

Public Petitions Committee
Thursday 10 September 2026
2nd Meeting, 2026 (Session 7)

PE2220: Support Retrofit Training for a Greener Scotland and Just Transition

Introduction

Petitioner Gloria Lo on behalf of Scottish Ecological Design Association

Petition Summary Calling on the Scottish Parliament to urge the Scottish Government to fund and expand retrofit-skills training; work with education providers, local authorities and industry; widen access for underrepresented groups; and align training with area-based programmes.

Website <https://petitions.parliament.scot/petitions/PE2220>

1. This is a new petition that was published on 24 June 2026.
2. A full summary of this petition and its aims can be found at **Annexe A**.
3. Every petition collects signatures while it remains under consideration. At the time of writing, 112 signatures have been received on this petition.
4. A SPICe briefing has been prepared to inform the Committee's consideration of the petition and can be found at **Annexe B**.
5. The Committee seeks views from the Scottish Government on all new petitions before they are formally considered.
6. The Committee has received submissions from the Scottish Government and the Petitioner which are set out in **Annexe C** of this paper.

Action

7. The Committee is invited to consider what action it wishes to take.

Clerks to the Committee
September 2026

Annexe A: Summary of petition

PE2220: Support Retrofit Training for a Greener Scotland and Just Transition

Petitioner

Gloria Lo on behalf of Scottish Ecological Design Association

Date Published

24 June 2026

Petition summary

Calling on the Scottish Parliament to urge the Scottish Government to fund and expand retrofit-skills training; work with education providers, local authorities and industry; widen access for underrepresented groups; and align training with area-based programmes.

Previous action

Responses to various government consultations raised this issue (<https://tinyurl.com/39xsdx6e>) in particular, Heat in Buildings (2024), and Scottish Skills for Energy Efficiency (2021) consultations. The Climate Engagement Fund supported SEDA 2045 Big Conversation (attended by Patrick Harvie MSP) explored pathways consulting widely across construction industry for Just Transition and upskilling with submitted reports. Currently consulting Ariane Burgess MSP who supports this petition.

Background information

Scotland has committed to ambitious climate targets, requiring large-scale retrofitting of homes to ensure safe, effective installation of insulation, ventilation and low-carbon heating. These measures will also reduce fuel poverty and improve public health.

However, Scotland lacks one of the most fundamental ingredients for success: a large enough skilled, retrofit-ready workforce. A skilled workforce is central to safeguarding the public interest and delivering Scotland's climate commitments.

A competent workforce is essential to protecting residents' health, safety and wellbeing. Yet there is no dedicated government funding for retrofit-skills training, despite urgent and growing need.

This shortage risks poor-quality work, failure to meet national targets, harm to householders, and lost opportunities to rebuild trust in the industry and develop local community skills.

Annexe B: SPICe Briefing



Scottish Parliament
Information Centre
Ionad Fiosrachaidh
Pàrlamaid na h-Alba

Briefing for the Public Petitions Committee on petition PE2220: Support Retrofit Training for a Greener Scotland and Just Transition, lodged by Gloria Lo on behalf of Scottish Ecological Design Association

Brief overview of issues raised by the petition

The petitioner is critical of Scotland's current preparedness to meet its commitment to climate targets, specifically the large-scale retrofitting of homes to ensure safe, effective installation of insulation, ventilation and low-carbon heating.

This petition calls on the Scottish Parliament to urge the Scottish Government to fund and expand retrofit-skills training; work with education providers, local authorities and industry; widen access for underrepresented groups; and align training with area-based programmes.

Without intervention, the petitioner is concerned Scotland will see "poor-quality work, failure to meet national targets, harm to householders, and lost opportunities to rebuild trust in the industry and develop local community skills".

Scotland's Climate Change Plan: 2026-2024 (CCP)

In relation to public and residential buildings the [CCP](#) claims that "growth in clean heating sectors will drive demand for skilled workers, and presents opportunities for upskilling and reskilling the current workforce, supporting a just transition for workers".

