

Community of Practice

# Championing Sustainability through Apprenticeships

12.07.2023



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**NORTHERN**  
SKILLSNETWORK

# Project activities so far

- A summary from CoP 1 in May
- Launch of the Padlet
- Employer Roundtable held in July
- A summary from CoP 2 in June
- Champions programme developed – endorsed by NCFE – available to the wider CoP attendees following the pilot
- Education for Sustainable Development Health Check created & commenced provider strategy development
- Word Bank / Jargon buster for apprentices & employers under development
- Championing Sustainability through Apprenticeships charter under-development
- Championing Sustainability through Apprenticeship case study developed
- Green Skills for the North Conference – 25th September – agenda to follow

# Summary

We held our July NSN community of practice on 12th July with 3 core focus areas

- Guest Speaker – Upcycle Fashion
- Employer demand and gaps
- Embedding into Apprenticeship standards – services to business – Payroll, Team leader, management, admin, customer service, HR and Legal

The session started with an update from the last session, including the latest additions to the padlet and discussed Universal tips for bringing ESD into all teaching and learning practices. Alex shared some examples of how the carbon literacy qualification she completed has helped develop teaching & learning discussions for reviews or within induction. Some of the examples shared included –

- It's important to remember that ESD isn't purely about environmental behaviours – recycling and energy efficiency for example. Of course, these are important but ESD should develop learners' knowledge, skills, behaviours and agency that enable them to contribute positively to sustainability solutions in their lives and work.
- A collaborative and cohesive approach to learner engagement with sustainability is needed. Practitioners should work in partnership and collaboration with others to bring ESD comprehensively into their learner's experience. Adding short mention of sustainability in one lesson is not going to develop the knowledge, skills, behaviour or agency learners need.
- Ideally ESD should be delivered as part of their core subject specialism, rather than as a parallel stand-alone content. This enables learners to understand how their subject or vocational area contributes to both sustainability challenges but also solutions in a way that is relevant to them.
- ESD should be solutions and action focused – simply raising awareness of the sustainability challenges we face could lead to disengagement or eco-anxiety.
- Develop a culture of enquiry. You're not expected to know everything about sustainable development. Facilitate discussions (with your learners, colleagues, and others you work with) and you may learn from them as much as they do from you.

Whilst embedding sustainable development works best when contextualised to the core vocational area, there are still too few apprenticeship standards that have this as a core or even small element and therefore we need to find approaches that embed for us, which means practitioner development time and CPD is vital to this.

Alex shared the list of qualifications that are now dedicated to sustainability, these can be found on the ETF website and there are now over 300 qualifications that have sustainability as their primary core learning objective, these range in all levels from entry through to level 7 – see extract below & link to the full set –

[Teaching sustainability tool - The Education and Training Foundation \(et-foundation.co.uk\)](https://www.et-foundation.co.uk/)

The session moved on to meeting demand from businesses and the demand for green skills is rising at a substantial rate per year – with an increase in 40% since 2017

However, only 13% of the current workforce posses the skills in this area that employers need

Employers from across a range of industries are stating green / sustainability skills gaps as being the biggest challenge facing them, with many believing that the lack of skills will result in the UK not meeting net zero goals.

The role of apprenticeships provide a vital tool in meeting industry gaps, challenging industry norms and finding new & creative approaches to support businesses green, lean & clean processes

More young people are asking employers during interviews about the company's response to environmental matters, such as waste, carbon footprint or clean air

Many employers are waiting for green light for funding before mass recruitment of staff & apprentices will take place so training providers need to be prepared for this

In many cases apprentices are already being the vehicle that supports change in their workplace in relation to sustainable development, net zero and environmental factors. In almost every apprenticeship standard there is opportunity for apprentices to review and enhance not only their personal development, managing self and improving workplaces but also providing opportunities for apprentices to challenge industry norms and the status quo.

The session then handed over to Julia Roebuck from Upcycle Fashion who provided lots of insights into the work she does to support fashion & textiles waste and supporting local schools and colleges to inform and educate their students.



# Sustainable Fashion



Julia shared examples of how Apprenticeships providers can engage with local community and charity organisations to share the work they are doing to support young people or for apprentices to complete some local research and activities for their businesses to engage with as part of their social value.

