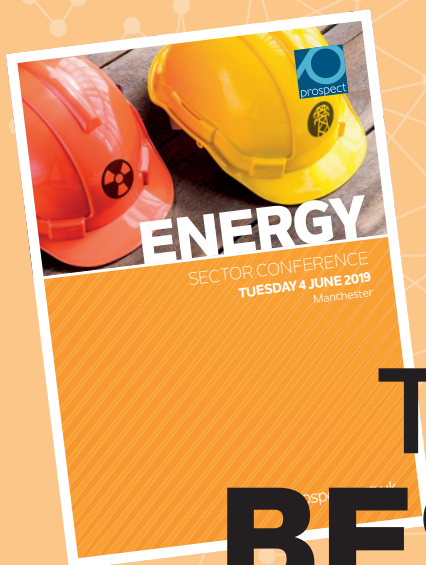


# ENERGY EYE



## THE BEST ENERGY UNION IN THE UK



**Sue Ferns**, Prospect senior deputy general secretary, looks back on a busy month for the energy sector but says there remains a full programme of work ahead

PROSPECT'S FIRST conference for members across the entire energy sector was held in Manchester on 4 June, attended by more than 100 people.

It completed a busy month, which also included seminars on equality, diversity and inclusion in the energy sector and on Prospect's future strategy for nuclear.

Delegates at the sector conference unanimously approved a new inclusive set of rules that will ensure we can respond with agility to the most significant changes facing the industry for decades.

Prospect has long advocated for a balanced energy policy. We now need to find ways to make our case in a contemporary and engaging way as the best advocates for the UK's entire energy workforce.

That's why, ahead of a new Energy White Paper, we have been working hard to impress upon politicians the need for urgent decisions on the future direction of energy policy, to remove the uncertainties that are holding back investment and to create confidence for the longer-term.

It's why we are pressing so hard for measures, in regulation, and at

company level, to enhance workforce resilience. We have compelling evidence of the impact of work intensification – from networks to renewable generation.

It's why we are seeking to lead the debate on just transition – to ensure that workers directly affected by the transition to a low carbon economy have real influence on how change is implemented and are supported to secure alternative high quality, skilled jobs.

And it's why we have chosen to give focus to the renewables workforce, where some companies have used their green credentials to mask a less-than-ethical approach to union involvement.

Together the conference and seminars provided us with a full programme of work – covering issues from stress to pensions; from long working hours to union support for contractors; and from gender pay gaps to increasing Prospect's presence across the nuclear supply chain.

For sure, there are significant challenges. Our task, working together, is to convert these into influence and opportunities. Do get in touch if you would like to get involved.



## INBRIEF

**ONE NDA –**

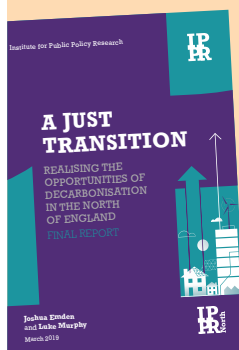
Representatives from across the Nuclear Decommissioning Authority Group met in Cumbria in late May to discuss how to better co-ordinate input and activity on a group-wide basis. Arising from this meeting we have written to the NDA's CEO seeking the establishment of a consultation forum at group level.

**NI ENERGY REPS FORUM –**

An energy sector reps forum has been established in Northern Ireland to try and encourage energy reps to share their experiences and to support each other. A recent forum included a presentation from Prospect's research team on energy sector pay and terms and conditions, and how Northern Ireland compares with the rest of the UK.

**IPPR NORTH –**

In March, progressive think tank, the Institute for Public Policy, published a major report on the potential opportunities in the north of England to establish itself as a 'new heartland for a low carbon energy economy'. Up to 46,000 jobs could be created by 2030 in the power sector alone, says the report, which was supported by Prospect and the energy companies, EDF Energy, Northern Powergrid and Sellafield. Find out more: [bit.ly/ippr-just-trans](http://bit.ly/ippr-just-trans)



EQUALITY, DIVERSITY and inclusion across the energy sector was the subject of a half-day seminar held at Prospect's London headquarters in early May.

Abbie Sampson, director of external affairs at Energy UK, the trade association representing the energy industry, told the seminar how EDI was not just the right thing to do morally, but that it was also good for business.

There was a return of £4.52 for every £1 invested in gender diversity initiatives, she said. Energy UK was also trying to set an example for the industry through their own actions, for example, by banning, or boycotting, all-male panels.

