

# BRIDGING THE GAP: Exploring Perceptions and Challenges of the Green Space Sector

## > THE GREEN SPACE SECTOR CAN CONTRIBUTE TO A GREENER, FAIRER AND MORE INCLUSIVE SOCIETY

## > GREEN SPACE JOBS DEFINITION:

Jobs that involve the preservation, restoration, and management of natural ecosystems and biodiversity as well as urban green spaces including public parks, roadside verges, and football pitches.

This research was carried out by the Green Space Skills Hub, and facilitated by Groundwork London, to understand perceptions of UK-based green space jobs and the sector.



### PERCEPTIONS

Belief that jobs...

- > are low-paid and low-skilled
- > are under-recognised for the skills they require
- > lack opportunities to progress
- > means always working in poor weather conditions

**London's parks have been estimated to store 5.5 million tonnes of carbon annually, valued at £340 million.**



### CHALLENGES

- > Widespread misconceptions about the sector
- > There is a significant skills gap
- > Unclear education and training pathways
- > Lack of visibility and awareness of jobs in this sector
- > Reaching a larger and broader audience to fulfil existing and future needs of the sector
- > 48% had not heard of 'green space' as a sector before
- > Children discouraged by parents and schools to pursue green space educations



### OPPORTUNITIES

- > To promote the wide range of **purposeful career opportunities** that respond to climate change, nature recovery and wider social needs
- > To coordinate an approach, as a sector, to tackle these perceptions and challenges, such as improving **diversity and inclusion** and visibility of **career pathways**
- > To raise the profile of the sector and **promote existing programmes and initiatives**
- > To improve **mental health and wellbeing** of Londoners by improving access to nature



# BRIDGING THE GAP: Exploring Perceptions and Challenges of the Green Space Sector

The report has outlined several exciting solutions to address the challenges in the green space sector and help drive meaningful change. One of the key recommendations is the need for a more coordinated approach, bringing together leaders from across the sector to tackle these issues collaboratively. At the Green Space Skills Hub (GSSH), we're committed to building these vital relationships and fostering collaboration to make a real difference.

One of the ways we're doing this is through campaigns like the [Force of Nature](#). This initiative aims to raise awareness and engage audiences who are often underrepresented in the sector—such as young people, women, and individuals from diverse communities. By actively reaching out to these groups, we hope to inspire them to see the green space sector as a viable and rewarding career option, filled with opportunities for growth and fulfilment.

The report also highlights the importance of recognising individuals already working in the green space sector. To that end, the GSSH has been working on a series of case studies focused on these individuals as part of their news blog, showcasing their stories and contributions. We've also created a video to raise the profile of the sector and to dispel the myth that jobs in green spaces are a "last resort." Instead, we're showing how these roles offer a wide range of career pathways, from apprenticeships to senior-level positions with higher salaries.

Unfortunately, negative perceptions around low pay and a lack of skills have often led to a lack of respect for jobs in the sector. But we're determined to change that. The green space industry offers not only varied career opportunities but also tremendous personal benefits. In fact, many people interviewed in our research reported the positive impact that working outdoors has had on their mental health. Many of them were career changers—people who left high-stress office jobs in favour of a more fulfilling and balanced lifestyle in the green space sector.

As we continue to push forward, our focus remains on engaging and inspiring diverse audiences to join us in this journey. Whether it's through campaigns like Force of Nature, which asks organisations to pledge to support diversity and inclusivity, or through our work with employers to drive change, the GSSH is just getting started. Together, we can create a greener, more inclusive future for all!



The logo for Green Space Skills Hub features a green-to-white gradient bar on the left. The text 'GREEN SPACE' is in a light green, sans-serif font, and 'SKILLS HUB' is in a dark blue, sans-serif font.

# GREEN SPACE SKILLS HUB

## Bridging the Gap: Exploring Perceptions and Challenges of the Green Space Sector

### Abstract

The Green Space Skills Hub conducted research into perceptions of UK based green space jobs and the sector: jobs relating to land management, to put it simply. We found that green space jobs are under-recognised for the skills they require and lack public respect. We identified challenges and barriers facing employers and job seekers, including the lack of visibility of jobs within the industry and the career progression opportunities they provide. There are various existing programmes and initiatives in the sector to address elements of this perception gap and low profile. However, a key gap that this research identified is the need to reach a far larger and broader audience which is required to match future growth and needs of the sector. We therefore propose a coordinated approach to better communications as a sector, and propose the structure of a communications brief to address cross-cutting themes.

### Introduction

What challenge is the green space sector facing?

Green space jobs are an essential element of the growing green economy, and they play a crucial role in addressing environmental challenges, such as loss of biodiversity, and promoting sustainable development. The sector is projected to grow, with increased funding expected from public and private sources (including water companies and developers) to respond to climate and nature commitments and legal requirements. However, the industry is facing significant challenges that pose a barrier to the sector reaching its full potential.

