OUR POWER OFFSHORE WORKERS' DEMANDS FOR A JUST ENERGY TRANSITION

CAMPAIGN





MANUAL



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To protect their anonymity, all the names of workers quoted have been changed.

None of the people pictured in the report participated in the workshops.

IN THIS MANUA

he climate crisis is escalating. The Global South has been living through the harshest consequences of a changing climate for years, while here in the UK we've started to see heat waves. landslides, flash floods and droughts threatening lives and livelihoods. No part of society will be safe from the impacts of climate breakdown, though the impacts will be felt the most by the poorest. No workforce or community can avoid the need to adapt.

66 We need the government to act in the best interests of workers and energy users. Imagine if we had nationalised the North Sea! There's an opportunity to shape what happens with renewables, if it was nationalised it would be the most positive outcome as it grows. ??

Sarah, Marine Technician

Over the last three years, we have organised with offshore oil and gas workers in the UK to understand their vision for the future. Through six workshops and a lot of phone calls, 34 workers came together to build demands for an energy transition. We wanted to make sure the rest of the workforce agreed, so we surveyed more than 1000 workers. Over 90% backed each demand.

The workforce is clear. Oil and gas companies have profited from the exploitation of workers and the planet for years. The pursuit of profit by energy bosses is driving emissions up and working conditions down. The UK's offshore oil and gas workers hold the skills and experience necessary to build a renewable powered economy yet politicians rarely seek out their views.

A just transition means ensuring that we stay within climate limits, putting power into the hands of workers and communities and building a fundamentally new energy system: renewable, publicly owned and designed to meet people's needs.

This manual outlines oil and gas workers' ten demands to build a renewable economy that creates jobs, reinvigorates communities and protects our shared planet, and what we need to do to make them happen.

66 The whole country is angry at the oil and gas companies everyone is talking about it - on the worksite, at the social club. They're taking money off the public. If BP made \$9.3 billion in profit last quarter, surely they're able to give something back. It's just fat cats getting fatter. I want to know what they're doing with the money, because they aren't putting it back into the industry. ??

– Mark, Rigging Supervisor

THE DEMANDS

OUR TRANSITION

Solutions for the immediate barriers workers face to moving into renewable industries.

DEMANDI

WORKERS AT THE CENTRE OF TRANSITION PLANNING

DEMAND 2

CLEAR, ACCESSIBLE PATHWAYS OUT OF HIGH CARBON JOBS

DEMAND 3

A TRAINING REGIME BUILT TO KEEP **WORKERS SAFE INSTEAD OF FOR PROFIT**

DEMAND 4

INVEST IN DOMESTIC MANUFACTURING AND ASSEMBLY FOR RENEWABLES



OUR RIGHTS

Solutions to ensure work in renewables is secure, well-paid and safe.

DEMAND 5

COLLECTIVE BARGAINING WITH STRONG RANK AND FILE UNIONS ACROSS THE WHOLE OFFSHORE INDUSTRY

DEMAND 6

ESTABLISH UNIVERSAL RIGHTS AND A WAGE FLOOR ACROSS THE UKCS

DEMAND 7

EFFECTIVE AND TRUSTED WHISTLEBLOWING PROCEDURES



III. OUR ENERGY

Solutions for a new energy system, where benefits are shared fairly and there is greater public control.

DEMAND 8

PUBLIC OWNERSHIP FOR THE PUBLIC GOOD

DEMAND 9

REORGANISE THE TAX SYSTEM FOR PUBLIC GOOD

DEMAND IO

NO COMMUNITY LEFT BEHIND



OUR I. TRANSITION

e need the skills and experience of offshore workers to build a renewable energy system. These engineers, electricians, divers, welders and more have years of knowledge and experience. No one knows the challenges of working in the offshore energy system better than the workers. As renewable energy projects have grown across the UK, these workers have been shut out of making a transition. There are simply not enough renewable jobs available and even where some do exist, they are often on worse terms and conditions. For workers able to get jobs, they are frequently required to pay for their own training in renewables as well as oil and gas.

The demands in this section set out how to ensure a just transition by bringing these workers to the centre of energy policy in the UK. They cover the nuts and bolts of transition planning: how we utilise skills that already exist in the workforce, skill-up where necessary, create new jobs and open up pathways for existing workers to move across.



