



UNIVERSITY OF LEEDS

Community members climate change the green economy and just transition

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LEEDS UNIVERSITY BUSINESS SCHOOL

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UNIVERSITY OF LEEDS

Priestley International
Centre for Climate

CERIC
Centre for Employment Relations, Innovation & Change

FOREWORD

Decarbonising Britain's steel industry is among the biggest challenges steelworkers have ever faced, but it must happen and the trade unions do not shy away from that. In fact, we want to get on with it, because already we are years behind European competitors and our primary steelmakers are at a critical point where investment decisions have to be made.

We firmly believe that a successful and just transition in steel can only be delivered through trade unions, employers and the government working in close and constructive partnership. Greening the steel industry, and the position of Britain's steel industry in particular, has been the subject of numerous studies, but all too often the concerns of the workforce are not adequately taken into account. This research from the University of Leeds helps to address that imbalance, making an important contribution towards placing workers views, fears and aspirations at the heart of ongoing debate around the transition.

Community was pleased to work with the University of Leeds on this research project, and we circulated and promoted the University's in-depth survey to our thousands of members working across all Britain's steelmakers. The results of the survey will inform the union's conversations with our members and steel employers and there's no doubt they are striking; the clear message is that members are extremely concerned about the future and they feel unprepared by their employers and excluded from decision-making.

That steelworkers are worried about the future, given the ongoing uncertainty and lack of commitment from the Government, is hardly surprising, but there's no doubt more must be done to involve and equip the workforce for a future transition, with unions' robustly holding employers to account on their decarbonisation plans.

Our thanks goes to Vera and Jo at the University of Leeds for their considerable time and effort, and for sharing their expertise to help us better understand our members' concerns on this most important of matters. We look forward to continuing to collaborate with University of Leeds as we pursue a decarbonisation pathway that, not only delivers a sustainable future for our steel industry, but that is fair and just and properly reflects the needs of the workforce.

Alasdair McDiarmid
Operations Director at
Community the steelworkers' union

SUMMARY

Steel workers are particularly vulnerable when it comes to a transition towards low carbon or net zero economy. Currently, there is a lack of commitment from government to burden the costs for steel decarbonisation in the UK, and workplaces are at risk.

This report presents views of workers in the steel industry about climate change, decarbonisation, net zero and just transition policies. It has been prepared for Community and relies on a survey carried out in late 2021.

Key Findings

- **Community members are very worried about climate change, more than the average worker in the UK.** Every fourth think climate change should be addressed with extreme or the highest level of urgency.
- **Outrage is the most common feeling among Community members**, but while very worried, they are also more hopeful that climate change can be addressed and less anxious about its effects than the average UK worker.
- A majority feels well informed about climate change but **has not received any relevant training on climate, net zero or decarbonisation from their employers.**
- It is primarily at household level that Community members try to reduce emissions, rather than at work or through the union.
- In relation to decarbonisation, Community members are **less satisfied** with their job security, access to training, involvement in decision-making at work or with their employers responding to them.
- Thus, **Community members are sceptical** their businesses will be able to decarbonise and stress the need for stronger government support.
- **Government** is seen as having the greatest responsibility for addressing the climate crisis.
- Members see also the role of their union as **extremely important** in taking up environmental concerns at the workplace.
- **Given the exposure of steelworkers to job loss**, Community members are strongly in favour of free access to training, professional support to relocate, a job guarantee or early retirement.

Recommendations

- There is a clear chance for **Community to engage more with members** around climate change. Members take action individually at household level but see the role of their union as **extremely important.**
- **Reps, including specialist ‘green’ or environment reps should feel encouraged to do more** around the climate crisis including action at the workplace to organise relevant education and training for workers, to hold employers more to account on decarbonisation plans and to actively engage with workers on those plans.

INTRODUCTION

Community is a trade union with industrial and community roots in the UK representing workers in the steel industry, in education and early years, logistics, light industry, finance, justice and custodial, health and social care, third sector and self-employed and with a membership of 52,000¹.

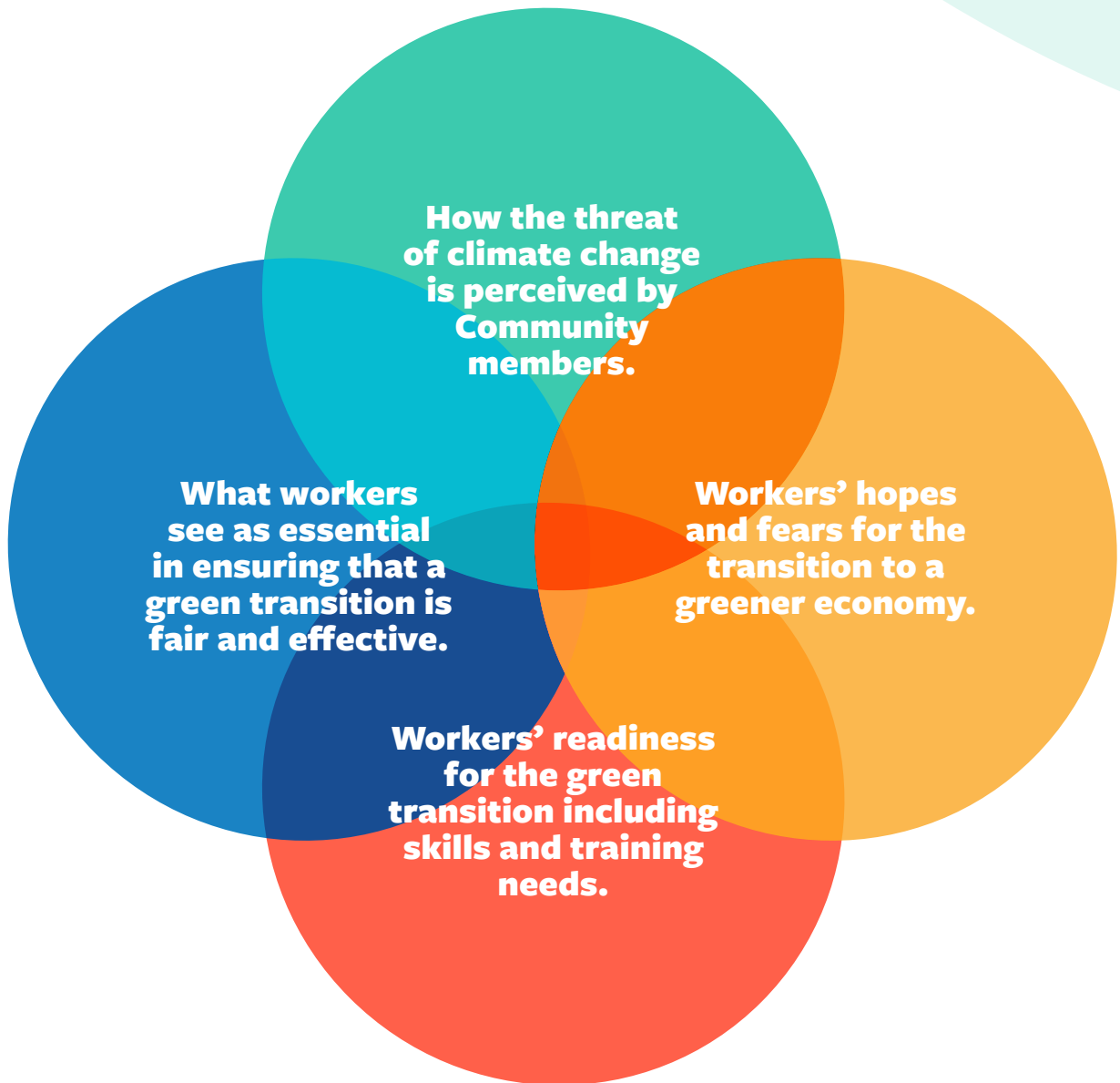
This report has been prepared for Community on members' perceptions of the transition to a low carbon economy. The survey was sent out to members in the steel sector only. Fifty-three members of Community responded to the survey which was launched in July 2021 and was open until mid-September 2021. The survey was designed by researchers at the University of Leeds, Centre for Employment Relations Innovation and Change (CERIC) and distributed by Community. This report focuses on the responses from Community members and where relevant compares these to the findings of a similar survey which was undertaken with a nationally representative sample of 2,000 workers across the UK in 2021².