[The Horticulture Sector Skills Survey, 2019](#), reported: “The sector is facing a critical skills challenge (skills gaps and shortages), manifesting in an ageing workforce, difficulties in filling skilled vacancies and challenges in recruiting apprentices and a general shortage of labour.”

As part of the [London Environment Strategy](#), the Mayor of London established the London Green Spaces Commission (LGSC) to recommend how boroughs can be helped to develop, strengthen and secure their parks services. The [LGSC report](#) was published in 2020 and highlighted challenges the sector is facing:

“The green space sector is facing a crisis with a loss of staff capacity, skills and expertise... worsened by a lack of career progression and professional recognition, difficulty in gaining transferable skills, poor workforce diversity and the fact that it is currently a relatively self-contained sector.”

## What is the Green Space Skills Hub?

This research has been conducted by the [Green Space Skills Hub](#), which is part of the Mayor's Green Skills Academy to deliver the commitments of the London Green Spaces Commission using climate adaptation and mitigation to create engagement, green jobs, and opportunities for wider training and skills development.

The Green Space Skills Hub is a partnership led by [Groundwork London](#), an environmental and community charity that works with communities to create better places, improve people's prospects, and promote greener living and working and [Parks for London](#), the Centre for Excellence for London's green space. The founding partnership included: strategic bodies: BALI; the Landscape Institute; Future of London; LEDNet; London Councils and the GLA's Environment Team; Capel Manor College, the anchor training provider; Glendale and idVerde, the largest green space contractors in London; Peabody; LLDC; and the individual London boroughs.

## Methodology

The research was undertaken in three parts: desk research; interviews with a cross-section of Hub partners; surveys and interviews with employees and new entrants within the sector.

**Desk research:** Online research was conducted throughout the research process. Firstly, to get a baseline level of knowledge of green space jobs and the sector. And, secondly, more in-depth research was conducted to dive deeper into insights shared during interviews and surveys, such as to follow up on any initiatives mentioned.

**Interviews with hub partners:** 14 interviews were conducted with employers and industry professionals to gather their insights and perceptions of the green space sector.

**Survey:** 58 participants completed the survey that was sent to employees in the green space sector, including arborists, grounds maintenance and project managers, as well as to apprentices, to gather their perceptions and experience of green space jobs and the industry. 52% of participants identified their role as being in the 'green space sector'.

**Interviews:** 7 survey participants were interviewed for 30 minutes to explore their survey responses in more detail.

## Results

### Defining 'green space'

The first challenge of the research was understanding the definition of the 'green space sector'. This terminology is easily and regularly confused with the broader term 'green sector', which can refer to jobs in retrofitting, renewable energies and waste, for instance. Survey responses highlighted this common misunderstanding as participants categorised solar energy and electric vehicles as part of the 'green space sector' rather than 'green sector'.

'Green space jobs' refer to employment opportunities that involve the preservation, restoration, and management of natural ecosystems and biodiversity, including but not limited to activities such as landscaping, maintenance, sustainable agriculture, conservation, ecological restoration, and forestry. These jobs prioritise environmental sustainability and contribute to mitigating the impacts of climate change through the land management of public parks, roadside verges, and football pitches, for example.

Employers in the industry include local authorities as well as private contractors. Jobs range from frontline practical roles, such as arborist, grounds maintenance, surveyor, and gardener, designer and commissioner, to support roles in communications, contract management, and administration.

## Overview

The green space sector sees many career changers - people leaving their careers to start afresh in a new industry. Since the covid-19 pandemic, there has been a surge in career changers entering green space jobs. Anecdotal evidence from the interviews has shown us that, during the lockdown, many people reassessed their careers and reprioritised their values, now opting for a better work/life balance, working outside rather than in an office, and improving their mental health through a less stressful career.

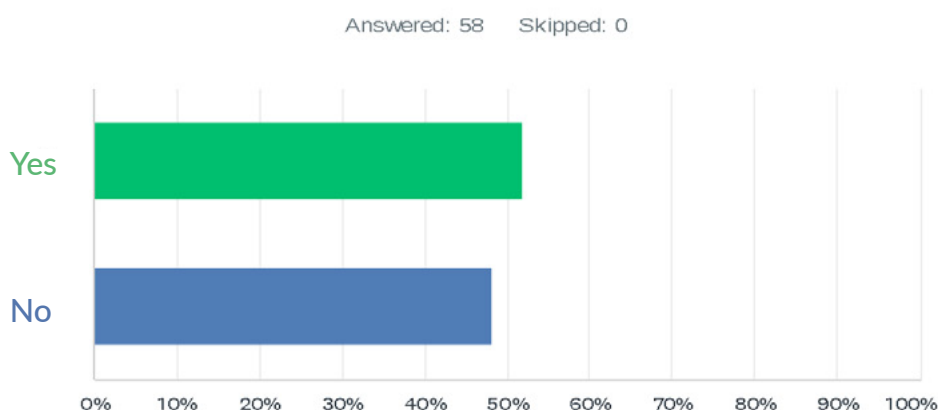
“We see many more career changers now. People who are looking for better peace of mind and who previously had stressful jobs. They want a better quality of life.” - Assistant Park and Apprenticeship Manager at Royal Parks

