

TRAINING & TICKETS

The Hidden Costs For Offshore
Oil & Gas Workers



Friends of
the Earth
Scotland

GREENPEACE

These findings are from a survey of 610 offshore oil and gas workers conducted by Platform, Friends of the Earth Scotland and Greenpeace UK.

The survey results show a workforce in insecure employment, where workers are bearing the brunt of training and certification costs previously borne by employers. This follow up survey on training and certificate costs comes after the release of the report [OFFSHORE: Oil and gas workers' views on industry conditions and the energy transition](#) and hundreds of conversations with oil and gas workers about their working conditions and visions for the future.

Of the 610 respondents, 53.8% live in Scotland, 40.4% in England, 3.1% in the rest of the UK and the remaining 2.7% outside of the UK. The survey found that these workers are paying an average of over £1,800 a year in training costs.

Other key survey results show:

- 97% are concerned about the UK's offshore energy industry training costs
- 74.5% are employed ad-hoc as contractors
- 87.7% say they spend a LOT of their own money on training costs, tickets and workplace expenses to work offshore
- 69% spent over £2000 of their own money on training including safety and trade-specific costs in the last two years, which is up 15% from before 2015
- 65% said their employer contributed 0% to their training costs including safety and first aid training in the past two years, which is up from 45% before 2015
- 62% believed certificates they were asked to obtain duplicate skills they acquired at NVQ, City and Guilds or equivalent
- 62% had been asked to obtain an overlapping qualification when changing employers despite their current qualifications being in-date
- 44% had been asked by a single employer to repeat training for each new contract, despite having in-date certificates

94% of respondents said they would support an offshore passport, which licences accredited workers to work offshore in any sector through a cross-industry minimum training requirement.

The current environment, where workers are bearing the brunt of training costs and are made to repeat training has developed for a variety of reasons.

- **Negligence by government and regulatory bodies.** A lack of government regulation or proper oversight of training requirements from any one body means that increasing burdens and costs on workers have been allowed to proliferate unchecked.
- **Increased casualisation of the offshore oil & gas workforce.** Employer-funded training is not available to the majority of workers (65%) who pay completely out of pocket with no guarantee of work. These workers are also shut out of the Engineering Construction Industry Training Board's pilot Connected Competence programme to standardise competence and training requirements for the engineering construction workforce.
- **Lack of support for workers and communities.** The North Sea Transition Deal, announced in March 2021 by the UK Government, failed to provide any real support for workers or communities to transition, either in terms of investment or policy.
- **Profiteering training companies.** Training standards bodies like GWO and OPITO are obstructive to schemes that would standardise certification which would reduce the amount of training required, and therefore endeavours like the Energy Skills Alliance, run by OPITO, are not an appropriate vehicle for these changes which need to come from the top of government in Scotland and Westminster.

The solution, an offshore training passport, would standardise training accreditation across the offshore oil and gas and offshore renewables industries, reducing costs significantly for

self-funded workers by reducing the need for duplication of certificates and allowing workers to shift more easily between oil and gas and renewables.

It is critical for barriers and costs associated with the energy transition to be dealt with urgently. Together, Friends of the Earth Scotland, Platform, Greenpeace, RMT and Unite Scotland are calling for:

- The implementation of an Offshore Training Passport which will allow workers to move freely between offshore and onshore energy sectors (ie renewables, oil and gas, and decommissioning) with a standardisation of certification across roles and sectors, and clarity that a certificate in date does not need to be repeated. This should be accessible to all workers, including ad hoc contractors.
- The UK Government, BEIS in particular, and the Scottish government, the Cabinet Secretary for Net Zero, Energy and Transport, the Minister for Just Transition, Employment and Fair Work, in particular, must lead this process and work directly with the Health and Safety Executive (HSE) to set standards for working conditions.
- A training fund for the offshore passport should be established as part of the North Sea Transition Deal to directly support workers rather than companies, which can be accessed by individual, self-employed and contract workers rather than only through employers.
- The Scottish Government to explore how the National Transition Training Fund and Green Jobs Workforce Academy can help address these issues
- Industry backing of an Offshore Training Passport to ensure full compliance across the sector.