

Who will be doing the work? - Providers and Installers under the Green Deal and ECO

DISCLAIMER! This document has been prepared on the basis of the consultation documents published by DECC, and AECB's attempts to interpret them. DECC's consultation documents may well not be representative of the final scheme when it goes 'live', and additionally, our interpretation may be inaccurate. This is only a guide, though we hope you'll find it useful.

AECB will be perusing and commenting a little more on DECC's proposals in the coming weeks, in these pages and on the forum – but DECC has produced an extremely weighty set of documents, so any response will need to be a collective one, sourced through the joint input of membership.

So take a look at the proposals, in the light of the article below (as you see fit), and post your observations, suggestions and responses on the AECB forum [here](#) – and of course, share them with DECC.

Sections in double inverted commas (“”) are quotes from the main DECC consultation document: *The Green Deal and Energy Company Obligation Consultation* (with page numbers given, generally), unless quotes are stated to be from another source.

Numbered questions from DECC's consultation are reproduced **in bold in red**, with DECC's other questions **in red as well**.

Points that AECB suggests members might also wish to comment on, are boxed.

The DECC Green Deal and ECO consultation and associated documents can be found at www.decc.gov.uk/en/content/cms/consultations/green_deal/green_deal.aspx#code . Do please refer to the original documents, and share your observations on the AECB forum.

Installers and Providers – how to get in on the deal, training

Chapter 7 of the consultation document, plus other sources.

DECC documents and ministerial rhetoric acknowledge the important role of SMEs

p84: “We are ... keen to ensure that smaller companies can benefit from the Green Deal market. The Federation of Master Builders (FMB) estimates that small building and contractor firms carry out approximately half of all repair, maintenance and improvement work in the UK, and employ around two thirds of the construction workforce. The SME builders' community and SMEs from all sectors with qualifying measures will therefore have an important role to play in the delivery of the Green Deal.

“In particular SME builders are very often the party in direct contact with householders and most familiar with the individual property, and are therefore well placed to advise householders on specific works that might be appropriate and to trigger Green Deals

This point, discussed in an AECB soapbox here (<http://aecb.net/news/2011/11/without-smes-the-national-refurb-just-isnt-going-to-happen/>), has also been taken up by climate change minister Greg Barker, who told a construction industry meeting that barriers to Green Deal entry were “the last thing we want.”

“SMEs could help generate leads for the Green Deal where existing renovations are already occurring, ensuring minimal disruption, Mr Barker said.”Your customer networks and reputation will be great assets to the Green Deal and that's why SMEs need to be able to compete effectively in this new market.” (<http://www.greatgreendeal.co.uk/article/barriers/>)

However, widespread concerns have been voiced about just how easy it will be for small companies to enter a market which even DECC admits could readily be dominated by a few very large players.

SMEs may be able to initiate work – but will still need a ‘friendly’ Green Deal Provider – who fills this gap?

In places the consultation document gives the impression that small building/installing firms will be able to deal directly with their customers, for example to include a Green Deal in existing building work. However, on closer examination, it seems evident that in fact both the customer and the installer will be dependent on the presence of a body acting as “Green Deal Provider – and it is the provider who is ultimately responsible for the price, the finance, and the contract with the customer.

Thus the consultation states on p158: “A Green Deal installer may be engaged in number of ways. For the purposes of the Green Deal we have tested our approach against the following potential business models to ensure installers have fair access to the market – whether they are sole traders, SMEs or large organisations:

- A salaried employee of the Green Deal provider;
- Sub-contracted on a per-job basis by a Green Deal provider;

DECC also offers a third option:

- An independent Green Deal installer commissioned directly by a consumer.”

This suggestion of the possibility of ‘independent installers’ is repeated on p159 “for installation, a consumer can choose to go directly to a Green Deal provider who contracts the supply chain of installers, or they can go to an independent installer to carry out the work.

However, whether or not this will actually be possible in practice is not clear from the consultation document. In all the instances described elsewhere by DECC it appears that it is the provider who offers the quote and is responsible for appointing the installer; as for example on p88: “Green Deal providers are responsible for arranging the installation of measures (either using their own employed installers, or sub-contracting with an authorised installer)”. Therefore ‘independent’ installers will, it appears, still need a relationship with a Green Deal finance provider.

A hard-to-decipher diagram on p159 suggests in relation to ‘independent installers’: “Trade Body/national brand acts as Green Deal Provider for SMEs”. AECB is not aware of how much progress has been made into establishing this kind of arrangement; more insight on this would doubtless be welcomed by SMEs.

