

Boost for UK's Green Skills with appointment of former Skills Minister as Honorary Chair of new national initiative

Press release posted by Luke Moss, Green Construction Advisory Panel (GCAP)

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The Green Construction Advisory Panel (GCAP), which was originally established by Exeter College as a South West England based membership group and then rolled out internationally earlier this year, is widening its scope in its aim to address the green skills gap in the UK more broadly.

The newly re-named Green Skills Advisory Panel (GSAP) is on a mission to close the green skills gap and provide entry routes into green careers by establishing a UK-wide framework. It aims to upskill the current workforce and educate new entrants to adopt emerging technologies, consider the environmental impact of construction and other activity, and identify how industry can help meet Net Zero targets.

A 9-strong National Partnership Board has now been appointed to direct and engage in the work of GSAP by representing members' interests at a national level in government, industry forums and public discussions; commissioning researching and publishing reports which inform members and stakeholders; promoting the efficiency and effectiveness of the green skills sector; enhancing the role of employers in designing the new curriculum; and informing and influencing industry training standards and best practice.

Former Minister of State for Skills, Apprenticeships and Higher Education Robert Halfon has been elected as Honorary Chair of the GSAP Board with Mike Blakeley of Exeter College as Chair and Graham Hasting-Evans of NOCN Group and BACH, Nick Miles of EWI Pro, Charlene Wall of The Wood Manor Group, Paul Brown of SWIFIX Ltd, Giles Bradford of Bradfords Building Supplies, and Natalie King of AccXel, as Board Members. They are seeking the support of the Department for Energy Security and Net Zero (DESNZ), Department for Education (DfE) and the Department for Business and Trade (DBT),

Robert Halfon commented:

"The Green Skills Advisory Panel (GSAP) represents a crucial step in our journey towards the new skills of the 21st Century. GSAP is not just building houses but helping to construct the very foundation of our green economy. This transformation embodies the essence of my Ladder of Opportunity - providing clear pathways for young people and adults to climb into secure, well-paid green jobs while addressing our nation's critical skills shortages. We are not just about closing the green skills gap; we're opening doors to all - for a brighter, cleaner future on the green skills ladder of opportunity."

Mike Blakeley, Executive Director of Future Skills & Apprenticeships at Exeter College and Chair of the GSAP National Partnership Board, added:

“Partnership and collaboration is at the heart of delivering exceptional outcomes for industry and learners alike. GSAP embodies all that is brilliant with regards industry and education coming together for common good. The absolute focus of making a difference and maximising impact from our joint endeavours will have a substantial effect. With our quest for Net Zero so high on the agenda I am excited about what we as a nationwide and international partnership will achieve.”

Graham Hasting-Evans, President of BACH, chief executive of green skills solutions provider NOCN Group, and GSAP Board member, said:

“If the UK is going to make the step change needed to achieve Net Zero we must harness the power and commitment of our local companies and communities as well as investing in the mega projects such as off-shore wind and Carbon Capture & Storage (CCS). GSAP has proven in the South West of England that you can do just that. This is why NOCN Group is delighted to be able to support the national roll-out of this important initiative. It will help us to make major improvements in areas such as social housing and social mobility which are key agendas for us as a skills charity.”

Luke Moss, Project Manager at Exeter College and GSAP, added:

“Since its launch as GCAP in the South West in 2022, GSAP has expanded to 20 centres across the UK and forging connections with international partners in Malawi and Nepal. GSAP Centres unite key regional stakeholders. This includes, 30 committed training providers, employers, building services companies, housing associations, construction firms, manufacturers, local authorities, government agencies, and charities with the aim to identify opportunities and collaboratively develop pathways into green careers. These centres provide a comprehensive view of the green skills landscape in their regions, driving coordinated efforts toward actionable outcomes.”

To become a GSAP member or to find your local centre, follow this link on our website, www.gsap.org.uk

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