

energy

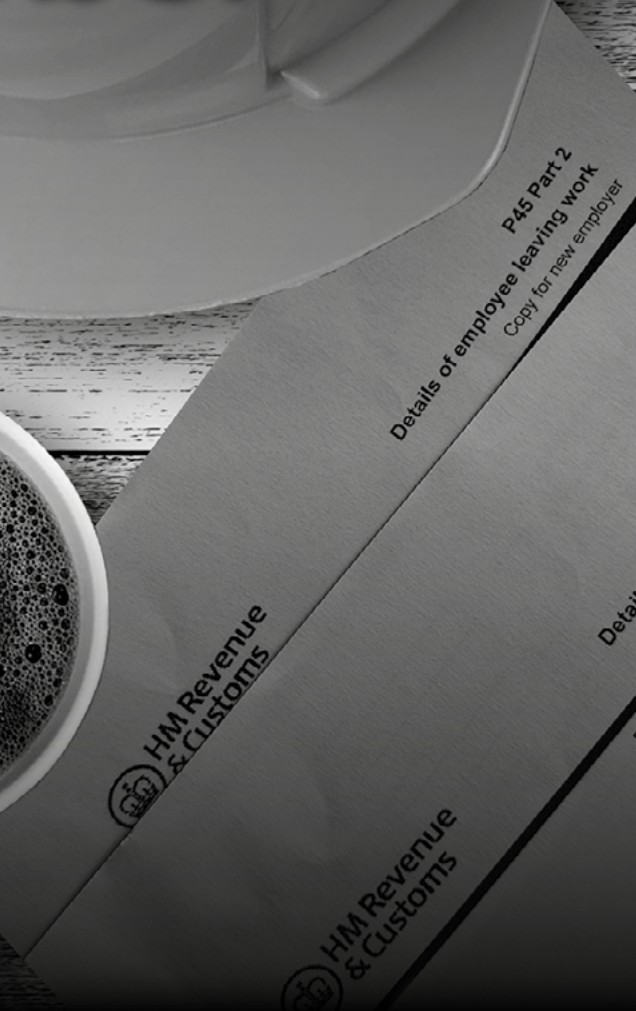


OUTRAGE

offshore energy workers speak out **FLASH BULLETIN 6**

Passport to?

We need jobs!





Passport and a P45 - *Is this our future?*

Outage 6 continues our theme about the future for workers across the energy sector. The front cover illustrates how one member put it – A passport and a P45, is this our future? We also have views on health and safety, a bit of politics, and more, enjoy!

North Sea Consultation begins

- Have they missed a word?

Hello, I've just heard on the news [March 5th '25] that consultation is starting with the UK Government about the future of the North Sea. I think they've missed out a word... should it no read – **Redundancy Consultation** is starting!

On the TV they said - Ed Miliband and the Government have got plans to put the North Sea at the heart of Britain's clean energy future and drive economic growth. They're pulling our chains, right!

I had a look on line to see what they're saying and in the bumf there's a line – **The government recognises the call of workers and trade unions for a coordinated plan to protect good jobs, pay terms and conditions in the North Sea, and commits to shaping this plan with workers and unions.**

So, when is RMT meeting them about this plan?

Details provided.

[We asked Darren Procter, RMT National Secretary, who told us;

We are talking to the secretariat for the Department of Energy Security and Net Zero (DESNZ) to arrange a meeting. Before that happens, I will be in Aberdeen to discuss matters with the Branch, the Regional Organiser, and members. Any plan being put together by DESNZ, needs to consider every aspect from jobs, pay and conditions, to safety regulations, employment protections, training, jurisdiction and much more. Details will be shared with members as talks progress.

Numbers tumbling - *A little less conversation!*

The old saying about – Death by a thousand cuts – sums up the situation across the North Sea. Politicians continue to debate and discuss the ever-elusive PLAN which has been a feature of Scottish and UK Governments for... too long, meantime the lifeblood is being drained!

As this edition of Outage is being pulled together, we see Respol, Wood, Petrofac and Well Safe reportedly cutting numbers, but this is just a fraction of what is going on. We've also had news of the Catering contractor Entier being acquired by their competitor Aramark, and as we know from experience, there is no take-over that doesn't involve number reductions. News has also broken of the merger of Subsea7 with their competitor Saipem, although this won't be finalised for a while, it has got alarm bells ringing about the future!

This drip, drip effect of small numbers being reduced by individual companies from specific installations and operations masks the big picture this workforce needs help and they need it now. The time for talking is over, we need action!

RMT Offshore Energy Branch.

What happens if the bubble bursts!

- Do Politicians know?

The discussion at the last Branch meeting got me thinking about the future for oil and gas workers and I was left wondering – what happens if the bubble bursts?

At the Branch meeting the Regional Organiser told us there was something like 1,000 redundancies across the offshore sector in the last year. She also told us we are looking at anything between 2,000 and 4,000 redundancies in the next 18-months with decommissioning, company buy-outs and mergers. But the thing is, this is probably the BEST we can hope for, because it's based on oil and gas prices staying around the \$75 barrel range. The big question the politicians need to think about is – what happens if the oil price crashes and we end up with something like a \$40 barrel?

