

First Minister calls on Centrica to 'take threat off the table'



GMB, the union for British Gas workers, has renewed its calls on parent company Centrica to think again and come back to the negotiation table, after one of its biggest customers advised the company to do the same.

In first minister's questions earlier today (Tuesday 24 November 2020) Mark Drakeford responded to a question put forward on the issue by Huw Irranca-Daves MS, telling Centrica that the company would be 'very well advised to take the threat off the table, to get back around the table and to work with GMB to negotiate a deal'.



The Welsh government is one of British Gas's biggest customers, [administering a £200m contract to run NEST in Wales](#) providing energy efficiency improvements to low-income households.

[The calls come as GMB members in British Gas are set to ballot for industrial action](#), after the company made its final offer to the workforce but have made clear if the offer is rejected, then staff will face termination of contracts and dismissal.

[The ballot will open on Tuesday, December 1st, 2020 and close Thursday, December 17th](#) - with the first possible strike action to take place anytime from New Year's Eve.

If the ballot is successful, then it could see strike action over the cold winter period, one of the energy titan's busiest periods

GMB has urged Centrica to 'mull over this free market research' and return to the table as soon as possible to work out an equitable path for all parties.

Ruth Brady, GMB senior organiser said:

"We'd like to thank Mark Drakeford and Huw Irranca-Davies for bringing this issue to the Senedd floor.

"British Gas is a major employer across Wales. The way the company has behaved not only shows a complete contempt of its staff, but also of all their families and communities across the country.

"Let's not forget that the Welsh Government is one of British Gas' biggest customers and an ethical one too. They've had some free market research there, which they need to mull over sharpish.

"It's time for Centrica to think again, come back to the table and show welsh workers the respect they deserve."

Huw Irranca-Davies, Labour MS for Ogmore said:

"This is not a good look for Centrica, and its customers and the wider public in Wales will be dismayed at its bull-headed approach to industrial relations.

"But it's not too late for Centrica to come back to the table and negotiate properly with the GMB.

"That's the least we'd expect of them. It's the least we'd expect of any fair employer in Wales. And it's the least that the workforce and their families deserve."

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