

energy



OUTRAGE

offshore energy workers speak out

FLASH BULLETIN

Call out GWO!

Welcome to the first ever edition of our new 'Flash Bulletin' titled **OUTAGE**

Offshore energy workers are familiar with the term 'outage' it generally means the loss of power on their installation or vessel, an outage. With this flash bulletin we are looking to give a new meaning to the term outage and provide a 'power outage' to workers across the sector. We want to give you the power to put your voice out there with your views and opinions about the offshore energy sector, your 'outage' if you like.

This is not a Newsletter like others. **This is more views than news**, with your opinions and your comments about the News affecting us as workers across the offshore

energy sector. If you read or hear something that you have a view on, send it to us and we'll try to share it with a bigger audience. Industry, politicians, regulators, workers, and the press will all get sight of OUTAGE, so say it as you see it! For this first edition members of the offshore energy branch have contributed views on a mix of items making the news about offshore.

Good, bad, funny, or sad, send your comments to;

oilc@rmt.org.uk

Note: [All contributions are completely confidential]



Call out GWO! *This has dragged on too long.*

It is time to call out the Global Wind Organisation (GWO) for obstructing the introduction of the Offshore Passport, covering skills and safety training standards across the offshore energy sector. The idea has been talked about for years, it has the support of other standards bodies like OPITO, ECITB, IMCA, and IMO. The idea is also supported by industry organisations, employers, and Trade Unions. Most importantly though, workers across the offshore energy sector want the passport, to reduce the duplication of training and the costs!

Why are GWO obstructing the passport? Various excuses have been used about training needs, and renewables being a different industry, we don't buy it! GWO are meant to be a not-for-profit organisation, but our view is, it is all about the money! In our opinion, GWO fear losing the monopoly that lets them exploit workers and industry, simple as that! Their actions are nothing to do with improving safety, or protecting workers. They should be ashamed!

We want industry, training bodies, trade unions and workers to call out GWO. If they are not prepared to get behind the Passport GWO should be dumped by all groups. The obstruction has gone on long enough. GWO are based in Copenhagen and the biggest Trade Union for offshore energy workers in Denmark, Dansk Metal, do not recognise GWO. Dansk Metal tell us that GWO are not an organisation they can work with and we feel it is time the rest of Europe and the UK took the same approach.

If GWO continue to hold workers and industry to ransom we should boycott GWO, de-recognise their standards, refuse to work with them! Write to your MP or MSP and call out GWO. International Trade Union organisations like ITF and IndustriAll should call out GWO. Employers and industry associations should call out GWO. The RMT offshore energy branch is calling out GWO and we will be writing to all concerned!

Offshore Energy Branch

Engagement is the first step... right? *Diversity and Inclusion failure!*

What a shocker it was to read in the news that only 5% of 400 Offshore Energies UK (OEUK) member companies had bothered to respond to a survey on Diversity and Inclusion! Compare that to our own RMT Offshore Energy Branch efforts and we put OEUK to shame. Our front cover is an illustration of this with our proud Chair of the Branch, Nikki, agreeing to feature in our first edition of OUTAGE. Nikki is employed in a support role for the subsea sector and is a great supporter of Diversity and Inclusion.

Mind you, as the picture here illustrates it wasn't easy getting Nikki to 'strike a pose', she couldn't keep her face straight long enough! LOL

All sorts of studies and figures have been used in recent times arguing that Diversity and Inclusion is absolutely vital if the energy sector is going to achieve the net zero energy transition targets. Apart from that, it is long overdue

and we really should be doing a lot more in this space. Look at Norway, about half the offshore workforce is female and they are involved in every discipline. Compare that to the UK which has struggled since day one to get above the 6% mark! Mind you, it hasn't helped that offshore they are reluctant to bring females out due to cabin issues, which after 40+ years is a shocking failure of this industry!

To be fair, we spoke to a few companies we are involved with about this subject and it was telling that quite a few of them had never heard about the OEUK survey? Maybe OEUK should let us run their surveys in future, engagement is our bag and we've done a reasonable job of it for the last 30+ years.



Grangemouth Refinery closure

Just Transition my #####!

The news that Petroineos intends closing the Grangemouth Oil Refinery by the spring of 2025, is a kick in the teeth for the workforce and the community! It shows the governments in Westminster and Holyrood have no interest in energy security, and a Just Energy Transition for workers is non-existent.

