

Ring fence fair share of gas to ease cost of living crisis, GMB tells Ministers



A new report from GMB Union today reveals exports of North Sea gas more than doubled at the end of the year and calls for emergency legislation to ring fence

a fair share and ease the cost-of-living crisis.

The call comes as Ministers prepare to publish an Energy Supply Strategy before the end of the month. Business Secretary Kwasi Kwarteng recently said that 'leaving Britain continually exposed to a market



that can be manipulated by Putin or anyone else would be a complete dereliction of duty.' [2]

The UK exported 32.5 GWh of natural gas in the fourth quarter of 2021 – up 159 per cent on the year before – as prices were higher and Norwegian exports were lower

In the report, which has been sent to Ministers, GMB outlines how the UK sells North Sea gas overseas each year while households and industries struggle with spiralling bills.

GMB's 'Fair Share' policy would see the UK follow the path of many gas producing countries and ring fence some domestic supply for the domestic market.

The scheme would create a reserve of North Sea gas that only domestic purchasers could bid for, addressing the international price pressure on UK households and industries.

Setting aside just 15 per cent of production could meet the needs of:

- Almost all (90 per cent) of energy-intensive industries' gas needs; or
- The combined gas needs of the chemicals, construction, automotive and food manufacturing, glass and ceramics, and metals (including steel) sectors; or
- 4.5 million households' annual gas consumption.

The cap on exports would reduce domestic prices while meeting trading agreements with partner nations during the current international crisis.

The report also calls for a long-term domestic gas policy linking use and production to the highest environmental and labour standards – instead of a net-zero transition that is reliant on gas from Qatar and Russia.

Andy Prendergast, GMB National Secretary, said:

“At a time of rapidly rising international tensions, we have to secure the supply of vital natural resources.

“Customers face rocketing bills and vital exporting industries are struggling with spiralling costs.

“Action must be taken to secure our energy supply and provide stability and reassurance to households and businesses.

“As a gas-producing nation, the UK is an international outlier by not having domestic limits in place.



“It’s time for a national conversation about an industry that can make an immediate contribution to lifting the cost-of-living crisis.

“In the long-term, it would be morally repugnant to reach net zero by winding down our vital industries while importing gas from despotic regimes.

“Gas will still be needed in 2050 under all scenarios – GMB’s Fair Share policy will sustain communities and protect the highest environmental and employment standards.”

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