

Wales Council for Voluntary Action

Supporting charities, volunteers and communities

12. Climate change

12.8 Climate change and livelihoods



Reducing the risk of serious climate change will alter the shape of the UK economy. Virtually all sectors of the economy will be affected in some way by the transition to a low-carbon economy, with implications for the nature, location and security of jobs. Many individuals and communities in the UK are still paying the price for the rapid shift away from industrial production over the last 30 years and we must not allow the transition to a low-carbon economy cause similar effects.

Re-structuring needs to be done in a way that is sensitive to all workers but particularly low-income workers, who are the most vulnerable to food or fuel price shocks. Climate change policies must be equitable and prevent the burden of climate change falling unfairly on low-income workers and their families.

The trade union movement and others have argued for a just transition to a low-carbon economy. The concept of just transition recognises that support for environmental policies are conditional on a fair distribution of the costs and benefits of those policies across the economy, and on the creation of opportunities for active involvement by those affected in determining the future well-being of themselves and their families.

Just transition recognises that the impacts of climate change are disproportionately borne by the poorest in society – those who have done the least to contribute to climate change. It provides a framework for addressing this injustice, but also for ensuring fairness for all workers who face churn in the jobs market, and taking advantage of the many opportunities presented by greening our economy.

The TUC's publication, *A Green and Fair Future: For a Just Transition to a Low Carbon Economy*, argues that we must start planning now so that social justice is built into climate change policy and the inevitable transformation that will flow from it.

Read the publication at www.tuc.org.uk/publications/viewPub.cfm?frmPubID=549

There must be education and training to aid sustainable employment, and flexible transition packages for workers whose jobs may be lost or changed.

Substantial evidence demonstrates that environmental transition happens most effectively when workers are involved. The TUC's Green Workplaces project shows the success that can come from employers and employees working together to set and meet environmental goals.

Support for communities is also essential, particularly given the geographical concentration of many energy intensive industries. The Welsh Government, local authorities, employers, trade unions and the third sector will all have a part to play in planning a co-ordinated response. Only through this approach can we ensure a genuinely just transition to a low-carbon economy.

Capturing the Potential: A Green Jobs Strategy for Wales

Green Jobs Strategy, 'Capturing the Potential', provides an important delivery mechanism for our Sustainable Development Scheme and describes in more detail how we can achieve our vision of:

A resilient and sustainable economy for Wales that is able to develop whilst stabilising, then reducing, use of natural resources and reducing its contribution to climate change.

Transition to a Low Carbon Economy

For further information on what needs to change to our economy to deliver green jobs and a just transition see the following publications:

Zero Carbon Britain 2030

[http://neweconomics.org/sites/neweconomics.org/files/Zero Carbon Britain 2030.pdf](http://neweconomics.org/sites/neweconomics.org/files/Zero_Carbon_Britain_2030.pdf)

Sustainable Development Commission's Low Carbon Regions

www.sd-commission.org.uk/data/files/publications/SDC_LowCarbonRegions_report_web.pdf

The Great Transition: A Tale of how it turned out right

<http://neweconomics.org/publications/great-transition>

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