Offshore workers know what a falling oil price means for us, but I don't think the politicians get it, do they? The redundancy figures the Regional Organiser spoke about would probably double for the next 18-months if we see a crash. It looks to me like everybody is talking about Grangemouth and the loss of jobs. Something should be done about Grangemouth, no argument there, but something should have been done years ago and I'm thinking they have never had a plan! If the bubble bursts, and the oil price crashes, have the politicians got a plan for offshore workers? Or are we going the same way as Grangemouth?

Details provided.

[We will raise this with our National Executive. In the meantime, we asked our former Regional Organiser Jake Molloy who sits on the Just Transition Commission about this. His response was blunt – "There's no plan in place now, and definitely no plan for if/when the bubble bursts!" Jake said he would try to raise this issue with Ministers.]

Pawns and broken promises - *Workforce morale matters for safety!*



I'm a worker/safety rep with decades in the oil and gas industry and it's worrying to see workers once again being used as pawns by industry and government to justify their actions. We are told we are important, we need to be focused, have the right attitude and behaviour, to be safe, cos we're a key part of the industry and we'll be involved in a just transition.

For years the resources have been exploited and £billions taken by companies, shareholders, and governments in tax, but nothing has been put aside in the UK for the transition of the industry. It shouldn't be a distant dream, we can see Norwegian rigs, we know their T&Cs and we read about their wealth fund. Now, the promises made to workers offshore regarding the transition are a distant dream, along with job security. Onshore, the promises made to Grangemouth workers before the last election by the incoming "Labour" government (can we still call them that?) about saving Grangemouth, is a prime example, workers are just pawns faced with broken promises.

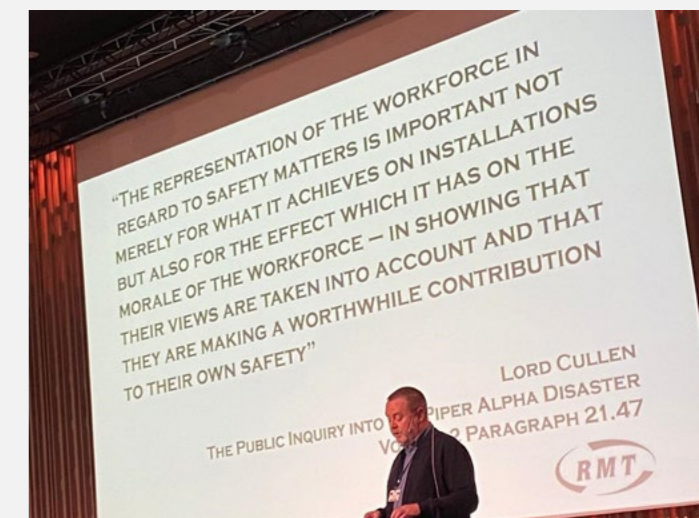
There's many years left in production and decommissioning offshore, and while safety has improved over the years, it has 'plateaued' in oil and gas, and it's crap in renewables! After all the money that's flowed/flowing from here, means we should be in a good place, a better place.

Engagement and information sharing with workers is vital and promises made should be kept. You can't forget promises days after an election, and you must engage those

affected by your decisions. Failing to do this is dangerous practice, workers get distracted, lose focus, and safety will suffer! UK regulation requires workforce involvement all the time! It's still happening on some oil and gas sites, some could be better, but renewables needs major improvement and regulated better.

Sam – scunnered and scared.

(Note: This is not Sam Peace, Director of Energy Division at HSE but it should be!)



Mental Health - *They just don't get it!*

I read something recently about Mental Health offshore where Managers spoke about how they influenced things. There was a lot about Employee Assistance Programmes (EAPs) and some were talking up the idea. A few said they had good systems, but it was reported only about 4% of employees had ever used an EAP. There was also a bit about research showing offshore workers were 15-times more likely to consider suicide compared with onshore workers.

What I couldn't understand was, nobody said anything about "TRUST," not a single word! They don't get it, do they! Let me spell it out –

WORKERS DON'T TRUST YOU AND YOUR SCHEMES!!

If you getting bullied by a Gaffer and you contact the EAP, they tell you to talk to HR. We all know what happens next, Managers protect the Gaffer!

We get told to stop the job if it's not safe. The Gaffer disagrees and says get it done, what do you do? If

you go ahead and something goes wrong, who gets the blame, NOT the Gaffer! If you refuse to do the job because you don't think it's safe, you risk a disciplinary for refusing to take a reasonable instruction, from the Gaffer!

If you call the EAP saying you've got issues and not feeling up to it, you end up on the beach, off the job, on s### sick-pay and it's unlikely you'll get back! Bottom line - you put yourself in the spotlight, and suddenly you don't have the right attitude, especially if you're a contractor.

