

Net Zero Home's key role in workforce development

The Net Zero Home, based at the city's Energy Training Academy, is set to play a key role in shaping the workforce of tomorrow after being officially opened by Lorna Slater MSP and Minister for Green Skills, Circular Economy and Biodiversity.

A fully functioning one-bedroom bungalow, the unique property is housed within the 12,000 square feet training centre in Dalkeith.

It revolves around three primary objectives: upskilling engineers and tradespeople, addressing the retrofitting challenges in the current built environment and providing energy efficiency education for youngsters with the aim of inspiring them to pursue careers in renewables.

The facility, which was officially launched by Ms Slater, aims to help establish Scotland as a leader in sustainable living and workforce development.

"Supporting Scotland's current and future workforce to develop the skills needed for the transition to net zero is a clear priority for the Scottish Government," she said.

"The Energy Trading Academy's Net Zero Home is an innovative project and will help address the changing skills needs of

industry and support young people into good green jobs.”

The academy, which operates as a social enterprise, is the only community-focused facility of its kind in Scotland, and co-founder Mark Glasgow spoke of his pride at seeing a long-held dream become a reality.

“My vision was always to have something pretty spectacular that would make a difference in the community as well as the renewables sector and I believe we have achieved that,” he said.

“The Net Zero Home is a testament to sustainable possibilities, showcasing how innovative technologies like solar energy, smart heating, and efficient design can come together to create an eco-friendly living space. It’s a practical example of how we can achieve a net-zero EPC rating, inspiring a step towards a greener future.

“There has been a lot of people involved and that collective vision has brought this to fruition – it’s a proud day for everyone at the Energy Training Academy.

“Firstport, Midlothian Council and Capital City Partnership have supported us from the outset and we’re extremely grateful for their backing. Local contractors and numerous national manufacturers and suppliers have all helped make this happen.”

Features of the home include heat pumps, solar panels, battery storage, infra-red heating and smart lighting, underfloor heating, air-to-air units, velux sun tunnels, a bath waste recovery system and rainwater harvesting.

“The aim is to enhance training by providing candidates with hands-on experiences in areas like working at heights, safely installing solar panels, fitting various panel systems, working in roof spaces, and installing heat pumps and batteries,” said Mr Glasgow.

“This immersive approach elevates the quality of training for aspiring renewable engineers, making it a pivotal initiative for shaping the workforce of tomorrow.”

Having achieved success in business, Mr Glasgow looks back on his upbringing in a tough housing estate in Niddrie in the city as one of the main drivers for the project.

“I want to give youngsters an opportunity in the trade as I know how important that was for me. Growing up in a rough housing estate, I don’t know what I would be doing now had I never got an opportunity to get into plumbing.

“This will give kids the chance to change their lives, particularly those who are maybe not so academic. The home is also about the journey to net zero. I want to do what I can to make sure my kids have a stable environment when they are all older.”

Co-founder Andrew Lamond said: “We can do a lot of good work together for the planet and make a real difference in Dalkeith, Edinburgh and Scotland.

“There is no doubt we can make a difference to the lives of young people by inspiring them to have a career in renewables and then they can pass their learnings on to future generations which is important.

“Hopefully local residents and home owners will be inspired to get themselves to net zero and it is so doable now with the technologies that are out there.”



Lorna Slater MSP and Mark Glasgow of The Energy Trading Academy