Alternative options, such as Green Deal Provider backup being organised by not-for profit organisations, with the possible option of setting up Green Deals to be carried out by local contractors, is being explored but the discussions are still at an early stage – see notes at the bottom of the AECB soapbox on SMEs and refurb (link above).

Relationship between customer, provider and installer – provider co-ordinates, and is point of contact

In the greater part of the Green Deal consultation, the lead on arranging Green Deals and appointing installers seems to sit squarely with the Green Deal Providers: (p94) Once the customer has their Green Deal assessment, completed by an authorised Green Deal assessor, they will be able to take the outcome of the assessment to any authorised Green Deal provider and ask them for a quote for installation of and finance for one or more of the recommended measures.”

p26: “The Green Deal Provider’s quote for installing these measures will include the costs of the measures themselves, installation, finance and any other associated costs.”

Then (p159) “The provider will co-ordinate the installation works. They will either contract in-house installers to carry out the work, or sub-contract to independent installers. The Code of Practice sets out requirements that installers must meet with regards to the installation process.”

p88 “Once a property has been assessed, and tailored energy saving recommendations have been given, the customer can contact a Green Deal provider to obtain a quote and agree to a Green Deal Plan. The Green Deal provider is the counter signatory, with the customer, to the Green Deal plan for the provision of finance and energy efficiency works. Therefore the contractual relationship sits between the Green Deal provider and the customer.

“The Green Deal Provider is responsible for:

- offering a Green Deal Plan to customers, based on recommendations from a Green Deal assessor. The plan sets out the financial terms of the agreement and must be accompanied by some further compulsory terms designed to help protect consumers such as terms for warranties in respect of the improvements.
- ensuring the energy efficiency works are carried out to a property by an authorised Green Deal installer.
- ongoing obligations in relation to Green Deal plans, including dealing with customer complaints.”

Commentators have pointed out that given that the Provider has the long-term, contractual responsibility for the Deal, they are likely to want a fairly close oversight over the installers – and to trust in the quality of their workmanship.

Observers who have been following the Green Deal process closely suggest that DECC is anticipating (or at least hoping) that providers and installers themselves will create ways of working together for mutual advantage, without their being suggested by DECC, but within the constraints of the rules DECC sets out.

The providers may be few and far between – which might restrict participation?

DECC seems to have assumed that anyone and everyone would be setting up as Green Deal providers, offering finance and arranging jobs, and thus offering a diverse and flexible market where all kinds of small businesses might find a niche. Inside Housing reported Chris Huhne as saying at the Green Deal launch:

“The Green Deal is a massive business opportunity for firms up and down Britain, helping to power the economy and creating jobs. From one man bands and local authorities, to the big supermarkets and DIY stores, we want as many providers getting involved as possible because that’s what will give consumers the best deal.”

However, there are fears that smaller bodies whom DECC might be hoping would take on the role of provider will find it difficult, unprofitable or simply impossible to become providers – for example, because of the accreditation and warranty requirements (discussed below in relation to installers).

See the discussion here <http://www.linkedin.com/groups/so-many-liabilities-requirements-insurance-4211367.S.84461610?view=&qid=4211367&type=member&item=84461610> – “In the DECC Green Deal consultation there is a requirement for the Green Deal Provider to take out an insurance bond effectively offering a guarantee that the customer will be looked after for up to 25 years. In addition, all works will require an insurance backed guarantee for their lifetime. Will all of these costs either make the works too expensive to meet the Golden Rule or possibly mean that there will only be a tiny number of Green Deal Providers creating a monopoly?” is the opening post.

This view is echoed by energy consultancy Encraft on their blog. “The [Green Deal] proposals talk about creating “a new, open and dynamic market for businesses” but put in place warranty requirements for Green Deal providers which will ensure the market is controlled by a small number of large financial middlemen. They also pull back from making the new Energy Company Obligation (ECO) fully accessible to all scales of company, and are proposing that 50% of these funds (amounting to £1.3 billion annually) remain under the exclusive control of the six major utilities. Believing this power will not be used to distort the market in the interests of the utilities is naïve in the extreme.”

<http://encraft.blogspot.com/2011/11/green-deal-needs-more-customer-input.html>

Social Landlords not yet on board

Inside Housing reports that Social Landlords are uncertain about whether they will find it worthwhile to become Green Deal providers.

Andrew Eagles, Managing Director of Sustainable Homes, points to the ‘considerable bureaucracy landlords must come to terms with’ as a reason for this.

