

UK - wood recycling spurs growth in green collar jobs

With thanks to the London Community Recycling Network for flagging this, a national body representing community wood recycling projects is calling on the government to help rapidly scale up the industry - pointing to new research that shows it creates green collar jobs and training from very little initial investment.

The National Community Wood Recycling Project 2009 Survey, authored by its assistant director Ali Walmsley, is the most complete survey yet undertaken of the community wood recycling and reuse projects across the UK. The survey found that initial start up costs for wood recycling and reuse social enterprises are on average only £20,000. Each business creates an average of four paid jobs so that equates to an average cost per green job of £5,000.

The 22 community wood recycling projects, which make profits by collecting timber waste from the building industry for a fee and then on-selling that wood, also support an average of six volunteers per enterprise as well as work placements. They have reached a combined annual turnover of more than £1m, providing, in total, employment and training opportunities for nearly 300 people.

Walmsley called on the government to 'take notice' of the low overhead costs of these green jobs and help the industry to quickly grow. Over the last two years it has been expanding across the UK at a rate of 15 per cent per annum despite the economic downturn. 'At the moment people are looking for ways to create green jobs and we've been doing it for ten years now at quite a similar rate,' said Walmsley. 'With organic growth we would have 50 centres in ten years, so 70 centres in five years with a bit of a push is very achievable.' Dr Ryan Woodard of the University of Brighton waste and energy research group praised the 'excellent report' for its complete coverage of the wood reuse sector and its role in highlighting the green jobs created.

Copies of the report National community wood recycling project 2009 survey (1.5 MB) are available from:

http://www.socialenterprisemag.co.uk/upload/sem/story/993_document2.pdf

Or we can email you a copy.