

Politicians must ask why British Gas is provoking strike action



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GMB, the union for British Gas workers, has called on Senedd politicians to probe Centrica boss Chris O'Shea over his decision to provoke an engineers' strike with 'fire and rehire' pay cuts.

It comes as it was announced the Centrica and British Gas Chief Executive would be called before the Welsh Environment, Energy and Rural Affairs Committee.



GMB members employed as service and repair gas engineers, installers and electricians, will stage a total of **five days strike action** from Thursday (7 January) until Monday (11 January).

Centrica PLC recorded a group-wide operating profit of £901 million in 2019, the company's **accounts reveal**.

And Centrica declared an adjusted **operating profit** of £229 million for its domestic heating business in the UK for the six months to 30 June 2020 – up 27 per cent on the same period in the previous year.

The union called on the Centrica Board to rein in **Chief Executive O'Shea**, who is due to take home an annual package worth almost £800,000 this year – twenty times the basic earnings of an experienced British Gas engineer.



Justin Bowden, GMB National Secretary said:

“Politicians at the Senedd are right to be hauling Chris O'Shea in front of them. They need to ask him why a company that made operating profits of almost a billion pounds is provoking an engineers' strike over fire and rehire pay cuts in the depths of winter.

“The Centrica Board need to rein him in and put in place a proper strategy to deal with the real issues to be number one supplier for customers in the changed regulatory environment, and which takes staff with them – that is real leadership.

“British Gas is a business of underlying profitability, with a valuable brand. What it has failed to do under Chris O'Shea is develop a strategy to adapt to a new regulatory environment. Instead Mr O'Shea is lashing out with punishing pay cuts to engineers on pain of fire and rehire threats that have been widely condemned – including by the Welsh First Minister.

“Chris O'Shea stands to cash in and grow his personal fortune from picking a fight with a dedicated and loyal workforce. The Centrica Board needs to step in and do what's right for the company rather than Mr O'Shea's bank balance.”

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