¹Certification Office Annual Return 2020

²Worker Perceptions of Climate Change and the Green Transition (2021)

THE KEY THEMES

explored in these surveys are:



MAIN FINDINGS

Profile of survey respondents

All of the respondents to this survey work in the steel industry (See Table 1).

Across the survey 23.4 per cent are a union rep, a further 19.1 per cent classify themselves as an active member. The remaining 57.4 per cent say they are a member but not very active in the union or its campaigns. Ninety eight per cent of respondents identify as White British, the majority of respondents, 79 per cent, identify as men, 21 per cent as women. Half of the respondents are located in Wales, a quarter in Yorkshire and the Humber and mainly working for Tata Steel, Liberty Steel, British Steel, Celsa Steel and Outokumpu.

Most of the respondents have a stable working life: 95.9 per cent are in permanent employment; all work full-time, 2 per cent work on a temporary contract with no agreed end date, 2 per cent work fixed period contract with an agreed end date. 96.3 per cent were placed on furlough during COVID and 3.7 per cent were made redundant during the COVID19 pandemic. 70 per cent work in large workplaces with more than 500 employees. A majority of 75.6 per cent of respondents consider that they work in a workplace with high carbon emissions.

The level of education is medium, with 33.3 per cent having a degree level qualification or higher (NVQ Level 4 or higher), 25.9 per cent have an NVQ Level 3, and 20.3 per cent an NVQ Level 2 qualification, 9.2 per cent hold a craft or apprenticeship. Sixty seven per cent are parents.

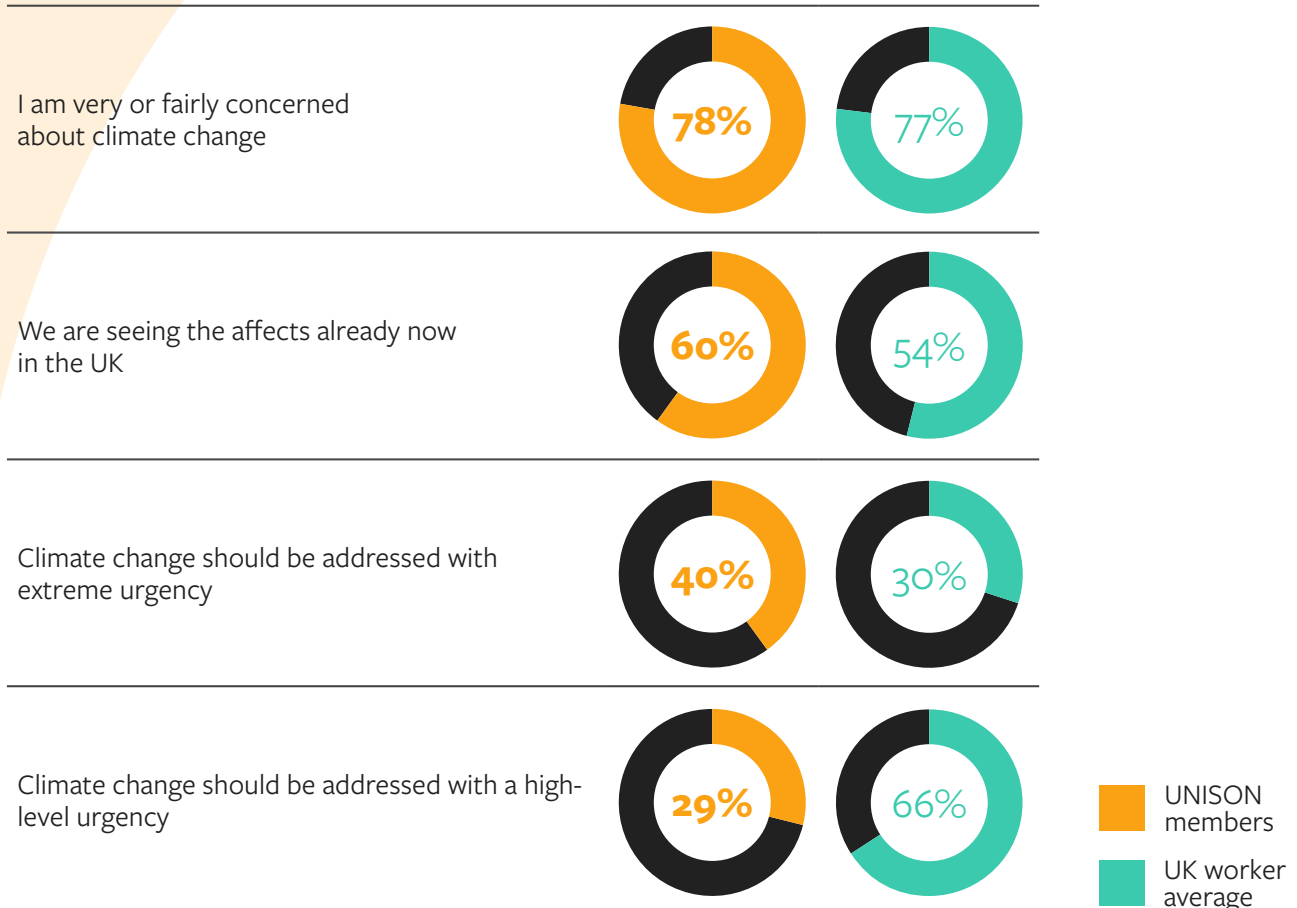
COMMUNITY MEMBERS more concerned about climate change

Community members are very worried about climate change (See Figure 1).

