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Offshore workers' demands take on government inaction and industry profiteering

- Coalition of offshore oil and gas workers, climate groups and trade unions back a new plan that would deliver a just transition away from fossil fuels to protect jobs, communities and climate.
- Over 1000 surveyed oil and gas workers support transformative demands to remove barriers to transitioning into renewables; to ensure safety, job security and fair pay across the energy industry; and a longer-term vision for sharing the benefits of our energy system fairly
- Costed demands include a permanent Energy Excess Profits tax, a sovereign wealth fund, public ownership, rig decommissioning costs to be paid for by polluting companies, and a minimum wage for migrant workers.

(Monday 06 March, London) 'Our Power: offshore workers' demands for a just energy transition' is an industry first, putting workers front and centre in a plan for decarbonisation and public ownership, campaigners say. The plan comes amidst a winter of unprecedented strikes and struggles for fair conditions at work, affordable energy and stronger public services.

'Our Power' gathers together demands, costed proposals and case studies that show how offshore oil and gas workers can lead a just energy transition, and why they must. The demands follow two years of workshops and research with people who work in the offshore oil and gas industry, coordinated by **Platform** and **Friends of the Earth Scotland**.

Surveyed workers demand fair pay and protections across the sector, arguing that we cannot model offshore wind in the broken image of the oil industry. This research shows:

- Salary thresholds set by UK Government immigration rules have been waived for the offshore wind sector for the past 5 years. On SSE's Beatrice wind farm off the Scottish coast, for example, crew were paid less than £5 per hour while working 12 hour days, 7 days a week.
- Whistleblowing protections do not apply to self-employed workers, who make up a substantial proportion of an increasingly casualised workforce, leaving many workers vulnerable to blacklisting and victimisation for speaking out.
- Training standards body GWO (wind) has so far failed to come to an agreement with OPITO (oil & gas) and other bodies on standardising training across the offshore sector, meaning duplication and extra costs to workers.

Mark*, a rigging supervisor who has worked offshore for twenty years, described declining pay and the need for a government-backed jobs guarantee:

"When I was working on the River Tyne, I spoke to a guy who had worked in the oil and gas industry for 40 years. He asked me where I got my survival suit, because he wanted one for the winter. Not to go out anywhere or for work, but to sit inside at home. He

couldn't afford his gas and electric over the winter. To have someone who has worked their whole lives in the industry asking me a question like that, I felt like crying."

A worker-led just transition would reinvest money in communities through a sovereign wealth fund and share the benefits of our energy system fairly. The UK is losing out on revenue that could support households and public services, while private, polluting companies profit. The current energy system results in:

- Globally, just five oil and gas firms made almost \$200billion profit in 2022.
- Low taxation means companies in the UK take home the highest proportion of revenue of any country - the UK Government took less than a tenth of what the Norwegian Government took in taxes per barrel of oil in 2019.
- Despite huge profits, 73% of oil and gas companies invest nothing in renewable energy production in the UK.

Julie*, who works as a Heli Admin in Aberdeen, described why she supports public ownership of energy:

"Public ownership would mean decent contracts, permanent work and that workers would be treated with respect. It's less of a danger to our working environment than having someone who is cowed, stressed or worried about their livelihoods. If you look at places like Norway, the attitude of the Norwegians is so different to the attitude in Britain. They own stakes, own rigs themselves. It gives them a greater responsibility. It would be ours, we'd be part of the big machine, we own it, we run it and it's for us."

The demands have been backed by over 1000 surveyed offshore oil and gas workers, alongside major unions and organisations working in the energy and climate sector, including the RMT, Unite Scotland, Unison Scotland and Uplift, among others. The demands are comprehensive in their scope, transformative in their scale, and deliverable now. As it stands, offshore workers across the RMT, Unite and GMB are looking to industrial action over existing pay and conditions, with more than 10% of the workforce being balloted by Unite alone.

Neither the UK Government nor the Opposition have put forward concrete plans for a genuine just transition for workers and the most impacted communities, campaigners say. The UK Government has recently begun the process of handing out licences to explore for more oil and gas. The windfall tax actively incentivises extraction and compromises climate commitments, allowing polluting companies to 'offset' as much as 91% of their tax liability against increased oil and gas extraction. Meanwhile, we are yet to see the progress we need from Labour's Just Transition Working Group. The party's flagship Great British Energy, while a promising start, falls short of the comprehensive changes needed across the whole energy system.

Platform and Friends of the Earth Scotland call on the UK and Scottish Governments to back the fully costed demands. Gabrielle Jeliakov, just transition campaigner at Platform, said:

"The future of the UK's energy system should be in the hands of workers and communities. Industry profiteering and government inaction has left us with soaring bills, declining working conditions and no plan for an energy transition. In the midst of the climate and cost of living crises, offshore oil and gas workers have developed a way forward. Politicians must deliver on these demands. We cannot trust obstructive industry bosses working in their own interests to develop solutions that protect workers, communities and the climate."

Friends of the Earth Scotland head of campaigns Mary Church, said:

"Our current energy system is destroying our climate, is unaffordable to millions and is failing the people who work in it. Climate science is crystal clear that we have to rapidly phase out fossil fuels if we want a liveable future. Failure from politicians to properly plan and support the transition to renewables is leaving workers totally adrift on the whims of oil and gas companies, and the planet to burn. The Scottish/UK Government must pick up these demands and run with them as part of their just transition plan for the energy sector."

The RMT's Regional Organiser Jake Molloy said:

"The workforce must be fully engaged, involved, and empowered in the process if we are to achieve a real just transition. Politicians must wake up to the fact that we need a new model. The current lack of a real transition plan from politicians and industry is failing the existing workforce, fuelling discontent and disillusionment which is evident with the growing number of disputes and industrial action."

"These demands are the start of an energy plan that will deliver affordable and secure energy, through secure employment across the energy sector. We need an industry that protects domiciled and migrant workers, who must be paid as UK workers and not exploited for greater profit. We need a manufacturing base to support new developments and decommissioning. The voice of the workforce must be heard!"

The full list of demands is:

OUR TRANSITION

1. Workers at the centre of transition planning
2. Clear, accessible pathways out of high carbon jobs
3. A training regime built to keep workers safe, instead of for profit
4. Invest in domestic manufacturing and assembly for renewables

OUR RIGHTS

5. Collective bargaining with strong rank and file unions across the whole offshore industry
6. Establish universal rights and a wage floor across the UKCS
7. Effective and trusted whistleblowing procedures

OUR ENERGY

8. Public energy for the public good
9. Reorganise the tax system for the public good
10. No community left behind

Notes to Editors

These demands were developed through in-person workshops, telephone interviews and a survey of 1,092 UK oil and gas workers.

Further quotes from our case studies and information for journalists are available [here](#). A summary of the embargoed demands is available [here](#), and the full report [here](#).

Spokespeople including workers, union organisers and campaigners are available for interview upon request.

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**Fear of blacklisting causes many workers not to speak out. Names of contributors have been changed to protect their identities.*