It focuses on the following key policy drivers:

"1. A target for decarbonising heating systems by 2045: We will also publish a Heat in Buildings Strategy and Delivery Plan.

2. Financial support for energy efficiency: To enable progress towards our decarbonisation goal while reducing fuel poverty, by providing advice and financial support for energy efficiency.

3. Heat networks: We are developing plans to boost heat networks by requiring certain properties to change from fossil fuel heating systems when a heat network is available.

4. Heat in Buildings Programme: We will continue to deliver a programme of support schemes and advice services which are designed to support a wide range of groups to decarbonise heat in our buildings."

The CCP also cites previous evidence that retrofit and heat decarbonisation are key areas for green job growth, including 2021 research estimating that Scotland would need an additional 22,500 workers by 2028, particularly in retrofit and heating roles.

The Scottish Government notes that many existing heating installers will need to upskill from fossil fuel systems to heat pumps, requiring different technical skills such as heat-loss calculations, hydraulic balancing, flow-temperature calculations and system sizing.

In response, it has launched a [Heat Pump Skills Fund](#), piloted from 2025 and continuing in 2026, to support existing heating engineers and plumbers to train in heat pump installation. This includes provision for remote and rural communities through [a mobile training van](#). This fund is part of the larger Green Heat Installer Engagement Programme, delivered by Energy Saving Trust.

[The Green Heat Installer Engagement Programme](#), supported 25 installers to achieve MCS certification including grants to cover up to 75% off certification fees. Additionally, the programme has also continued to support a Heat Pump Installer toolkit which gives advice on how to become MCS certified and an Insulation Installer toolkit which gives advice to installers about achieving PAS 2030 certification and becoming a TrustMark registered business.

The CCP estimates that around 8,300 workers are currently employed in Scotland's clean heat and energy efficiency sectors. It says future training provision should be flexible, aligned with local demand, and developed with industry and training providers.

The Scottish Government states its future training offer will be set out in the new Heat in Buildings Strategy and Delivery Plan, expected in 2026

Climate Emergency Skills Action Plan 2020-2025

[The Scottish Government's Climate Emergency Skills Action Plan 2020-2025](#) is a strategic framework coordinated by Skills Development Scotland and the Scottish Government to align the workforce with net-zero targets. It set out construction (including the retrofitting of housing and non-residential properties) as a national priority. It promised the creation of a Green Jobs Workforce Academy, Green Jobs Skills Hub, and a Climate Emergency Economic & Investment Leadership Group to provide leadership, oversight and to drive the alignment of skills investment with our national economic ambition.

Skills Development Scotland: Sectoral Skills Assessment – Construction

Skills Development Scotland sees the construction sector facing a period of massive opportunity. At the same time, it sees meeting net zero is a major infrastructure and building retrofit challenge. It states in the [Sectoral Skills Assessment Construction 2025](#):

“The transition to net zero will directly impact the labour market as actions are taken to meet net zero targets. This shift offers significant opportunities for job creation in Scotland, particularly in the clean energy sector. Scotland has strong natural assets, and existing sectoral strengths provide a strong foundation for a

green economy. However, upskilling will be crucial for transition to net zero. Especially in the construction, manufacturing, agriculture, energy and transport sectors”

Examples of Training Opportunities

There are some trainings and resources for upskilling in Scotland.

[Retrofit Scotland – The Low Carbon Passport](#)

- Training course designed to help both existing professionals and new entrants. Backed by major industry partners including Balfour Beatty plc, Morrison Construction, Kier Group, Robertson Group, and the Passivhaus Trust, the programme is led by BE-ST. One day course offered August 2026. Fully funded.

[West College Scotland - Understanding Domestic Retrofit](#)

- Online self-paced course with 30 hours of learning. It covers retrofit standards, roles, process, and types. Not currently available. Price £595.