They are on average slightly more worried than workers UK wide (78.1 compared to 77.3 being very or fairly concerned). More Community members think the UK is already experiencing major effects of climate change, 60.4 per cent compared to 54.4 per cent of UK workers on average. Overall, 68.9 per cent of Community members think that climate change should be addressed urgently: this includes 39.6 per cent of Community’s members who think that climate change should be addressed with extreme urgency, compared to a lower number of 29.8 per cent of UK workers on average. While over a third of Community respondents feel bold action on the climate should be taken now, there is a broader constituency within the union who do not support this idea of the need for urgency when it comes to tackling climate change. Among Community respondents there are 31.1 per cent compared to 4.5 per cent among the average worker in the UK, who don’t think that climate change should be tackled with high or extreme urgency.

Figure 1: Views on climate change Community Respondents & UK Worker Average

% of survey respondents



We explored whether the climate perceptions discussed above differ across different segments of the membership.

Table 1 shows the breakdown of Community respondents' views about climate change across those who are union reps, those who describe themselves as active union members and those who self-define as not so active in the union. Community reps have a higher level of concern about climate change, are more likely to see that the effects of climate change are already being felt locally and that urgent action should be taken on climate change. Those who consider themselves as less active within the union are slightly more likely than 'active' members to have similar view on climate change to the Community Reps, although the differences in climate perceptions between membership type are small. **Overall, the key point shown here is that the degree of concern about the climate is felt across the membership, although reps tend to have a slightly greater sense of concern and need for urgency.**

Table 1:
Views on climate change **% of survey respondents**

Statements:	UNISON Reps	Active members	Not so active members
I am very or fairly concerned about climate change	81.8%	69.7%	74.1%
We are seeing the affects already now in the UK	63.6%	55.6%	59.3%
Climate change should be addressed with extreme urgency	54.5%	33.3%	37.0%
Climate change should be addressed with a high-level urgency	27.3%	33.3%	25.9%

We know from a growing body of research that our emotions about the climate crisis influence how we process information about climate change, the likelihood we will take individual or collective action on climate, and the type of policies we support (Stanley et al 2021). Thus, perceptions and emotions relating to climate change are an important factor in understanding workers’ perspectives on the green transition. We asked how strongly respondents feel about climate change and their emotional response to the issue asking about hope, fear, anger, guilt, and outrage.

Figure 2 shows some interesting results. Levels of hope and outrage at the same time are much more dominant/prominent among Community members than with the average UK worker, however, levels of anxiety and fear amongst Community members are much lower than the national average UK worker. This suggests scope for action on climate change and outrage and hope are emotions that tend to form the basis of action whereas fear, guilt and anxiety can inhibit this.

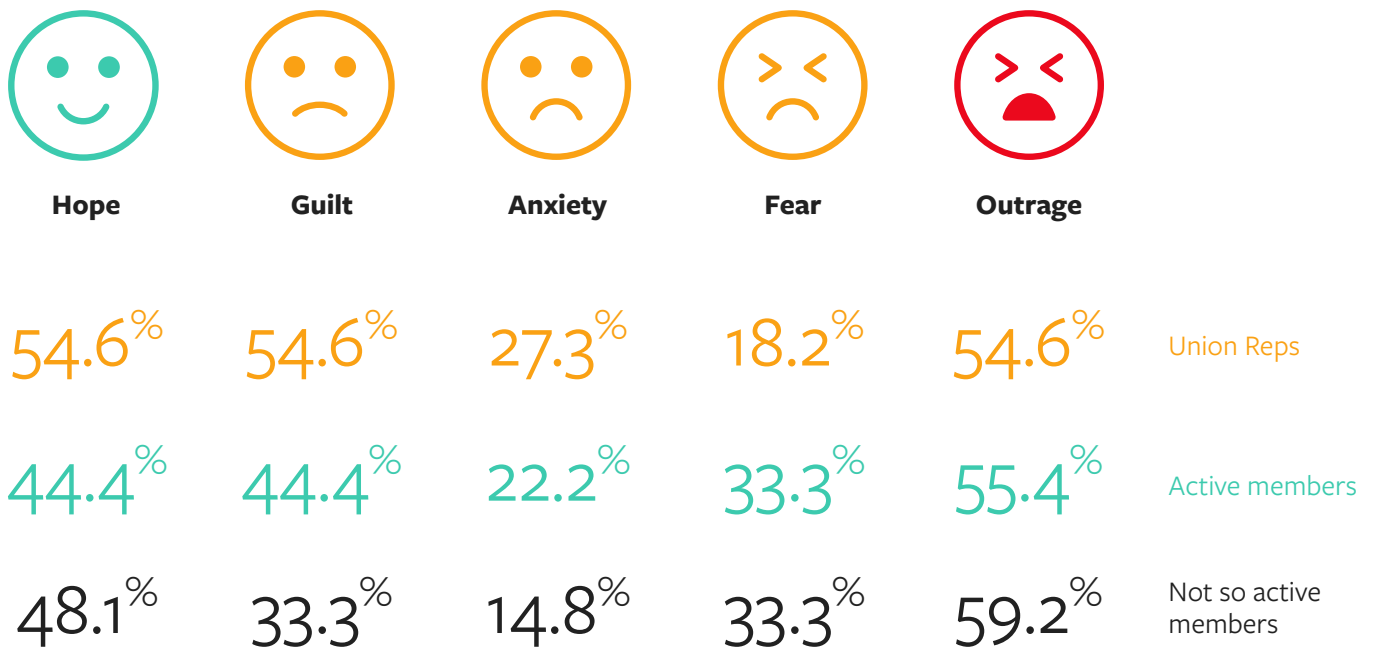
Figure 2: Climate emotions
Community Respondents & UK Worker Average



Again, looking at this set of questions in more detail with respect to the type of respondent, Table 2 shows that there are differences between union reps and rank and file active and non-active members.

Community reps feel more guilty, more hopeful about the challenges of climate change, and less fearful than rank and file members. Outrage though is strongly felt among the entire Community membership.

