



Hertfordshire Retrofit Skills Plan 2024 Executive
Summary

Hertfordshire Retrofit (Greener Homes) Skills Plan

MARCH 2024



Introduction

This document presents an overview of the Retrofit (Greener Homes) Skills Plan for Hertfordshire, commissioned by Hertfordshire Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP) and produced by Deyton Bell. The Skills Plan analyses the county's existing retrofit landscape, identifies opportunities and barriers to growth, and presents an action plan to develop vital skills capabilities locally to help realise the economic potential of the sector.

Retrofit is key to achieving Government's 2050 Net Zero target, and can be defined as any work done to an existing building to improve its energy efficiency and reduce its carbon footprint.

With 40% of the UK's carbon emissions coming from the built environment, and 80% of the homes that will be occupied in 2050 already in existence, the decarbonisation of the county's building stock is a major priority. The NHS spends £1.4 billion annually on treating illnesses associated with living in cold or damp housing.

Delivering the skills needed to accelerate retrofit will provide far reaching benefits and solutions, including warmer homes, improved health and lower energy bills for residents, as well as greater job prospects and the chance for tradespeople and SMEs to secure new contracts and boost business growth.

Circa 482,900 homes in Hertfordshire will need to be retrofitted by 2050 – the equivalent of 52 homes per day. This is a colossal task, but one

that presents significant growth opportunities - backed by over £100m of funding already granted to Hertfordshire's local authorities and social housing organisations in 2023 to retrofit their building stock.

The county now needs an estimated 2,300 retrofitters per year to 2050. However, with only 1.7% of employers in the county currently certified to deliver retrofit, it is clear that demand cannot be met without intervention. The unprecedented scale of the delivery requirement is made more challenging by the county's dearth of retrofit training provision, qualification and certification, for both personnel and businesses.

Whilst technical roles, such as retrofit assessors, installers and heat specialists, are critical to retrofit delivery, soft skilled roles such as project managers, customer service and finance professionals are equally paramount, presenting a great opportunity for upskilling and cross sector working.



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Hertfordshire's retrofit landscape

Critical to producing a Retrofit Skills Plan for Hertfordshire is to first understand the county's starting position, and research was carried out in November 2023 to assess its existing building stock, workforce, potential labour markets, and training provision.

The findings have confirmed that Hertfordshire's retrofit skills and capabilities are in its infancy stage, with only a small provision available, including 33 Retrofit Assessors, 3 Retrofit Coordinators, and 157 certified Trustmark installers.

The majority of Hertfordshire's domestic building stock is old, built circa 1945. Only 3 in 5 homes possess an average Energy Performance Certificate (EPC) rating of 'C' and there are more failing certificates than passing in most districts. This determines that the retrofit skills and qualifications most needed to improve these dwellings relate to the installation of energy efficiency measures, including double or triple glazed windows and doors, improved wall and loft insulation, internal energy management systems, smart heating controls and modern heating technologies such as photovoltaics, heat pumps, geothermal, and so on.

Hertfordshire's domestic energy efficiency supply chain is worth £1.2bn¹, with 52% of sales coming from the installation of ventilation, heat pumps, energy management and Solar PV. This is forecast to grow to £36bn by 2030, with employment for the sector projected to increase by 203% by 2028.

Although retrofit is scalable and will boost local economic growth, a number of challenges have been identified with regard to increasing the county's skills capacity, including: a lack of awareness of the opportunities retrofit offers; the perceived lack of demand for work; the reluctance to train due to not knowing the benefits and value; limited competent resource; and a shortfall of teaching capacity, experts and equipment.



¹ [Greater South East Net Zero Hub - Hertfordshire LEP Domestic Energy Efficiency Supply Chain Market Intelligence Report, January 2023](#)



Opportunities and challenges

The Retrofit Skills Plan pinpoints a target group comprised of installers, electrical and heating engineers, technical consultants, and construction trades who can be upskilled to support retrofit delivery.

However, this audience is fragmented and often difficult to reach, with low awareness of retrofit opportunities. This presents a key challenge and risk, which will be tested and managed throughout the implementation of the plan.

Another key challenge involves the complexities and variations between the systems, processes and targets of Hertfordshire's local authorities and social housing organisations. Encouraging these organisations to work together and with local partners to overcome retrofit barriers would be highly beneficial in terms of both economies of scale and consistency of messaging.

Hertfordshire LEP is working to encourage this collaboration locally, which if successful, would present learnings that could be adopted by other regions to accelerate retrofit delivery nationwide.