[BE-ST - Introduction to Building Physics Dynamics](#)

- Available to anyone not in full time education. The course offers a practical introduction to building physics, helping learners understand how core construction products function and how to use them effectively (including insulation, airtightness tapes). One day course offered in September and November 2026. Fully funded.

[BE-ST - Passivhaus Practical Training](#)

- For Contractors, subcontractors, designers and supply chain members. With Coaction Training CIC, the course offers Passivhaus Practical Training for Tier 1 supply chain members working on commercial, educational, public service and residential projects at scale. One day course offered in September 2026 Price £150.

[BE-ST - Timber in Construction Skills](#)

- Funded by CITB. For Installers, site teams, project managers, contractors, manufacturers, engineers & architects. The programme will develop modular, employer-facing training and clear entry pathways so the UK workforce can scale timber construction safely, efficiently and with low embodied carbon.

[Energy Saving Trust - Green Heat Installer Engagement Programme](#)

- Deliver the Green Heat Installer Engagement Programme on behalf of the Scottish Government. This programme supports SMEs and local suppliers to access the growing clean heat market. Mobile Heat Pump Training Centre was launched in 2023.

Key Organisations and relevant links

- [BE-ST: Scotland's National Retrofit Centre](#)
- [Energy Skills Partnership: college sector agency in Scotland for energy transition, zero carbon transport, engineering, construction and STEM whilst leading on the Climate Emergency Skills Action Plan.](#)
- [Skills Development Scotland: Sectoral Skills Assessments - Construction](#)
- [Circular Economy Construction Retrofit Programme](#)
- [Climate Emergency Skills Action Plan 2020-2025](#)
- [Scotland's Climate Change Plan: 2026–2040](#)
- [Retrofit Scotland](#)
- [HELIX: Hub for Retrofit Upskilling and Training Opportunities](#)

Kelly Eagle
Senior Researcher
24 July 2026

The purpose of this briefing is to provide a brief overview of issues raised by the petition. SPICe research specialists are not able to discuss the content of petition briefings with petitioners or other members of the public. However, if you have any comments on any petition briefing you can email us at spice@parliament.scot

Every effort is made to ensure that the information contained in petition briefings is correct at the time of publication. Readers should be aware however that these briefings are not necessarily updated or otherwise amended to reflect subsequent changes.

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Annexe C: Written Submissions

PE2220/A: Support Retrofit Training for a Greener Scotland and Just Transition

Scottish Government written submission, 21 July 2026

1. Does the Scottish Government consider the specific ask[s] of the petition to be practical or achievable?

The Scottish Government recognises the importance of supporting Scotland's current and future workforce to develop the skills needed for the net zero transition, including in our housing. Our ongoing engagement with industry, trainers and trade bodies confirms that upskilling the current workforce and attracting new entrants to the sector will be necessary to achieve the target set out in the Climate Change Plan (March 2026) to decarbonise heat by 2045.

However installers, many of whom are Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs), need confidence in local demand for installation of clean heat systems and energy efficiency measures before taking up support available and investing in upskilling their workforces. As such, it is imperative to continue to grow consumer demand for home retrofit projects / services. That is why we remain committed to introducing a Heat in Buildings Bill to give households and property owners, as well as supply chains including installers, the certainty they need to invest. In addition, action is needed by the UK Government to rebalance the costs of gas and electricity to make retrofit of clean heating a clear choice for consumers, which reduces ongoing energy costs.

Ensuring high standards and quality assurance is at the heart of our approach.

Scottish Government support schemes include a requirement for strong quality assurance. For clean heating, house owners are required to use Microgeneration Certification Scheme installers to access Scottish Government funded support programmes. In relation to certain energy efficiency measures, to access Scottish Government funding, installers should be TrustMark registered businesses. By requiring these standards for our own schemes we hope to encourage installers to develop these qualifications and build customer confidence.

2. What, if any, action is the Scottish Government currently taking to address the issues raised by this petition, and is any further action being considered that will achieve the ask[s] of this petition?

