

Last update: 21 Nov 2024

Bulletins

GMB National Gas Distribution Forum (NGDF) Working Hours And Fatigue Survey 2025

Posted on: 21 November 2024

NATIONAL GAS DISTRIBUTION FORUM (NGDF)

WORKING HOURS & FATIGUE SURVEY 2024

Dear members

The National Gas Distribution Forum (NGDF) is made up of senior GMB representatives from Cadent Gas, NGN, SGN and WWU. The NGDF meets quarterly to discuss and campaign on issues that affect GMB across the gas distribution and energy sector.

GMB reps from the four Gas Distribution Networks (GDN's) meet with HSE every six months; staffing levels, rotas, and fatigue have been at the top of agenda. Likewise, when GMB meets with OFGEM, having enough people to do the job (workforce resilience) has been central to these discussions.

As part of next regulatory period (RIIO3) the GDN's are required to produce a workforce resilience strategy and engage with stakeholders, which includes GMB Union.

GMB conducted a survey of working hours and fatigue with GMB members across the four gas networks. The key findings are as follows:

Contractual Working Hours



- 67% said they work between 35 to 39 hours
- 32% said they work between 40 to 44 hours

Hours over and above your contractual hours?

- 65% reported working between 1 to 10 extra hours per week
- 28% said they worked between 11 to 20 extra hours per week
- 62% said the extra hours were done on standby
- 31% said they were done as overtime

Rotas

- 68% said there aren't enough people to cover the work the rota or department
- 66% people said they're being asked to travel further to cover work
- 59% said their GDN has problem recruiting and retaining staff

Workload

- 56% said their workload was manageable
- 68% said their workload had increased in the last 12 months

Shift Length

- 83% said they regularly work more than 12 hours
- 60% reported they did shifts of more than 12 hours, 1 to 5 times per month
- 18% work shifts of more than 12 hours, 6 to 10 times per month.

Rest



- 64% said they get 11 hours rest between shifts
- 69% said they get compensatory rest

Fatigue

- 61% said the number of hours they work per week made them feel fatigued

Work life balance

- 71% said they feel they do not have a good work life balance.

When asked what would improve your work life balance the top five answers in priority order are:

1. Properly staffed rotas
2. More rest between shifts
3. Less hours
4. Compensatory rest
5. Less Standby

WHAT'S NEXT

GMB will share the results with the gas distribution networks, HSE, and OFGEM.

The gas distribution networks need to employ more people to tackle fatigue. In a very competitive energy sector, the GDN's should pay better wages and offer improved terms and conditions to recruit and retain staff.

In Solidarity

GARY CARTER CARL MEADER

NATIONAL OFFICER GMB NGDF CHAIR



Posted on: 19 October 2023

GMB STATEMENT ON GAS FOLLOWING PUBLICATION OF THE NATIONAL INFRASTRUCTURE COMMISSION REPORT

Dear Colleague,

I am writing to you following yesterday's publication of the National Infrastructure Commission's report which recommends an end to gas central heating and the decommissioning of the gas grid. It makes these recommendations on the grounds that it believes that installing heat pumps is the best way of achieving net zero and that we should abandon attempts to trial hydrogen heating on the grounds of cost.

We are writing to you to tell you that your Union, GMB, fundamentally disagrees with these findings and believes that it far too early to write off an industry that has sustained the UK and Ireland for well over a century. At the exact moment when the USA and EU are pouring billions into hydrogen, this report is recommending that we throw in the towel.

GMB has a proud history of representing gas workers and still firmly believe that there is a future for the network and the jobs that it sustains. We know that gas jobs are good jobs, high skilled, unionised, well paid, and ones that sustain communities across our nations. The development of hydrogen gives the potential for this industry to be turned into one that will play a huge part of us getting to net zero, without having to rely on an electricity grid that will not be able to be updated quickly enough to accommodate both electric cars and electric heating.

We need gas for heating, for power, for everything from the chlorine in our water to the fryers that cook our fish and chips. As long as there is potential for gas to be a green fuel, we will unashamedly push for it. Whilst some argue on cost grounds, people forgot that they said the same about wind power a decade ago, only to see costs tumble once the investments paid off.

Your union is already in contact with both the Government and opposition as we fight for your industry. We are pleased to see the Government's immediate response to give assurances that 'hydrogen can still play an important role' in home heating, the very thing your union is campaigning for.

