

Tender Brief: Resource Efficiency and Circular Economy Skills Gap Analysis Across Priority Sectors

1. Background and purpose

The transition to a more resource-efficient and circular economy will require the right skills not only within the resources and waste sector, but across the wider economy. Skills England's work on priority sectors presents an opportunity to understand whether existing apprenticeship provision is adequately equipping learners with the skills needed to use resources more efficiently, prevent waste and support circular approaches.

CIWM is seeking to commission a consultant to undertake a **rapid, cross-sector skills gap analysis** focused on the Government's two priority sectors, **Advanced Manufacturing** and **Digital and Technologies**. The purpose of this commission is to provide an initial evidence base that CIWM can use to engage with **Skills England, Government, employers and training providers** on whether and how resource efficiency and circular economy skills should be strengthened within existing provision.

2. Scope of the review

The consultant will undertake a targeted review of apprenticeship provision across Advanced Manufacturing and Digital and Technologies, identifying the occupations and standards most relevant to resource efficiency and circular economy activity.

The review should consider, where relevant:

- resource efficiency and productivity
- waste prevention and minimisation
- reuse, recycling and recovery
- circular economy principles
- lifecycle thinking
- repair, refurbishment and remanufacturing
- design for durability, repair and disassembly
- material selection, substitution and secondary materials
- critical materials and resource security
- material flows and resource losses
- circular business models and their commercial application.

The consultant should develop a proportionate approach to assessing the relevance and depth of coverage. This could include categorising standards according to whether relevant skills are 1) absent; 2) addressed primarily at an awareness level; 3) covered through knowledge/theory; or 4) reflected in practical occupational application.

The analysis should identify examples of good existing provision as well as potential gaps and should avoid recommending new provision where existing standards could reasonably be strengthened.

3. Key research questions

The consultant should address:

3.1. What is already covered?

- Which priority apprenticeship standards already include resource efficiency and circular economy content?
- What is the apparent level and depth of that coverage?
- Are these skills sufficiently connected to practical occupational contexts?

3.2. Where might there be gaps?

- Are important circular economy and resource-efficiency skills absent or only addressed at an awareness level?
- Are there gaps around practical application, such as repair, reuse, remanufacturing, material recovery or lifecycle thinking?
- Are emerging requirements around critical materials, resource security and circular business models adequately reflected?

3.3. What do employers need?

- What skills do employers currently need to develop beyond existing training?
- Which skills would have the greatest impact on resource productivity, cost, waste prevention and business resilience?
- Are there common skills gaps across Advanced Manufacturing and Digital and Technologies that could be addressed through transferable or modular provision?

4. Employer and provider validation

Desk-based findings should be tested through targeted engagement with employers and training providers.

The consultant should undertake a number of targeted interviews, proportionately distributed across Advanced Manufacturing and Digital and Technologies and focused particularly on areas where the desk research identifies potential gaps.

Engagement should explore:

- what skills new entrants currently have
- what employers need to teach additionally

- where learners struggle to apply resource-efficiency or circular economy principles
- which skills are becoming increasingly important
- whether identified gaps are sufficiently significant to warrant changes to existing provision.

CIWM will support stakeholder identification and introductions where appropriate.

5. Analysis and recommendations

The consultant should develop a clear and proportionate framework for assessing the level of coverage across the priority apprenticeship standards reviewed. This should allow CIWM to distinguish between:

1. **Good existing coverage** – no significant intervention required
2. **Partial coverage** – existing provision could be strengthened
3. **Potential skills gap** – further development or new content may be required.

The final analysis should identify opportunities to:

- strengthen existing occupational standards
- incorporate additional knowledge, skills and behaviours
- develop optional or modular content
- embed resource efficiency and circular economy skills within existing technical education
- develop cross-sector learning where common skills are identified.

The consultant should also identify **2–3 priority opportunities** where there is a particularly strong case for further development.

6. Outputs

The consultant will be expected to deliver:

6.1. Inception and methodology

- agreed scope and methodology
- priority-sector and occupational coverage
- stakeholder engagement plan.

6.2. Interim findings

A short presentation or briefing to CIWM setting out:

- initial findings from the desk review
- emerging gaps and common themes
- key questions for employer/provider validation.

6.3. Final report

A concise evidence-based report setting out:

- findings from the apprenticeship review
- existing strengths and areas of partial coverage
- validated skills gaps
- cross-sector opportunities
- 2–3 priority areas for intervention
- recommended next steps for CIWM's engagement with Skills England and other stakeholders.

6.4. Executive briefing

A short briefing summarising the key findings and implications for policy and skills provision.

7. Timescale and budget

Given the current opportunity to engage with Skills England, the work will need to be completed to a **tight timetable**, with substantive research completed by the end of **October 2026** and final reporting in **November 2026**.

The available budget for the commission is up to **£9,000** excluding VAT.

8. Consultant requirements

The successful consultant should demonstrate:

- experience of UK skills policy and apprenticeships
- knowledge of Skills England and/or the current skills system
- experience undertaking skills or curriculum gap analysis
- understanding of resource efficiency, circular economy and sustainability skills
- experience engaging employers and training providers
- strong analytical and policy-writing skills.

The consultant should demonstrate the ability to deliver high-quality research within a compressed timeframe.

9. Tender response

Please submit your proposal by **12:00 on Friday 18 September**.

Proposals should include:

1. proposed methodology and approach
2. project timetable

3. relevant experience and examples of similar work
4. proposed project team
5. approach to employer/provider engagement
6. proposed number of days and day rate
7. total cost and any additional expenses
8. confirmation of availability to deliver the work between **September and November 2026**.