Table 2: Climate emotions by Community Union Respondent Type



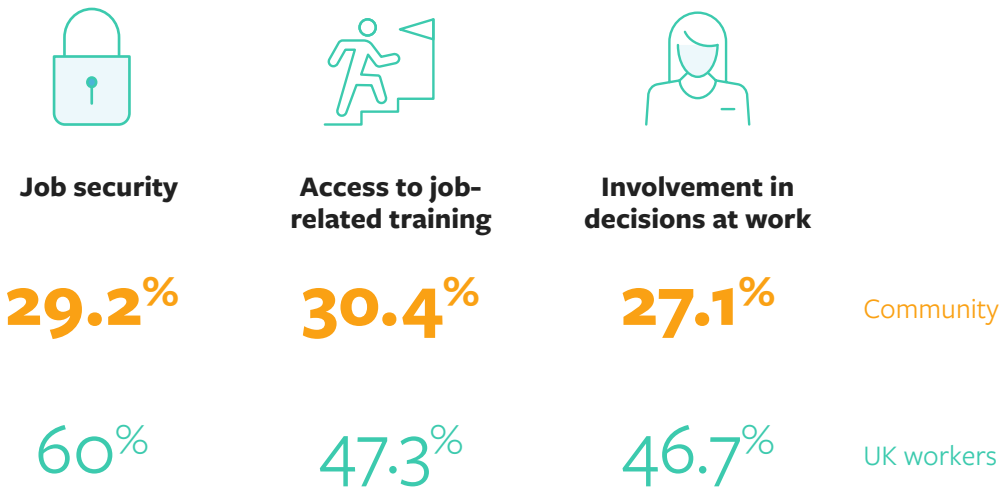
The survey also checked the extent to which respondents felt knowledgeable about the topic of climate change. The level of concern about the climate crisis might be linked to relatively high levels of understanding of the climate challenge. A large majority of Community respondents feel well informed about climate change. 62.5 per cent state that they have a good knowledge about the causes and effects of climate change, compared to 49.1 per cent in the UK national worker average. Interestingly, active members are much more likely than union reps or not so active members to say that they feel knowledgeable about climate change (77.8 per cent of active members compared to 54.6 per cent of reps and 59.2 per cent of other members).

DECARBONISING AT THE WORKPLACE: Workers disappointed by management

The survey explores general questions around job satisfaction and the degree of dialogue with management about day-to-day experience at work.

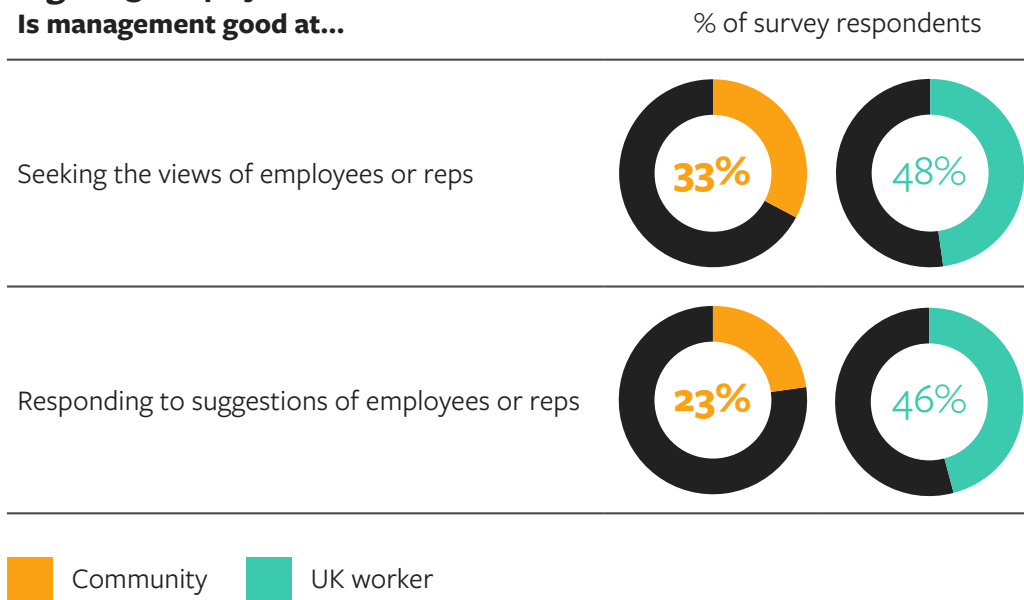
This helps set the context for questions about the extent to which they are involved in dialogue over workplace changes related to the climate crisis and plans to move towards net zero. Members of Community seem relatively unsatisfied with their working conditions, they are less satisfied on average than the UK average worker. In terms of job security this difference is the greatest. Table 3 shows that only 29.2 per cent are ‘extremely’ or ‘somewhat’ satisfied with job security compared to 60.0 per cent nationally. Satisfaction with access to job-related training is also low (30.4 per cent), and noticeably much less satisfied with their access to training than the UK average for UK workers.

Table 3: Job Satisfaction
Extremely or somewhat satisfied with....



Additional questions asked members about management and their engagement with workers. Involvement in decisions at work are evaluated also more negative by Community members than the national average, only 27.1 per cent rate the involvement in decisions at work positively, compared to 46.6 per cent nationally. Rather 32.3 per cent of Community members surveyed state that they are somehow or extremely dissatisfied with the involvement in decisions at work. 33.3 per cent say that managers are good or very good in seeking the views of employees or employee reps, again **this is lower than the national response** of 48.4 per cent. 22.9 per cent think managers are good at responding to suggestions from employees or employee reps and this is **much lower than the national average** across the UK workforce where 46.4 per cent state this. 25 per cent state that their managers are very poor at seeking the views of employees or employee reps, 25 per cent think they are rather poor, 12.5 per cent think managers are very poor whilst 31.2 think rather poor in responding to suggestions from employees.

**Figure 3: Employment Relations at work:
Is management good at...**



This rather negative judgment by Community members at management’s ability to take on board worker views becomes even more critical when asking Community members about satisfaction with their employers and their engagement towards net zero and green issues; shown in Table 4.

Not surprisingly, 75.6 percent of Community respondents state that they work at a site with a high level of emissions, compared to only 16.8 percent of UK workers and almost two-thirds of Community respondents state that plans to reduce carbon emissions are underway (59.1 percent). This contrasts with one third of work sites for UK workers (36.4 percent).

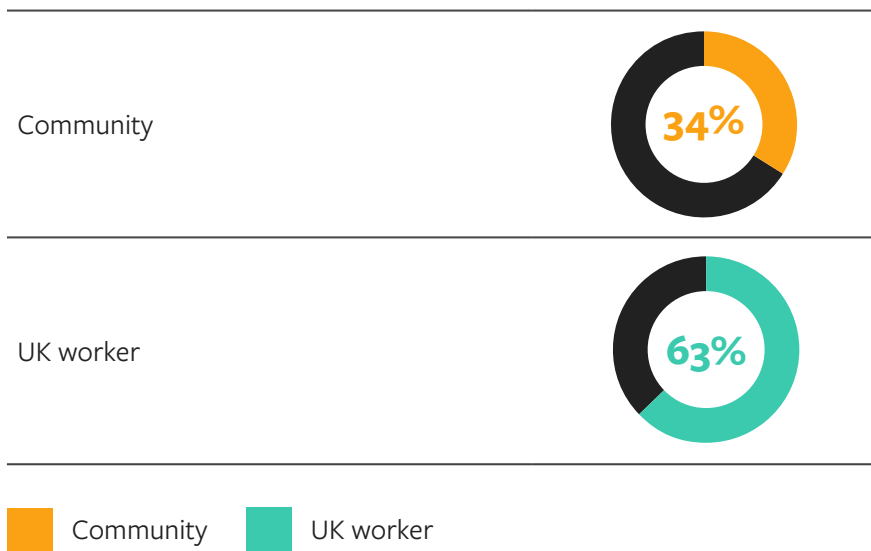
Of greater concern, is that Community members in those sites where net zero plans are underway are less likely (42.3 per cent) than the UK worker average (54.8 per cent) to have been consulted on those plans and significantly fewer (7.7 per cent) have received any relevant training on net zero compared to the UK average (27.9 per cent).