One interviewee told us about his experience as a doctor in the NHS but after many years, at the age of 43 years old, he found it too stressful and wanted to work outdoors. He changed his hours to part-time while he trained to become a tree surgeon and, 20 years later, he still loves working in the green space sector.

Career changers are valuable assets to the green space sector, but they also contribute to the ageing workforce as there are few younger people starting these careers. There is a lack of visibility of the sector, available jobs and career pathways, among younger people and the public.

The survey indicated that professionals were largely unaware that they are working within the green space sector or that the sector exists. Responses to the question below showed 48% of participants had not heard of 'green space' as a sector before taking this survey, however, a further 23% of those identified as working in a green space job, indicating a disconnect between employees and their awareness of the sector.

### Q1 Have you heard of the green space sector before?



During the interviews, we were repeatedly told only a small number of people enter the sector directly from school or education, and that individuals are usually older when they find themselves in these jobs by “accident” or they “just fell into the role”, for instance. They referred to barriers to employment, such as gaps in their education, as the cause of this. Many people started as volunteers or temporary workers or had a friend or relative in the industry, then discovered their passion for working outdoors and stayed in their roles or worked their way up the ladder in the industry.

“We don’t get people from school or college; people stumble into the jobs.” - Operations Manager at a large contractor.

“Young people enter the sector when they know someone personally who has had a green space job.” - Head of Parks at a London borough.

# Perceptions

The overall perception of green space jobs and the sector as a whole was quite negative as interviewees and survey participants felt the public had little respect for the work and workers. This was understood to be linked to the Government underfunding the sector and resulting in low wages. However, all research participants acknowledged that the public views are misconceptions and lack awareness and understanding of the level of work and skills involved. The following factors were mentioned as common misconceptions by most interviewees:

- “It’s easy work, anyone can do it”
- “It’s low-skilled work”
- “People aren’t clear what these skills and jobs are - they think it’s like gardening, working outside where it’s rainy and cold and unpleasant”

Additional research participant comments included:

- Gardeners and tree surgeons are “waste removers”
- “Young people want tech jobs, not to get their hands dirty”
- Green space jobs are for “underachievers”

The Canopy Climbing Collective is a group of arborists who are trying to change negative and inaccurate perceptions of the industry. They said, “People think that, as a tree surgeon, we come in and we take trees down, we destroy the environment. I think that’s the common misconception that we face and that’s been a big thing for us in this industry.” - [Chasing Adventure, The Arborist](#) (documentary)

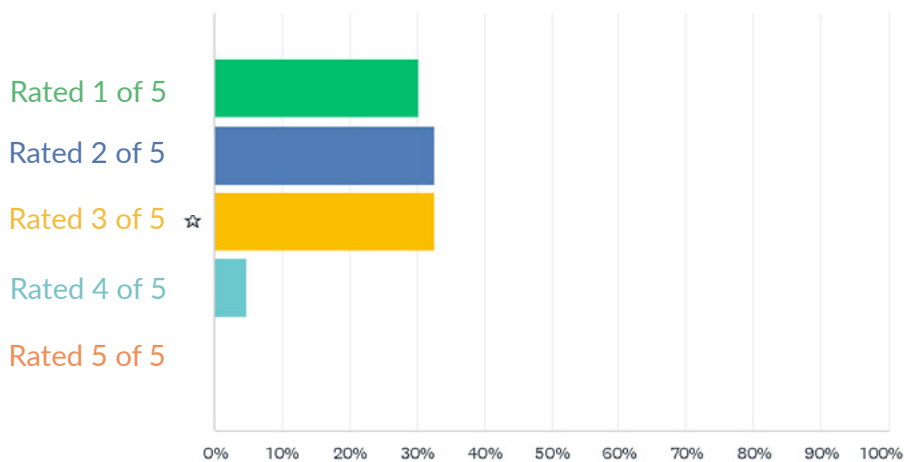
# Challenges

The lack of visibility of the industry as well as a lack of awareness of what these jobs entail were two of the main challenges raised by employers within the sector. Another factor creating a barrier to new and existing employees is the low pay and lack of career pathways into better paid positions.

