

British Gas boss 'lied' about fire and rehire threat – MP tells Parliament



Chris O'Shea told Stephen Doughty MP company had not issued redundancy notices when they had – as provoked strikes leave 200,000 planned annual service visits axed

The boss of British Gas 'lied' about a threat to fire and rehire thousands of British Gas engineers and other workers, an MP has told Parliament



The revelation comes as British Gas engineers and other staff begin a fresh four day strike on Friday 29, Saturday 30, Sunday 31 January and Monday 1 February over 'fire and rehire' imposed pay cuts 15% below agreed rates and other adverse changes.

Speaking to Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy Kwasi Kwarteng, **Labour MP Stephen Doughty** said he met with Centrica CEO Chris O'Shea in September, who told him the company has not issued s188 notices to staff.

In fact, Centrica issued s188 notices, which are a required advance notice of dismissal, to its entire UK workforce in July, before negotiations had even started.

The eight days of strikes so far this month, provoked by a profitable British Gas, have led to a repair backlog of more than 150,000 homes, with 200,000 routine annual boiler service visits cancelled so far this month.

Both figures are growing as further strike days planned take place.

GMB has accepted an invitation to appear at the BEIS Select Committee as MP's call British Gas boss Chris O'Shea to give evidence over his fire and rehire plan.

Justin Bowden, GMB National Secretary, said:

"Either Chris O'Shea was in denial about the dysfunctional way he's running the business, or he deliberately lied to a Member of Parliament representing their constituents.

"He is also in denial about how the strikes affect customers and the field engineers' rejection of the contract.

"The strikes provoked by British Gas leave more than 150,000 homes in a backlog for services and 200,000 planned annual service visits were axed in January.

"Field engineers, as a separate bargaining group, have decisively rejected the contract with eight strike days against it.

“ Either Chris O'Shea was in denial about the dysfunctional way he's running the business, or he deliberately lied to a Member of Parliament representing their constituents.

Justin Bowden, GMB National Secretary



“The only votes that count in this group are those of the field engineers themselves. The misleading 83% figure mainly covers other bargaining groups so it has no relevance to this dispute.

“A lethal mix of deceit, a failure to grasp reality and wishful thinking that engineers will acquiesce on pay 15% below agreed rates and other changes, has led to a complete breakdown in industrial relations between British Gas and the field engineers bargaining group.

“Sadly there is no respite in store for customers or staff because British Gas fails to accept that the only way to end the dispute with the engineers bargaining group is to take ‘fire and rehire’ off the table.”

Press office

079859 1525698

press.office@gmb.org.uk

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info@gmb.org.uk