He is referring to the financial and administrative demands on becoming a green deal provider such as gaining accreditation for financiers and installers and the legal costs of establishing supply frameworks - very little of which is costed out in the consultation. The lack of financial detail is frustrating some organisations.

Places for People have been examining green deal provider models for some time. But Nicholas Doyle, project director at the 62,034-home association, says it is not close to making a decision. ‘If we want to get into this then we need the cost of accreditation and assessments - there are 14 separate frameworks to consider - half of which are a cost to green deal providers,’ he says. ‘These are slim margins we are talking about.’

<http://www.insidehousing.co.uk/eco/the-green-deal-dilemma/6519507.article>

Will DECC be leaning on Local Authorities to become Green Deal Providers?

Some larger Local Authorities may set up as Green Deal providers – offering the possibility, at least in theory, of a ‘friendly’ local provider, favourably disposed to working with locally based independent contractors, because of local economic development agendas.

Thus the Business Green website reports “The largest Green Deal project in the UK is already being pursued by Birmingham City Council, which last month began a procurement

process designed to identify a service provider for its planned £250m domestic energy efficiency scheme.

A group of councils in the North East led by Newcastle City Council are also investigating a similar model, while a number of other local authorities are said to be investigating how they can drive Green Deal adoption.” (<http://www.businessgreen.com/bg/news/2117036/councils-kickstart-green-deal-revolution>). The suggestion is that Local Authorities can access capital at low rates of interest, and possibly establish ‘street by street’ refurbishment programmes to realise economies of scale. Possible models are described in more detail on this link.

While at least one comment on this item suggested local authorities had neither the resources nor the inclination to become Green Deal Providers, there may be pressure on them to, according to Inside Housing: Local authorities could next year be ‘required’ to take part in the government’s flagship retrofit scheme, the green deal.

Speaking at a UK Green Building Council conference in London last week, climate change Minister Greg Barker MP said he wanted councils to become champions of the scheme.

Department of Energy and Climate Change official Tracy Vegro later added that local authorities will be ‘asked or required’ to take a role.” (<http://www.insidehousing.co.uk/eco/councils-could-be-forced-to-take-green-deal-role/6519502.article>)

Can AECB members see a place for themselves in any of the arrangements described above? Or does the proposed set of arrangements feel inaccessible, or even irrelevant?

If installers are dependent on providers for access to Green Deal/ECO contracts, will there be issues to do with their professional independence, for example if they prefer to employ non-standard products, components or systems to achieve the desired energy savings?

Will there be room for different types of contractor, and for a range of technologies and products, or is the result likely to be the kind of standardisation that some have criticised in the cavity wall insulation sector as a result of the CERT programme.

All installations are required to be backed by warranties

p160.”It is proposed that customer complaints will be handled by Green Deal providers in the first instance. The intention is that all installers will be required to guarantee the quality of their works for a reasonable period. The Green Deal Provider will decide how best to take forward any complaint. The Green Deal Provider may instruct the installer to complete corrective actions. This may be set out in a contract between the Green Deal Provider and the installer.”

p153 “We are proposing that all Green Deal and ECO installations should be underpinned by a comprehensive scheme of insurance backed guarantees, warranties and redress procedures should anything go wrong.”

This is causing some concern, given that component manufacturers may only offer warranties of a few years (eg on a new boiler). As mentioned above, long-term insurance backing for installations is likely to add considerable to the costs of any Green Deal.

Matthew Rhodes of the engineering consultancy Encraft believes that installers will be carrying a lot of risk without being able to benefit in return:

“Matching risk and reward is fundamental to a healthy economy. The biggest risks in the Green Deal will fall on installers, who are least protected and most regulated by the design of the scheme. Yet this group has the least opportunity for meaningful reward after all the financiers and assurance bodies have taken their cut. The link between doing a good job and reward is completely lost.

(<http://www.building.co.uk/comment/blogs/six-tests-for-the-green-deal/5029068.article>)

p158 “We are currently working with the sector to determine how this will work in practice, but we also intend to set out reasonable minimum requirements for the quality of installations in the Code of Practice. Further details of our approach on guarantees and warranties are set out in section 3, the Green Deal Plan, of this consultation.”

Members are urged to look at this section and comment, particularly on the relationship between the demands of a Green Deal and the current warranties offered by manufacturers and installers.

DECC demands installers accreditation for consumer protection – details still to come

p153: The standards and accreditation framework for installers is proposed to ensure that all work is completed to a high standard and that consumers can expect the same level of technical expertise, customer care and protection regardless of the installer.