OUR TRANSITION DEMAND **WORKERS AT THE CENTRE**

OF TRANSITION PLANNING

of workers surveyed support this demand

urrently, workers are largely left out of transition planning decisions - decisions which will have a major impact on their lives - at the workplace, sector, regional, and national levels. Workers' knowledge and experience is largely ignored as climate policy is made.

Workers in every workplace, particularly in the oil and gas sector, should have the opportunity to feed their knowledge and experience into policy. The UK and cottish Governments should ensure greater worke up and Scotland's Just Transition Commis

Local Authorities and employers must step up too. Policy-making processes should involve the participation of the workers and communities that will be affected or hold experience in the industry. High-carbon workplaces in particular should be planning a just transition with their workforce and these plans should be formalised as collective agreements.*

> A **collective agreement** is an agreement or arrangement reached through negotiation between employees in one or more trade unions and the employer of those workers. Collective agreements may cover terms and conditions of employment. such as pay, holidays and training.

66 Anyone sitting on any board or any commission, there should be a good representation of workers. There should be equal representation and voting rights. ??

- John, Test Engineer

- + Germany and Spain established commissions involving trade unions and local governments to plan the phaseout of coal mining. They secured infrastructure investment and alternative job creation for those affected.
- **Italian** chemicals manufacturer Enel holds a companywide just transition agreement with trade unions.
- → Worker representation on company boards is mandatory in Germany under 'co-determination' laws.



CLEAR, ACCESSIBLE PATHWAYS OUT OF HIGH CARBON JOBS

of workers surveyed support this demand

uilding renewable energy projects has the potential to create thousands of jobs. Many of these will require similar skills, training and experience to the existing oil and gas workforce. Despite this, there is little support provided for high-carbon workers to find alternative jobs, to facilitate retraining where necessary, or to lighten the financial burden of training currently borne by the workers themselves.

The UK and Scottish Governments must be proactive to ensure the workforce is available to expand our renewables industry. Skills audits and forecasts should be conducted on the UK and Scottish level, both holistically across the economy and with a sector focus. These audits should become the basis of government action plans for how to support the workforce-wide transition.

Skills audits should be backed up by a jobs guarantee that secures alternative employment for workers. This should include guaranteeing 90% of workers wages as they retrain, similar to the furlough scheme during the Covid-19 pandemic, and support for the oil and gas supply chain to convert to zero carbon industries. It should also obligate companies to transfer workers to new jobs within the company or else pay a levy to support government programmes helping workers find alternative jobs.

everything for yourself, train up for all the industries and we'll call you if we need you' system. It's unsustainable. The government needs to get an offshore training passport in place, train people up to move into new industries and make bursaries for people to be able to transition.

– Stuart, Marine Supervisor

- The **Transition Training Fund in Scotland** funded training and employability support to oil and gas workers who were facing redundancies following the drop in oil and gas prices in 2014.
- + Germany's short-time working scheme (Kurzarbeit) subsidises the bulk of workers' pay (up to 60%) at companies in temporary economic hardship.
- + In the US, Trade Adjustment Assistance programmes support workers who lose jobs following industry closures due to Free Trade Agreement impacts by covering training costs and wages for a defined period of time.



A TRAINING REGIME BUILT TO KEEP WORKERS SAFE INSTEAD OF FOR PROFIT

96% of workers surveyed support this demand

oday the qualifications required to work in offshore oil and gas and in offshore wind industries are aligned to standards set by different industry bodies, respectively, OPITO (Offshore Petroleum Industry Training Organisation) and GWO (Global Wind Organisation).

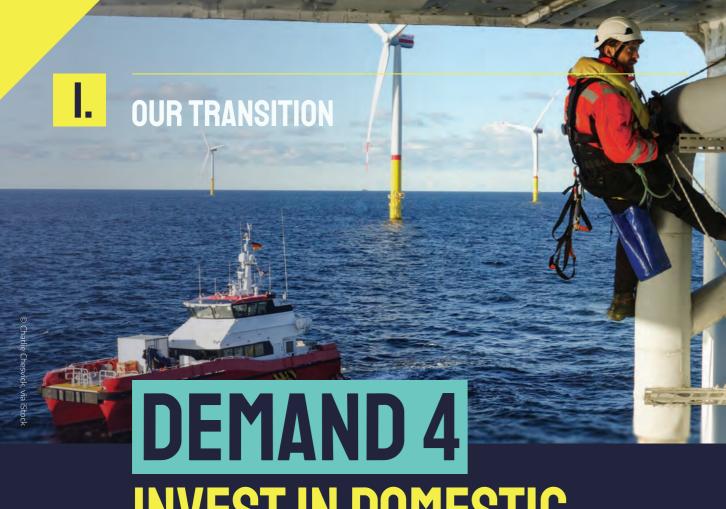
An earlier survey of offshore workers found that most were paying thousands out of their own pocket just to complete the training for their jobs in oil and gas. Under the current system, they would need to duplicate much of this training (and the cost) before they could even consider applying for alternative jobs in the renewables industry.

