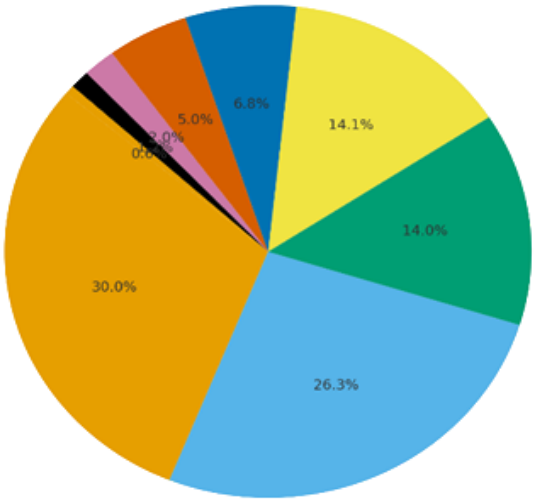
People Skills Review for the Clean Energy and Renewables Sectors

Today we're looking at how project demands, delivery deadlines, Government initiatives and public perception and awareness might be affecting the UK Renewables market's skills supply and demand.

Wind power has already cut UK CO_2 emissions and reduced reliance on volatile gas prices, but reports from NOF, RenewableUK, Scottish Renewables, and Energi Coast all highlight a looming ***skills gap of tens of thousands of workers by 2030***. CP30 (Clean Power by 2030) accelerates demand; but without coordinated training and reskilling, escalating costs and investor hesitation could undermine delivery.

Annual generation shares (NESO, 2024)

Wind: 30.0%, Gas: 26.3%, Nuclear: 14.0%, Imports: 14.1%, Biomass: 6.8%, Solar: 5.0%, Hydro: 2.0%, Storage: 1.2%, Coal: 0.6%. (Values and chart from NESO.)



Wind Power's Proven Impact

- **CO_2 Reduction:** Wind displaces fossil fuels, with UK offshore wind alone forecast to deliver **43–52 GW by 2030**, cutting emissions significantly.

- **Energy Cost Savings:** Renewables have shielded consumers from volatile gas prices; Carbon Brief confirms that **gas, not renewables, drives bill increases**.
- **Regional Benefits:** Offshore wind hubs in Scotland, the North East, and Humber are creating high-quality jobs and reducing reliance on imports.

Skills Gap Analysis

Note that these figures could vary depending on what the actual financial investment in the sector ends up being.

The **Renewable UK / OWIC Skills Report (2025)** states that the current UK wind workforce is approximately **55,000** (40,000 offshore, 15,000 onshore) and that by 2030 there will be **74,000–95,000 offshore jobs** plus **17,500 onshore jobs**. This equates to a skills gap of up to **57,000 workers missing** under ambitious scenarios.

NOF / ORE Catapult Workforce Foresighting identifies future skills needs in subsea survey, autonomous systems, AI data processing, and grid integration. It emphasises that collaboration between employers and educators will be needed to anticipate gaps.

The **UK Renewables / Clean Power 2030 Assessment** suggests that there will be between **135,000–725,000 net new jobs** in clean energy by 2030 and that between 30,000 and 60,000 could be reskilled from oil & gas, for example.

The **Scottish Renewables / ClimateXChange Study** shows that Scotland's onshore wind workforce must grow from **6,900 FTE in 2024 to 20,500 by 2027**. Severe shortages are predicted in **civil contractors, high-voltage engineers, turbine technicians, planners, and environmental consultants**.

Energi Coast / North East Evidence Hub research highlights that offshore wind workers numbers will be up **24% in two years** (32,000 → 40,000). Regional training hubs and workforce observatories recommended to monitor supply/demand.

Market Forces and CP30 Impact

- **CP30 Pressure:** Accelerated timelines risk escalating costs, squeezing margins, and deterring investors.
- **Curtailment Issues:** Scotland often overproduces wind but grid constraints prevent distribution, undermining efficiency.
- **Pricing Models:** Cap-and-floor stabilises revenue but may limit flexibility; demand-side pressures require grid upgrades.

Strategic Recommendations

There appears to be a common message; there are four main areas where real difference in the skills gap can be achieved:

- **Expand Regional Skills Hubs:** As recommended by Energi Coast and RenewableUK; build training centres in coastal communities.
- **Cross-Sector Reskilling:** Transition oil & gas workers into renewables, leveraging transferable engineering skills.
- **Government & Industry Collaboration:** Scottish Renewables' Sector Deal shows how national frameworks can align apprenticeships, higher education, and supply chain growth.
- **Data-Driven Workforce Planning:** Establish a national observatory to track skills demand, as proposed by Energi Coast.

In summary, wind power is already delivering measurable CO_2 reductions and cost savings, but the UK's CP30 targets magnify the skills challenge. Reports from NOF, RenewableUK, Scottish Renewables, and Energi Coast, amongst others, converge on the same message: without rapid scaling of training, reskilling, and workforce diversity, escalating costs and investor hesitation could undermine progress.

The next 5–10 years are pivotal: building a resilient workforce is as critical as building turbines and the supporting services and infrastructure. Investments, public perception, energy security and return on investment will all play a major role in what happens in reality.

Publicly available information from NESO, NOF, RenewableUK, Scottish Renewables, and Energi Coast has been used to assist in the production of this document.

Contact information

For an informal chat about this or other staffing, project or related subjects, please contact Ewen:

ewen@macarthurrecruitment.co.uk

01768 800260

07827 988676