

# Sustainable Shift: 1 in 4 would take a pay cut for a sustainability role

New data from global job matching and hiring platform, Indeed, revealed that people surveyed now consider working in jobs that positively impact society (57%) and the environment (55%) more important than they did when they started their careers.

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Throughout our lifetime, not only are we challenged by the world around us, but also by ourselves.

We feel the human need to adapt to our environment, to change, to improve things. There resides the strength of our fight or flight instinct. We are constantly challenging ourselves and our skills in order to not only grow as individuals, but also to transform our surroundings, for the better or the worse.

Environmentally-wise, the worst has already happened. In order to fix this, millions across the UK, billions across the world, are looking to change their lives for the greater good of mankind, as shown in the latest research from Indeed.

## National survey and Global issue

New survey from Indeed comprising more than 1,000 workers, job seekers and

500 employers in the UK, highlights the ongoing green skills challenge. Despite the clear appetite for sustainability-related jobs among working people, 42% believe there are still too many barriers to entry. More than a quarter have been trying to transition to the sector but have been unsuccessful so far.

26% would also take a pay cut and 44% would consider retraining to enter the environmental sustainability sector.

## Facing Obstacles

Location is a key barrier to applying for sustainability jobs, with 42% saying where they live significantly holds them back. Those in the West Midlands are more likely to feel this, while those in the South East of England feel best placed to secure a sustainability-related role with only a third saying their location is a barrier.

Pay is another factor deterring job seekers. 1 in 5 respondents feel that there aren't enough paid positions to apply for, while 52% believe that ESG or sustainability roles are predominantly volunteer-based or fundraiser roles. Even when there are paid positions, 33% say that inadequate pay puts them off applying.

Despite challenges with pay, just over a quarter of respondents say they would take a salary cut for a job that contributes to sustainability initiatives. Yet there are generational differences with willingness, with 42% of 18-24 year-olds prepared to take a pay cut, compared to only 23% of 35-44 year-olds, and 18% for 45-54 year-olds.

Employers and jobseekers alike are wary of greenwashing. 1 in 5 jobseekers are put off applying for sustainability jobs due to an employer's sustainability credentials not matching claims. Equally, 1 in 5 of employers say the fear of being perceived to be greenwashing is a barrier to recruitment in this sector.

## Employers vs Jobseekers

The data shows a disconnect between employers' and job seekers' perceptions regarding the prevalence of sustainability skills. 29% of employers say there is a lack of candidates with the right skills, and while 25% of workers and job seekers say they don't have the right qualifications (such as a scientific degree) for many of the roles, 44% feel employers are not open enough to transferable skills.

Over a fifth of employers believe that having better support systems for onboarding skilled workers from other industries could effectively address the

recruitment challenges in sustainability-related positions. While employees think sustainability education should start early: with 63% agreeing more should be done to encourage young people into environmental or sustainability jobs.

Regardless of this misalignment, of the respondents currently trying to transition to a sustainability role, more have been successful (32%) than unsuccessful (27%). However, younger applicants are finding it more difficult with 35% 18-24 and 25-34 year-olds reporting their attempt to transition has been so far unsuccessful compared to only 19% of 45+ year-olds.

## Promising Future

There's a promising future for ESG-related jobs as, according to *ONS data*, employment for these roles rose 8.4% higher in 2022 than originally estimated in 2021. Indeed's survey was equally optimistic, with almost half (48%) of working people feeling more roles will become available in environmental sustainability following new EU legislation dictating business metrics around sustainability.

Although there are an estimated 639,400 green jobs in the UK, reflecting the three-quarters (76%) of British businesses surveyed that said they have a sustainability department or point of contact in their organisation, almost half of the businesses that don't have a sustainability function say they don't plan to set one up; more needs to be done to truly make a positive impact on climate change.