Government proposes to make it mandatory for an installer to be authorised to operate under the Green Deal and ECO and to have been certified to have met a new Green Deal standard. Installers will need to carry the Green Deal Mark, take full responsibility for the quality of work and comply with the requirements set out in the Green Deal Code of Practice.

The British Standards Institute (BSI) is currently developing the installer standard with the sector, and this is scheduled to be published in January 2012.

Installer accreditation to be based on existing schemes – where possible

p153 “The installer standard will bring together existing standards in one place to ensure greater clarity and consistency of approach, as well as robust levels of monitoring and compliance.

We propose to implement the standard through certification bodies with a view to minimising burdens and costs by using existing structures. Those certifying bodies will themselves have to be accredited.”

What will installer accreditation involve?

p155 “A person or organisation will only be authorised as a Green Deal installer if they:

- are certified by an accredited certification body against the relevant Green Deal standard set out in the Code of Practice;
- are a member of the certification body which certified them;
- agree to comply with the Code of Practice;
- have agreed to keep clear records of work done and allow monitoring of installation work when requested.”

Will accreditation be too much of a burden for SMEs?

DECC is not sure:

Question 41: It is not yet clear what the accreditation requirements for GD/ECO will be and how they will impact on incumbent firms in the market. Further work is being carried out to understand and quantify the nature of the impact of these, particularly for those firms that are micro-businesses. We welcome views from incumbent CERT installers on what the potential implications of changes to accreditation would be.

Will the burden of regulation, and the might of the 'big boys', squeeze smaller firms out of the picture? Is there a way for small firms to operate, while still protecting consumers from cowboys?

The desire to offer consumer protection and, therefore, consumer confidence is understandable – and the government seems very aware of the disastrous consequences of the failure to regulate a government-backed home improvement programme, as seen in Australia where, AECB has been told, a recent scheme went so disastrously wrong that on occasion lives were lost.

(p154) “We are determined to learn all the lessons we can from the recent Australian insulation programme, which was launched in 2009 without insulation certification standards being required to access grants. Inadequate and poorly policed installation led to the cancellation of the programme and loss of public confidence.”

Recent experience with the some installers of PVs demonstrates this is a real concern here too: (<http://www.yougen.co.uk/blog-entry/1695/Solar+PV+companies+use+dodgy+sales+tactics+and+give+poor+advice'2C+say+s+Which'3F/>). Yet on the other hand, how much protection can be offered to consumers without the expense of indemnity compromising the financial viability of the entire programme?

However, voices have been raised in concern that the system of financing, regulating, accrediting and offering warranties will in practice exclude many smaller potential contractors from the Green Deal/ECO market, not because they are less competent, but because they cannot afford the overheads of participation, including the costs of compliance.

There is bound to be some tension between avoiding a 'closed shop' for the 'big boys' only, yet affording adequate consumer protection against 'cowboys'.

Matthew Rhodes of the engineering consultancy Encraft believes that installers will be carrying a lot of risk without being able to benefit in return:

“Matching risk and reward is fundamental to a healthy economy. The biggest risks in the Green Deal will fall on installers, who are least protected and most regulated by the design of the scheme. Yet this group has the least opportunity for meaningful reward after all the financiers and assurance bodies have taken their cut. The link between doing a good job and reward is completely lost.

There are too many parties and too many accreditations. Quality installers may not engage at all and the whole deal will become peripheral to economic market development.” (<http://www.building.co.uk/comment/blogs/six-tests-for-the-green-deal/5029068.article>)

Yet some level of accreditation does not necessarily prevent participation by SMEs, as for example the Severn Wye Energy Agency found in their Target 2050 projects (see <http://aecb.net/news/2011/11/without-smes-the-national-refurb-just-isnt-going-to-happen/>).

Accreditation (and training?) might help overcome the 'confidence gap' on the part of not only customers, but also contractors themselves.

Some interesting market research has been carried out by the Energy Saving Trust suggesting builders felt they were not sufficiently trusted by customers to feel confident in suggesting energy saving work alongside the jobs they had been called in for.

Builders say that around a third of their clients ask about energy-saving, but that the proportion that actually includes it is much lower. They are very clear that this is client-led: most builders feel they have a good knowledge of insulation and other energy-saving measures, but they are reluctant to make suggestions for extra work for fear of losing business.

