



Newsletter

Edition 1 | 2023



Skills shortage

Addressing the workforce shortage and competency gap



The situation

According to the GWEC Global Wind Report 2022, 'the total global wind power capacity is now up to 837 GW, helping the world avoid over 1.2 billion tonnes of CO2 annually – equivalent to the annual carbon emissions of South America'. (1)

Investing in clean, green sources of energy is a necessity to power a safer future. However, the explosive growth of offshore wind is posing one enormous challenge... **the shortage of personnel.**

There is an industry-wide need for skilled personnel to sustain its rapid rate of growth. A bitter-sweet phenomenon.



Skill



Headcount vs competency

While the industry hasn't quite got to grips with filling the headcount gap, there is yet another workforce gap that looms large, the competency gap. Competence comes from on-the-job experience and the skills and knowledge gained as a result. It is not something that can be gained through training and theory alone.

Safety is the number one priority across the industry. However, safe operations require an exceptional level of competency to ensure the right measures to control and manage risks are put in place. [\(2\)](#)

Even if, as an industry, we were able to fill the widening vacancy hole – is it with the skilled personnel required to do the job safely and efficiently?

Global war for talent

As stated in the Global Energy Talent Index (GETI) 2022 report, 'the convergence of the energy industry, alongside technological transformation and growing flexible working practices have created employees with transferable skills no longer anchored in one sector or space. Facing a skills shortage and a global war for talent, renewables firms must focus on harnessing the expertise of existing employees and recruiting from outside the sector.' [\(3\)](#)

This however won't be easy. There has been discussion about retraining the oil and gas workforce to meet some of the demand. However, the oil and gas industry will exist for decades yet and may even see periods of resurgence depending on political will and supply and demand economics.

No immediate solution

Training, educating and nurturing talent simply takes time. Whether inspiring school leavers with local apprenticeship opportunities or supporting current employees with courses to help them upskill, building a skilled workforce cannot occur overnight.

This can be broken down into two time horizons:

- 1. Addressing current shortfall**
- 2. Future requirements**

1 - To address current requirements, we can look to industries or individuals with transferable skills. This could be workers from the oil and gas industry, ex-Forces personnel or retraining those with similar skills that, with a bit of training, could provide the necessary skills.

2 - In order to meet the demands for the next few years, the industry needs to look at school leavers and those looking to move industry and have robust training schemes and career paths in place to allow a smooth and easy transition into the market.

This can be by engaging with schools and educating pupils on what opportunities there are for them within the industry and helping the sector to shape training schemes and academies that focus solely on renewables jobs.

Addressing the challenge

Before it becomes an unmanageable risk to offshore wind, and to the energy transition as a whole, filling the workforce gap should be top of the sector's to do list.

As part of James Fisher and Sons Plc (James Fisher) our wider sustainability strategy aims to attract, develop, and retain a high performing workforce, by ensuring equal access to opportunities, providing purposeful and safe work, and promoting our core values where we operate.

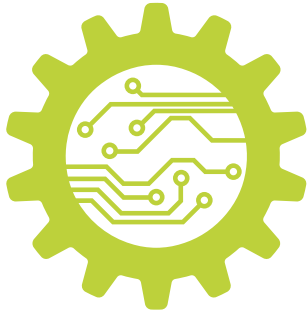
In doing so, this commitment will help address the skills shortage challenge looming over the energy industry.

Three approaches we're taking include the following focus areas: **transferable skills, upskilling** and **STEM opportunities**.





Transferable skills



Industry hopping

Factors such as advancing technologies and innovations, sustainable opportunities, and a stronger focus on environment, social and governance (ESG) strategies, are becoming more desirable to the workforce.

Robert Gordon University's UK Offshore Energy Workforce Transferability Review predicts that around 50% of the jobs in 2030 are projected to be filled by personnel making the leap from existing oil and gas jobs to offshore renewable roles. [\(4\)](#)

As discussed in an [earlier issue](#), offshore renewables would simply not exist if it wasn't for oil and gas. The technology propelling us towards a green power future exists because of the decades of innovation that has come before.

Our roots are in oil and gas, which brings a wealth of experience, tools and lessons.

Ex-Forces personnel

We are an Armed Forces-friendly organisation, supporting the employment of veterans, recognising military skills and qualifications in our recruitment and selection process. This provides the ideal opportunity to upskill and retrain suitable personnel.



Chris Rawnsley

**Head of
Blades**

Rotos 360

Currently working as the Head of Blades, Chris qualified as a composite technician in the Royal Navy, and then furthered that qualification in 2014 to an Advanced Aircraft composite technician.

Chris utilised his experience in the Royal Navy to work to the highest standards in the most extreme environments. Having worked on the Commando helicopter force as a helicopter technician, carrying out operations in offshore, arctic, desert, and remote locations, he found his forces experience allowed him to concentrate on safety and quality.