We will contact you further as to our campaign and the steps you can take to save your jobs and your industry, but in the meantime, rest assured that as long as gas can be part of the solution to both energy independence and a greener future, that is exactly what we will be fighting for.



GMB ENERGY NEWSLETTER – 20th SEPTEMBER 2021



Posted on: 20 September 2021

GMB Energy newsletter- 20th September 2021

GMB are working hard to fight for members' jobs and the future of your industry. As you will have seen over the weekend, the issue of energy prices and supply is rapidly becoming a national emergency with genuine fears as to how the country are going to cope over the coming winter.

Energy Crisis

GMB are holding meetings with employers across the industry to ensure that our members are kept abreast of any changes and the steps being taken to protect the flow of power during this crucial time. We also need to know what actions are being taken and how they will impact on our members to ensure that we get the best deal for you. The energy crisis exposes the fragility of our energy supplies and underlines the need to ensure that there is a long-term plan in place, which will keep the lights on over the coming months.

The issues effecting the energy market are those we have long warned of with a fragmented system which is no longer fit for purpose. The failure of numerous energy companies has created massive problems for consumers and the fear is that this boom-and-bust approach will create issues for members' jobs if not resolved quickly. GMB have always been clear that energy is too important to be left to a market system that discourages long term strategies in favour of quick profits and the failures of these energy companies underlines this view. Members need certainty that the energy supply will continue uninterrupted, both to protect their jobs and to ensure that their domestic needs will be met, and we are working with both employers and politicians from all parties to ensure that your voice is heard throughout this debate.

Just Transition

GMB are committed to protecting the long-term future of our energy industries. We are working hard to secure investment in green hydrogen to protect the long-term future of the gas industry. Green hydrogen is a safe, clean fuel that can utilise the current gas network and protect our members' jobs in



both gas transmission and heating. It is vital that we get the funding to ensure that this fuel is developed with a long-term goal of converting current boilers to the new fuel.

So far, the Government has introduced a number of initiatives to support the development of hydrogen heating. However, we need greater investment and a longer-term strategy if this is going to be done in a manner that supports the good quality jobs that our members and their communities rely on. As a result, GMB are continuing to lobby both parties and employers to ensure that we have a plan which will guaranty members skills and jobs moving forwards.

We also need significant investment in battery plants, to protect against the uncertainties in the supply renewable energy. As we have seen over the last few years, our renewable energy industries have been hampered by a lack of investment, with companies preferring to ship wind turbines from across the world as opposed to building them in the UK and letting plants like Bi-Fab go to the wall when they could be the cornerstone of our renewable industry.

GMB have always been clear on this, that if we are to keep emissions low, we need to ensure we focus on domestic manufacturing rather than simply shipping in products made in countries with low environmental standards before being transported halfway across the globe.

Labour Party and TUC Conference

GMB worked hard to get support from the union movement for the expansion of our nuclear industry. The fact that the current energy crisis has been exacerbated by the fire in Ashford, which has reduced our ability to import energy from the continent, exposed the fragility of our energy supplies, and underlined the need for investment in new nuclear power stations to support both domestic and commercial energy. GMB believes that nuclear is a key part of the energy mix and provides a clean fuel that will be instrumental in helping us achieve net zero carbon emissions.

We are also working hard to get support for our energy policy from the Labour Party Conference. To get the long-term investment necessary to support the development and implementation of these initiatives, cross party support is key as it provides the necessary assurances to large investors to fund the changes. As such, we are working to ensure that Labour take a position that supports our members, and which will lead to an energy policy that both provides a pathway to net zero whilst supporting jobs and communities. This will mean taking a stand against the wilder calls from the green lobby which threaten members' jobs and skills, and which seem to have little regard for the necessity of the broad base support for changes needed in a democracy.

Whilst not arguing as to the need to reach net zero, we strongly believe that this can only happen if working people are at the heart of the plans, with the support of communities being seen as vital if we are to take the steps necessary to ensure the future of our planet. We are clear that this will need investment in all parts of our energy supply, protecting jobs in our key industries whilst moving towards net zero in a managed and sustainable way.



Next Steps

GMB will keep you updated of developments as they occur. If you require extra information or support on any issue, please contact your local GMB shop steward.

Yours sincerely

ANDY PRENDERGAST

NATIONAL SECRETARY FOR COMMERCIAL SERVICES

Noticeboard Bulletin – 30-07-2021



Posted on: 30 July 2021

Dear Member,

Last week GMB wrote to you about the future of gas and defending those high-quality jobs in the sector. We wrote to you to say that we will not be quiet on defending the future of the industry and asked you to tell us your views on what we should be telling politicians from all the political parties. We got the message back from you loud and clear and the message is already being passed on.