Table 4: Carbon reduction plans at work	Community	UK Workers
Work at a site with high emissions	75.6%	16.8%
Has your organisations made plans to reduce carbon emissions	59.1%	36.4%
Management consulted with staff on these plans? % of those at sites with carbon reduction plans (% of all workers in brackets)	42.3% (25.0%)	54.8% (22.9%)
Received relevant training on carbon reduction? % of those at sites with carbon reduction plans (% of all workers in brackets)	7.7% (4.6%)	27.9% (12.3%)

Putting the answers of Community members in a comparative perspective, Figure 4 shows that Community members are more sceptical that steel plants will decarbonise when compared to asking UK workers as a whole as to whether these plans will be realised in their workplace (34.1 percent of all community members versus 63 percent of UK workers).

Figure 4: Do you feel confident your organisation will decarbonise?

% of survey respondents



In open questions, when asked what kind of changes or investments are needed at their sites to help reach net zero, many underline the need for more investment and government support, specific responses are shown in Table 5 and summarised as being focused on climate policy, better management, more investment, greener production processes and better education.

Table 5 also illustrates that some members are not so interested in the topic, and as noted above, others are sceptical that change will happen at all. Table 5 illustrates that many Community members have ideas about ways in which decarbonisation can be achieved. In this respect, it is concerning that workers in the steel sector are not regularly engaged in dialogue by management on net zero (only a quarter overall).

Table 5: What key changes or investment is needed to ensure that your organisation decarbonises?

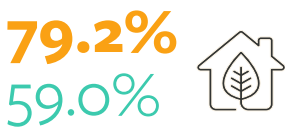
Individual responses	Areas of engagement
Considering the industry, I assume an off-set scheme is necessary	Climate policy
Better management	Management
It needs a new owner	Management
State funding	Investment (state)
Help from the government	Investment (state)
Carbon Capture technology, the willingness to invest	Investment (in tech); Greener production processes
Investment in Hydrogen fuelled, and Electric arc Blast furnaces and investment into turning CO ₂ in to Acetic acid	Investment (in green tech)
Power factor correction, investment in renewable energy to power auxiliary equipment. e.g. Solar/ hydro	Investment (in green tech)
Electric Arc furnaces along with new thin slab caster and mini hot mill within the next 5 years.	Investment (in green tech)
I am not sure, it is an old site with many challenges, it would need significant investment, would a company be willing to do that?	Investment; Management
Financial investment	Investment
Greener resources	Greener production resources
Its own melting shop	(Greener) production resources
Massive overhaul of production	Greener production processes
Scrap a big issue	Greener production processes
Will need to review and develop advanced steel grades that are made from recycled steel scrap rather than new crude steel production.	Greener production processes
Education and funding in new technologies	Education; Investment (state, green tech)
Don't know	Don't know
No idea, don't care just happy to be working	Don't know
They won't	Sceptic

MEMBERS' OWN ACTION ON CLIMATE CHANGE

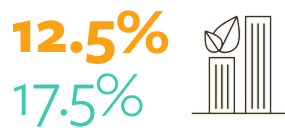
Table 6 shows that Community members are already active on climate change in several ways, most notably within their households. There is also some involvement in climate change activity at work, in local communities or via their trade union. Community respondents are less likely than those across the UK to state that they are active in climate action at work. Yet overall, Community members are active on climate in some way, only 18.8 per cent of Community respondents state that they are not involved in action on climate in any of these ways, compared to 28.8 per cent (over a quarter) of all UK respondents. Over three quarters of Community members state that they are involved in climate action at home (79.2 per cent), this is higher than the UK average (59.0 per cent). Engagement in climate action at home is very strongly associated with action on other domains. In the case of Community respondents, if they are not active in household climate actions they are not at all likely to be active at work, in the local community or union climate action.

Looking at the degree of activity in climate action by types of respondent (reps, activists and not so active members), 100 per cent of Community reps state that they are taking action on climate in their households with 45 per cent of active members and 89 per cent of not so active members are taking climate action at home. In other settings - at work or in the local community - there is also variance across these groups, with 22.1 per cent of reps engaged in green action at work, and the same proportion (22.1 percent) of this group also report that they are active in environmental activities or campaigns in their community. Some of the respondents who define themselves as less active union members are also active in climate action at work and in their community (14.8 per cent) but none of the active members are involved in climate action in these other domains. These findings suggest that there is considerable scope to connect the concern that members have for environmental issues with the potential for action and engagement via the workplace and through the work of the union.

Table 6: Taking action on climate change.



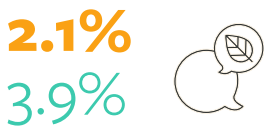
In our household we are trying to reduce our carbon footprint



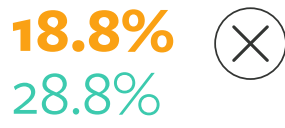
At work I am involved in action to reduce carbon emissions or protect the environment