## Low pay, highly skilled

Q8 Do you think green space jobs are well paid? (1 = low, 5 = high)

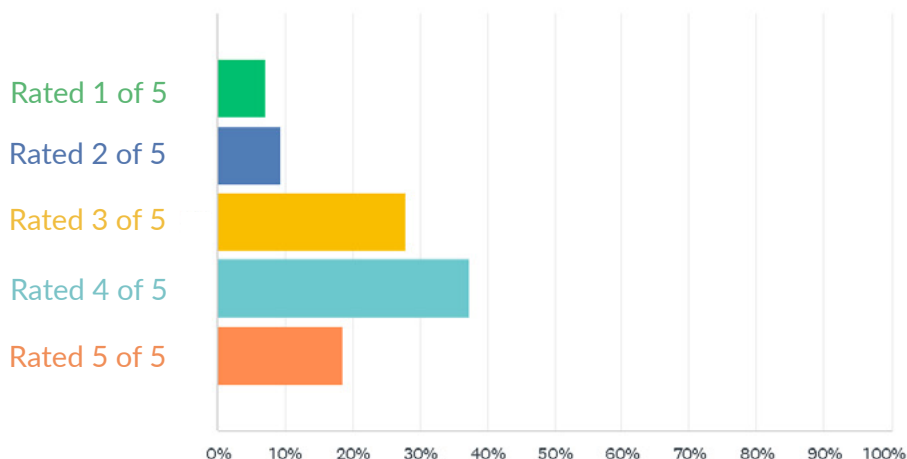
Answered: 43 Skipped: 15



Research participants highlighted the imbalance between jobs in the sector that are low-paid yet require a specific skillset. 62% of survey participants who answered, rated the pay of green space jobs as 1 or 2 out of 5\*. Similarly, 67% rated these jobs as 1 or 2 out of 5 for how well respected they are. Conversely, 55% rated these jobs as 4 or 5 out of 5 for the high level of skills required.

### Q9 Do you think green space jobs are highly skilled? (1 = low, 5 = high)

Answered: 43 Skipped: 15

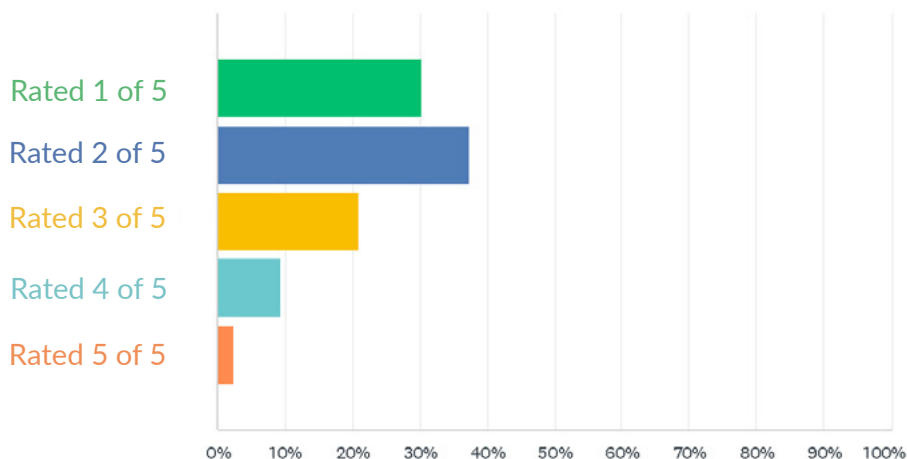


### Lack of respect

A common opinion among interview participants was that they feel jobs in the green space sector lack the respect of other sectors, the public and the UK Government. This is, in part, tied to the low pay they receive and the lack of funding. But, also, due to negative and inaccurate perceptions that green space jobs do not require much expertise or training.

### Q10 Do you think green space jobs are well respected? (1 = low, 5 = high)

Answered: 43 Skipped: 15



## Barriers to employment

During the interviews, we were repeatedly told only a small number of people enter the sector directly from school or education, and that individuals are usually older when they find themselves in these jobs by “accident” or they “just fell into the role”, for instance. They referred to barriers to employment, such as gaps in their education, as the cause of this. Many people found their way into the sector through volunteering, temporary work, or had a friend or relative in the industry.

## Lack of visibility of diverse roles

When asked to describe the green space sector, most survey participants identified it as an industry that works with land. The sector is known for practical outdoor jobs relating to horticulture, ecology, and arboriculture. However, there was no mention of the other side of this vast industry: fewer practical jobs such as administration, marketing, and other supporting roles. This has an impact on the demographics attracted to the industry, as some people may not consider themselves suitable for a practical, labour-intensive career. For instance, the green space sector has an extremely low percentage of people living with disabilities working in it, even though there are numerous employment opportunities that could benefit from their inclusion.