Also this week we've seen further reports in the press that the Government plans to push back its ban on new gas boilers to 2040. We hope this is politicians beginning to wake up to the harsh realities that they need to take the public with them if we are going to reach the UK's political ambitions of net-zero by 2050.

Securing a long-term future for the gas industry and its workforce with a political approach that prioritises low-carbon solutions like hydrogen-ready boilers for home heating is the best way of securing an affordable and familiar choice for households, keeping the heating on and meeting our climate ambitions.

We have also heard the Government is considering a levy to pay for hydrogen technology development. We absolutely need urgent investment in hydrogen but this should be funded through general taxation, not by hitting household bills.

You can read our full press release on the reports [here](#)



But all this is currently speculation. Next week we won't get all the answers to our questions but we should start to get a better idea on what the Government's plans really are for the sector when they finally release their hydrogen strategy, unless we see more delays.

Ahead of next week GMB have also written to Government Ministers on the need for urgent clarity around how future nuclear will be funded. Government needs to end the uncertainty over the vital new Sizewell C nuclear project that would urgently secure good well-paid jobs and reliable low carbon energy including the potential for hydrogen gas production.

We need new nuclear to support the efforts to build hydrogen capacity in the UK. **You can read the letter we sent to the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy here.**

Government needs to get on with releasing its hydrogen strategy and wider plans so we can end the speculation and they can finally start to show us their ambition.

GMB is leading the push on the Government to make sure their level of ambition includes investment to secure the future of the gas industry. This also means with employers where our reps and officers are making sure employers are investing in the gas jobs and skills of the future.

Gary Carter
GMB National Officer

Noticeboard Bulletin – 23-07-2021



Posted on: 23 July 2021

Dear Member,

The future of the gas industry and defending high quality jobs is a top priority for GMB. We know that over time there will be changes to meet government targets, but this must be done with workers, not to them, and we must come through the transition with more high-quality jobs, not fewer.

One area that has potential is the conversion of the current gas network to move towards hydrogen mixed gas. Not only will this assist in the move towards net zero carbon emissions, but it will guarantee the survival of the industry for years to come. Hydrogen based fuels can utilise the current network and would preserve jobs throughout the sector. So far, the Government has dragged its feet and has not put in the investment needed to kick start the hydrogen industry in this country.



We have been expecting the government's long-term plans for both building and home heating and hydrogen over the last weeks to meet their own climate ambitions of net zero by 2050. But both are now delayed with the hydrogen strategy delayed until the summer holidays and the home heating strategy delayed until the Autumn.

Read GMB's reaction to the delays:

[Find out more](#)

GMB has long been calling for investment in hydrogen. The alternative pushed by some groups is to move towards electronic heat pump technology which we believe is not only completely unsuitable for around 75% of current properties and unaffordable for consumers, but also risks rendering the skills our members have built up over the years redundant. GMB have been involved in cross-party lobbying to get the public investment to protect jobs and the future of the sector and minimise disruptions and additional bills for households.

Politicians need to get real if they want to take the voters with them on their route to net zero. The public aren't going to reward them at the ballot box for putting up their heating bills or forcing them to significantly refit their homes by ripping out central heating systems. This goes for the Government as well as opposition parties including Labour.

It's why it was especially disappointing that this week Labour's energy spokesman Alan Whitehead MP announced the position that 'I and the Party believe the government is on course for making a big mistake in its pursuit of hydrogen development' in an article hidden behind an [internet paywall](#). Saying essentially that the only form of hydrogen that should be pursued is that produced through wind power effectively declaring an end of gas as there is no realistic alternative to meeting future home heating demand. This is not acceptable.

So, we write to tell you that we won't be quiet on these matters. But we want to hear what you think before we respond. Click below to email us before Wednesday 28th July and we'll pass on your message.

Let us know your view

[Email us](#)

All the political parties, including the Labour Party, need ambitious plans for hydrogen that not only ensure the country meets its climate change obligations, but also protect and enhance jobs in the gas industry.

That starts with fully consulting the workers and their representatives in the industries affected. That means you.

Andy Pendergast
GMB National Secretary



PS You can find more about GMB's written submission to the select committee inquiry that the Secretary of State gave evidence to [here](#)

And the Special Report on Energy passed at our Congress [here](#)

