

Post-16 Level 3 and Below Pathways: Consultation

Response from the Society for the Environment (January 2026)

Introduction

The Society for the Environment (SocEnv) defines the standards for professional competence in environmental practice, ensuring key decisions are made by verified professionals. Having received a Royal Charter in 2004, we license professional institutions to award the Chartered Environmentalist (CEnv), Registered Environmental Practitioner (REnvP) and Registered Environmental Technician (REnvTech) professional registrations. There are now over 9,000 registered environmental professionals, sharing a common vision of delivering a sustainable future shaped by environmental professionalism.

We welcome the opportunity to feed into this consultation. This response is formed from our experience in connecting learning, skills and professional registration, by creating clear pathways to professional registration in the environmental sector. More information about our work can be accessed [here](#).

We are more than happy to discuss further and illustrate our key points with more examples and case studies from our extensive network of environmental professionals and partners, from professional bodies to employers.

SocEnv acts as the secretariat for The Environmental Policy Forum (EPF), which is a network of UK-based environmental professional bodies and learned societies promoting environmental sustainability and resilience for the public benefit. Ahead of the UK General Election in 2024 EPF published 'Environmental Priorities for the next UK Government'. Of the x10 priorities, is the call to 'Unlock the enormous social, economic and environmental potential of green jobs and skills'. Please see the [EPF website](#) for more details.

Response

We have chosen to focus on the question most aligned with our work and expertise.

3. Which subjects do you think are most appropriate for delivery through V Levels? Please provide evidence of relevance to employment sectors or further study.

Making environmental sustainability a priority within V Levels (and the wider skills system) is essential to meeting Net Zero and Nature Recovery commitments.

The following examples are government reports that highlight the urgent need to establish a high-quality pipeline of green skills:

- *Skills England: Skills for Growth and Opportunity (Clean Energy Industries)*
- *Estimates of Green Jobs, UK: July 2025 (ONS)*
- *Clean Energy Jobs Plan*

Every occupation, whether classified as a green role or one that is ‘greening’ must adapt to new technologies and innovations shaping workforce skills. Embedding sustainability into vocational and technical education is therefore critical.

V Levels can achieve this in two ways:

1. Embedding sustainability across all V Levels

Every vocational subject should consider its environmental and societal impact. This means integrating approaches that help businesses operate ethically and profitably while contributing to sustainability goals. Learners entering the workforce from V Level studies will bring knowledge and skills that enable employers to meet regulatory requirements, reduce carbon footprints, and innovate in line with green growth strategies.

2. Introducing dedicated V Levels focused on sustainability

There is currently no T Level dedicated to environmental sustainability, representing a clear gap in provision. A V Level in this area would create a progression route into apprenticeships and Higher Technical Qualifications (HTQs) aligned with occupational standards, in roles such as Corporate Responsibility & Sustainability Practitioner, Energy Manager and Environmental Practitioners. It could also prepare learners for degrees in environmental sciences or practical geography, fostering environmental professionalism.

The demand for green skills is growing rapidly, with forecasts of hundreds of thousands of new roles in low-carbon sectors by 2030. A sustainability-focused V Level would strengthen the pipeline into wider technical education, provide early exposure to green careers (a known challenge in careers advice), and offer a route to professional recognition through initiatives such as the Entry-Level Environmentalist (ELEnv) register – more information available [here](#).

This connection to professional bodies would ensure learners receive guidance and mentoring beyond the V Level itself, supporting long-term careers in environmental sustainability.