Petroineos, is jointly owned by the Chinese state-owned oil firm, (that politically has an interest in destabilising energy security) and Jim Ratcliffe, who has form in bullying a workforce and is more interested in becoming the part-owner of Manchester United. He certainly has no interest in a Just Transition for the workforce! With even the more extreme climate campaign groups admitting that oil and gas will still account for 25 to 30% of the energy mix by 2050, and the geopolitical situation in the world since 2022 making national energy security imperative, the closure of 100% of the refining capacity in Scotland which supplies 80% of road fuel used in Scotland, and 25% of the UK capacity makes no sense whatsoever.

The Offshore Branch has been warning for some time that energy security and a worker-led Just Transition have not been taken seriously by the governments at Westminster and Holyrood. Grangemouth confirms our fears. On hearing the news, the Offshore Branch called on both governments to work together and take Grangemouth Refinery into public hands, thus protecting national energy security and showing they are serious about a Just Energy Transition.

Sadly however, since making that demand both Westminster and Holyrood have shamelessly washed their hands of any pretence of supporting the workforce in a just transition or supporting energy security. On 9th January 2024, The Herald printed an article pointing out that Scotland would, 'become a 'third world' fuel-producing nation, despite a continuing reliance on North Sea Oil and Gas production' and that 'Analysis shows that Scotland faces becoming the only one of the the top 25 major oil-producing nations that does not have a refinery to produce car fuel'.

You couldn't make it up!

Life of an Agency worker *This kind of treatment in the energy sector must end*

Agency: Hi, this is **** Agency, we've got an offer of work on ****, they've asked for you personally as you've worked there before, the starting dates are 22nd or 29th if you're interested?

Me: I'm actually working somewhere else just now, but should be free and available for the later date. I was contacted by you last month for work at the same place, but this fell through without any explanation, before committing, can you guarantee that this is a genuine job, as I have a course booked and other offers of work.

Agency: Yes this is a genuine offer, HR contacted us directly asking for you, when you get off, confirm your commitment to us and we'll arrange everything then, please don't accept any other work as they really want you.

Me: Ok that's me home now, I've told the other agencies I've accepted something else, and have rearranged my course. Is everything still ok for the 29th?

Agency: Yes, we'll send you all the details next Monday or Tuesday, have a good weekend.

The following Monday -

Agency: Hi, unfortunately, you are no longer required for this job, I do apologise for the inconvenience.

Me: Wait a minute, you told me this work was guaranteed, the company HR department asked for me, you told me not to accept any other jobs that I have now missed, and change my course, and now you think that 'I do apologise for the inconvenience' is an appropriate answer?

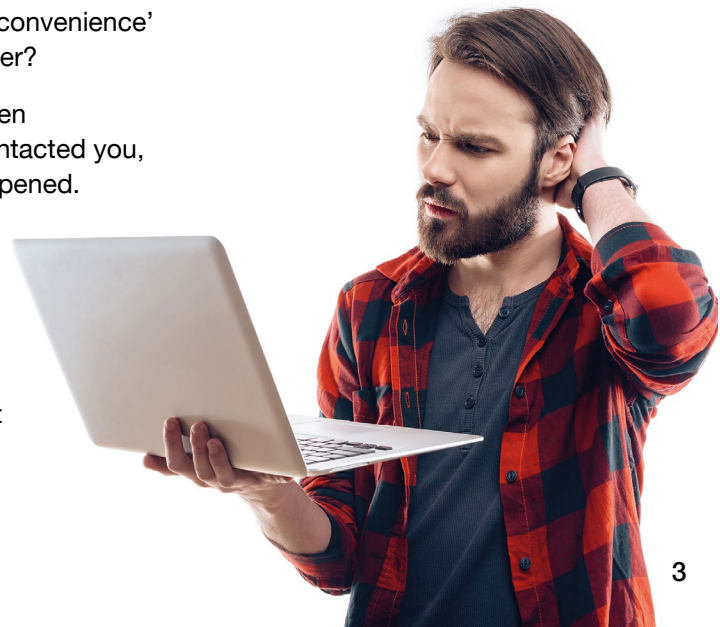
Agency: If you had been forthcoming when I contacted you, this wouldn't have happened.

Me: I was halfway through another job, and told you exactly when I was available, to put the onus on me for this is nothing short of gaslighting.

Agency: No reply.

Sadly, incidents like this are not uncommon these days. Certain agencies treat those on their books little better than filth, with gaslighting and ghosting common, it's about time these agencies were named and shamed.