Julia also shared the importance of all businesses completing waste audits and how apprentices can be the champion for this, but suggested that waste audits on their own need to be supported by action plans for the ‘what’s next’ – Julia’s suggestions include –

- **Sharing: Library of Things**
- **Repairing: Repair Cafe**
- **Redistribution: Can any waste streams at your workplace be a resource to local creatives, educators, businesses?**
- **Re-curement: Are there any waste products from local organisations that could be a resource for YOUR organisation?**

Lots of great takeaways from Julia to support apprentices with their own readiness for work in terms of business attire and fashion, and looking at how training organisations or local charities or businesses can support and promote clothes swaps and rails dedicated to apprentices. Some of the key learnings to support championing sustainability through apprenticeships include –

- Apprentices be aware of their sustainable citizens status
- Work wear exchange rails for apprentices
- Using apprentices creativity to make positive change in the workplace – do we ask them this question
- Collaboration and peer on peer activities are vital to positive climate action – so apprentices have the opportunities to work with and learn from other apprentices?
- Look at approaches for apprentices to “make, do, mend” for work wear or uniform exchanges
- Adopting a Share, Repair, Redistribute and Reuse approaches to the workplace or work wear
- Apprentices to plan a campaign of change that support recycle / upcycle approaches to fashion, workwear, uniforms

Thank you to our guest speaker Julia and all you do with Upcycle Fashion.

# Strategic Development

The session then moved onto to looking at how to map sustainable development into the 'services to business' apprenticeship standards – starting with leadership & management and Alex shared an example from the Fashion & Textiles Sustainability Strategy Programme Pilot Project Evaluation Report – including their findings on developing a winning sustainability strategy in 5 stages – the full breakdown of the stage sand the report can be found on the project Padlet. The session then looked at content that could be included into the following standards or vocational areas –

- **IT & Digital**
- **HR & Law**
- **Accountancy & Finance**
- **Business Admin**

The session closed as it always does with a discussion on the 17 sustainable development goals and how these can be used to develop strategies, embed into curriculum and support social value and enrichment activities.



# UNESCO's 17 SDGs

Education for Sustainable Development (ESD) is a key element of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. Its aims form one of the targets of the Sustainable Development Goal on education SDG 4.7 and it is considered a driver for the achievements of all 17 SDGs.

ESD empowers everyone to make informed decisions in favour of environmental integrity, economic viability and a just society for present and future generations. It aims to provide the knowledge, skills, attitudes and values necessary to address sustainable development challenges.

Complementary to the UNESCO guidance document - Education for Sustainable Development Goals - Learning Objectives, this resource bank has been designed for educators, education planners and practitioners. It offers hundreds of pedagogical ideas for classroom activities and multimedia resources detailing how best to integrate ESD into teaching and learning, from early childhood care through secondary education.





Alex suggested providers should identify 3 or 4 of the SDG's that are most suited to the organisation and detail how these will be developed into programmes or policy. This can then be rolled out over a longer period of time, it is suggested a 1-5 year plan. Taking on extra SDG's as the plan grows.

The common SDG's that most providers Alex has worked with have chosen to start with are –

- SDG 4 – Quality Education (linked to Ofsted EIF & KSBs)
- SDG3 – Well-being (linked to pastoral, personal development and behaviours & attitudes)
- SDG9 - Industry, innovation and Infrastructure (linked to reducing waste, carbon footprint and institutional change policy)
- SDG11 – Sustainable cities and communities (Linked to MCA, LEP & LSIP priorities & themes)



# Conclusion

The next community of practice is taking place on 9th August and the themes include –

- Guest Speaker EAUC – The Alliance for Sustainability Leadership in Education
- Sector focus – Early Years and Teaching Assistant standards
- Developing local partnerships and initiatives to support apprentices and businesses

To book on visit -

Wednesday 9th August

[GSD - community of practice 10.00 - 12.00- Online](#)

Thank you again everyone who has attended and shared their insights. I hope you found the session useful and look forward to seeing you at future sessions. Don't forget to check out our padlet and health check and please get in touch if you require any support.

Yours Sustainably,

*Alex Miles*

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