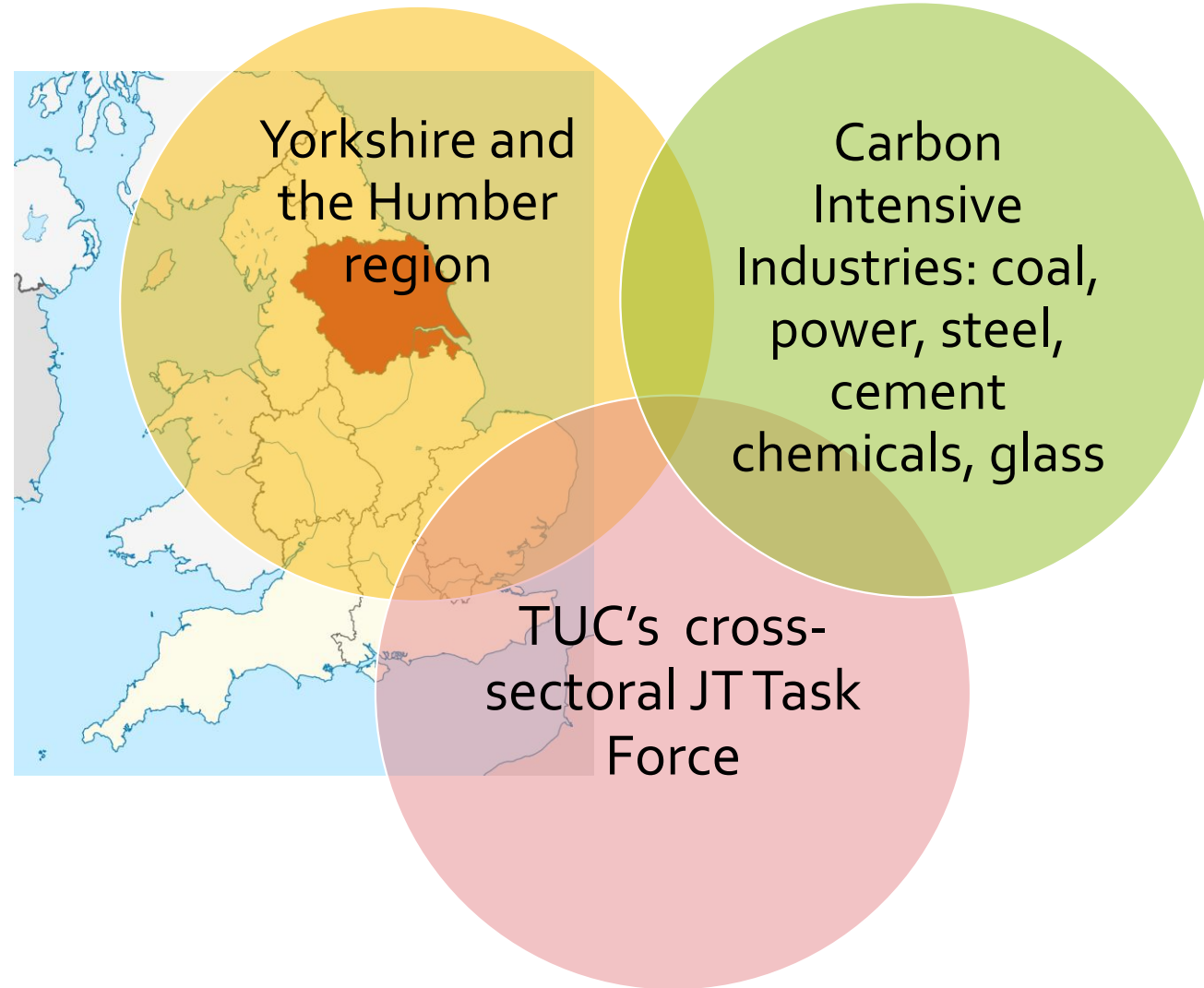


# Work and skills in the climate transition

in Yorkshire and the  
Humber

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# Divisions in the labour market in Yorkshire and the Humber

## Tendencies in lower-paid jobs

- Declining pay
- Low security
- Short term
- Lack of in-work training
- Lack of access to knowledge
- SMEs or self-employed
- Minimal investment in their job or work premises
- No employee input to carbon reduction strategies, even if they exist

## Tendencies in higher-paid jobs

- Increasing pay
- Secure contracts
- Long term
- Paid training
- Knowledge-based
- Larger companies, public sector, or consultants to these
- Investment in technology and buildings at work
- Employers aware of carbon reduction and may involve employees

Ecological pathways are fundamentally different to technocentric (or modernizing) pathways

### 'Modernising' pathways examples

- E.g. in the steel industry, make processes more **energy efficient** so they produce less CO<sub>2</sub>;
- **Increase recycling** rates for steel.
- These pathways are needed but **insufficient** to reach zero carbon.

### 'Ecological' pathways examples

- E.g., **re-use** construction steels instead of melting them down to make new ones.
- Circular economy approaches that **design out waste**.
- **Rethink company and job roles**, e.g., leasing steel components instead of making them.

## Just Transition demands change at four levels – unions can contribute at all levels:

(Model defined by Cambridge Institute of Sustainability Leadership - Silveira & Pritchard, no date)

- **Technological**
  - Unions work with employers to support technological change benefiting members directly – e.g., cleaner aircraft fuels
- **Organizational**
  - Unions train members to act as Green Reps to enable collective bargaining on carbon
- **Social**
  - TUC in Y&H is campaigning for *Better Buses* to benefit workers, wider society and climate
- **Institutional**
  - In UK, there is a lack of related institutions, or unions are not asked to participate. Some new developments emerging in cities, regions and nations of UK, e.g., Yorkshire and Humber Climate Commission.

Trade unions can work in **four ways** for a just transition to a safe climate:

Each quadrant is *necessary*.

Defending existing jobs is *not sufficient*.

'Getting more from less' is *not sufficient*.

	Unions' narrower role	Unions' wider role
Ecological pathways	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Protect existing members</b> in construction, transport, health, care, education, manufacturing</li> <li>• <b>React to defend workers</b> in the face of digitalisation and AI</li> <li>• Promote <b>democratic control</b> in the economy</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Work with civil society to create <b>good new jobs and skills</b> in construction, transport, health, care, education, manufacturing</li> <li>• Enable <b>workers' knowledge</b> to contribute to ecological re-design</li> <li>• Promote redefining prosperity around <b>good work and no waste in an inclusive economy</b></li> </ul>
Modernising pathways	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Protect existing members</b> in high-carbon industries</li> <li>• <b>Defend members' conditions</b> in the face of process change for energy efficiency, and economic / policy threats</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Work with employers and government</b> to create <b>good new jobs and skills</b> in high-tech industries including renewable energy</li> <li>• Thus enabling:             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Workforce diversification</li> <li>• Better economic security for places</li> </ul> </li> </ul>

## Key findings for policy from my research

- Carbon emissions need to be limited, but not good work and skills – there is a **large intersection between climate action, an inclusive economy, and pandemic recovery.**
- Seek **balance, rather than growth,** in the economy – invest in each quadrant so that climate action also addresses low pay, low skills and insecurity.
- Keep the **everyday economy** firmly in view (food, housing, local services, health, care, education) – it is where most climate action needs to happen.
- Good work and skills are at the heart of a Just Transition and bring **co-benefits to communities around health, wealth and happiness.**
- **Trade unions can be partners in change** at all levels – technological, organisational, social and institutional.