I am involved in environmental activities or campaigns in my community



I am involved in environmental activities or campaigns in my trade union



None of these



Responsibility for climate leadership

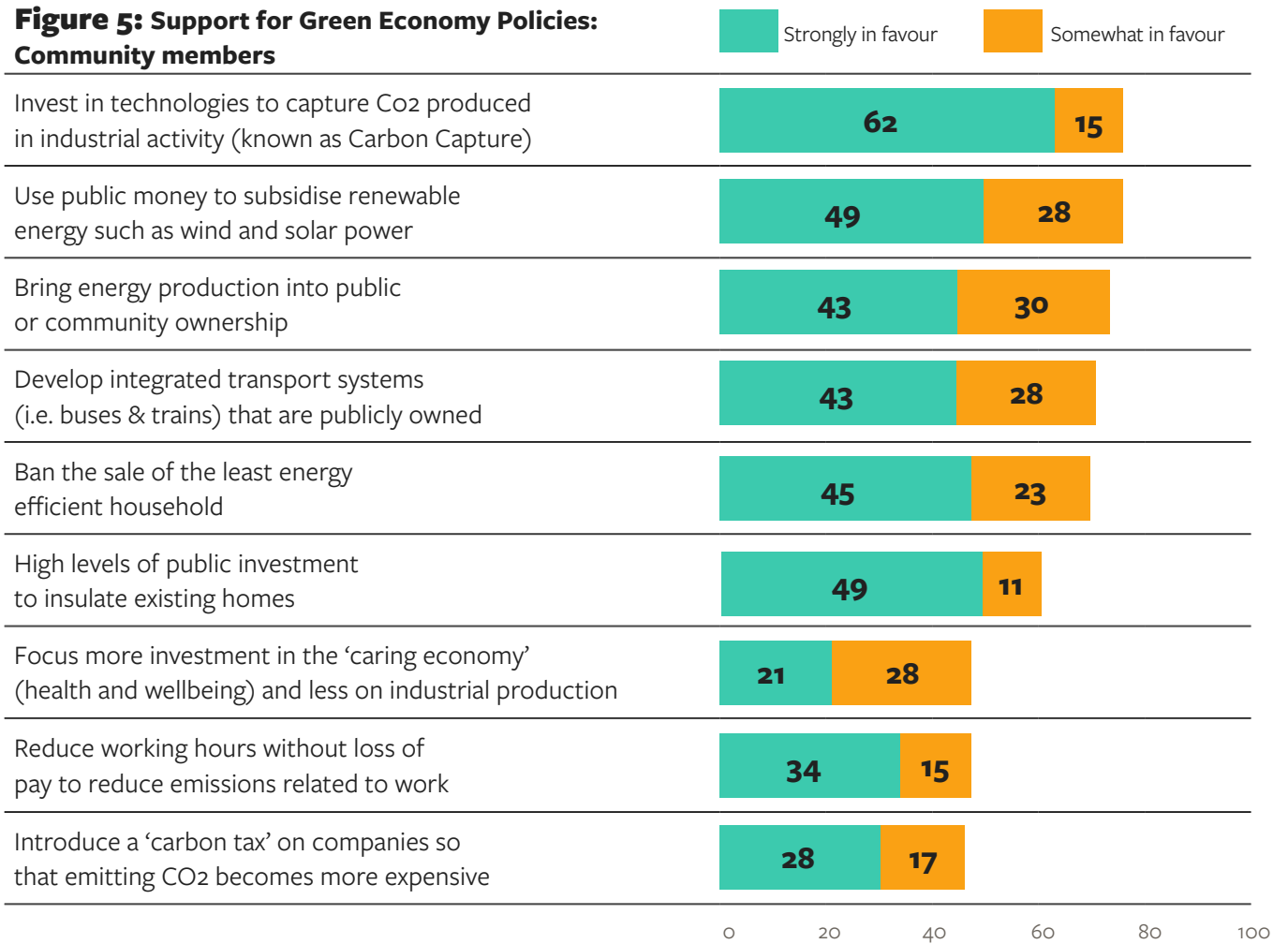
When it comes to who has the greatest responsibility to address climate change Community members think it is the government, then business and individuals equally and then community groups and organisations. Interestingly though, Community members think that the union has a huge role to play in addressing climate change. When presented with the hypothetical case of a worker who is concerned about high emissions at their workplace and about large amounts of waste, Community members are much more likely to state that they should try to push for change through their workplace union, (27.7 per cent), whilst only 21.2 per cent think they should raise it with management. 27.7 per cent think it is local council/government who should make sure that companies meet high environmental standards through regulation and legislation, another manifestation of the strong belief climate change needs to be (foremost) addressed by government. This suggests that Community members consider the role of their union as extremely important in taking up environmental concerns at the workplace, as compared with the average worker in the UK.

Policy support for net zero and a just transition

In addition to understanding perceptions of climate change and engagement in action to address it, the survey also explores members views on government proposals and policies to tackle climate change by presenting a number of policy options currently being debated by trade unions and government. The results are shown in Figure 5 where respondents were asked to state their level of support for various green strategies.

The policies that obtained most support (strongly or somewhat in favour) are support for investment in carbon capture technologies and public investment in renewable energy. It is notable that what might be described as more “socialist” ideas like bringing energy into public ownership and publicly owned and integrated transport systems also attract high levels of support. More generally, debates over the nature of economic policy and sustainability consider whether economic growth is compatible with a sustainable green economy, this is a complex issue and Community members are undecided if economic growth harms the environment, 29.2 per cent think it does, 29.2 per cent disagree and 37.5 per cent are undecided. These proportions are very similar to the UK worker average (33.2 percent agree, 31.1 percent disagree and 25.6 per cent undecided). In a contrasting question, respondents were asked if they believe that the UK needs economic growth to help protect the environment. 58.3 per cent of Community members agree, 8.33 per cent disagree, and 33.3 percent are undecided. This compares to average UK workers survey responding 49.6 per cent agree, 14.4 percent disagree and 36.2 percent undecided, suggesting that Community members are more likely to see the economic growth.

Figure 5: Support for Green Economy Policies: Community members



Climate adaptation and mitigation, the turn towards a greener economy might have deep implications for jobs and employment. Policies that support workers where jobs are at risk because of efforts to reduce climate change are called policies for a Just Transition (JT). These try to ensure green transitions are fair and effective. We asked respondents to rate the importance of JT policies, drawing on the most prominent ones suggested by the ILO guidance on Just Transition (2015) or more recent demands from worker organisations in the UK (such as those made by Community, Prospect, Unison, Unite and GMB).

Respondents were asked to rate each policy on a ten-point scale 'from not at all important' (0) to 'extremely important' (10). Figure 6 shows the results for key areas of direct policy support for workers. Figure 7 shows preferences for the core principles upon which dialogue over just transition should be based, both figures compare the findings from Community members to that of the national UK worker survey. Figure 6 shows that the balance of priorities was broadly the same for Community and UK workers, with access to training and good quality jobs locally being seen as key elements of the just transition. It is striking to see how much more emphasis Community workers place on access to free training for re-skilling, access to free training to re-skill and access to local jobs.

Figure 6: Rating of Just Transition Policies, Community members & UK workers

Statements:	Average score (10 point scale)	
	Community	UK
Support package to relocate	6.7	6.3
Pension boost to retire early	7.6	5.8
A job guarantee	8.4	6.9
Professional support to relocate	8.6	6.7
New jobs locally	8.9	7.1
Jobs with similar pay & conditions	9.1	7.2
Access to free training to re-skill	9.1	7.3

Figure 7 highlights how strongly Community members also favour a strong emphasis on union-management plans, worker and community engagement. Community members, more than the national workers survey, also place a high premium on policy being sensitive to the needs of particular regions already negatively affected by industrial change. This is understandable given that steel communities have been badly affected by round of restructuring in the past.

