



Worker perceptions of climate change & the green transition in Yorkshire and the Humber **Key messages**



This report has been prepared to inform the Yorkshire and Humber Climate Commission on worker perceptions of the transition to a low carbon economy. The study has a core focus on the Yorkshire and the Humber (Y&H) region, but has lessons of interest for anyone working on the question of employment and skills in the green transition. The research draws from a nationally representative survey of 2,000 UK workers undertaken by the Centre for Employment Relations Innovation and Change (CERIC) at Leeds University Business School with funding support from UKRI Research England..

Workers' views on climate change

- Across the UK, 76 per cent of workers express concern about climate change. However, in Y&H, workers are significantly more concerned (85 per cent). 65 per cent of workers in the UK say that climate change should be tackled with a high or extremely high level of urgency. In Y&H, this rises to 77 per cent.
- Workers have a mix of emotions about the climate crisis ranging from hope, to fear, anger and outrage. The sense of outrage is the most strongly felt emotion across the UK and significantly more Y&H workers report this than the UK average.. How emotions shape worker responses to and engagement in action to address climate change needs to be better understood and reflected in policy.
- The green transition is real and already here for many workers. A third of workers (36 per cent across the UK and 34 per cent in Y&H) say that actions to decarbonise are happening in their workplace, yet only half have been consulted on these changes and a just over a quarter say they have received relevant training.

Expectations of the transition to a greener economy

- Workers in Y&H feel quite optimistic about community level impacts of the green transition with nearly half expecting new green jobs to arrive in their local communities. At the same time workers in Y&H are not as confident as others in the UK that they personally will be able to access employment opportunities in the green economy. Only two in five expect new green jobs to be better quality jobs.
- A significant minority expect disruptions. One in five expect job losses locally due to green transitions. One in seven thinks that the green transition will mean they will have to change their job or relocate to find work. Two thirds expressed interest in working in green economy jobs. To realise change this would require many workers to switch sector.



- Working in the green economy is an attractive proposition for workers in Y&H: nearly three quarters are interested in a 'green' job, motivated by the prospect of interesting and meaningful work that helps reduce or halt climate change.

Skills and training for the green transition

- Workers in Y&H feel less equipped to deal with the green transition than workers in other parts of the UK: they are less likely to have regularly updated knowledge and skills, less likely to think their knowledge and skills would be useful in the green economy and more likely to think that the 'greening' of jobs will require them to learn new skills.
- The vast majority of workers in Y&H are willing to develop new skills and feel confident about doing so, emphasising the opportunity for policy to support the skills transition. Yet, workers in lower-skilled occupations are more likely to feel that they will need to change jobs and are much less likely to say that they have skills relevant for the green transition or report that regularly accessed training.

Delivering a just transition

- Workers in Y&H, as elsewhere, want support in the green transition that primarily focuses on access to training and good quality jobs.
- Workers also want to see collaborative 'bottom-up' approaches to transition planning with greater involvement in decision-making that draws on their knowledge and relevant skills.
- In the Y&H region workers particularly emphasise that green transition processes should focus on reducing inequalities in communities already badly affected by industrial change in the past.

Take-aways for policy-makers, business & trade unions

- Investing in skills is important now and workers are ready to undertake training and development to prepare for green transitions. In addition to occupational training and workplace learning, general carbon literacy training for all workers is also needed to improve the knowledge base around climate change and green transition.
- Involving workers in decarbonisation programmes early on is a key recipe for success. This requires more complex and sustained forms of dialogue between employers, workers, local authorities and training providers to engage workers directly on the employment effects of climate policy and to understand how job change, upskilling or re-skilling and the transition to new roles can best be supported.
- Tackling climate change is seen as a key responsibility of governments, failing to address this now can potentially lead to further political disengagement

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