**Workplace behaviour**

Prospect research officer, Jenny Andrew, extrapolated data from the union's latest workplace behaviours survey to offer an insight into the state of the nuclear and ESI sectors.

Jenny explained that:

- The energy sector is male dominated: mostly male, mostly led by men, and traditionally male. This was a red flag for sexual harassment, but also for poor treatment of women more generally.
- The survey sample suggests



## Energy sector under the EDI spotlight

that the nuclear sector is slightly more male than the rest of the survey sample, but the former ESI sector is dramatically so (just 23% women, rather than 38% across the whole survey).

- Our whole survey sample was racially homogeneous, with only 4% BAME respondents. The former ESI sector was a little better, closer to 5%. The nuclear sector is significantly lower at 2%.

The energy sector has much lower numbers than the whole survey sample of both disabled workers and LGBT workers.

One of the dangers of having such low representation in the workforce, said Jenny, is that workforce culture fails to adapt for the experiences of these workers, and fails to take their voices into account.

Finally, Nick Kardahji, also from Prospect's research team, gave a presentation at the seminar on gender pay gap reporting.

■ *See P8 for an interview with Gayle Rew, a Prospect member at Magnox, who won a national award for her contribution to EDI issues.*

## New pay offer resolves dispute at SONI

**PROSPECT MEMBERS** at SONI, which operates the electricity transmission system for Northern Ireland, have successfully resolved their dispute with management, following an eleventh hour improved pay offer from the company.

The improved offer follows two days of action short of a strike, which was scheduled to be followed by 24 hour strike action on 15 April.

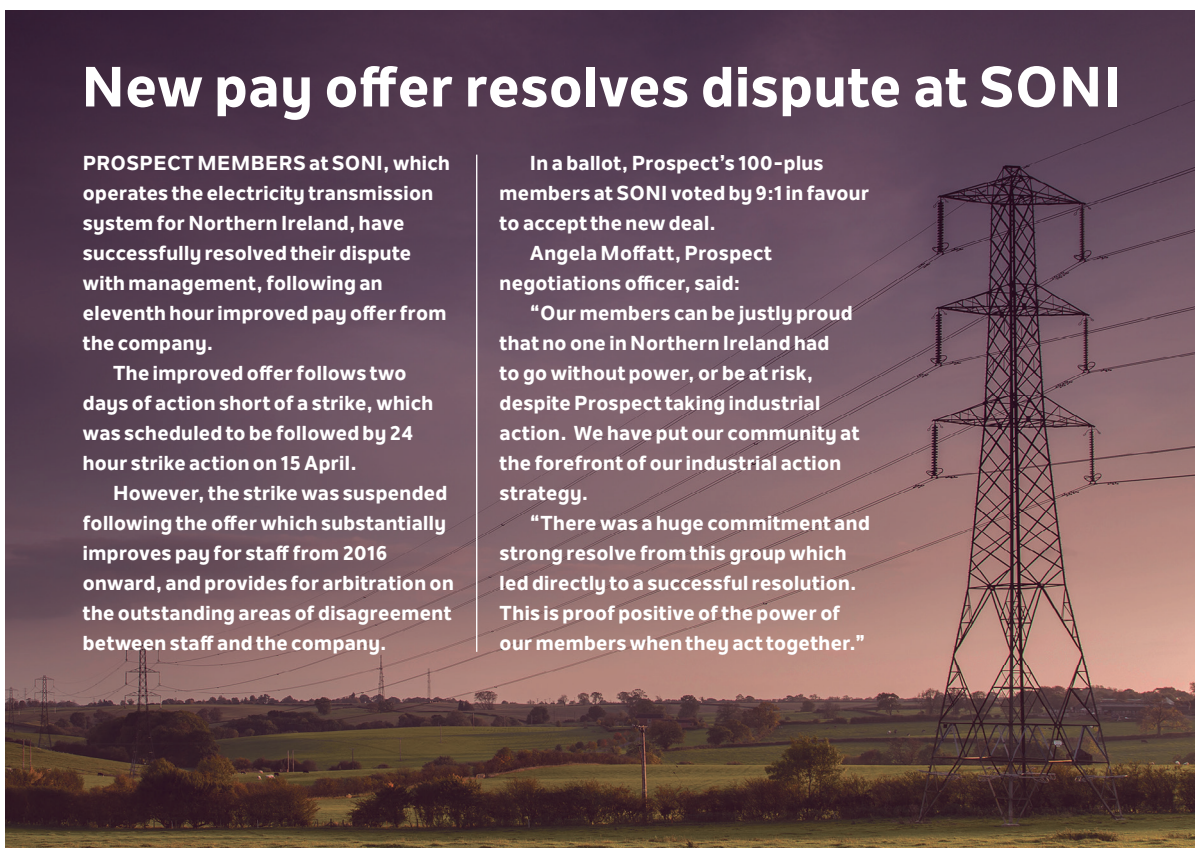
However, the strike was suspended following the offer which substantially improves pay for staff from 2016 onward, and provides for arbitration on the outstanding areas of disagreement between staff and the company.

