Gender Pay Gap

Oil & Gas UK

Oil & Gas UK is the leading representative organisation for the UK offshore oil and gas industry. Its membership comprises around 400 oil and gas producers and contractor companies. Thank you for the opportunity to submit written evidence to the Committee’s Inquiry into gender pay.

Women and the oil and gas industry:

The last report into the demographics of the oil and gas industry workforce was published in December 2014: Fuelling the Next Generation Report 2014.

The figures are all UK-wide and show that women make up 23 percent of the oil and gas workforce and 13 percent of the technical workforce. Although this is significantly lower than the national average (47 percent), our figures are broadly in line with other STEM sectors (water – 28 percent, defence - 26 percent, construction - 24 percent and aerospace - 12 percent).

Gender Pay

Several Oil & Gas UK member companies have signed up to the UK Govt’s Think Act Report initiative

Oil & Gas UK also supports publishing details of the gender pay gap. Although many companies are already taking steps to tackle the issue, the introduction of the gender pay gap reporting regulations provides an opportunity for many more companies to be aware of the challenges of ensuring gender diversity in their workforce, which is ultimately undermining their own competitive edge. Understanding this gap can then help prompt companies to take constructive steps to close the gap by, for example, actively encouraging and supporting women to move into more senior and STEM related roles.

There are also a number of campaigns and networks within the industry that are working to close the gender gap. For example, in Aberdeen the Axis network aims to increase female retention in early, mid and late career paths and raises awareness of gender diversity impacting the energy industry. Nationally, there is also WISE, a campaign to tackle gender imbalance in science, technology and engineering.

Finally, Oil & Gas UK’s Chief Executive Deirdre Michie is a member of the Women’s Business Council. The Women’s Business Council was set up in 2012 to advise government on how women’s contribution to growth can be optimised. Its aim has been to focus on areas with the greatest potential economic benefit and on recommendations with a clear economic case for
action, including promoting best practice within companies to tackle the gender pay gap as well as helping to develop the recent reporting regulations.

**STEM**

The proportion of female engineers in the UK workforce stands at 7 percent. Oil & Gas UK believes that one way to improving this figure is to increase the number of young people, particularly girls studying STEM subjects. In our response to the UK Government’s Industrial Strategy, we call on Ministers to implement the recommendations of Professor John Perkins’ Review of Engineering Skills to increase the number of trained engineers and encourage the take up of STEM subjects. There are also existing industry initiatives to boost the number of such as Shell's Girls in Energy programme. This one year programme and delivered in partnership with North East College. It delivers weekly lessons, workshops and field visits to young women aged 14–16 in secondary education with a view to expanding their understanding of what a career in the energy industry could involve.

**Oil & Gas UK**