

NatWest Group-backed Retrofit Skills Programme shows strong demand and impact after one year

10 months ago



This month marks the first anniversary of the [Supply Chain Sustainability School](#)'s pioneering retrofit programme, proudly sponsored by [NatWest Group](#). Launched to help combat climate change by upskilling the built environment sector, this free programme has achieved remarkable success in just one year, with 4,668 individuals and 1,844 companies actively engaged exceeding its initial two-year goals and demonstrating strong demand for sustainable construction practices.

With buildings contributing approximately 40% of the UK's carbon emissions, achieving net-zero targets requires a large-scale retrofit of existing structures. However, a key challenge is that the current workforce lacks the necessary skills and awareness to deliver retrofitting at the scale needed.

In response, the School, in collaboration with NatWest Group, developed a comprehensive retrofit programme offering free CPD-accredited training. This includes e-learning modules, training assessments, workshops, webinars, and conferences designed specifically for professionals in the built environment.

This programme, created in collaboration with industry leaders, addresses vital sector needs. Organisations such as the Construction Leadership Council, British Standards Institution, Welsh Government, Historic England, Wates, CBRE, Robertson Group, and Canary Wharf Group have actively shared their expertise at events, ensuring that the programme drives meaningful progress in retrofitting and sustainability across the UK's built environment.

Programme Success to Date:

In its first year, the retrofit programme has exceeded its initial two-year goals, demonstrating strong demand for sustainable construction practices.

Key milestones include:

- 4,668 professionals engaged
- 1,844 companies participating
- 2,108 e-learning resources downloaded
- 693 training needs assessments completed

These achievements highlight a growing appetite for sustainable practices within the industry, a positive development for those championing the decarbonisation of the built environment.

Alyssa Sharkey, Bid Team Manager at Seddon (a member of the School), commented: “Engaging with Supply Chain Sustainability School and their retrofit learning has been key to Seddon’s approach to sustainable construction, equipping our teams with technical knowledge and practical skills in delivering high-quality retrofit solutions. This expertise has strengthened our capability to tackle complex sustainability challenges while ensuring we meet PAS2038 and PAS2035 standards. The School’s training has become a foundation of our strategy to reduce carbon emissions and improve building performance across our projects.”

A Collaborative Effort Driving Sustainability

With over 240 industry Partners and their supply chains, the School is uniquely positioned to catalyse positive change. The School provides free access to sustainability training for over 44,000 members, covering not only retrofitting but also key topics such as energy and carbon management, the circular economy, and waste reduction.

Holly Hansen-Maughan, Sector Manager for Retrofit at the Supply Chain Sustainability School, added: “Leading this programme since its inception has been an inspiring journey. This success would not have been possible without collaboration – from our partnership with NatWest Group to the 27 organisations that have shared best practices this past year. We’re proud of our achievements and excited for the future impact of this programme.”

As one of the largest lenders in Britain, NatWest has a key role in supporting consumers and businesses to transition to more energy-efficient buildings that are not only warmer and cheaper to heat but also emit fewer carbon emissions. However, according to Energy Systems Catapult, the UK is not fully prepared for the scale of retrofitting required to meet its net-zero target by 2050; achieving this goal will require retrofitting eight homes every minute.

To make this transition feasible, the industry must develop both the skills and companies needed to carry out retrofit work at scale. Recognising the skill gaps as a significant barrier, particularly for retrofitting the built environment, NatWest became the first bank to partner with the Supply Chain Sustainability School. Together, NatWest and the School have established a free retrofit training programme to build the necessary skills within the construction industry to retrofit both residential and commercial buildings, helping to cultivate a more mature retrofit supply chain.

Laura Capper, Head of Construction and Manufacturing at NatWest comments: “As the need for sustainable solutions in the built environment grows, we’re proud to support initiatives like the retrofit programme, which empowers professionals with essential skills to drive real change. By investing in upskilling and collaboration, this programme is bridging critical gaps in retrofit expertise, equipping thousands to deliver sustainable solutions at scale and accelerating progress toward a net-zero future for