The Scottish Government continues to work in partnership with the industry, trade bodies and training providers to ensure that the appropriate support and training provision are available, and in a way which is aligned with business needs and local market demands.

The Green Heat Installer Engagement Programme (GHIEP) has been in place for a number of years and continues to provide support for Scottish businesses to enable them to upskill staff and develop their accredited clean heating and energy efficiency installation capacity. It offers a range of formal training and more flexible advice sources for installers including MCS certification funding support (75% of the

certification fees up to a maximum of £1,000), the Heat Pump Skills Fund which uses a mobile training facility (subsidised training at a cost of £250 per person), webinars and online toolkits.

GHIEP's heat pump and insulation toolkits include information on the business benefits of embedding equity, diversity and inclusion within organisations. Existing case studies featuring female apprentices, alongside further case studies currently in development, help promote the sector to a broader range of audiences and support increased representation of women and people from ethnic minority backgrounds.

As well as directly funded skills support, our capital investment schemes support skills development and attraction of new employees to the sector. Warmer Homes Scotland, for example, encourages improvements to local jobs and supply chains through community benefit targets. As of April 2026, the new phase of the scheme has helped create 153 modern apprentices, upskilled 817 of the supply chain and delivered 1,491 scheme-related training opportunities.

Area Based Schemes, which are funded by the Scottish Government but designed and delivered by local authorities, are important in supporting jobs and supply chain opportunities right across Scotland as the clean heat transition scales. Local authorities are asked to ensure that local schemes support the local economy and encourage the use of local installers, where possible. This includes an expectation that larger businesses will actively promote job vacancies and support apprenticeship opportunities in the local community. Councils must consider this as a contractual condition in their procurement and commissioning of goods and services for Area Based Schemes.

The Scottish Government will continue to work closely with Councils, installers, training providers and others to develop the future skills and training offering, details of which will be set out alongside delivery options in our Heat in Buildings Delivery Plan. This will set out the actions necessary to meet the decarbonisation target and help to stimulate the clean heat market encouraging the clean heat supply chain.

3. Is there any further information the Scottish Government wish to bring to the Committee's attention, which would assist it in considering this petition?

Further information on the Green Heat Installer Engagement Programme is available at [Green Heat Installer Engagement Programme - Energy Saving Trust](#)

Heat in Buildings Delivery Division

**Joint written submission from Petitioner and Common Weal,
2 September 2026**

PE2220/B: Support Retrofit Training for a Greener Scotland and Just Transition

Note: This petition is associated with an open letter, 'Support Retrofit Training for a Greener Scotland' sent to the Cabinet Secretary for Social Justice and Housing¹. The letter's supporters include the Royal Incorporation of Chartered Surveyors

¹ <https://seda.scot/open-letter>

(RICS), the Royal Incorporation of Architects in Scotland (RIAS), the Chartered Institution of Building Services Engineers (CIBSE) Scotland, the Chartered Institute of Architectural Technologists (CIAT) Scotland East, and the Chartered Institute of Building (CIOB).

Heating our homes and buildings produces around a fifth of Scotland's greenhouse gas emissions². In addition 34% or 861,000 households in Scotland are in fuel poverty³.

As of 2024, approximately 48% of Scotland's 2.8 million dwellings and an unknown number of its 220,000-230,000 non-domestic buildings had critical elements of disrepair (Scottish House Condition Survey, 2025). This reflects the fact that maintenance is often overlooked by policies that seek to increase the installation of energy efficiency and renewable energy measures. Building owners who invest in such upgrades do not then always receive the full benefits of them, and may need to remove them as part of addressing maintenance issues.

This problem is being addressed as part of the Scottish Government's development of the Heat and Energy Efficiency Technical Suitability Assessment (HEETSA) - see the Policy Report⁴, and forthcoming Planning and Discovery Report (awaiting publication), which is based on the two key principles of "maintenance first" and "no regrets".