Figure 7: Rating of Just Transition Principles, Community and UK workers

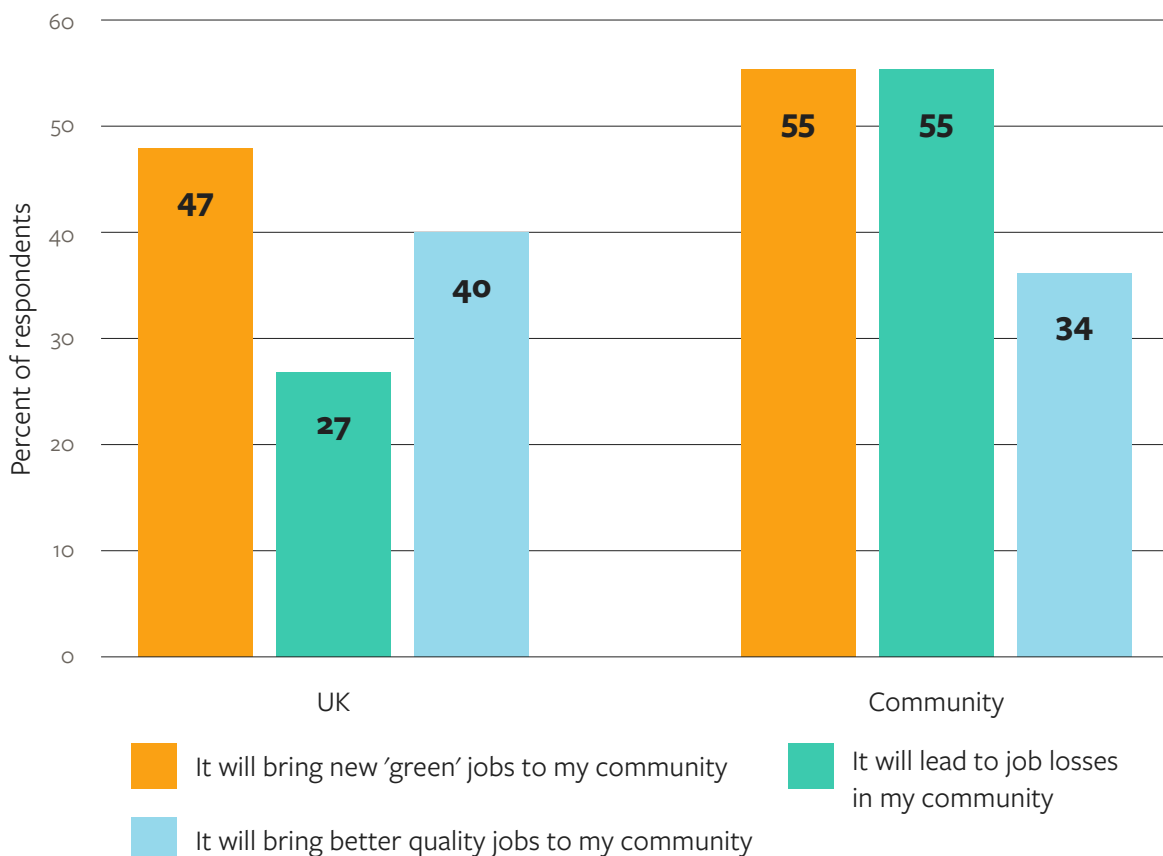
Statements:	Average scale (10 point scale)	
	Community	UK
A strong union-management agreement to plan and prepare for change	8.5	6
A strong focus on reducing inequalities in communities badly affected by industrial change in the past	8.2	6.7
Use the knowledge and insights of workers on how to decarbonise	7.7	6.6
Direct involvement of the communities affected by green economy plans in decision making	7	6.6
Allow businesses to make changes with limited regulation from government or oversight unions	5.2	5.6

Regarding the union's position on climate action, the survey asked a set of questions regarding the prioritisation of jobs in the face of climate change mitigation. Of course, union action in this area is not simply an issue of 'jobs versus environment' and when asked if 'unions should prioritise the fight against climate change at the expense of certain jobs, as long as there is adequate investment for new, decent quality jobs' (i.e. Just Transition policies) 54.8 per cent of members support this idea. Less respondents, though, support the idea that jobs are more important than climate mitigation, only 34.2 per cent agreed with this statement.

THE FUTURE IN A GREEN ECONOMY

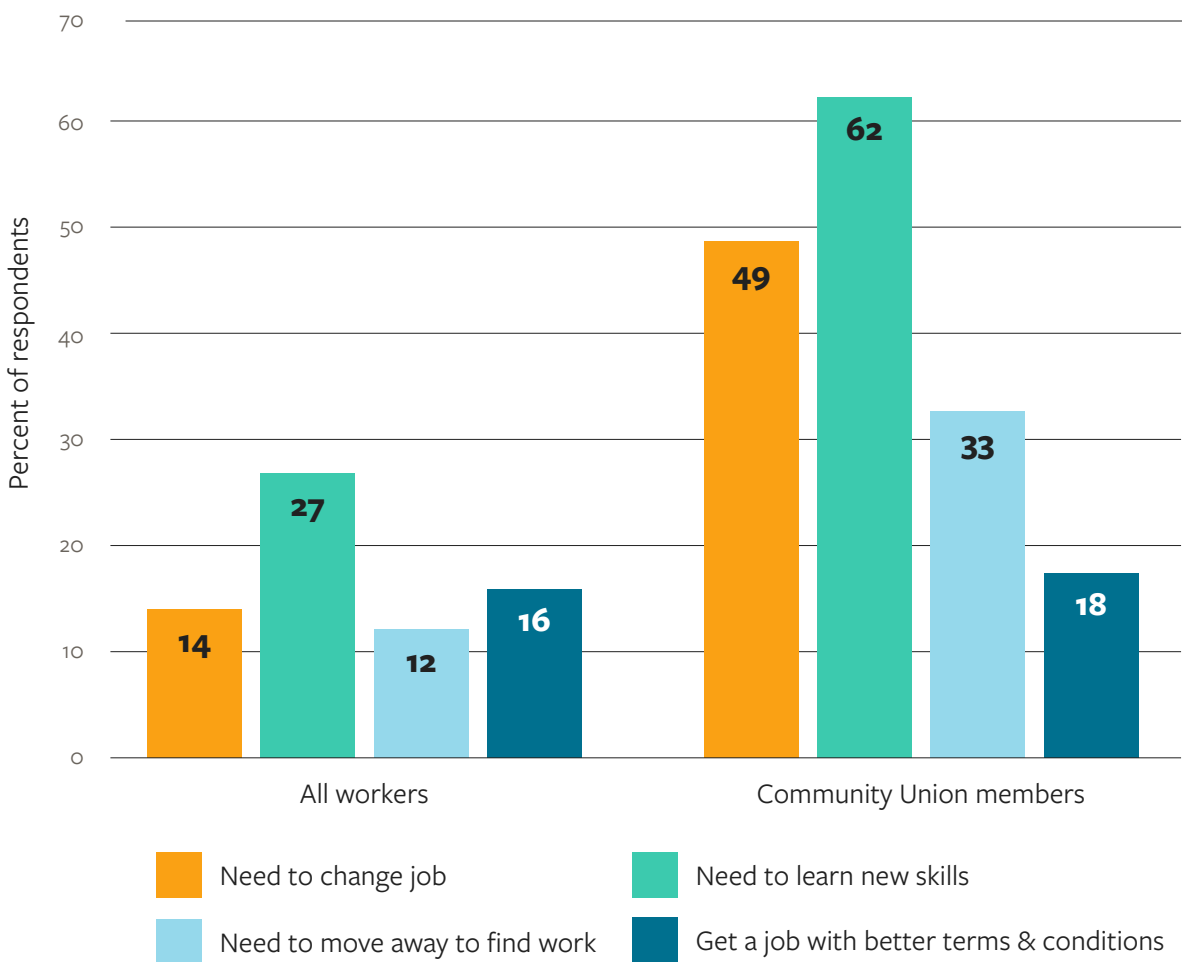
A range of estimates on the job opportunities that the transition to a greener economy might bring tend, in the main, to be positive overall. But it is also important to understand how people see these opportunities for themselves and their communities. Figure 8 shows that Community members are broadly positive but in some aspects also ambivalent about the changes that moving towards a greener economy might bring. 54.5 per cent think it will bring new jobs to their community but the same proportion (54.6 per cent) assume changes towards a greener economy will also lead to job losses locally. This indicates considerable expectation of ‘churn’ in the local labour market. This contrasts with the UK worker average where, although the proportion anticipating new jobs is a little lower, UK workers on average are much less likely to assume potential for jobs losses in their local area as a result of the green transition. Community union members are also concerned about the quality of new green jobs, only 34.1 per cent think that the green transition will bring better jobs to their local area and overall, it is still notable that only around half of Community members anticipate potentially positive outcomes, the so-called ‘co-benefits’ of climate policy (Stern et al 2016).