In a ballot, Prospect's 100-plus members at SONI voted by 9:1 in favour to accept the new deal.

Angela Moffatt, Prospect negotiations officer, said:

"Our members can be justly proud that no one in Northern Ireland had to go without power, or be at risk, despite Prospect taking industrial action. We have put our community at the forefront of our industrial action strategy.

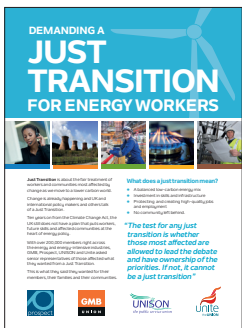
"There was a huge commitment and strong resolve from this group which led directly to a successful resolution. This is proof positive of the power of our members when they act together."







# TUC outlines principles for 'Just Transition'



THE TUC, following extensive input from Prospect and sister unions in the energy sector, has published its statement of principles for a just transition

to ensure that the voices of affected workers lie at the heart of the growing progression towards a low carbon economy.

"The trade union movement recognises that there is overwhelming scientific evidence of the need to decarbonise our economy... The voices of workers who are at the forefront of dealing with the challenge of climate change must be at the centre of achieving a successful transition to the economy we will need," says the preamble to the TUC statement.

## Onsite talks

Prospect recently led two round table discussions where the union's members and reps were able to speak directly with officials to help shape the TUC's just transition principles.

In April, at Uniper's Ratcliffe power station site, Prospect representatives were able to share with TUC colleagues their experiences of negotiating and consulting from several change management processes in recent years.

At Sellafield, in early May, Paul Nowak, TUC deputy general secretary, joined Sue Ferns, Prospect senior

deputy general secretary, on a tour of the site before meeting company and union representatives.

## TUC: A Just Transition to a greener, fairer economy

### ● A clear and funded path to a low-carbon economy

Calls on the government to set up a cross-party commission on long-term energy usage and strategy, involving workers, unions, industries and consumers, to plan towards just transition.

### ● Workers must be at the heart of delivering these plans

Companies and organisations moving to a lower carbon model should put in place Transition Agreements, covering a range of issues, that are agreed with unions.

### ● Every worker should have access to funding to improve their skills

Government must dramatically increase its investment in skills: to maintain the energy skills that are still needed in the sector; to help workers develop new skills in the energy sector and to help workers switch to jobs in the wider economy.

### ● New jobs must be good jobs

The 'green economy' must recognise unions and bargain with them to ensure good quality jobs with terms and conditions that are at least as good as those in energy, transitioning and carbon intensive sectors. Employers should also strive to make their workforces as representative of the UK as a whole.

### ■ Download Prospect's Just Transition leaflet: [bit.ly/act-now-renew](http://bit.ly/act-now-renew)

## FIDDLER'S FERRY CLOSURE: UK'S COAL PLANTS DOWN TO FIVE

BIG SIX energy firm SSE has announced the closure of its last remaining coal-fired power station, Fiddler's Ferry, near Warrington in Cheshire.

The plant, which employs around 160 staff, will close early next year and will leave just five other coal plants in operation in the UK.

**Sue Ferns**, Prospect senior deputy general secretary, said: "This announcement is disappointing but not unexpected to the dedicated staff at Fiddler's Ferry after a long period of uncertainty about the future.

"Prospect understands the necessity of transitioning away from high carbon generation, however, we believe that it is essential that workers are supported during this transition, and we will be working on behalf of those affected through this difficult period.

## Govt commits to zero carbon.

ENGLAND, SCOTLAND and Wales went for two weeks in May without using any coal to generate electricity for the first time since the industrial revolution, according to the National Grid.

However, electricity generated from coal was imported from Europe, which highlights the UK's reliance on interconnectors, and the need for a balanced low carbon energy policy.

The government recently underlined its commitment to achieve net zero carbon emissions by 2050, and has set 2025 as a deadline to close all of the UK's coal plants.