## Working in poor weather conditions

Green space jobs are perceived as being ‘outdoor’ jobs which mean enduring cold and wet weather in the winter and extreme heat in the summer. However, not only does this exclude many of the indoor jobs available within the industry, such as admin and marketing roles, but the fact that working outdoors is seen as a negative is inconsistent with the feedback we have had from employees working in the sector. Employees often attribute this element of the job as one of the main benefits due to it contributing to positive mental and physical health.

## Cost of training

The cost of training can be a barrier for individuals seeking to enter jobs in the green space sector, as specialised knowledge and skills are often required. Training programmes, certifications, and higher education degrees in areas such as chainsaw training, horticulture, or arboriculture can come with significant expenses.

## Lack of skilled workers

Many people enter the sector without training and take on apprenticeships. However, this has led to a skills gap at management level, meaning many of these positions are being filled with under-experienced individuals or left vacant.

## Unclear training and pathways

The apparent skills gap within the industry conflicts with the fact that there are seemingly many options for training. The issue could be that the options are unclear and therefore few people are opting in.

This vast sector offers a variety of low skilled entry-level jobs through to highly skilled jobs that require advanced knowledge and experience. There are many pathways into different roles, including volunteering and short courses that take anywhere from a few weeks to a few months, to apprenticeships and university degrees that take upward of two years. These options also come with a lot of variation of qualifications, tickets and experience which can cause confusion and deter people from pursuing the jobs, especially for anyone new to the sector.

## Lack of diversity

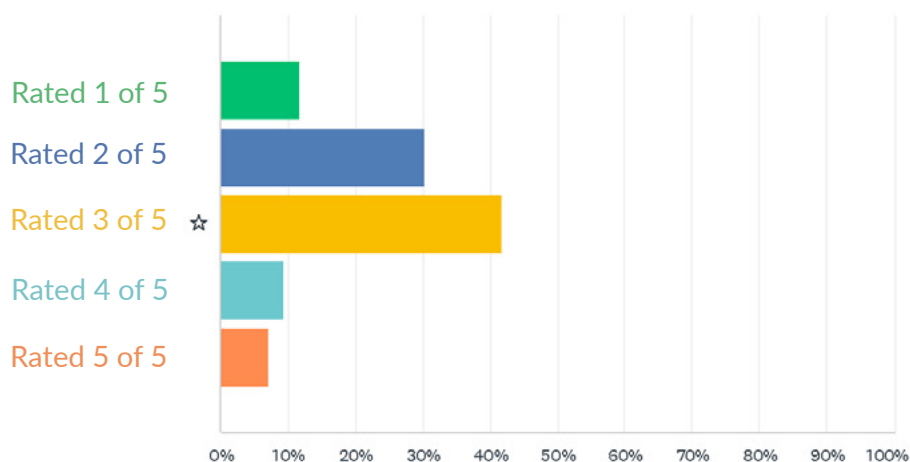
The lack of diversity, particularly among younger people, women, BAME (Black, Asian, and Minority Ethnic) individuals, and those living with disabilities, in the green space sector can be attributed to various factors, such as limited representation and visibility of diverse role models and professionals both in the field and media, as well as insufficient outreach and inclusive initiatives to attract and retain underrepresented groups.



## The misconception of entry-level jobs

Q11 Do you think green space jobs provide adequate opportunities for career development? (1 = low, 5 = high)

Answered: 43 Skipped: 15



Entry-level jobs provide opportunities to unskilled people and give them a chance to start training. However, there is a negative perception that deters many job seekers who perceive the roles as low-skilled and lacking career development or opportunities. This misconception deters ambitious individuals who want to progress in their careers and has resulted in an industry with a skills gap at the managerial level.

The industry caters for individuals with no qualifications as well as those with learning disabilities. Whilst this provides opportunities to those who need them, it has created a barrier to students who may be actively deterred by their parents and teachers who don't see these jobs as viable career options for the children.

### Parents and schools discourage children from aspiring to green space jobs due to negative perceptions

Parents, teachers, and careers councillors, who have a negative perception of green space jobs may be concerned about job prospects, salary, and security, and actively discourage children from aspiring to these positions.

### Driving licence shortage

A driving license is essential to many practical roles within the industry, however, there is now a shortage of employees who can drive. Some interview participants attribute the lack of employees with driving licenses to the rising cost of living and gentrification of London, which has priced out individuals who would have traditionally taken on roles in the green space sector.

### Inflexible working patterns

Jobs in the green space sector does not always offer part-time or remote work options, making it challenging for individuals balancing their caring responsibilities or working within the constraints of their benefit limitations.