We're isolated offshore and there's no balance of power. There's also a culture of "blame," and we always get the blame! Workers need a system they can trust, a system that provides balance and accountability. Reporting should be about learning and education through trust and empowerment to speak up.

Details provided.

[You might want to join a Trade Union!]

Your site, your voice... coming soon!



Members should look out for an email coming from the Branch in the very near future about the launch of our new website and information pages –

www.rmt-offshore.uk

You will have access to a range of information, read news, make news, download "Outage" and agreements, share information, as well as ask questions (all confidentially). Our Branch team will be refreshing information regularly and any news and pictures you want to share can be sent to us and uploaded, after ensuring there is no come back for you.

The Training fiasco continues! - *No jobs, no support!*

The online journal "Energy Voice" reported a new scheme from ECITB for 24-technicians from Aberdeen and Grangemouth to be trained at colleges in those regions. The aim is to train the techs to a competency standard that will enable them to work across oil and gas and wind assets. A spokesperson from ECITB said; 'this will create an agile workforce to service operations of both sectors.'

Without wishing to sound critical of ECITB's efforts, we've got to ask again, what is the hold-up here? We've been talking about this since the "Energy Jobs Task Force" was created back in 2015! This is a no-brainer! How the hell can we do a transition without recognised training standards!

The same article talked about the UK Government announcing the January 2025 launch of the – "much-delayed" (seriously understating it!) – Energy Skills Passport. The article reported the Skills Passport was at the pilot stage and workers could sign up. That should have happened at least 4-years ago but

was delayed by the Global Wind Organisation (GWO). On the positive side the 24-tech training programme will include the "Connected Competence" scheme which, will be recognised by the Skills Passport system. At last, commonsense prevails, a bit of joined up thinking is being applied! Let's hope GWO don't pull the plug, again, for their own commercial interests!

However, serious questions still exist, the most obvious one being – where are the jobs? Another one is training costs to meet the Connected Competence/Skills Passport standards. The 24-techs in Aberdeen and Grangemouth are lucky, being supported by ECITB, but 24-workers is scratching the surface! What about the thousands of precarious workers engaged through countless agencies on, IR35, provision of service, sole-trader/self-employed type contracts? How do they secure support for the training to create this "agile workforce" described by ECITB? If anyone from ECITB, OPITO, GWO, OEUK, RUK, the ORE Catapult or the UK Gov, is willing to offer an insight, drop us an email!

Ad-Hoc abandoned? - *Courses don't provide experience!*

I'm hearing a lot about this Connected Competence thing and the Skills Passport but nobody is telling us how it works for short-term ad-hoc lads! Last year I got about seven trips offshore for different shutdowns. I worked with Wood, Petrofac and Aker. When I applied for the jobs, they asked for my training record and they expected me to have certain courses. Most of mine were up to date at the time but they are running out.

With this Connected Competence and Passport thing what happens with the short-term ad-hoc guys? Will it be a case

of the guys who get the courses (probably paying for it themselves) get the jobs, before any of us who don't have some courses?

I suppose I'm asking you; who will pay for our courses or will the ad-hoc guys that have been doing this for years just get abandoned? That doesn't seem right, because a course doesn't give you all the experience you need. I've been doing the shutdowns for years!

Details provided.

[We will make enquiries and try to get answers from industry]

OEUK has the final word - *Following your concerns, we spoke to OEUK to get their steer...*

The need for a highly skilled, adaptable workforce to support the energy transition is well understood, and steps are being taken to address this challenge.

The Connected Competence initiative is a highly effective way for time-served employees to demonstrate and future-proof their knowledge, ensure technical competence and contribute to good safety performance. The Connected Competence initiative is already making a difference helping to eliminate the cost of unnecessary training, creating a workforce with recognised, transferable skills and reducing duplication of assessments when technicians move between sites and contractors. It stands as a strong example of industry collaboration. ECITB have recently outlined their further investment in supporting transient and ad-hoc workers, you can find more details here - £300K for Connected Competence voucher scheme - Connected Competence - ECITB.

Connected Competence is crucial to recognise the importance of adaptability and continuous learning and with other evolving initiatives like the Energy Skills Passport it is intended to help people work seamlessly across different sectors. They complement each other and support our industry's aim to adopt a standardised approach as the energy transition evolves.

The Energy Skills Passport, launched in January 2025, is another critical tool in this transition. It enables workers to identify the qualifications required for roles across oil and gas and offshore wind while also mapping out future career pathways. Research commissioned by OEUK indicates that 90% of oil and gas workers have skills transferable to renewables. The Skills Passport is designed to streamline this process by identifying common skills, equivalence of qualifications and training previously undertaken and highlighting where further training may be required to secure opportunities in the evolving energy sector.

A great deal of work is being undertaken with stakeholders to anticipate and support job evolution within the energy transition. However, continued investment is essential to ensure projects move forward across all energy sectors, ultimately creating the job opportunities required to support the transition. We appreciate the discussion and remain committed to working with industry partners to drive progress.

OEUK.

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