The National Grid also has its own ambition to operate at zero carbon by 2025. Fintan Slye, director, National Grid Electricity System Operator, told a Prospect energy summit:

"We have announced our ambition that by 2025 we will have transformed how we operate the grid, so that it can operate at zero carbon. I would say there's no other grid in the world that can do this, is doing this, or will do this. We believe it's hugely ambitious and we also believe it's achievable."

■ Full coverage of Prospect's energy summit can be read in the April edition of our Renewables Newsletter: [bit.ly/renewables-april](http://bit.ly/renewables-april)

■ Prospect blog: Onshore wind must be part of the solution to achieve net zero by 2050: [bit.ly/onshore-net-zero](http://bit.ly/onshore-net-zero)



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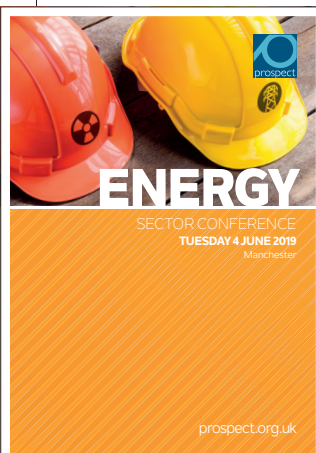


# MOTION 1

## A new energy sector fit for these changing times



■ Top-bottom: Richard Clatworthy, Sue Ferns, Kwabla Gad, Josh Whitworth  
■ Front cover, L-R: Rachel Garrick, Alex Jones, Jenny Andrew, Tasos Zodiates



The first order of business at Prospect's annual energy sector conference in Manchester in early June was, perhaps, also the most important.

Motion one was for the adoption of new sector rules that would establish an overarching energy sector.

Previously, workers in energy supply and their

colleagues in the nuclear industry were led by separate executive committees with their own sector rules.

A two-thirds majority of delegates was required to adopt the new rules and, in the event, it was passed unanimously by all of the 100-plus delegates in attendance.

The new energy sector brings together 22,000 skilled and specialist workers across energy generation, supply, distribution, nuclear, decommissioning and, importantly, those working in the renewables sector.

"The formation of an overarching energy sector has been talked about for a long time and those talks have now come to fruition," said, sector president, Gary Swift in his opening remarks to the conference.

"I believe it will give us a stable platform to lobby Parliament on a balanced energy policy that will be fit for purpose now, and will be for generations to come.

"It also enables us to bring renewables into

the energy sector and, as those branches grow, there will be somewhere they can develop. It will also give those already within the energy sector a wider view and it can only enhance our members in the future."

### Moving to the future

Formally moving the motion, Richard Clatworthy, sector vice-president, said: "The creation of the energy sector is going to allow us to move into the future and bring into the fold all of those businesses, which we don't currently cover."

Richard explained that the process began last summer with consultations between the energy supply committee, the nuclear development group, affected branches and Prospect's national executive committee.

As no objections were raised, the NEC endorsed the changes in the autumn.

"The past decade has seen transformational change across the energy sector, with renewables taking a growing share of the energy mix, posing challenges to systems stability, security and, of course, for the future of fossil fuel generation and grid infrastructure.

"Political and economic uncertainty adds further challenges for planning investment and ensuring skills capacity and capability. Prospect has a clear role to play in providing a distinct and authoritative voice for skilled workers across the energy sector. The new energy sector will allow us to do just that."



# Q&A

One of the highlights of the energy conference was a wide-ranging Q&A session on UK energy policy featuring a panel of distinguished industry leaders and experts. The panellists were **Nina Skorupska** of the Renewable Energy Association; **Mark Lappin** of the University of Strathclyde Centre for Energy Policy and **Tom Greatrex** of the Nuclear Industry Association. Here are their edited remarks on some of the topics that were brought up by the delegates.

## How can we achieve net zero emissions by 2050?

**Nina Skorupska:** We've seen an extraordinary reduction in the cost of renewable technology. And before everybody starts saying, 'when the sun's not shining, and the wind's not blowing, what do we do for 24/7 secure supply?' There are storage solutions that are coming fast to support it. So it can be done, but the government needs to put quite a few more supporting policies in place.

**Mark Lappin:** Essentially, for all of our history we needed energy to be reliable and affordable. We've now added the third parameter, which is zero greenhouse emissions. And I would suggest that the market doesn't care about that, in normal circumstances.

If we need reliable, affordable, low greenhouse gas emissions, then for the foreseeable future, that means an energy mix, and at the moment, they all have pros and cons.