Upskilling



In a [2022 study](#), GETI reports that, 'sixty-three per cent of respondents say the best way to get the necessary skills to handle the challenges of a changing energy landscape is to improve in-house learning and development, followed by retraining existing employees.' [\(3\)](#)

Evidently, one of the most efficient ways to help bridge the recruitment gap within the offshore wind sector is to turn our attention to the current workforce. Investing in their careers, and encouraging further learning not only upskeils their knowledge base, but is also a fantastic way for increasing staff retention.



Lisa Beesley

Project Manager

EDS HV

Lisa previously worked in offshore wind recruitment before joining EDS' Asset Management division (OFTO) team in 2018. Utilising her existing sector knowledge and transferable skills, Lisa has continually astounded us with her dedication to her role, as she is about to complete her Level 2 City & Guilds technical certificate in Power Engineering, and she is also starting a HNC in Electrical Engineering next year.

"The learning curve was steep at first but I'm extremely proud of the progress I've made and for stepping out of my comfort zone. It feels great to work in an industry that is constantly growing and with so much still to come, whilst also doing good."

Hear more from Lisa:

<https://www.edshv.com/news/lisa-beesley/>



STEM opportunities



In the longer term, education is vital in creating a clear path for the future skilled workforce in offshore wind. Apprenticeships, internships and graduate schemes, particularly with a science, technology, engineering and math (STEM) focus, will undoubtedly support the transition from school to the workplace, particularly offshore wind.

Graduate, internship and apprenticeship programmes

Our programmes provide opportunities for those looking to begin their career after completing their education, offering valuable industry insight and developing transferable skills to help shape career prospects from the beginning.



Sebastian Scorer

**Strategy and
Sales Analyst**

EDS HV

Having transitioned from his previous company that specialised in safety and control systems for construction equipment in the civils, marine and rail sectors, Seb's passion for the environment ultimately encouraged his leap to the renewables industry. His wider skill set and experience gained was a perfect fit and has allowed him to develop his career.

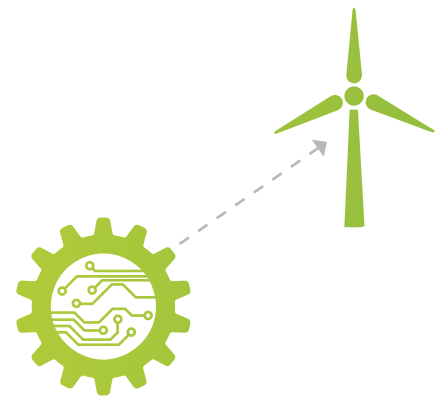
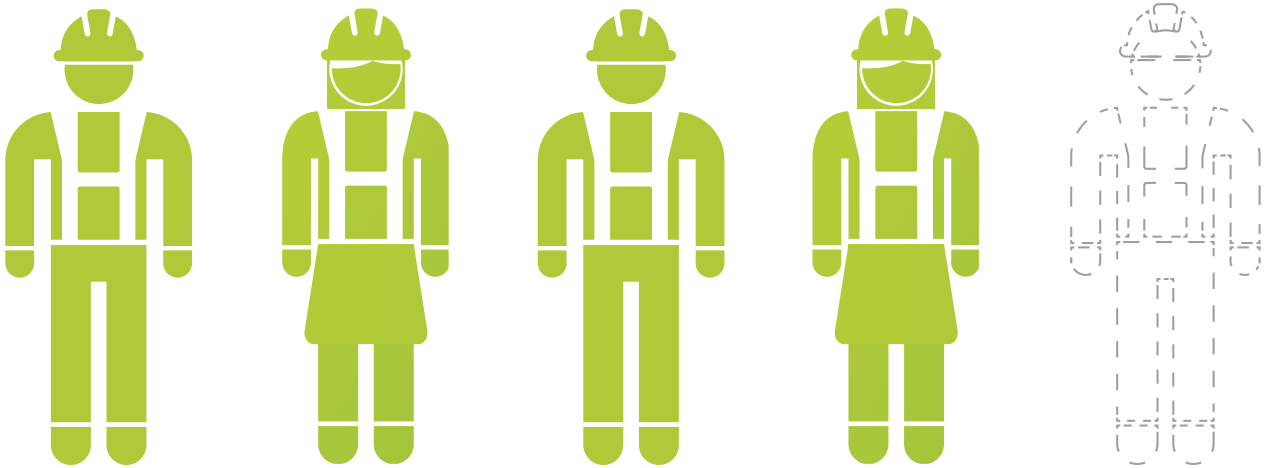
“What I love most is that EDS HV are contributing massively to the production of green energy. I am doing my best in my personal life to live sustainably, but now I get great satisfaction knowing that I am also doing my bit by working in the renewable energy industry too.”

