

Taskforce can unlock £1trn energy efficiency market

2 years ago



The [Building Engineering Services Association](#) (BESA) has praised the government for launching an energy efficiency taskforce charged with driving investment in improving the performance of buildings.

Co-chaired by leading banker Alison Rose and energy security and net zero minister Lord Callanan, the taskforce will devise a plan to cut energy consumption in domestic, commercial, and industrial buildings by 15% by 2030 compared with 2021 levels.

The government is putting a total of £12.6bn behind the plan this decade – £6.6bn allocated during this Parliament and the rest from 2025. Chancellor Jeremy Hunt believes energy efficiency could be worth £1 trillion to UK businesses between now and 2030, and emphasised its importance to energy security, economic growth, and the delivery of net zero.

“Addressing the climate crisis is a team sport and building vital partnerships between the public and private sector is the key to tackling this challenge at pace,” said Rose, who is chief executive of NatWest. “Improving energy efficiency will not only drive a lower carbon environment, but also deliver greater economic security through lower bills for people, families, and businesses.”

BESA said that energy efficiency measures could be rapidly scaled up through a national programme of building retrofits, which would put the built environment at the heart of economic growth and the government’s net zero strategy.

Skills gap

However, it urged the taskforce to make training and recruitment a key focus for investment to address the ‘green skills gap’ that could undermine the wider energy efficiency strategy.

“The building engineering sector will be pivotal to delivering energy efficiency improvements, but we need help to develop a skilled workforce capable of keeping pace with government targets,” said BESA’s technical director Graeme Fox.

“For example, the target is for 600,000 heat pump installations a year by 2028 which is about ten times what we are doing now. We need lots more people, but those people need to have the right skills so there needs to be a huge jump in spending on training and recruitment.”

A recent [Energy Systems Catapult report](#) found that just 2% of workers in the heating industry were female and only 5% were from an ethnic background. It said this lack of diversity was undermining efforts to decarbonise heating and hot water in buildings.

“The building services industry has a lot of work to do to make its workforce more representative of the population we serve and attract vital new skills and approaches to problem solving,” said Fox. “The energy efficiency taskforce could really help by making it part of their strategic plan to ensure a flow of investment into promoting the sector and underpinning green training programmes.”