries. Employer-led, our purpose is to identify employers' skills needs and provide effective solutions to improve business performance.

The government's national skills strategy aims to ensure that employers of all sizes have people with the right skills and qualifications to support the success of their businesses. Of equal importance is ensuring that individual employees have the skills and qualifications that they need to be both employable and personally fulfilled.

Central to the government's skills strategy is the idea that the employer's voice should be significant in choosing the provision of training and skills development, and the related systems of qualifications. Energy & Utility Skills is actively seeking to establish itself as a focal point for industry and government working together, and as a catalyst for change. We would welcome your input and support, whatever the size of your business.

Contact Energy & Utility Skills on
0845 077 99 22

To Learn More

Further information on the work undertaken with employers on our Sector Skills Agreement can be found on the Energy & Utility Skills website at www.euskills.co.uk

- UK Summary Report
- Briefs on each of the 16 Projects (which includes contact information if you wish to get involved)
- Detailed research from Stage 1 assessing current and future skills needs
- Detailed research from Stage 2 assessing the supply and quality of training provision
- Sector skills gap analysis at Stage 3 for each of the four nations
- Employer collaboration at Stage 4
- Concluding action plans for each nation and English region at Stage 5
- Short films describing the benefits of all current SSA Projects

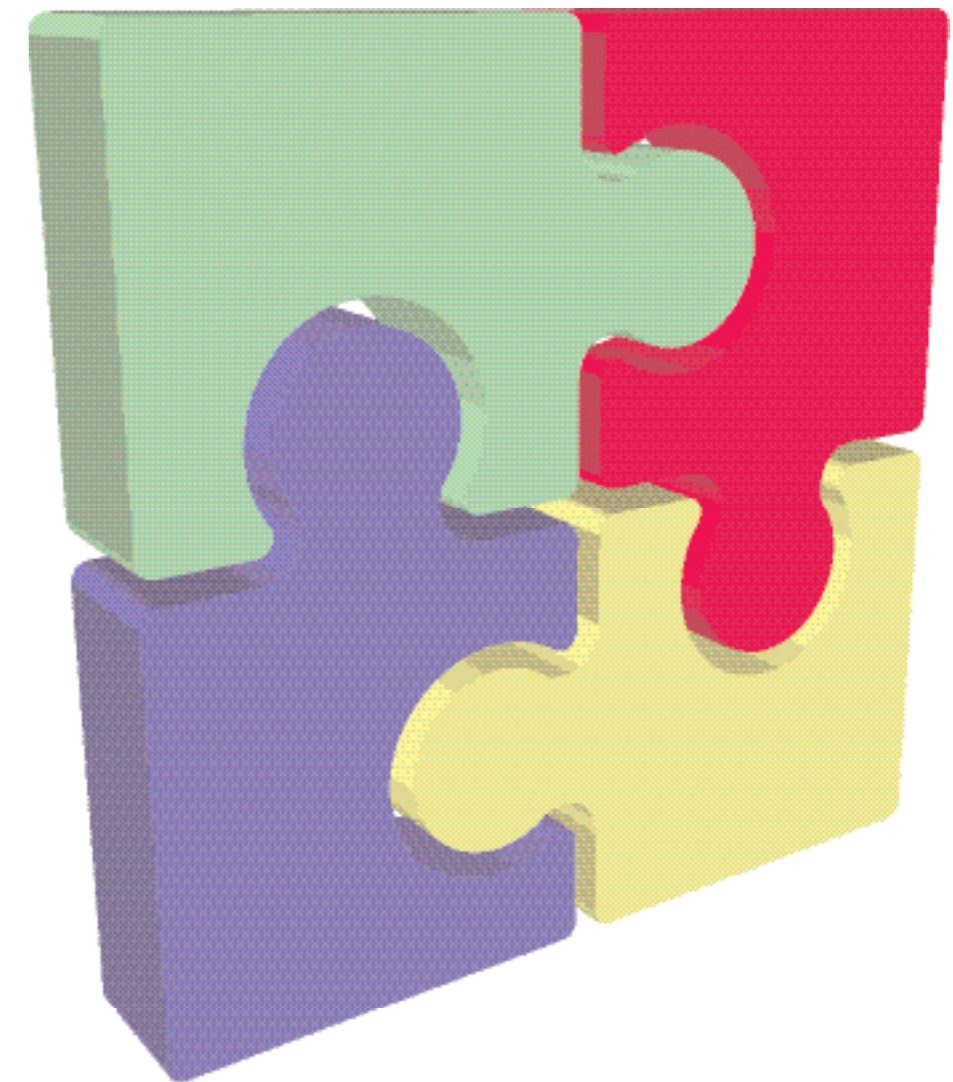


Employees celebrate their successful completion of an SSA training course



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Our employers have used our Sector Skills Agreement (SSA) work to significantly improve the way they address their skills issues.

"None of this work will have any value unless it positively impacts the business of our employers. The process of the SSA has given us the opportunity to understand what employers want and to focus on delivery. Energy & Utility Skills acts as a catalyst for employers to enable skills development."

Frank Corrigan,
Director of Strategy & Development

Strategic Platforms for Change

At Energy & Utility Skills (EU Skills), we believe in the power of collaboration when addressing skills issues. Our employers have agreed to work collaboratively where this will help them manage their skills issues more successfully. We have worked hard to create partnerships which, in many cases, are being directly supported by our Board Members. The main platforms for change are:

- The Gas Networks are working together with their Regulator on agreed new investment to overcome the serious issue of their ageing workforce.
- The electricity industry is collaborating on a fundamental review of all its strategic skills issues, and plans to work with its Regulator on long-term skills needs.
- The waste management industry has developed an alternative to the system for proving the minimum level of skills being deployed on key installations, as required by legislation.
- An Industry Liaison Group has been created for the downstream gas industry to raise the importance of its safety skills debate. This is a great opportunity for employers to begin to have a positive say on both safety issues and the broader skills agenda.
- Working Groups representing the Network Construction contractors, are delivering a number of projects that will strengthen their distinctive voice on skills.
- Collaboration in the water industry, traditionally the strongest employer-led voice within EU Skills' sector footprint, continues to gain strength.