An Offshore Training Passport would align the standards across the energy industry where possible and lay out clear routes to topping up training for those making a transition. The UK and Scottish Governments must ensure the creation of the Offshore Training Passport and establish a levy on energy companies to raise funds for offshore worker retraining.

that exist in the training system for a transition but it isn't the idea of training we're fighting against. We are fighting against the commercial interests and the manipulative impact that has on the training system.

– Robert, Subsea Engineer

- France, the Netherlands and Australia include the principle of Recognition of Prior Learning in their national qualifications frameworks to ensure workers are assessed for their existing competence before additional training is required.
- → The UK's Engineering Construction Industry Training Board Connected Competence scheme enables experienced workers to have their proficiency assessed directly, although this only covers direct employees and isn't recognised widely across employers.



INVEST IN DOMESTIC MANUFACTURING AND ASSEMBLY FOR RENEWABLES

95% of workers surveyed support this demand

he number of jobs created in the renewables industry has fallen short of government promises. Manufacturing jobs in particular have not materialised, with key components imported from other countries. Even though the UK has one of the highest levels of onshore and offshore wind in the world, we have failed to build up an associated industrial base.

Despite projections for rapidly expanded renewable energy projects, the UK continues to lack the infrastructure and ports necessary to turn this into green jobs. Much of the supply chain servicing the oil and gas industry could be retooled to support the offshore renewables industry with the right investment and support.

There are fewer jobs required to maintain and operate wind farms compared to oil and gas production offshore, and this means creating jobs in manufacturing and assembly is vital for ensuring there are jobs available to transitioning workers and for creating new opportunities in communities across the UK.

The UK and Scottish Governments should use their existing Investment Banks to funnel money into ports and infrastructure upgrades to build the capacity to deliver large-scale offshore wind projects. Strict conditions should be placed on licences awarded to renewable companies to ensure a minimum percentage of components are sourced from these UK manufacturing hubs.

166 If you are tendering out, there needs to be a regulatory statement saying "you can only tender if you meet Criteria A, B, C, D, E" and these should be written in stone that you do the local infrastructure, x amount of jobs local, you must use x or y, decommissioned steel. Build it into the tendering process. They must benefit the communities they are working around. Create secure and good jobs.

– Jake, Safety Officer

- + Across the EU, most ports are publicly owned and their development is led by local, regional and national authorities who have made investments to secure their role in offshore wind installation and manufacturing.
- + Similarly, it is common practice **across the EU** for conditions to be attached to developer funding and licensing related to skills and social benefits.

OUR BIGGS

orkers everywhere should feel safe and valued in their industry. Since 2014, working in oil and gas has seen increasingly precarious contracts, declining pay and heightened fears over safety. Creating safe, well paid jobs in the renewables industry is vital.

Right now, many workers are leaving the energy industry altogether. They are often expected to carry out dangerous work for companies making a fortune while their own pay stagnates. Our energy industry shouldn't create profits for shareholders at the expense of pay for ordinary workers and affordable energy in their communities.

The demands in this section set out how workers believe safe, well paid jobs can be created in renewables, by establishing strong collective bargaining agreements, improving safety procedures and guaranteeing protections for all workers in the North Sea regardless of nationality.

66 If we want a workforce that

is capable of self-defence in the

emerging renewables industry

then we need a trade union led

by the rank and file.* We need

organisers within the rank and

file. And that is hard work, when

people try to achieve it they will

be singled out, intimidated, it isn't

HAS THIS BEEN DONE ELSEWHERE?

and working conditions in Italy, where 90% of jobs are covered by a national sectoral collective agreement.

a legal right in 2022, and, crucially, covers subcontracted

access any workplace where work normally covered by the

+ Sectoral collective bargaining predominantly sets wages

In **Spain**, sectoral collective bargaining was reinstituted as

The right to union access to workplaces exists in **New Zealand**, where union representatives have the right to

union happens or where a union member works.

workers.