Figure 8: How will moving towards a ‘greener’ economy affect your local community?



Following on from questions about anticipated community level impacts, the survey explores how respondents see the potential impact on their own employment prospects, shown in Figure 9. A rather sizeable proportion of Community members think that the green transition will mean that they will need to change jobs, 48.9 per cent; 33.3 per cent think they will have to move location to find work. This is substantial deviation from the national average. Only 17.7 per cent of Community members think that they would get a better-quality green job.

Figure 9: How will changes to a 'greener' economy affect you? Extremely or somewhat likely



A significant number of Community members (62.2 per cent) anticipate that they will need to learn new skills in their existing job to ensure that they are prepared for work in the low-carbon economy. From their perspective this should not pose a problem as Community members have regularly updated their knowledge and skills (71.1 per cent state that they have done so). Even more, 95.5 per cent are willing to learn new skills, and 86.8 per cent feel confident about learning new skills.

A quarter of respondents, 25.3 per cent, state that they have taken part in some form of education or training courses that have developed their knowledge of the environment and climate change, or in training that might help them develop 'green' skills. This is in stark contrast, however, to the mere 4.6 per cent who have received specific training related to the decarbonisation or net zero plans within their current workplace. This suggests that while initiative is taken by members to develop their learning on climate and net zero, this is not currently being offered by management at anything like the level anticipated by workers as being needed.

To put this into comparative perspective, steel workers are more likely to think that they will have to change jobs. Given these expectations, the lack of special training initiatives will most likely make feel workers abandoned, as the following written comments from respondents suggest:

- 'It will reduce my ability to get to work'
- 'I live in a rural area, minimal public transport is available'
- 'Historic well-paid jobs with guaranteed future income will pay the price of green policy and will be lost'
- 'I expect the steel works might close, I will have to switch industries, new houses will not be built and (we) will be forced out'

Others are cynical about the direction of green policy:

- 'It will be used as another excuse to raise taxes, while ignoring the real causes'
- 'I run a car as it takes me 2.5 hours to get the 10 miles to work by public transport (walking is about the same as public transport), to a London politician who lives in a taxpayer subsidised flat a mile from work, they won't care about the reality for most'
- '(My steel town) is a mono-town. For there to be support from me to drastically change the industry and its effects in the environment, there needs to be strong support from the government, and the introduction of new industry if jobs are not to be lost'

These comments reflect the concerns of workers about how the drive to decarbonise will affect them and their local communities. But as noted above, Community members also have a range of positive suggestions on what is needed in their workplaces to progress to net zero and more broadly, clear ideas as to what is needed for a green transition, as illustrated by the following written comments in the survey:

- 'We need to include an education policy in our communities so people understand what a greener economy can achieve'
- 'Tackling climate change is a global problem. There needs to be a solid plan for encouraging other nations to decarbonise in a fair and balanced manner and should be an integral part of UK foreign policy'
- 'The UK needs to produce more of its consumed goods domestically using sustainable materials and best practises in modern manufacturing techniques with regards to reducing carbon emissions and minimising environmental impact, even if it results in goods costing more, rather than continuing the trend of importing cheap goods from abroad and exporting the carbon footprint of its manufacture to other countries'
- 'We should be worried more about the chemicals used rather than carbon dioxide I would really love to be involved in green Engineering, however much of it seems more like a box ticking exercise'.

CONCLUSIONS

The steel industry in the UK is facing huge challenges resulting from the need to decarbonise its production as soon as possible. High energy prices place the UK in a difficult position in an increasingly competitive world market. This survey with steelworkers from Community shows that workers are prepared to retrain, upskill or even relocate. 95.5 per cent are willing to learn new skills, and 86.8 per cent feel confident about learning new skills. However, only 4.6 have received training related to the decarbonisation plans in their workplace.

Workers have clear views about the challenges that lie ahead and want to be involved much more in decarbonisation and transition plans.

Whilst these findings are based on a relatively small sample, there is clear overlap with what workers think more generally in the UK. It is also apparent that Community members are more worried and angry about the climate crisis and the inaction and the consequences it has for their jobs.

ABOUT THE AUTHORS

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Prof. Vera Trappmann is professor of comparative employment relations and leads a programme of work on the green transition, climate change and the worker voice at the Centre for Employment Relations Innovation and Change at the University of Leeds. She is an expert in industrial restructuring, notably in the steel industry, she has written her PhD on restructuring in the Polish steel industry and led on projects for the European Commission, the European Trade Union Institute, the German Research Foundation, IG Metall, and most recently for Hans Böckler Foundation on Just Transition in 12 countries.

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