... the main barrier to promoting additional energy-saving measures to their clients is trust. They are wary of promoting additional measures because homeowners would see it as an attempt to add to the final bill: "Builders have quite a bad reputation so you're always viewed suspiciously. The minute you walk into people's homes it's like a battle."

This view was backed by homeowners in our study: "These tradesmen are businessmen – they're going to try and sell you to do more rooms."

However, both builders and homeowners agreed that, once trust is established, homeowners view builders as experts with valuable experience. At this point, suggestions of additions to the project that are logical and make economic sense often are taken up. "Once they trust you and see that you will do a good job that is the time to say 'have you thought about x?'"

(<http://www.energysavingtrust.org.uk/Publications2/Corporate/Research-and-insights/Trigger-points-a-convenient-truth>)

AECB members may not automatically perceive accreditation and quality assurance to be an unwanted burden; on the other hand, they may have unhappy experiences of existing schemes – either way, DEC should be told.

There is a theoretical possibility that customers also value for a 'Green Deal' accreditation when appointing contractors for other, non Green Deal-related work. Is there even, therefore, a case for generalising some form of accreditation across all general building work, in effect, opening the market to all, by raising standards more generally?

Do the DECC proposals get this balance right, or at least, allow for a balanced approach?

It is not just the accreditation/quality control issue, but the whole spectrum of market advantages that could be exercised by the big providers, that worry some. There is a sense perhaps that a big organisation with access to large amounts of credit, and perhaps readier access to the finance in the Energy Company Obligation, will structure the market to suit themselves, and call more of the shots.

The Federation of Master Builders for one, views the presence of such large players, with huge budgets to deploy, with concern: "The danger is that the large energy and utility companies will Hoover up the Green Deal market and squeeze out local builders which is

very bad news both for the building industry and local economies,” said FMB director of external affairs Brian Berry. (<http://construction-manager.co.uk/news/200m-boost-green-deal/>)

This is echoed by Matthew Rhodes of the engineering consultancy Encraft, who is doubtful that a truly competitive market will be established: “There are nice words in the consultation about encouraging small firms. But the reality of the Green Deal is that it is creating a complex and difficult market space for small firms to enter, controlled by a small number of very large finance-based ‘Green Deal Providers’ who will extract significant value, and with the major energy utilities still exercising significant market power through their control of at least 50% of the £1.3bn ECO subsidy fund.

The UK construction industry currently supports more than 100,000 small and medium enterprises (SMEs). The Green Deal is an opportunity to give these firms a context in which they can compete, innovate and grow. [But] SME growth and success is still not possible in the current design of the Green Deal because it is designed to keep small firms small and large firms large.

Even as the Green Deal consultation was under way, the ministerial rhetoric from DECC continued to insist that SME’s would be key to the uptake of the Green Deal, and that DECC was ‘committed to ongoing dialogue with SMEs right up until the launch”.

This seems a clear invitation to small firms to look closely at the current proposals and let DECC know very clearly of changes that should be made.

Will there be enough regulation on solid wall insulation?

A concern for many AECB members is the incorrect installation of solid wall insulation leading to poor performance (for example, due to thermal bypass) or problems with dampness on or in cold masonry behind the insulation, mould growth, and potential danger both to the building fabric and the occupants.

With the new emphasis on solid wall insulation in the Energy Company Obligation running alongside the Green Deal, the rate of SWI installation is expected to mushroom, and there are bound to be a lot of new entrants attracted into the sector. Will adequate training be available, first of all simply to create the capacity in the industry to meet the demand, and secondly to train and accredit these installers to a sufficiently high standard to ensure that homes are improved, and not damaged, by work under the Green Deal and ECO?

As DECC puts it on p83 “The number of external and internal wall insulation installers needs to increase over the next ten years to deliver the number of jobs needed to meet carbon budgets. The installation rate needs to increase at least ten-fold over time. We are working with the National Insulation Industry, INCA and others to ensure that there is an appropriate training infrastructure in place, and that the 1000 Green Deal apprenticeships announced in the Budget 2011, can be fully utilised.”

New 25 year Guarantee for solid wall insulation announced

According to Neil Marshall of the National Insulation Association: “The NIA is ... working closely with the Solid Wall Insulation Guarantee Agency who are developing a new quality

assurance infrastructure and framework for SWI to enable capacity to be ramped up in a controlled manner. This will include a new independent SWIGA 25 year Guarantee for SWI.”

Are members satisfied the correct approach is being taken, that standards will be safeguarded and that the market in both training and installation will be accessible to those who have the appropriate expertise?