easy, but it needs to be done. 99

- Alistair, Rigger

phe increasing shift to casualisation across the UK

Collective bargaining agreements protected 80% of

workers in the UK in the early 1980s. Today, this is

In the offshore renewables industry, there is currently no sectoral collective bargaining deal covering

offshore workers. Even energy companies like

Scottish Power, that have traditionally participated

in collective bargaining for their onshore generation and distribution assets, have resisted carrying over

their own collective bargaining agreements when establishing and separating out their renewable

Despite the successes achieved by offshore trade

unions in recent years, there are many external factors restricting collective rights and workshop participants pointed to the organising challenge for trade unions. Against the backdrop of often hostile

approaches from offshore management and reports of blacklisting of trade union activists, it is difficult for

workers to feel secure in joining and being active in

The UK and Scottish Governments should ensure v offshore job is covered by a sectoral collect

negotiated with trade unions an

ivers at the table, that covers pay, health and

ety, and benefits at work - including for on payro

payroll and self-employed workers

Rank and file refers to the ordinary

members of an organisation, like a trade union, as opposed to the leadership.

down to 25%.

energy divisions.

their trade union.

OUR RIGHTS

93%

DEMAND 5

of workers surveyed support this demand

COLLECTIVE BARGAINING WITH

STRONG RANK AND FILE UNION

REPRESENTATION ACROSS THE

WHOLE OFFSHORE INDUSTRY

economy, alongside legislation that is evermore

aggressive to trade union organising, has weakened the position of workers and trade unions.





























ESTABLISH UNIVERSAL RIGHTS AND A WAGE FLOOR ACROSS THE UKCS*

of workers surveyed support this demand

oopholes in the law and inferior employment protections for offshore work allow employers to exploit foreign workers by undercutting wages. There are even less protections in offshore wind than oil and gas, and the UK Government has granted the offshore wind industry other concessions that allow them to undercut wages at the expense of all workers, while under-resourced regulators are unable to adequately monitor conditions.

The RMT Union has revealed that offshore energy companies regularly charter vessels operated by foreign agency crew paid less than the UK legal minimum, and well below collectively bargained rates of pay in trade union agreements. Other offshore trade unions, including Nautilus, have since uncovered multiple adverts for seafarer jobs paid at rates below the National Minimum Wage, including in the offshore energy supply chain.

Fossil fuel and renewable companies cannot be allowed to build a transition through the exploitation of foreign workers in the UK's seas. Workers understand that this practice is morally wrong and drives conditions down for all workers in the energy industry.

ne UK Government should legislate to guarantee

66 I want to see people helping each other up and not holding people down. Because it's a dog eat dog industry and it doesn't need to be. We should be trying to help each other to attain a better quality of life. 99

– John, Test Engineer

HAS THIS BEEN DONE ELSEWHERE?

- In Norway, a new law guarantees local Norwegian wages and terms and conditions across all ships operating in Norwegian waters, regardless of the flag flown, except ships that are only directly sailing between Norway and another country.
- + The EU's Adequate Minimum Wage Directive includes a requirement to promote collective agreements in countries where the proportion of workers covered by collective agreements is below 80%.



The UK Continental Shelf (UKCS) is the region of waters surrounding the United Kingdom, in which the UK claims the rights to minerals and other resources in the seabed and subsoil.





EFFECTIVE AND TRUSTED GRIEVANCE AND WHISTLE-BLOWING PROCEDURES

of workers surveyed support this demand

any workers do not feel safe raising concerns, creating a risk to the health and safety of all offshore workers. Blacklisting, where workers are told they are no longer wanted on the job, remains rife in the industry despite commitments from companies to stop the practice.

Although UK law protects workers from being dismissed or victimised when they blow the whistle, this protection does not apply to self-employed or off-payroll workers. There is also no legal or regulatory requirement on offshore companies to have whistleblowing policies, to investigate concerns, or to train managers on how to respond to whistleblowing.

People should feel safe at work. The offshore energy industry involves dangerous work in incredibly challenging conditions and ensuring there is adequate grievance and whistleblowing procedures is essential for workers' confidence in their industry.

The UK Government should amend legislation to expand the scope of whistleblowing rights to cover all offshore workers, to require companies to have whistleblowing procedures and to create powers for a regulator to monitor whistleblowing in the energy sector. Employers in the energy industry must commit to change the culture offshore through adequate reporting and monitoring of grievances and whistleblowing.