There should be far more protection under the law for those working through agencies in the offshore industry, as it stands, unscrupulous agencies can virtually treat people how they like.



Are the Health and Safety Executive (HSE) a captured regulator? *The wild west!*

In the early days of oil and gas, workers were assured they had health and safety protections and employment security, but we knew different. The Department of Energy looked after health and safety. They insisted that regulations were in place; the regulator was well-resourced and controlling the industry; everything that could be done was being done to benefit workers and the country; yadda yadda!

Then Piper Alpha blew apart killing 167 workers.

Academics around the world wrote about the Piper disaster. Looking at causes they talked about things like the 'Common interest principle' where government and industry had the same interest. The 'Political economy of speed' moving from one industry (coal) to a new industry (oil & gas). They talked about precarious work and a "Captured Regulator" where the regulator is acting in the interests of the industry (and government) by applying the lightest of regulatory control. Workers summed it up as – the wild west – where you were always dodging bullets to try and earn a few quid!

Fast forward to the present day and renewables. We are assured we have health and safety protections and employment security. We are told there are regulations in place. The regulator (HSE) is well resourced and in control. Everything that can be done is being done for workers and the country. Right?

Wrong! Workers don't know what regulations apply. The HSE have 3 inspectors in place (or is it 4?) for the entire offshore wind sector. The 'Common interest principle' is evident along with the 'Political economy of speed' as we move from oil & gas to wind. Precarious work is everywhere and we have a "Captured Regulator" as the lightest of regulatory control is being applied. Workers are dodging bullets again, it is the wild west, again!

Must we wait for another tragedy to sort this mess?

Seagreen wind farm sale *Money makes the world go round my money!*

Can someone please explain to me how the UK/Scottish Governments are running the offshore energy sector cos I am baffled. I have just read an article that says TotalEnergies has sold 25.5% of the Seagreen wind farm to the Thailand national oil company PTTEP. The article says the Thai national company has bought this chunk of Seagreen for £552-million.

That's fair enough, but then the report says that TotalEnergies reckons the deal could be worth \$4.3-Billion over the next five years!

As far as I'm aware, the Scottish Government has given away £500-million as a Just Transition fund. There's no direct return from that, it's giving money to projects that they hope will deliver jobs or investment. I'm also aware the UK Government is giving away £billions as part of their "North

Sea Transition Deal" again with no guaranteed return on that money (our bloody money, tax payers!) just a hope of attracting investment and maybe with it some jobs and tax revenue.

Meanwhile, the Thai government is investing £552-million with a potential return of \$4.3-Billion (£3.4-billion) over the space of 5-years. And that's from one windfarm off the coast of Scotland, there's 11 more and counting! I'm also aware that national energy companies from Norway, Denmark, Sweden, China, Malaysia and many more are buying up UK wind farm acreage, so please can someone explain why our Governments are giving money away? Why aren't we buying for a return? And an added question – why are we paying more and more for our energy?

Concerned tax-payer

Chips are down? *Is it safety or fat shaming?*

It will be comforting for offshore energy workers to hear that industry leaders are working hard to address health and safety risks according to recent reports. The risks being addressed are probably not what you might expect though. It appears the industry is concerned about offshore workers getting fat, or as one report puts it – workers weight continues to grow.

Offshore Energies UK (OEUK) have had a meeting about it with their HSE Director, Mark Wilson, saying a review of the issue was, apparently, overdue! OEUK's Health and Safety Manager, Graham Skinner went further and told Energy Voice that the health and safety of our people was a top priority and that through close working with stakeholders some initial actions had been confirmed. He went on to say the next steps would be discussed with regulators, industry, and the workforce.

One measure reported to have been adopted by some industry operators was changing meal options provided to offshore workers and - limiting the serving of chips to once a week! Are your chips down? More importantly, do you feel all the safer for it?

Also reported in the Energy Voice article was a comment from a Dr Scott, the Chief Medical Officer of TAC Healthcare. The good Doctor points out that offshore workers also faced a lack of rest time compared to those workers in other physically demanding industries due to the shift patterns. Dr Scott said that with 2-week or 3-week periods of 12-hour shifts, "there's not a lot of respite." No ##### Sherlock!

We say the good Doctor is bang on the money and that instead of talking chip consumption, we should instead be looking at the quality of rest and improving the work/life balance –

2-weeks on 3-weeks off for all UK offshore energy workers!

FFS! JOIN RMT



Scan this QR Code to join RMT or visit www.rmt.org.uk/join

Fighting For Standards!