

The ECA is the leading voice of electrical contractors in England, Wales and Northern Ireland. For over a century the ECA has played a key role in driving standards and supporting the growth of a thriving industry, which is now crucial to the delivery and economic opportunity of net-zero.

ECA's Charter to Recharge Electrical Skills

In the race toward a net-zero future, electricians are indispensable – essential to the take-up, integration, and maintenance of low-carbon technologies. Yet there simply aren't enough of them. With the skills system in England blighted by inefficiencies and inadequate ties between education and industry, we must acknowledge that the electrical skills pipeline isn't working for the profession, people, or the planet. Key challenges include:



- Electricians are crucial to society and the economy but are too often overlooked by policymakers.
- The safe roll-out of green technologies, like EV chargers, energy storage systems and solar PV, needs the skillset of a competent, qualified electrician.
- Core electrical competencies cannot be learnt at a 'skills bootcamp' or other short course.



- There aren't enough competent, qualified electricians, with significant differences between regions.
- To maintain the number of electricians we need annual apprentice recruitment to be 5% of the existing workforce each year, but the current average in England is less than 4%.
- Despite shortages, it is not viable currently for many small employers to employ apprentices.



- Although vast numbers enrol onto classroom-based electrical courses each year, these courses do not produce qualified electricians, with less than 10% of learners subsequently progressing into an apprenticeship.
- Adult learners hoping to change careers or upskill often struggle to obtain financial or any other support.
- Because of the above, most learners never complete their training - locking thousands of potential electricians out of employment.

ECA is on mission to recharge electrical skills

It's time to reimagine the way we recruit, prepare and retain electricians for the challenges and opportunities of a net-zero world. This means upskilling our existing electrician workforce through the kitemark Electrician Plus accredited courses.

We also need a skills pipeline that not only meets the needs of today but anticipates the demands of tomorrow. A pipeline that creates a larger electrician workforce with the knowledge, skills and behaviours necessary to navigate the risks and complexities of energy efficiency and cutting-edge technology.

Future Electrical Skills Framework

Drawing on the collective insight of experienced professionals, industry experts and educators, the Future Electrical Skills Framework is a blueprint for the future of electrical skills development and how we can unlock a skilled electrical workforce crucial to meeting net-zero. The key pillars are:

1. Qualified electricians at the heart of net-zero

Fund industry-recognised upskilling programmes for qualified electricians in green technologies.

Train electricians to advise customers on transitioning to low carbon technologies.

Raise awareness that skills bootcamps and other short courses, developed without proper industry input or endorsement, risk competence and safety.

2. Increasing the number of qualified electricians

Prioritise public funding towards industry-endorsed routes which lead to qualified electrician status, including apprenticeships, NVQ and experienced worker assessment.

Provide additional direct funding and administrative support for small employers to take on apprentices.

Incentivise industry professionals to teach apprentices by benchmarking pay by industry levels.

3. Stronger pipeline and support into employment

Monitor and assess more closely the outcomes of classroom-based courses.

Build more effective partnerships between education providers and employers to help connect learners with jobs.

Incentivise employers to offer hands-on work experience for classroom-based, NVQ and EWA learners.

Call to action:

The shortage of qualified electricians, intensified by a broken skills pipeline, poses a serious but solvable challenge to achieving net-zero targets. We urge policymakers, industry leaders, and educators to come together and join our mission to **#Recharge Electrical Skills** by endorsing the **Future Electrical Skills Framework**.