**Tom Greatrex:** To get to a net zero outcome, then fundamentally, we need to make use of all available low carbon technologies, and some of those are still under development. There is not a one size, one solution, silver bullet solution.

It's good to have a long term target. But it's also very important that it's not a target that gives people, whether that's industry or government, the excuse to say, well, that's a long way away, we'll just kick it down the road. Because the worst thing that happens is you end up narrowing your options and it ends up being more expensive and less flexible.

## On standards and conditions in the renewables sector

**Nina Skorupska:** We have over 550 member organizations, and two thirds of them are small to medium enterprises. Yes, and some of them will not be 'green' out of an altruistic point of view. Some of them are out there just to make money, just like every other industry sector. I do want to say quite, quite unequivocally, that if any of our members bring the industry into disrepute, we actually kick them out.

■ The panel, L-R:  
Nina Skorupska, Mark  
Lappin, Tom Greatrex

## Government energy policy

**Tom Greatrex:** The UK has got bits of an energy policy; I don't think it's got a complete or holistic policy. For quite a long time, there has been a view from government, and from civil service that, effectively, energy will, in the end, mostly look after itself. I think we are starting now to see the short-sightedness of that.

**Mark Lappin:** It's only recently that we've got to have government intervention in energy. The arrival of the third parameter of greenhouse gas emissions means it's a big government issue now. In many ways, I feel sorry for them, trying to develop a policy in this environment. I will say we've had 12 energy ministers since 2012. I think that's an indication to some extent that this is a political hot potato.

## Establishing an independent energy commission

**Tom Greatrex:** Well, in a previous life [as a Labour MP] I used to advocate for almost exactly that. Our policy proposal in 2015 was to have an expert group charged with advising government on the long-term decisions that need to be taken... The things you do in energy today have an impact in 50, 60 or 70 years' time - long beyond the time that any politician is going to be around.

**Nina Skorupska:** What would this new group do differently than before? Become a big quango? I would love to be involved in setting up the right framework for a joint energy strategy going forward. So that we're looking not just at power, but heat, transport and the built environment too. It will take three years to get it up and running, everybody gets to know each other, and then the new government will come in and they'll get disbanded.

# MOTIONS

## 2 WORKPLACE STRESS

Calls on the sector executive committee to work with branches to ensure that employers publish data on stress-related illnesses, that their stress assessments are suitable and lobby for annual reviews. The SEC is also instructed to set up a stress working group to share ideas, support branches and monitor progress.  
**PASSED**

## 3 FATIGUE & LONG HOURS

WITH REGARDS to the potential hazard in the energy sector posed by being fatigued at work, the SEC should consider the different approaches used by employers in the industry, and if necessary, call on Prospect to promote and campaign for additional restrictions on working hours.  
**PASSED**

## 4 GENDER PAY GAP

WITH THE latest figures showing that the gender pay gap remains a significant problem in the energy sector, branches are asked to ensure their employer is publishing an annual gender pay gap report, and to do so with additional data over and above the statutory regulations; employers to undertake a pay audit once a year with the union and publish a clear plan to close the gap. **PASSED**

## 5 PENSIONS PARITY

THIS MOTION noted the large discrepancies between two different schemes of the Combined Nuclear Pension Plan: the Defined Benefit and the Defined Contribution schemes. It called for all members of the CNPP to be given a choice of which scheme they wished to join, and for the DC scheme to be reviewed to determine its parity with the DB scheme. The aim was to achieve the fairest way of spreading the effect of pension changes across generations.  
**PASSED**







## “Becoming the 21st century union”

**PROSPECT GENERAL secretary Mike Clancy** set out a vision of how Prospect can be a ‘21st century union’, in his address to the energy sector conference.

He told members that the union was growing, and he was proud of the work that members, reps, and officials had done in order to achieve the growth in membership, telling delegates that “you are the platform for everything we do.”

But he warned that Prospect, and the union movement in general, must “never be complacent that our place in society is secure”.

While Clancy emphasised that “political independence remains our baseline” he also

argued that we must never be “politically naïve” and that there are certain political figures whose values go against everything the union movement stands for.

### “Restless”

In this environment Clancy argued that the union must be ‘restless’ about change, constantly asking ourselves how we can be better.

He concluded: “There is a union in this country that can be the 21st century union, that can take on and solve the challenges of the 21st century and grasp the opportunities, and that union is Prospect.”

