

Workforce Briefing: North Sea Transition Deal People & Skills Strategy

Summary and Update

Why

A skilled and resourced workforce is critical to a successful future energy sector. The purpose of the People & Skills Strategy is to provide a clear set of priorities and shared direction to the broad range of stakeholders who will be involved in helping the workforce to navigate through the changing landscape - from being part of the 'oil and gas' workforce to a broader energy one. We know this change will not happen overnight. It will be crucial to maintain an oil and gas workforce in the near-term, but both UK and Scottish Government net zero targets will demand and create additional roles in alternative energy sectors. That is why we are working towards a better understanding of how we can best support that transition.

Who

The focus of the People & Skills Strategy is on the UK offshore energy industry and its four main sectors – oil and gas, offshore wind, carbon capture and storage, and hydrogen. In talking about the transition, we cannot separate out the oil and gas sector from the other energy sectors. The point of this whole conversation is centred on the interconnections and how we can create ladders and bridges between these sectors for the workforce and their skillsets.

The Strategy has been developed to help support you, a member of the current workforce. It has been created for a range of stakeholders – employers, policymakers, trade bodies, training providers and academia to name a few, to understand what we must collectively do and how we can individually assist the longer-term workforce transition.

What

The People & Skills Strategy proposes a series of priorities to help achieve a transition that is fair, coordinated and properly managed to support the existing oil and gas workforce. It will put in place measures to ensure we retain current expertise and attract future talent by carrying out the required activity to get us there.

Alongside the Strategy, a series of action plans will be published. These will describe in more detail how the goals and priorities of the Strategy will be delivered. Attached to the plans will be timeframes, specific activities and the key partners involved to help you understand more clearly where we are going, and how and when, we will get there.

The first of these action plans is named **Aligning Offshore Energy Standards**. We are aware that, to enable people to move between sectors, there is a need to integrate the technical, and safety and survival standards, across the sector. The lack of a robust, integrated, industry-wide framework results in siloed working and creates barriers that inhibit the opportunity for the existing workforce to work between the different sectors of the offshore energy industry. Currently, the career pathways and transitional opportunities between the offshore energy sectors are unclear and fragmented. This results in workers regularly being obliged to repeat training when transitioning between sectors, incurring substantial financial costs, creating duplication and requiring a considerable time commitment from attendees. Therefore, our first action plan focuses on mapping existing oil and gas standards and creating a skills passport. For more information on what we aim to do, how, and when, please continue to read overleaf.

When

The People & Skills Strategy and first action plan – Aligning Offshore Energy Standards, will be published at Offshore Energies UK conference in May and shared widely on social media. The further action plans – Meeting Future Skills Demand, Developing Workforce Skills, Championing Diversity & Inclusion, and Improving Skills Data Intelligence – will follow in quick succession.

Aligning Offshore Energy Standards Action Plan

Aligning Offshore Energy Standards is the first action plan to be developed, associated with the People & Skills Strategy. Its four key priorities are to:

- 1. Create a coalition of standards bodies to map, align and mutually recognise offshore energy safety and technical training standards.**
- 2. Develop an integrated framework of offshore energy safety and technical training standards built on recognition, which is simple, flexible, visible and equitable, and avoids duplication of training wherever possible.**
- 3. Implement a digital solution (skills passport) that allows skilled workers to move easily across sectors, creating a more mobile and flexible workforce.**
- 4. Develop a plan to extend existing training standards to emerging sectors such as hydrogen and CCUS to achieve high levels of safety, operational and technical performance.**

Progress Report

OPITO and RenewableUK have worked together to cross recognise two units within the subject areas of Sea Survival and Basic Firefighting featured in the Basic Safety & Survival Training programmes of OPITO's BOSIET and GWO's Basic Safety Training (BST). It is estimated that this would reduce the duration of any required re-training by 1.5 days. We will work towards these units being formally recognised and we will then publish the results to provide visibility and transparency to the workforce and employers.

OPITO has also been working with The Engineering Construction Industry Training Board (ECITB), Cogent, RenewableUK and International Marine Contractors Association (IMCA) to map technical qualifications for key technical roles. Mapping is 95% complete for a first tranche of fifteen job roles. Initial roles selected were based on a number of factors, including workforce critical mass and perceived skill shortages; they include:

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| 1. Electrical Maintenance Technician | 9. Rigger |
| 2. Instrument Control Maintenance Technician | 10. Banksman Slinger |
| 3. Mechanical Maintenance Technician | 11. Welder |
| 4. Production Technician | 12. Plater |
| 5. Operations Technician/Plant Operative | 13. Site Manager/OIM |
| 6. Electrical Engineer | 14. Project Manager |
| 7. Mechanical Engineer | 15. Maintenance Supervisor/Team Leader |
| 8. Structural Engineer | |

The output of this work will list the vocational qualifications typically achieved in each sector by apprentices and skilled workers which will be cross recognised by each sector as well as clearly signposting any additional top up training. This will provide clear visibility for workers who wish to move sector. The group is now discussing which additional roles should be included in order to broaden the work completed to date. The results of the technical role mapping work and the safety and survival training mapping work will form the basis of the data which is included in a skills passport.

OPITO has hosted multiple workshops with a broad range of stakeholders (spanning recognised awarding bodies; trade associations; industry bodies; and operating companies) to capture the industry requirements for a Skills Passport. These requirements have been used to develop several design options.

OPITO has also completed a market scan of existing technologies (i.e., Vantage, Connected Competence, WINDA) to understand the functionality already used across the different industries as part of an options analysis, which has also considered costings relating to the development of a skills passport.

Lastly, OPITO has drafted a delivery roadmap for a Skills Passport which articulates the plan and associated activities for developing, deploying and embedding an industry skills passport as part of the wider NSTD People & Skills Strategy. Detailed technical requirements are now in development which will allow a decision to be made on the best solution for the workforce.

For more information:

www.opito.com | www.oeuk.org.uk/nstd | www.gov.uk/government/publications/north-sea-transition-deal