Learn more about Seb:

<https://www.edshv.com/news/meet-the-team-sebastian-scorrer/>

Facts and stats

In the UK, only around **40,000** engineering and manufacturing technology apprentices graduated in 2021 – a **20% decrease since 2019**. [\(2\)](#)



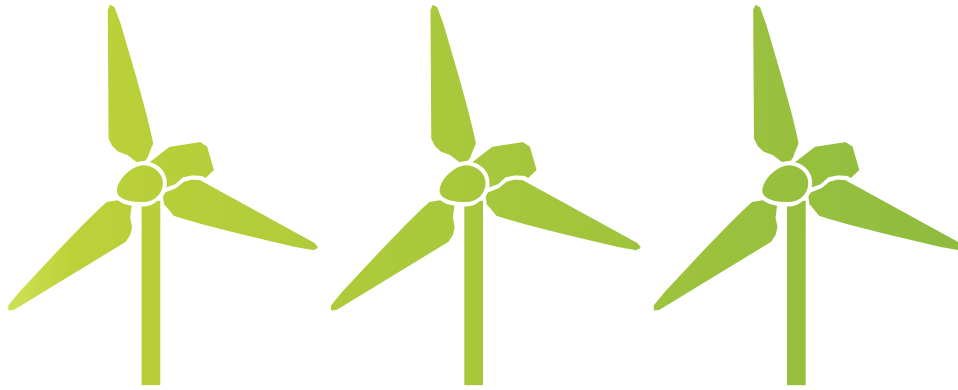
A skilled workforce is required to help drive the energy transition forwards. Competence is vital for ensuring quality workmanship as assets will have a life expectancy in excess of **25 years**. The quality of the build, as well as the operation and maintenance will significantly influence the return on investment and the asset's capability. [\(2\)](#)

70,000 UK skilled workers are required to close the gap in order to meet the challenges of climate change and accelerate the move to a decarbonised future. Offshore wind in the UK currently employs 26,000 people which means that, to meet this target, employment needs to increase by **170%** by 2026. [\(5\)](#)

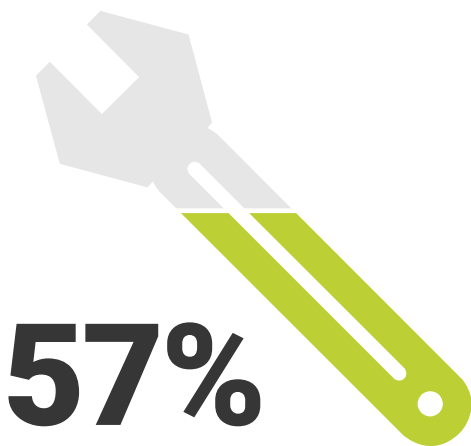
In a study conducted by GETI 2022, 'as the sector undergoes digital transformation, we are seeing an increasing interchangeability of both skills and workers between technology and energy. Thirty seven per cent of the renewables workforce joined from a non-energy sector in the past 18 months while 77% would consider moving to an outside sector in the next three years with technology the top choice.' [\(3\)](#)



Wind can power **3.3 million new jobs** worldwide over the **next five years** [\(6\)](#)



3.3 million

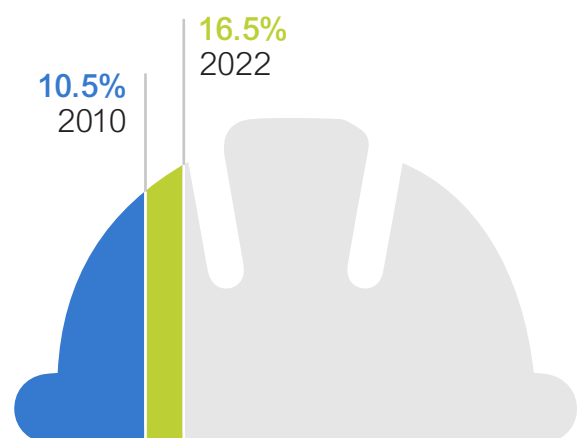


According to the [GETI 2022 report](#), 'rapid technological innovation means **engineering** is now the **most sought-after technical skill** for **57%** of hiring managers when recruiting outside talent.' [\(3\)](#)

This global war for talent, competing for the same skill set and discipline across multiple sectors, is a significant challenge to overcome.

Across the STEM sectors, including the renewable energy industry, there is a substantial drive to increase female representation and create more equal opportunities.

In March 2022, Engineering UK reported that **women** made up **16.5% of all engineers** in the UK, compared to **10.5% reported in 2010**. [\(7\)](#)



Want to know more?



[Current vacancies](#)



[James Fisher sustainability strategy: People](#)



[James Fisher: Our People](#)

References

1. [GWEC: Global Wind Report 2022](#)
2. [Windpower Monthly: Training won't bridge offshore wind skills gap alone - we must build competency too](#)
3. [GETI 2022 report](#)
4. [Robert Gordon University: UK Offshore Energy Workforce Transferability Review](#)
5. [Windpower Monthly: How do we find 70,000 skilled workers offshore wind urgently needs?](#)
6. [GWEC report: Wind can power 3.3 million new jobs worldwide over next five years](#)
7. [Engineering UK: Women in engineering](#)

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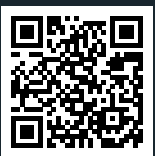
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Coming up...

In the next edition, we'll be exploring service operation vehicles (SOVs).





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