## Breakout sessions tackle recruitment, pay and stress

DELEGATES WERE divided into three separate groups for the conference breakout sessions, each led by one of Prospect’s full-time officials.

### Organising and recruitment

With the amalgamation of the new energy sector, we gave a presentation showing a snapshot of branches, citing membership losses and gains in the first quarter of 2019.

Together with fellow organiser, Jessica Norris, we ran a ‘speed recruitment’ activity. Half the room were given reasons for not joining Prospect, with the other half persuading them to join. Hesitant at first, an instant buzz was generated. 10 reasons, 20 delegates, 12 minutes and 40 conversations!

Numbers alone do not tell a story, members do. The point was made that a two minute chat with a colleague is worth it. **Louise Staniforth**

### Pay trends

The conference breakout session on pay looked at some of the key trends in the sector over the last decade.

There was a discussion about how pay at electricity network companies had changed

since the financial crash, and in particular how pay rates have become more differentiated across employers. We also looked at pay in the nuclear sector and how a challenging economic environment had put downward pressure on pay for many workers.

Finally, attendees discussed how data and information on pay across the sector could be shared more effectively. **Nick Kardahji**

### Tackling stress

Prospect’s energy sector survey showed that stress is a major problem in the industry. The breakout session provided a useful opportunity to equip reps with information about how to tackle it.

We discussed why it is important to focus on changing the working environment and the ways jobs are designed – risk factors like workload, the clarity of roles and procedures – not necessarily the individual.

Some reps expressed concern about employers’ reluctance to engage with the issue. However, it was mentioned that branches in other sectors gathered evidence to form a bargaining agenda, and ultimately won improvements.

**Chris Warburton**

■ Louise Staniforth leads the organising and recruitment breakout session



## MOTIONS

### 6 STAFFING & OFGEM PRICE CONTROLS

Calling on Prospect to work with branches to mitigate the impact of price controls and ensure the sector maintains adequate levels of suitably qualified staff. **PASSED**

### 7 UK CAPACITY MARKET

THIS MOTION called on the sector executive committee to support Prospect in working with other unions to form a response to the capacity market suspension. **PASSED**

### 8&9 UK NUCLEAR FUEL SUPPLY

TWO MOTIONS related to the possible threat to the Westinghouse Springfields nuclear fuel manufacturing facility and calls for Prospect to campaign to keep the facility open. After an objection around mandating the use of UK nuclear fuel, Motion 8 was **REMITTED**; Motion 9 was **PASSED**.

### 10 INDUSTRIAL POLICY

CALLING ON Prospect to explore the idea of a minerals and mining industrial partnership. The sector executive, while supportive of the sentiment, signalled that the politics around a mining partnership would be difficult for the union. **REMITTED**

### 11 BREXIT

PRESSING ON Prospect to continue monitoring the impact of Brexit on the sector and to campaign to protect members, especially offering support to EU national members. **PASSED**

### 12 CONTRACTORS

WITH A growing number of consultants being used in the mining industry, Prospect was called to look at developing a membership package for these workers similar to the model used for freelancers in the BECTU sector. **PASSED**





Solving the climate crisis cannot be done without good jobs, says **Nick Kardahji**

PROTESTORS ON the streets of London, Greta Thunberg, and the UK's Committee on Climate Change (CCC) are all reminding us of one thing: time is running perilously short to take action on climate change.

If we want to positively influence the trajectory of global temperatures, then we urgently need to make radical changes to the way our societies and economies function; if we do not, current projections suggest that human life as we currently know it will probably become unsustainable by the end of this century.