### Competition from other sectors

More than one employer said that staffing issues are affected by staff leaving the sector in order to get better pay elsewhere, for example, drivers have moved to the delivery industry where they often get paid more for an entry-level role. Supermarkets and fast-food chains, such as Macdonald's, were also referenced as options for people looking for jobs that pay the living wage with the added benefit of working indoors and avoiding bad weather conditions.

## 'Banter' culture

Due to the lack of diversity within the industry it can be difficult to change a negative culture to a positive one. 'Banter' was mentioned by several interview participants as being something that may be off-putting to new members of staff and lead to decreased retention rates.

## Current initiatives

The issues of public perception and challenges facing people entering green space jobs have largely been recognised by the industry. Some key players have already taken steps to implement changes to address the issues. Here are some initiatives that show promise to making improvements in the sector.

### Schools and young people

- [Green Futures Project](#): A “programme for KS3 and Y12 students in the Royal Parks, giving them practical skills in support of biodiversity and the climate emergency; team and leadership skills; and an increased understanding of careers in the natural heritage sector. Activities may include citizen science and practical fieldwork; habitat creation; behind the scenes tours; coppicing and dead hedging; or work with our Ecology and “Help Nature Thrive” teams.”
- [Discovery Days](#): The Royal Parks’ learning team “run a range of free and exciting nature-inspired activities for families. You could be pond dipping, helping your children discover an underwater world, sweep netting in our meadow or bug hunting at our minibeast hotel.”
- [Royal Horticulture Society](#): Activities and events to introduce schools and families to gardening

### Work experience and training

- [Future Gardeners](#): Bankside Open Spaces Trust's “innovative training and work experience scheme, giving participants the core skills to gain entry-level jobs in the horticulture industry without having any previous experience or specialist education.”
- [Green Skills](#): A guide to recruiting and nurturing diverse early career talent. “The Heritage Fund has created a toolkit to help natural heritage organisations develop an inclusive and equitable approach to the recruitment of people at the beginning of their careers, with a particular focus on young people aged 18-25 from ethnically diverse communities.”
- [Capel Manor College](#): “The College plays a vital role in the green agenda for the capital (London), equipping the next generation of land-based sector workers with the skills and knowledge needed to help preserve and protect London’s wildlife, national parks and green spaces.” This specialist college in London, one of only a few in the UK, receives substantially more women than is typical for the industry (60% compared to less than 10% for the industry\*), which is possibly due, in part, to the clear route laid out to students, making it more accessible with visible prospects. \*There is a dearth of official data on the demographic of the green space sector and this figure is based on general consensus derived from the research interviews.
- [New to Nature](#): Groundwork UK’s scheme “will offer new, full-time, temporary work placements in nature and landscape organisations across the UK, aiming to increase diversity and enrich the environmental sector.”
- [Discovery Days](#): The Royal Parks Guild - Opportunities for apprentices, trainees and pupils to find out more about careers in the environment.
- [Keeping in Wild](#): The programme aims to inspire young people aged 11-25 to become actively involved in the protection and promotion of London’s natural heritage. Young people take part in Environmental Social Action Projects in their local communities and Paid Traineeships.

## Outreach

- [National Contractors Forum](#): British Association Landscape Industries set up this specialist group “to lobby on important issues and address key challenges within the land-based sector... Its constituents are drawn from different sectors of the industry, creating a formalised group of influence. It provides the landscape management, maintenance and construction sectors with a structure through which they can communicate across and beyond the industry”
- [Green Angels Project](#): A 2 year project aimed “to engage with the community, creating new learning opportunities including: countryside management; parks maintenance; business skills; environmental education and horticulture... Nearly 70 people took part in specific courses and out of those actively seeking work, 44% found employment.”

## Research

- [London Green Spaces Commission](#): The Mayor of London established the LGSC to recommend how boroughs can be helped to develop, strengthen and secure their parks services. In 2020, the LGSC published recommendations into what was needed to fully realise the potential of parks and green spaces across London. They recommended developing a [Future Greenspace Skills Programme](#) that would identify innovation projects that will lead to an expansion in the ways in which the greenspace workforce of the present and the future is trained and managed.
- [The Young, Green, and Well report](#): Parks for London’s research study explores links between young Londoners’ green space use and mental wellbeing

## Media

- [‘Where are all the arborists?’](#) (article): Research looking into why there are so few arborists in the industry today. By CTC Recruitment (arborist specialists) who were interviewed as part of this research project
- [GoLandscape](#): Using case studies to show “what it’s like to have a career in landscaping and how to become a landscaper in UK”

## Community action

- Community projects, such as the [Heston Action Group](#) and [The Tree Council](#): Encouraging local volunteering that can serve as an introduction to green space jobs
- [GCSE in Natural History](#): A new GCSE to be introduced in schools in September 2025.


