



JUST TRANSITION

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Just Transition: Green Jobs and A Green New Deal

Environmental issues have become a campaigning priority for The Labour Party, however there is no guarantee this will ensure social, economic, and environmental justice for workers. Environmental policymaking around employment is inherently *political*: on the one hand, if an environmental agenda is used to maintain the status quo then environmental policies can be portrayed as out of touch with the needs of workers and their communities. A jobs-versus-the-environment narrative would put climate issues in opposition to jobs and livelihoods. On the other hand, there is the potential to create an ambitious [industrial strategy](#) which can fundamentally transform political and economic reality at all levels of the UK. An active industrial strategy committed to such a Just Transition would see hundreds of thousands of [unionised green jobs](#), improved employment relations and a more democratic, publicly owned economy.

Key policy

To create an active industrial strategy suited to the multi-level nature of the UK which ensures a Just Transition, through creating hundreds of thousands of unionised green jobs with greater democratic planning.

A Just Transition Explained:

- **An Active Industrial Strategy:** By using existing financial levers - for example, procurement policy - of local government, devolved nations and Westminster, an active industrial strategy can encourage investment and also rebalance the UK economy away from unproductive sectors to productive activity based upon social need.
 - Re-establish the states' role in directing and coordinating economic activity in order to develop resilient, inclusive economies.
 - Ensure wealth is democratically owned and benefits working class communities through innovative ownership models.
- **For Just Transition, Job Creation and Worker Empowerment:** A Just Transition could offer to workers in existing industries dependent on fossil fuels alternative, good quality employment with retraining and support in transition.
 - New jobs in emergent 'green' industries would be decent, unionised and come with a high level of job security and employment rights to ensure no worker is left behind in the transition to a low-carbon economy.
 - Companies involved in the transition need to be put under legal obligations to hire local workers to prevent offshoring of production. In this way,

workers can be both individually and collectively empowered to resist attacks upon their jobs and communities.

- **Through Democratic Planning and Industrial Democracy:** To put the principles of socially useful production at the heart of an active industrial strategy, participatory planning with workers and their unions, alongside the state and employers, is essential.
 - The recent history of Bifab and Vestas show how workers' alternative plans are too often sidelined, and unions excluded from larger questions about economic priorities.
 - Instead, a form of *Transition Assembly* should actively encourage workers' and unions' participation in producing alternative corporate plans, planning agreements and, where feasible, worker-managed companies, exemplified by the Lucas Plan. This will also ensure that the assemblies remain heavily involved in the workplaces in order to facilitate worker participation in matters such as remuneration, working hours and adaptation to new technologies.

Examples of policy in action

- Employing a 'Community Wealth Building' model, the minority [Labour](#) administration of [North Ayrshire Council](#) have put into practice a '[Local Green New Deal](#)'. This new economic model is focused upon wellbeing and inclusion for people, place and planet, and includes a £8.8M Investment Fund to maximise renewable energy potential and support community economic development. More recently, North Ayrshire council approved plans for a council-owned solar farm, which will also contribute to a reduction in fuel poverty through providing affordable energy.
- **Scotland's** independent [Just Transition Commission](#) was set-up to challenge the Scottish Government to upskill and retrain workers whilst maximising the economic and social benefits of decarbonisation. The *Just Transition Commission* has made several [recommendations](#), including that the principles of planning, social engagement and dialogue, and equity are embedded in transition policy; That Fair Work principles are embedded in new green jobs; For the creation of a citizens' assembly on climate change in Scotland; For the creation of a climate emergency skills action plan.
- **Spain's** [Just Transition Deal](#) is an excellent example of how a developed European nation can agree to a [Just Transition deal for energy workers](#). The deal provided targeted aid and a total of €250m in the General State Budget, including a fixed amount of 10,000 euros for affected workers; a commitment to

'non-traumatic dismissal', support for retraining through a job board; drafting Fair Transition Contracts which have the objective of creating and establishing employment in the medium and long term.

- **Germany's [Energiewende](#)** is rooted in an progressive industrial policy and the proliferation of citizen energy facilities. The ongoing energy transition in Germany has already assisted former fossil fuel workers to find new employment in building restoration (e.g. rooftop solar installations). A key component of this has been to ensure a sufficient dialogue with stakeholders through public/worker ownership of industry and co- operation amongst organisations; such as unions, community groups, indigenous groups, government and businesses.