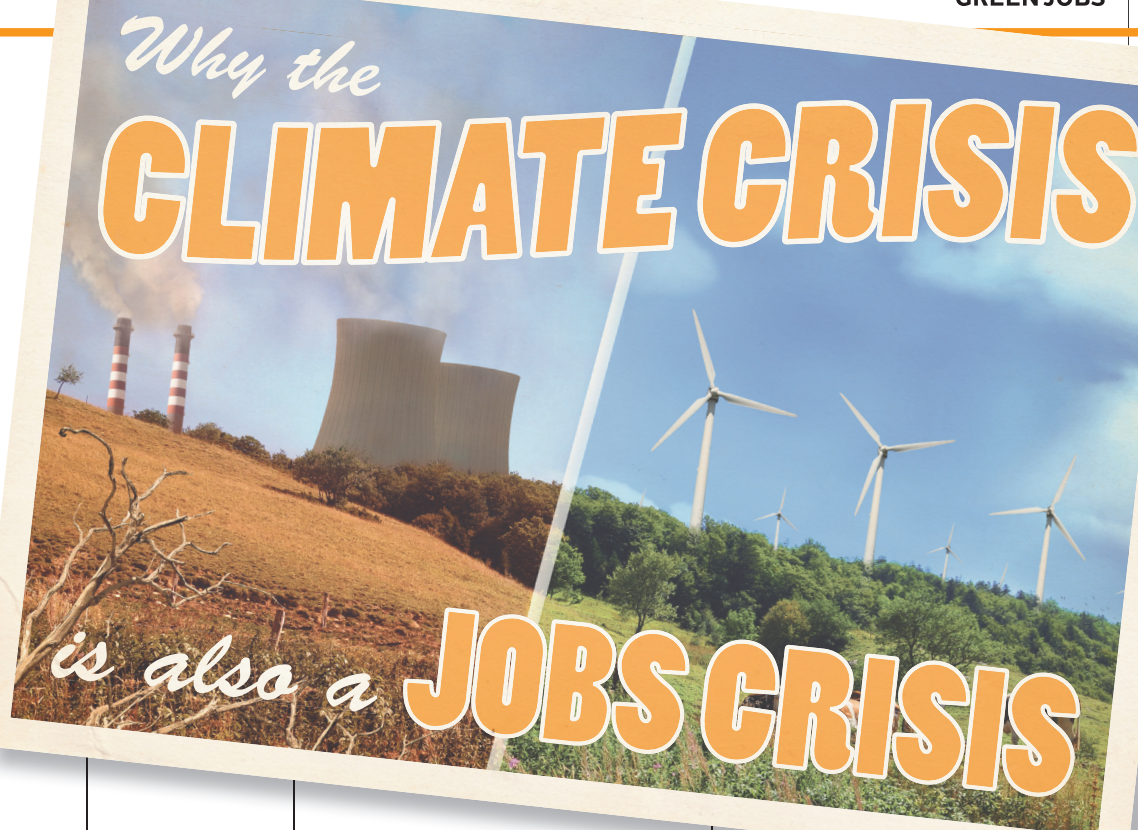
The price of failing to act is therefore clear, but the action required to mitigate the worst effects of climate change is both radical and incredibly daunting.

Nothing short of a complete revolution in how we produce and use energy is required over the next decade.

The challenge for us is not just to achieve this, but to do it in a way that does not leave behind the millions of workers around the world who currently depend on the fossil fuel industry for their livelihoods.

### How many green jobs?

In the UK, around 180,000 workers are directly employed in energy production



'Nothing short of a complete revolution in how we produce and use energy is required'

and distribution, with hundreds of thousands more jobs in the supply chain dependent on the energy industry.

The electricity and gas supply sector alone is conservatively estimated to ultimately contribute around 5% of UK GDP. And, adding to the challenge, much of this economic impact is felt in marginal rural and coastal communities, for example, in connection with North Sea oil and gas.

How will these workers and their communities fare as we transition away from carbon-based energy sources?

One possibility is that renewable energy will provide the jobs to replace those lost in fossil fuel production, as part of a 'green jobs' revolution

Ten years ago we were offered a plethora of predictions about how many jobs could be created as we transitioned to using more renewable energy.

In 2009, Greenpeace estimated that over 100,000 jobs could be supported by renewables in the UK by 2020, and two years later what was then the Department for Energy and Climate Change (DECC) speculated that renewable energy could be supporting 500,000 jobs in 2020.

These predictions have so far proved to be very wide of the mark.

In fact, total direct employment in renewables actually fell by 30% between 2015 and 2017 (the latest available figures) to just over 26,000 jobs, according to the Office for National Statistics.

So why this big discrepancy between forecasts and reality? Part of the answer is that the UK is just not building renewables infrastructure fast enough.

### Rising to the challenge

Another key problem is that subsidy payments by UK consumers have not always produced good renewables jobs for UK workers.

A recent report by the Scottish TUC highlighted how jobs in renewables manufacturing have gone to state-supported firms in Europe or Asia, while UK firms have lost out, reducing the number of local jobs arising from UK renewables projects.

At the same time, at least one employer has been caught paying well below the minimum wage to construction workers on a major offshore windfarm project, raising questions about the quality of at least some of the renewables jobs that have been created.

If this situation is allowed to continue, there is a real risk that the climate crisis will also be a jobs crisis, with workers displaced from the carbon-intensive energy sector and no corresponding growth in green jobs to replace them.