Projects

Regulation

The Electricity and Gas Distribution Networks have an ageing workforce. EU Skills is working with them to build detailed industry resourcing models which are helping them to attract, recruit, train and retain the next generation of skilled workers. By working with Ofgem and the Gas Networks we have helped secure £80 million for recruitment and training over the next five years.

Competency Management System (CMS)

Aimed at organisations within the waste and water industries, requiring a waste management licence to operate, CMS will be a cost effective method for demonstrating competence; enabling operators to organise their resources most effectively by deploying employees in a way that ensures the management of sites is technically competent at all times.

Sector Qualification Strategy

By translating the outputs from our employer consultation, EU Skills is working to create an employer-led vocational education system, responsive to employers needs and offering flexible and fit for purpose qualifications and frameworks to support the sector.

A day in the life of Streetsafe Sam

An interactive Health and Safety CD, Module 1 for Waste Collection.

Following the high accident rate highlighted by the SSA, this interactive CD was developed as an innovative approach to health and safety training, relevant to the occupations undertaken within the industry. It can be used as part of induction or refresher training.



Literacy and Numeracy Skills Workshops

Following a pilot scheme, demonstrating the specific business and individual benefits of running workshops to address low levels of literacy and numeracy, further projects are under consideration. Literacy and Numeracy Skills Workshops are essential in upskilling the workforce and enabling employees to complete tasks efficiently.

Water Competency

As the water industry drives the need for a competent workforce, two methods of acknowledging skills are emerging.

Endorsement schemes which allow quality in-house training to be benchmarked, enabling organisations to apply an approved training strategy to their employees; and registration schemes which allow individuals to register their skills on an industry recognised database, making their skills transferable between employers across the industry.

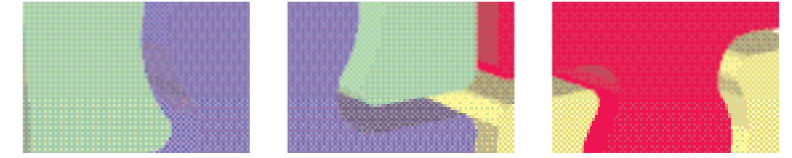
At present there are registration schemes in development for: drainage, leakage, competent design and water hygiene.

Power Sector Skills Strategy Group (PSSSG)

Established in July 2007, the PSSSG is a senior collaborative group of power sector companies, set up to address the strategic issues across the power sector and to deliver a sustainable skills strategy to meet the needs of the sector in the medium and long-term.

Higher Education Strategy for Workforce Development

In response to employer demand, the Strategy will promote high-level accredited programmes with the emphasis on Work Based Learning, through effective partnerships between Higher Education Institutions and employers. Learning processes directly link to business performance improvements and pathways will support technician to professional level development.



Network Construction Operations - Supervisory Qualification

For the first time, supervisors at Level 3, working for Network Construction employers, will have a cost-effective way of demonstrating competency, through a competency framework. The framework has been initiated, developed and delivered to meet the industry's specific needs. Supervisory level employees are pivotal to driving improved performance and productivity, and through improved competency employers will also derive better financial performance.

Network Construction Operations - Cross Utility Qualification

A cost-effective way for employees working as team leaders, at Level 2 in Network Construction, to demonstrate competency across both water and gas. The competency framework initiated, developed and delivered to meet their needs, will reduce cost and the time taken to develop competent team leaders.

Careers Website

Aimed at 14-19 year olds, the careers website is helping to raise the profile of the sector, making it more attractive to young people by providing information on Apprenticeships, jobs, qualifications, salaries, entry requirements and career progression.

Scotland

As part of the Scottish Enterprise Construction Skills Action Plan, EU Skills received funding from Scottish Enterprise to maintain and improve the skills levels of workers to satisfy current and future technical, legislative and safety requirements.

The project supports a variety of upskilling courses in the electricity, gas and water industries in response to employers needs - the aim is to encourage employers to upskill operational staff. The main requirement from employers is that the courses are short in duration.

Forces Resettlement Scheme

In Wales, the forces resettlement scheme is a means of recruiting and upskilling from the armed forces. Some training may be provided whilst candidates are still in service, saving the the employer training costs, whilst tapping into a strong source of manpower and attracting a highly skilled and trained workforce to the sector.

Skills Capacity Building

A National Training Awards (NTA) award-winning project, achieved through collaborative working between stakeholders, employers and dedicated Further Education training providers, addresses a regional shortage of good quality skills provision. Partnering employers and Further Education training providers has enabled the delivery of fit for purpose, quality, local training provision, at competitive prices to meet employer needs.

Engineering Technical Apprenticeship

In Northern Ireland, a new Gas Apprenticeship, designed to meet both technical skills and business requirements, enables Apprentices to have the vital skills required to meet today's technology, and to become a valued asset to their company. The Apprenticeship will include the main Level 3 gas qualification, with bolt on courses in electricity inspection and testing, plumbing hot and cold water and renewables.

Young Apprenticeships

The EU Skills Young Apprenticeship Programme encourages bright 14-16 year old pupils to complement their school STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering and Maths) studies by spending up to 50 days on work placement/experience in a safe, controlled environment. This feeds sustainable, structured career pathways.