

A charter  
for the  
energy  
sector



prospect  
**Dignity  
at  
work.**

# Introduction

The drive to decarbonise our economy, the introduction of new technology and new business models and an aging workforce, present major challenges for the energy sector.

But evidence suggests that the sector is poorly equipped to face those challenges. Decades of poor management practices have resulted in:

- a steady deterioration of working conditions
- stagnating pay
- a lack of workforce diversity, and
- rising problems with stress, fatigue and long working hours.

As a union which has represented engineers and specialists working in energy for more than 100 years, Prospect is deeply concerned at the current state of working life for many employees in the sector.

And it is often our members who face the greatest workload and managerial pressures.

We believe energy sector employers need to take urgent, concerted action to ensure work spaces are safe, healthy, diverse and offer all employees the opportunity to fulfil their potential.

That is why we are launching a Dignity at Work charter.

We want employers to establish a culture of respect and engagement; take action on fatigue, stress and working hours; increase equality, diversity and inclusion; commit to proper training and development and promote fair and transparent pay systems.



# A culture of respect and engagement

As a minimum, employers should immediately:

- establish and maintain a company-level health and safety committee, with subsidiary committees covering particular business units or geographical areas as necessary; the committees should meet regularly and have an appropriate number of union representatives
- consult health and safety representatives in good time before making changes which could affect employees' health and safety, including the introduction of new technology
- engage union representatives before, during and after periods of organisational change.

In the next year:

- involve health and safety representatives in the accident investigation process and provide them with training in the principles of human and organisational factors
- consider human and organisational factors – including fatigue – during risk assessments and provide suitable training for those who carry them out.

In the next two to five years:

- implement a just and learning culture, where the root causes of accidents are established and blame is avoided, unless the individual commits gross negligence, a wilful violation or a destructive act.





## Fatigue and working time

As a minimum, employers should work with health and safety representatives to:

- identify employees whose work places them at risk of fatigue and make organisational and administrative arrangements to reduce the risk
- provide workers with at least 11 hours rest at the end of the working day
- ensure safe staffing levels
- ensure employees have adequate and regular breaks during working hours
- ensure that attendance for call out duty is suitably distributed across employees
- take account of commuting times when scheduling work
- provide the workforce with suitable information about the causes and effects of fatigue.



## Stress

Employers should work with health and safety representatives to:

- take a primary preventative approach to stress using the Health and Safety Executive's Management Standards methodology; this involves identifying organisational-level factors which cause stress and consulting employees about the steps necessary to address them
- accurately record and publish statistics on the rate of absence due to work-related stress and mental health problems
- reduce the rate of absence due to work-related stress and mental health problems by more than the HSE's whole economy target of 5% by 2025.

# Equality, diversity and inclusion

As a minimum, employers should commit to:

- increasing the proportion of women in the workforce to at least 40%, and the proportion of black, Asian and minority ethnic workers to at least 10%, by 2030
- halve their gender pay gaps by 2025, and eliminate them by 2030
- review workplace policies on bullying and harassment and institute a zero tolerance approach to all forms of bullying and harassment
- review existing flexible working policies and role requirements to identify and remedy barriers to entry for those with caring responsibilities or other flexible working needs.





# Training and development

All employees should have access to adequate training and development opportunities so that they can reach their full potential. Employers should commit to:

- increasing the number of apprenticeships and graduate training opportunities and guaranteeing employment to those who complete these programmes
- ensuring that every employee has a career development plan, which includes access to training opportunities throughout their working career
- developing common accreditation and training standards across the energy sector and removing any barriers to workers being able to move between different companies
- embedding skills acquisition within pay and reward systems by developing competency-based, rather than performance-based, pay systems

# Pay

To promote fairness and transparency in pay, employers should:

- commit to sharing all relevant data on how their pay systems operate with trade unions, so that the fairness of pay outcomes can be properly assessed
- ensure all employees are aware of the 'rate for the job' for their particular role, and be given a reasonable timetable for progressing to that rate when they start the role
- carry out an equal pay audit, in conjunction with trade unions, at least once every three years and publish a plan for eliminating any gaps identified
- commit to ensuring, as a minimum, that pay awards at least meet the rising cost of living each year.

## Not already a member?

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PRO-19-0057/NOV19/DP-50