## Internal initiatives (being trialled or implemented by some green space organisations)

- Open days: An opportunity for job seekers to see what roles are like first-hand. This initiative has worked well for people with mental health issues and learning difficulties who may not have done so well in a formal-style interview.
- Flexible working patterns: Some organisations are trialling this to cater for people who might have caring/parenting responsibilities and would benefit from alternative working hours. However, there has not been much to report on at this stage
- Cross-team learning: Teams share knowledge of their specialist area to promote respect and understanding for one another’s role within the bigger picture of the organisation’s goals.
- Working with ex-offenders: Giving people a second chance at a career and sustainable lifestyle.

## Recommendations

This research was established to look at the perception of the green space sector as understood by people within the sector. Other research (by the Green Space Skills Hub and others) has identified wider barriers and challenges, overlapping with this research. This other research focuses on skills and training gaps and structural barriers. The Hub is seeking to address these through its 5 work streams: i) people; ii) training and skills gaps; iii) apprenticeships; iv) upskilling and sister sectors; and v) future skills. Remaining is the valuing of the sector as reflected on salaries (often driven by public sector budgets). This research is focused on perception, which can reflect positively (or negatively) on each of those listed factors.

The recommendations outlined focus on the approach to changing perceptions to support a repositioning of the sector and to tackle barriers which are based on lack of awareness, understanding and clarity. This can also support behaviour change within the sector. The overarching recommendation is a deliberate and coordinated approach to the communication of the sector. Proposed strategic campaigns have been outlined to create a 'brief' for comms activity going forward, designed by comms professionals; they are the Strategic Comms Team from Groundwork London. This is a proposed overarching campaign brief that is recommended to tackle the challenges the research identified, with key audiences.

 See the campaign proposal on the next page.

The recommendation is for a coordinated communications approach, with creative input against clearly defined strategic outcomes over time. This should be a sector initiative which could benefit from sector expertise and external communication/campaign input to optimise the messages outlined in the recommendations to further raise the profile and activity, importance and growth potential of the sector.

Some of this will be delivered through the Hub in its existing form, and used to shape communications. However, this wider approach is recommended to support the necessary growth of new entrants into the sector, recognising both existing pressures and the increased demand and expected greater level of funding to the sector.

# Campaign proposal and audience planning

## FUTURE GOALS

- raise profile of the role of green space sector
- build credibility of the green space job sector to make it a sector of choice
- bring green space jobs to the forefront of education, and defining career pathways

## OVERARCHING CAMPAIGN MESSAGE

The green space sector offers job opportunities for people from all backgrounds. Employees in green space jobs can benefit from varied careers and help London respond to climate change, nature recovery and wider social need. It is an exciting time right now as the **green space sector is growing!**

## CONSIDERATIONS

Relativity - someone people can identify with  
Climate resilience - *what is the investment?*  
Respond to challenges - report  
Variety and visibility of jobs, skill and opportunities

## STRATEGY

### STRATEGY 1: VALUE OF THE GREEN SPACE SECTOR

- Position the sector as protecting/preparing the environment against/for climate change
- Positive environmental impact
- Sustainable futures
- Skills development
- Positive mental health (individually & societally)

### STRATEGY 2: PROMOTING EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITIES FOR LONDONERS

- Maximise visibility of green space sector jobs
- Showcase diversity of employees
- Benefits of diversity and inclusion to improve recruitment and retention

### STRATEGY 3: CAREER PATHWAYS

- Define pathways
- Representation of role types
- Training opportunities - Who / What / Where / When / Why / How
- Progression and career development - why Green Space is an **invested career**

## AUDIENCE(S)

- Women / BAME / Disabilities / Youth / Career Changers
- Educators (teachers / careers advisors)
- School leavers

- Employers - employment offers flexibility
- Industry leaders
- Environmentalists / climate activists

- Women / BAME / Disabilities / Youth / Career Changers
- People claiming benefits looking for 16 hours of work
- Carers / parents

- Educators (teachers / trainers / careers advisors)
- School leavers
- **Parents**

## DELIVERY

- Interviews/case studies (written/video/reels) with fulfilled employees to showcase positive benefits
- Paid adverts - e.g. London Underground - showcasing benefits

- Interviews/case studies (written/video/reels)
- Resources
- Email marketing
- Webinars
- Events
- A core PR campaign using articles and larger platforms to reach wider, and more influential, audiences
- Airtime - radio / podcasts

- Interviews/case studies (written/video/reels) with relevant experienced/ successful employees to showcase development opportunities
- TikTok/YouTube shorts
- Paid adverts - e.g. London Underground - showcasing diversity
- Collaboration with notable individuals within the sector (e.g. someone from Chelsea Flower Show or gardening tv shows etc)
- Paid and organic campaigns - Promoting diverse job vacancies in different spaces - e.g. linkedin groups for people with disabilities interested in nature