As Prospect has argued before, to avoid this outcome, we need an urgent rethink of our approach to renewables, with government taking a much more active, interventionist role to support much greater investment and more decent jobs.

We are at a critical juncture in our history and the decisions we take in the next few years in response to the threat of climate change will have profound consequences far into the future.

■ **The full version of this article can be read in the latest issue of Prospect's Renewables Newsletter.**

### Sign up for our Renewables Newsletter

PROSPECT PRODUCES a quarterly email newsletter focusing on the news, issues and professionals working in the renewables sector.

As well as the full version of this column, the latest issue also features an interview with Paul Clarke, a former engineer at Cottam power station, who is now working in offshore wind development. See the latest issue at [bit.ly/renewables-june](http://bit.ly/renewables-june)

Prospect members and non-members are welcome to subscribe to the Renewables Newsletter at: [bit.ly/renew-newsletter](http://bit.ly/renew-newsletter)





In January, **Gayle Rew**, a Principal Waste Consultant at Magnox, was given an industry award for her ongoing quest to promote and achieve greater diversity in the sector. She tells Boc Ly what drives her commitment to equality.

WHEN GAYLE Rew joined Magnox nearly 20 years ago, armed with a physics degree and a PhD in applied nuclear physics, issues around equality, diversity and inclusion were not high on her list of career priorities.

"I was one of the very few women in a technical field, and realised very quickly that I was in a minority. I guess like most people in those kinds of environments you just get on with it," she recalls.

"For a long time, I wouldn't have been interested in a women's network. I wouldn't have wanted to single myself out as being a woman anything. I wanted to be recognised for my contribution as opposed to anything to do with gender."

Today, Gayle runs a team charged with understanding the properties of radioactive waste so that the right standards and processes are in place across the company's 12 sites to deal with it.

However, she is also one of the founders, and the current chair, of the Magnox Women's Network, which celebrates its second anniversary this June. The network has more than 200 members – and about 30% of them are men.

"Ultimately, you can't make change unless you have women and men working together to try to resolve any issues. We're very pleased to have a mix of men and women on our steering group," Gayle says.

One of their most successful initiatives has been setting up action learning groups across Magnox to help peer to peer coaching for small groups of women.

In addition, Gayle was the driving force behind the establishment of an umbrella committee, called Magnox Diversity Networks, which encompasses other advocacy groups, such as mental health, young persons, BAME and neurodiversity. An LGBT+ & Allies group has recently been launched too.

### Mission Possible

Her outstanding contribution was recognised earlier this year when she was celebrated at the Women in Nuclear UK annual conference with a Mission Possible Award, which honours an individual who was "tenacious in their mission to create change."

Fittingly, Gayle traces her awareness of EDI issues back to a Women in Nuclear UK conference in 2016. One of the sessions was on unconscious bias and it was a transformative

experience for her.

"When I was actually confronted with this, I thought, 'oh my god, this is so obvious, why haven't I spotted that before?' The problem is, because it's unconscious, most people don't even recognise that it's there," says Gayle.

"As women we tend to hold ourselves back, as well as other people holding us back. All of a sudden I thought, 'actually if I feel like this, wouldn't somebody else too?'"

A year later, following a company survey, a workshop was held to discuss the possibility of setting up a women's network within Magnox. This was where Gayle, who was an active Prospect rep for 12 years, got involved, first by volunteering to be part of the steering group and then becoming the Women's Network chair.

### Corporate challenges

The scale of the EDI challenge at an employer like Magnox cannot be underestimated. As the company is working towards safely decommissioning and closing its sites there will be limited recruitment in the future and hence little opportunity to change the proportion of

women and men.

Currently, 24% of the Magnox workforce is women, but this percentage is not reflected at all levels of the organisation. Not unlike many companies, the number of women at senior levels is lower.

Magnox introduced mandatory EDI training for all employees in 2017, and Gayle praises the executive board, for its support on the issues.

"They have invested quite a lot in trying to bring about cultural change, which is very difficult with 2,500 people across 12 sites, in a traditionally male-dominated workforce. They have also been very supportive of our employee networks."

A new chief executive, Gwen Parry-Jones OBE, will be taking up her position in September and is herself a supporter of Women In Nuclear UK.

Gayle says, "The thing with gender balance is that it makes business sense. There's lots of evidence now that supports the fact that if you have gender balance in your teams then your business will be more effective and profitable. It's a bit of a no-brainer really. Why wouldn't you want to fix this problem?"



# Workplace Equality? Mission Possible!