This research also details the significant gaps between supply and demand for the skilled professionals who will be needed to service this market and ensure that Scotland can meet its climate change and fuel poverty targets as part of a just transition. It also highlights how poor advice, design and installation of energy efficiency measures that don't take into consideration occupant circumstances, building condition and location specific challenges, has led to distrust amongst consumers, causing disengagement and lack of uptake (examples include Scottish Government schemes as well as the recent TrustMark scandal).

It is notable that, whilst the overall numbers of graduate jobs have fallen, construction and manufacturing are two of the rare sectors bucking this trend (Adzuna Business Report 2026⁵).

As things stand, the retrofit industry needs to be restructured almost from scratch. In doing so, this will create 'good' jobs, local opportunities for gainful employment – technical and / or practical jobs that will bring the satisfaction of benefitting our communities and the environment. Furthermore, delivering retrofit projects, particularly amongst poor and vulnerable communities, will require enabling householders to retrofit their properties and supporting tenants through projects, which will open up retrofit careers to people from social, welfare, project management, and similar backgrounds.

² <https://www.gov.scot/policies/energy-efficiency/>

³ <https://eas.org.uk/fuel-poverty/Fuel-Poverty-EAS> & <https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/fuel-poverty-statistics>

⁴ <https://www.gov.scot/publications/review-retrofit-assessment-scotland-improving-home-energy-efficiency-policy-report/pages/1/>

⁵ <https://www.theguardian.com/business/2026/aug/24/uk-graduate-job-vacancies-plunge-adzuna>

The scale of this training challenge is illustrated by figures from a 2023 report by the Just Transition Commission⁶, which found that an additional 22,500 full-time equivalent workers are required to handle building energy improvements. The report also found that this will be made harder by an aging labour pool, with roughly 50,000 existing construction workers expected to retire over a 10-year period. In addition, roughly one in five homes in Scotland was built before 1919, requiring specialist traditional conservation and moisture-management skills rather than standard modern retrofitting techniques (Skills Development Scotland, 2019).

Delivering this training and upskilling will require a concerted effort from all training providers – from further and higher education institutions to professional bodies, industry, and specialist providers – and given the risk adverse nature and financial constraints of traditional learning providers, this need must be clearly signalled by the Scottish Government. Furthermore, the numbers mean we cannot rely solely on the graduate pipeline. Much effort needs to go into adult education, upskilling and training, which must be designed to fit with how adults learn, their work situations and address the barriers they face accessing and undertaking training.

These barriers often include, for example, not being able to take time out from employment, caring responsibilities, and ability to pay. They are particularly acute in rural and remote areas, where levels of disrepair, levels of fuel poverty, and the numbers of traditional buildings tend to be the highest. This is also covered by 2026 Just Transition Commission report, ‘No Time to Lose’⁷.

Retrofit skills will be a significant part of the construction sector, and developing this sector requires strategic rather than reactive action.

Therefore, this petition and open letter are urging the Scottish Government to:

- Commit funding for retrofit training and workforce development as part of its climate and housing programmes,
- Work with colleges, training providers, local authorities, professional bodies and industry to scale up delivery rapidly,
- Ensure access to training for those currently underrepresented in the construction workforce, including women and young people,
- Align training funding with the delivery of area-based retrofit schemes, recognising location specific skill needs.

Authors: Dr Keith Baker FRSA, Member of the Board of Directors & Convenor of the Energy Working Group, Common Weal; Gloria Lo, RIAS RIBA, SEDA Director; Magdalena Blazusiak MCIAT FRSA, Chair, SEDA; Natasha Houchin FRIAS RIBA, Vice Chair, SEDA.

⁶ <https://www.justtransition.scot/wp-content/uploads/2023/09/Scotlands-Retrofit-Workforce-A-Breifing-on-the-Built-Environment-and-Construction-Accessible.pdf>

⁷ <https://www.justtransition.scot/publication/no-time-to-lose-final-report-of-the-2nd-just-transition-commission-2026/>