- Events - GWL staff (resource - **careers pathway MAP**)
- Growth of sector - Statistics and data
- Interviews/case studies (written/video/reels) with relevant trainees/university students to create resources to send to schools (presentations) and a video for the website?
- Work experience/discover days for young people
- School visits
- Collaborations with famous people/influencers, e.g. footballers (male & female)

## Campaign opportunities

Well-designed campaigns can raise awareness and visibility of the green space sector and highlight the value of the work being done to create and maintain sustainable environments. This can generate respect for the sector and its professionals, while also attracting a diverse range of people to pursue career opportunities in the field by promoting the specific roles, training and careers on offer. By showcasing the positive impact of green spaces on individuals and communities, a marketing campaign can help to build support for the growth of the sector. Following the challenges and data we've explored so far, the following campaign messages could be greatly influential to the development, and improved reputation of, the green space sector.

### Overarching campaign message:

The green space sector offers job opportunities for people from all backgrounds. Employees in green space jobs can benefit from varied careers and help London respond to climate change, nature recovery and wider social need. It is an exciting time right now as the green space sector is growing!

### Campaign goals for lasting change:

- Raise profile of the role of green space sector
- Build credibility of the green space job sector to make it a sector of choice
- Bring green space jobs to the forefront of education, and defining career pathways

### Campaign streams

#### > Strategy 1: Value of the green space sector

- Position the sector as protecting/preparing the environment against/for climate change
- Positive environmental impact
- Sustainable futures
- Skills development
- Positive mental health (individually & societally)

Audiences:

- Women / BAME / Disabilities / Youth / Career Changers / Long-term unemployed / Higher education leavers / Individuals undertaking community payback orders
- Educators (teachers / careers advisors)
- School leavers

#### > Strategy 2: Promoting employment opportunities for Londoners

- Maximise visibility of green space sector jobs
- Showcase diversity of employees
- Benefits of diversity and inclusion to improve recruitment and retention

Audience group 1:

- Women / BAME / Disabilities / Youth / Career Changers / Long-term unemployed / Higher education leavers / Individuals undertaking community payback orders
- People claiming benefits looking for 16 hours of work
- Carers / parents

Audience group 2:

- Employers - employment offers flexibility

- Industry leaders
- Environmentalists / climate activists

## Strategy 3: Career Pathways

- Define pathways
- Representation of role types
- Training opportunities - Who / What / Where / When / Why / How
- Progression and career development - why Green Space is an invested career

Audiences:

- Educators (teachers / trainers / careers advisors)
- School leavers / Higher education leavers
- Parents

## Other sector-wide actions

### Collective action

Collaboration within the sector to create a cohesive sector voice and knowledge-sharing, finding common threads and collective action could support a clearer pathway and address challenges identified by this research. By pooling resources and expertise, the network can maximise and promote the sector's impact and raise its profile among policymakers, investors, and the public. A collective effort will be better equipped to action other points on this list, such as the campaign above.

Audience: Organisations, local authorities and the GLA, strategic and governmental bodies, professionals, governing bodies, employers

### Innovation in apprenticeship/training and career options

A clear path will be more attractive to young people and job seekers who are looking for careers with progression opportunities.

Offering these opportunities side by side for comparison and making the applicant more aware of their options provides greater potential for successful retention. It also ensures that the offers that are in place from employers/providers can be compared and providing greater direct competition for candidates.

Improvements to the sector support for trainees and apprentices we are supporting the future workforce of the sector.

For seemingly intransient issues, collective hiring of training provision could offer a more attractive model (e.g. for driving license training or to improve the access to tutors/trainers/accreditors).

A realistic approach to training which recognises the drop in full-time study in the context of cost-of-living concerns and models that work for employers for in-work training.

Audience: Under-represented groups, such as young people, women, BAME, people living with disabilities, unemployed, lone parents

### Deliberate change to increase diversity and inclusivity

The Sector needs to consider the needs of under-represented groups, in structural and cultural terms and promote those actively to these groups. This includes providing more flexibility in working patterns which requires a cultural change within organisations and enabled in procurement. This enables a wider talent pool,

and for roles to evolve with individuals. There is support available for these cultural changes, but the sector needs to actively want to engage with the opportunities it enables.

Audience: initially the employers (leadership and operational levels), commissioners and strategic bodies, then women, BAME groups, people with caring responsibilities, people living with disabilities, unemployed.

### Further research

There is a lack of evidence about the demographic of the green space sector and a lack of research into the green space sector in other countries. Further research into these areas will give us more understanding of the current situation with a better foundation for moving on to the next steps. Understanding perceptions and activities internationally will provide opportunities for learning.

Audience: industry professionals, local authorities, governing bodies.

## Appendix

See [appendix here](#).