66 If you raise a complaint you'll just get NRB'd (Not Required Back). Blacklisting still happens. I used to be a spokesperson for the group and got stood down, put on standby. [On one job] two scaffolders were representatives for the workers and they got taken off the rig. ??

– Francis, Plater

- The EU Whistleblowing Directive has improved protection to whistleblowers across the European Union, including protection to self-employed workers, job applicants and trade unions who "facilitate" whistleblower reports.
- France implemented the above directive and provided enhanced protection to whistleblowers including the right to financial assistance in certain circumstances and harsher punishments for whistleblower victimisation.
- → In Belgium the Social Legislation Inspectorate is a regulator able to inspect and monitor employers' compliance with labour laws and collective agreements, as well as to provide information to employers, workers, and trade unions, and impose fines.

OUR III. ENERGY

any of the workers involved in creating these demands are from or currently live in Aberdeen, a place that is described as 'the oil and gas capital of Europe'. Despite this, many feel that their communities haven't seen the benefits of the huge amount of money flowing in and out of the city.

For those in North East Scotland and elsewhere in the UK, there is a real fear that their communities will be left behind. With private profits from energy through the roof and people across the UK struggling to pay to heat their homes, there is a shared sense that a fundamentally different energy industry is necessary to protect people and the planet, rather than selling it off to the highest bidder.

This final section captures workers' demands for how to build a better energy industry that works for everyone, rather than a small minority of bosses and shareholders. The demands present a vision for an energy industry that is owned by, answerable to, and beneficial for the people working in and relying on it across the UK.



y privatising its oil resources, Britain has missed out on an estimated £400 billion in public revenues from North Sea oil compared to Norway. Offshore wind is one of Britain's greatest natural resources and unlike oil and gas, it will never run out. And yet, our wind - a common resource – is being privatised. Across the whole UK, just one single offshore wind turbine in Fife is publicly owned.

We've witnessed the consequences of a privatised energy system with soaring private profit and rising energy bills. This privatisation has watered down job quality and hindered the development of a well-trained workforce that is large enough to roll out renewable power at the scale needed now.

Across the UK there is huge potential for publicly owned renewable energy companies at a national and regional level. They can prioritise renewable energy and domestic supply chains to create new jobs all while ensuring money is reinvested back into local communities.

The UK and Scottish Governments should set up public energy companies to invest into and develop renewable energy generation, including offshore wind and tidal stream, as well as taking ownership stakes in crucial port infrastructure. Local authorities should be proactive in setting up regional public energy companies building new renewable generation projects.

perceive these [natural resources] as ours. The state is there to facilitate the public good, capitalism can make profits within that but it's about the common wealth and the common good - it's our wind and our good.

– Alistair, Rigger

- The UK is an exception in Northern and Western Europe: France, Belgium, Germany, Denmark, Norway and Sweden all have public energy companies that are investing in and building offshore wind and other renewables. Some of these companies are municipal companies governed at a city level, others are country-level giants.
- → The Welsh Government has recently committed to establish a public energy company, developing new onshore wind projects while utilising domestic supply chains and reinvesting returns into energy efficiency programmes.



REORGANISE THE TAX SYSTEM FOR PUBLIC GOOD

94%

of workers surveyed support this demand

he UK's lax tax regime for oil and gas means that companies extracting on the UK Continental Shelf walk off with the highest proportion of revenue of any country in the world. In 2019, the UK Government took less than a tenth of what the Norwegian government took in taxes per barrel of oil.

Our energy system is incredibly profitable for the companies currently operating in oil and gas and renewables. The tax regime means many oil and gas companies receive money back from the government and profits for renewable companies have been protected at the expense of people across the UK.

Despite the huge profits, workers in the industry haven't seen equivalent improvements to their pay or working conditions. They see the struggle of people in their communities to afford energy and come home to higher energy bills themselves. It's clear that the current tax system isn't working in the interests of people.

Energy companies have profited from the crisis presented by recent rising gas prices following the Russian invasion of Ukraine. Unforeseen circumstances have led to record-breaking profits for major oil and gas companies while millions have been pushed into fuel poverty. Natural resources should not be exploited for private gain and a new, fair tax regime is needed.

The UK Government should establish a Wealth Fund for new offshore wind projects, amend tax codes covering North Sea extraction to raise the level to at least in line with Norway and amend the legislation to ensure decommissioning costs are covered by oil and gas companies alone.

