

GMB announces four new British Gas strike dates



With more than 170,000 homes in repair backlog and 200,000 service visits axed the company claim it is catching up after 24 hours is bogus

Engineers and other staff in the field staff bargaining group in British Gas will follow twelve days of strike with a further four days on February 5, 6, 7 and 8 in the next stage of the fire and rehire dispute.

A meeting of the GMB Central Executive Committee (CEC) tomorrow, which follows the twelfth day in the current series of strikes, will receive a report on the dispute.

In deciding on the next steps the CEC will assess the following:



- A profitable British Gas persists with the claim of a crisis to threaten and bully staff with fire and rehire
- Wishful thinking in the extreme persists that union members will ever acquiesce in pay 15% below agreed rates and other adverse changes.
- British Gas appears to have little concern for its customers. After 12 days of strikes, more than 170,000 homes are in a backlog for repairs and 200,000 planned annual service visits were axed. The company is misleading the media that it is catching up after 24 hours.
- GMB members in the field engineers bargaining group are solid after twelve days strike against the new contract. The only votes that count in this group are those of the field engineers themselves. The 83% figure mainly covers other bargaining groups so it has no relevance to this dispute.
- Last week talks at ACAS were undermined by Mr O'Shea refusing a 'drop hands' approach to taking 'fire and rehire off the table.

Justin Bowden, GMB National Secretary, said:

"These four days of strike will add to more than 170,000 homes in repair backlog and 200,000 service visits axed.

"British Gas's claim that it is catching up after 24 hours is bogus.

"Staff in the field engineers bargaining group will not accept the new contract. 12 days of solid strike action shows this. British Gas is kidding itself using an 83% that is mostly staff in other bargaining groups. The only votes that count are the field staff so the 83% figure is not relevant.

"GMB started with town gas then moved to natural gas and on to digital technology. Change won't stop there.

"Members are not afraid to embrace a new future with investment in the latest in diagnostic technologies to pave the way for the 'engineers of the future' programme. But members will not be bullied in the new contract.

"For the CEC in deciding the next steps it is looking likely that a protracted dispute looms."



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