

## Partnership set to accelerate green skills and retrofit jobs

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A partnership that will accelerate the development of green skills and improve social housing infrastructure in the South East, has been announced.

The Retrofit Academy and the Greater South East Net Zero Hub (GSENZH) are set to support the training and development of the workforce required to retrofit 13.9m households across the region's 16 counties.

The partnership comes as local authorities and social housing providers in the South East region were awarded over £290m in funding from the Social Housing Decarbonisation Fund (SHDF) and Home Upgrade Grant (HUG).

GSENZH and The Retrofit Academy are set to accelerate a competent and capable workforce by assessing the region's current skills gap and delivering a training infrastructure that will increase the number of qualified retrofitters required across the South East. With an estimated 523,000 jobs to be created in the region by 2050, the work by the two organisations will jumpstart the workforce development to fill the green jobs created by new projects.

GSENZH and The Retrofit Academy will also work with local organisations involved in retrofit projects, and the training and supply chain they require, to create a like-minded network that can deliver large-scale high quality retrofit of the city.

With 1.4m households in the region experiencing fuel poverty, this objective is critical not only for the region to meet net zero emissions targets, but also for making upgrades that reduce energy bills for residents that need it most. The SHDF and HUG funding will also provide a number of new job opportunities for the region, allowing more people across the South East of England to train and qualify as

Retrofit Assessors, Advisors and Coordinators.

Chief executive David Pierpoint said: “Across the 16 counties in the Greater South East Net Zero Hub’s jurisdiction, there is more demand for quality retrofit specialists. Yet there remains work to be done to train enough people and create a developed network to facilitate change at scale. This cannot happen without collaboration between all stakeholders working towards a common goal of creating a competent and capable workforce that is needed to retrofit millions of homes in the UK.

“This new partnership is set to provide an example of where putting this into practice will drive positive change for retrofit in the UK. Our joint objective is to create a network of like-minded organisations who work together to decarbonise homes in the South East, whilst also creating jobs and career opportunities for local people.

“We are committed to forging regional partnerships like this to demonstrate how collaborating on developing a retrofit workforce will result in the success of large-scale, high quality retrofit delivery.”

Greater South East Net Zero Hub regional head Maxine Narburgh said: “Spiralling energy prices and the dire impacts of climate change have amplified the need to reduce energy demand in our homes and buildings. Research shows that, across the Greater South East area, we have around £10m homes that need energy efficiency measures, low carbon heating and solar, in order to cut fuel bills and achieve the national target of zero emissions by 2050. However, we are seeing a huge shortfall in terms of the skills needed to deliver on the Government’s Net Zero commitment and a frustration from industry at the lack of solutions coming forward. With such a strong rationale demanding action at all levels, there is a need for greater coordination and collaboration.

“As such, establishing a Retrofit Training Network for the region provides the Greater South East Net Zero Hub with a mechanism to ensure we have a well-trained workforce to deliver the level of domestic retrofit needed. We are delighted to be working with The Retrofit Academy who, as a centre of excellence, are market leaders in delivering retrofit training and have demonstrated a commitment to forming the necessary partnerships with the key players needed, such as local authorities, to drive the retrofit sector/home decarbonisation agenda forward.”