Windfall taxes...we have to tell companies they either put money into infrastructure, communities and the workforce, or otherwise it gets taken by the government in tax. Take your pick, the tax [then] goes into the welfare fund. ??

- Cameron, Data Engineer

- ➡ In 2021, Norway decided to overhaul its petroleum tax system by abolishing certain incentives, and phasing out the reimbursement system for exploration costs introduced during the Covid-19 pandemic.
- → Several European governments have recently announced their intentions to exit the Energy Charter Treaty, which enables companies to take countries to court over tax changes, including **France**, **Spain and the Netherlands**.





DEMAND 10 NO COMMUNITY LEFT BEHIND

of workers surveyed support this demand

ecades on from the closures of coal mines, former coal mining communities are still feeling the impacts of an an unjust transition, which continues to affect health and wellbeing, access to services and job opportunities. Aberdeen and Aberdeenshire are at risk of a similar unjust transition, as the region is particularly exposed to the boom and bust cycles of the oil and gas industry.

This increased exposure also exists in parts of North East England, Yorkshire and the Humber, East Anglia and Wales. There is a lack of sufficient planning to ensure these areas are supported through a transition, especially when many feel they are already struggling economically despite the industry's presence.

Offshore workers want to see investment to provide decent lives and livelihoods in their communities for the long term. Growth in the renewables industry presents an opportunity to use the benefits of our natural resources towards improving people's lives, quality of work and local infrastructure.

ocal authorities should create regional econom versification programmes, promoting communit realth building strategies* to substitute the loc onomic contribution of oil and gas as well lding greater local democracy and social benefit ie UK and Scottish Government should provid ding to support these programmes through the

Community wealth building is a peoplecentred approach to local economic development, which redirects wealth back into the local economy, and places control and benefits into the hands of local people.

66 There's no one looking after Aberdeen, not even the council. Money coming in isn't staying here. There are some groups who are trying to look after the city, trying to change the city and are independent of the council. The oil and gas [industry] have no interest whatsoever, so we need the people to make the changes for themselves. 99

- Nate, Systems Design Engineer

- In North Rhine-Westphalia in Germany, the federal technology-intensive industries into a region previously
- In **Limburg, Netherlands**, EU structural investment funds were allocated for a period of 25 years to help transition away from coal.
- The US State of Colorado has established an Office supporting small businesses and is governed by a board with representation of workers and "disproportionately impacted communities".programmes.







Offshore workers have come together to set out 10 demands for a just energy transition - they are comprehensive in scope, transformative in their scale and deliverable now. They set out a vision which can take us from an extractive fossil fuel economy to a renewable powered energy system which prioritises people and the planet.



The workers who created these demands have a vision for the future that works for them, their communities and the planet. They are ready and eager to be part of building a new renewable energy system. In order to realise an energy transition like this one, people are going to need to organise and fight.



We need a rapid shift away from fossil fuels that prioritises people and the planet. Climate activists are increasingly finding common ground with the labour movement. Through growing climate activist solidarity on trade union picket lines to the regular presence of trade union blocs at climate mobilisations, there is a groundswell of support building.



If you are already campaigning for a just transition or on the issues arising in these demands, then you can draw on the expertise of workers demonstrated throughout this manual and the other publications. We want you to use this work, whether the full report and its case studies, the costed political briefings or the methodology and lessons learned briefing to help you win.



For the growing number of people interested in changing our energy system, the demands here can be used to identify a campaign. Focus on what matters to you and your community - be it supply chain investment, proper collective bargaining across industries or public energy.



These demands provide a foundation for people to get involved in campaigning for the first time, as well as providing demands that climate and labour activists can organise around together. We can fight for offshore workers' visions for the future, we can embrace their ideas in our own visions. Together, we can push our local authorities and national governments to act now and build an energy system that works for all of us.



MARCH 2023



Platform is an environmental and social justice collective based in London and campaigns for a well-managed, worker-led phase-out of oil and gas production in the North Sea and increasing worker and community power over policy decisions related to our energy systems.



Friends of the Earth Scotland campaigns for a world where everyone can enjoy a healthy environment and a fair share of the Earth's resources. Climate change is the greatest threat to this aim, that's why we're calling for a just transition to a 100% renewable, nuclear-free, zero-fossil-fuel Scotland.

This manual outlines 10 demands by offshore oil and gas workers for a just energy transition. For more detail on the demands, including potential costs and a complete series of recommendations for decision-makers, read the full **Our Power report.**