The insulation gap – managing the transition from CERT to ECO

However, the insulation industry has voiced concerns that far from assisting with a steady build-up of skills and capacity, and gradual transfer of activity from lofts and cavities over to solid wall, there will instead be a ‘cliff edge’ between the two, where activity will drop sharply, with a risk of skilled people *leaving* the industry because of a shortage of work.

Steven Heath, external affairs director of Knauf Insulation, has warned that DECC’s own figures reveal a dramatic slump in installation rates:

<http://www.rcimag.co.uk/newsitem.asp?newsID=960>

“Loft and cavity wall insulations are expected to fall from 800,000 in 2012, the final year of CERT, to approximately 110,000 per annum under the new Energy Company Obligation (ECO) and Green Deal landscape. The figures, released under DECC’s Green Deal impact assessment represents a fall of over 86% and could have a devastating impact on the loft and cavity wall insulation market.

The move also comes despite the fact that over 10m lofts and 6m cavities nationwide still require insulation (according to the Association of the Conservation of Energy).

There needs to be a sensible, effective transition to the Green Deal over the next five years, allowing us to service those households still in need of loft and cavity wall insulation while preparing for the predicted shift to solid wall insulation, which retains its subsidy under ECO. We urge the government to rethink its transition to the Green Deal if the countless jobs and businesses reliant on loft and cavity wall insulation are to remain in existence.”

Neil Marshall of the NIA also called for a “**robust delivery plan**” with **Government to insulate the housing stock**, and support the transition from lower cost Cavity Wall Insulation (CWI) and Loft Insulation (LI) to higher cost Solid Wall Insulation (SWI).

“This will need to maintain CWI and LI volumes post the Carbon Emissions Reduction Target and include support and funding for skills and training for SWI.”

More jobs for builders – but for builders who understand the energy outcomes

Brian Berry, director of external affairs at the Federation of Master Builders has pointed out: “The Green Deal will require 600,000 retrofits a year, carried out by a workforce of between 500,000 and 900,000. “We don't have that capacity, so we will have to upskill the existing workforce and bring in new people – that is why there is hope for the future,” he said.)

But in order to meet the Government's green homes agenda, the sector needs to develop a new "green" workforce that is multiskilled, creating new generic professionals and tradespeople. Berry said the workforce of the future had to move away from "base skills" and become more "outcome" focused. He said: "If we are going to retrofit our buildings, the workforce will have to understand how they interrelate to each other and that requires a new

skills set and upskilling." (<http://www.guardian.co.uk/public-leaders-network/2011/nov/18/building-on-green-deal?newsfeed=true>)

Tell DECC about qualifications and training needed

Commentators are concerned about the current lack of information about the necessary qualifications and competencies needed by the workforce that will have to be accredited to work on the programme.

But there are also fears from 'general builders' that these skills will mainly lie in specialist areas, and that little 'general building' work would in fact be created by the Green Deal and ECO. Roger Skehan, a general builder and managing director of Oddy Builders, predicted that his skills and those of other general builders will not be needed by the Green Deal workforce and "will not have access to the market" because the expected retrofit programme will not focus on the basic fabric of buildings – the traditional area where general builders work. (<http://www.guardian.co.uk/public-leaders-network/2011/nov/18/building-on-green-deal?newsfeed=true>)

He added his company also did not have the money to retrain staff in other skills needed to be part of the new green workforce. He said: "It's very difficult to get these [new skills developed] and we don't have money to chuck at it."

Some training funding?

The government is apparently making some funding available for training: according to a report from GreenWise Business "Firms looking to improve the skills and qualifications of their workforce to deliver the Green Deal are to benefit from £1.4 million of new Government funding."

The two-year funding will target the retrofit and construction sector, where 65,000 jobs are expected to be created on the back of the Government's flagship Green Deal scheme by 2015. The Green Deal Skills Alliance (GDSA), a partnership of Summit Skills, Asset Skills and Construction Skills, secured the funding from the Government's £61 million Employer Investment Fund (EIF) and said it would be used to create "qualifications frameworks" and "on the ground support" for employers looking to improve the skills of their workforce in time for the launch of the multi-billion pound scheme next autumn."

(<http://www.greenwisebusiness.co.uk/news/14m-boost-for-green-deal-skills-2851.aspx>)

<p>AECB members between them have a wealth of understanding of the skills needed to refurbish our existing buildings to higher energy standards, and experience of which skills are present in the workforce and how any gaps could be made up. This is understanding that should be shared.</p>
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