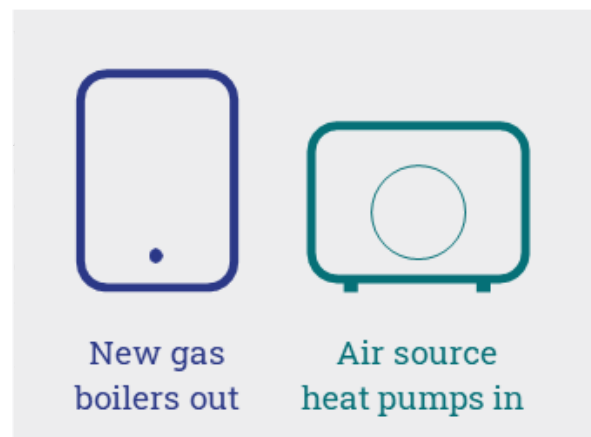
Hertfordshire also enjoys low unemployment levels and a skilled local workforce able to secure attractive employment in a competitive marketplace, which increases the challenge of recruiting workers to support retrofit delivery. Changes to migration laws have also contributed to a shortfall of workers, such as electricians.

Meeting retrofit demand will require upskilling the existing workforce as well as attracting entrants from other related sectors, including the 'Professional, Scientific & Technical' sector (which in March 2022 made up 19% of all Hertfordshire businesses), and 'Construction' (which made up 15.8% of businesses²).

Workers from these sectors would require the least amount of upskilling, however both sectors

already face their own skills gaps. Other groups will be targeted to widen the talent pool, including ex-military, the unemployed and underemployed.

However, retrofit is not a 'fad' or an isolated initiative. Government's Heat and Building Strategy dictates that the installation of new gas boilers should be phased out by 2035 and replaced with air source heat pumps. With over 11,100 labour intensive heat pump installations required in Hertfordshire by 2028, there is a clear opportunity for growth.



While retrofit training provision in the county is small, the LEP's launch of Retrofit Skills Bootcamps in 2023 has kickstarted momentum. As of February 2024, all 4 local colleges plan to offer Level 3 Awards in Solar and Heat Pumps; acquire equipment to train students; and have incorporated retrofit into their existing construction courses which attract circa 2,000 students per annum. However, the colleges have limited capability and capacity and further support will be needed.

² [Herts Insight - Business and Industry Profile for Hertfordshire](#)



Hertfordshire's 9-Point Action Plan

The Retrofit Skills Plan aims to accelerate Hertfordshire's retrofit capability and capacity to provide warmer and greener homes to benefit our people and planet, while creating jobs and unlocking economic growth opportunities.

This will be achieved through the implementation of a 9-point action plan:

	Goal	Action
1	To raise retrofit awareness amongst tradespeople and businesses.	Launch a digital marketing and communications campaign repositioning retrofit to 'Greener Homes' to help improve understanding.
2	To increase retrofit awareness amongst academia and industry to boost retrofit training provision and job creation.	Deliver an awareness raising 'breakfast briefing' event in collaboration with partners.
3	To increase employer engagement in retrofit.	Develop a grant funding scheme to support businesses and tradespeople looking to upskill, and launch or grow their retrofit offer.
4	To increase retrofit training provision in Hertfordshire.	To develop a grant funding scheme for academic and industry training providers to build or expand their retrofit training provision.
5	To increase the uptake of retrofit training courses.	Implement a digital marketing campaign to build awareness of the new employer grant funding scheme offer.
6	To increase interest in retrofit training and uptake from learners, supported by employers.	Develop a landing page for retrofit on HOP (Hertfordshire's online gateway to explore skills and career opportunities).
7	To formalise the governance of Hertfordshire's Retrofit Skills Plan and its delivery.	Produce a paper on the intent of the Steering Group, its governance, aims and objectives, protocols and accountability.
8	To promote retrofit employment opportunities via the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP).	Develop and implement an action plan to promote retrofit roles in partnership with DWP and partners, including Step2Skills and Restart.
9	Appoint two dedicated 'Greener Homes' experts from across the LEP's sub-brands to capture, log and respond to retrofit enquiries.	Deliver specialist training to one Hertfordshire Growth Hub Advisor and one Hertfordshire Opportunities Programme Skills Adviser.



While climate change and sustainability are high on society's agenda, it is recognised that there are pockets of industry that do not yet see the value of retrofit. Hertfordshire LEP has a pivotal role to play in communicating the opportunity, generating industry interest, providing a holistic overview of activity across the county and enabling further resources to be leveraged to help meet the countywide retrofit challenge.

Hertfordshire has a solid foundation for retrofit growth, but will need to draw on its strong legacy of partnership working between the public sector, academia and industry to successfully deliver the skills needed, while developing a burgeoning retrofit sector with the potential to support thousands of jobs and boost economic growth for years to come.



