

National news for members working for British Gas

Proposed Changes to Terms and Conditions Negotiations Update 08/07 #1

Dear Member

The first set of meetings took place this week between the trade unions and the business to discuss company proposals to attack member's terms and conditions of employment.

The business spent time at the meetings outlining why it needed to make sweeping changes. These reasons largely related to the financial state of the business. We have repeatedly made clear that we do recognise the financial challenges the business faces, but do not accept that it is our members; pay, terms and conditions to blame. Many of the financial challenges are related to poor decisions taken at an executive level and the state of the wholesale gas market which no employee in British Gas can influence.

The business went on to outline the full extent of the changes it was seeking to make to our members terms and conditions. It was a comprehensive list. It included;

- **Base Pay: The Business wants to align pay to a market position and believes that most staff are currently overpaid to the market. It proposes a base pay freeze for many staff for as long as 8/9 years while those below the market are levelled up.**
- **Holiday- A/L: To be reduced for many to a standard 25 days maximum**
- **Sick Pay: Proposal is to reduce entitlement for most staff**
- **Hours of Work: Move back to normal working hours being 6am-11pm Mon-Sun with no additional reward for evenings and weekend working.**
- **Redundancy terms: Remove existing contractual terms and reduce them.**
- **Pay Date: A proposal to again change the date to one being 4 weeks in arrears.**

We have not gone into detailed conversations on any of these matters and these will be taking place over the coming weeks. We understand that many members will be anxious about the extent of change being proposed. The agenda the business has set out has the potential to be very damaging to members and would, if imposed, see reductions in terms and conditions across the board. It would also clearly impact on many members financial earnings. **We will not accept this.**

At this point we are round that table and negotiating in good faith because we believe that is what our members want us to do. We hope to find a way forward but we will be challenging the business on its assumptions, its case for change and the specific measures it wants to introduce. As a trade union we are the only body that is putting your interests first and it will be you as members who determine how these negotiations should progress.

We will keep you updated as and when progress is made. We are fully aware that the business intends to bombard employees with information to ensure it gets its position across. There is however no way you can gloss over what this all means – the business thinks you are mostly over-paid, have too much sick pay, too much leave, too many benefits and if the business is to meet our promises to city investors this all needs to change. Unsurprisingly we don't agree.

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