

British Gas Announcement

06/20

Dear Member

Today's announcement by British Gas is bitterly disappointing coming as it did without prior advance notice and coming at a time when many staff have moved heaven and earth during the COVID crisis to keep serving customers and keep British Gas going.

Trade Unions have been given precious little in detail other than the broader headlines that say 5000 jobs will yet again disappear and that the terms and conditions of employees are to be under review yet again. We understand the challenges the business face but we are already struggling to give customers a first rate service (and not through want of trying) and cutting from line staff will only make this worse. It makes no sense.

The announcement is also deeply concerning because it does not retain previous commitments given by the business to avoid compulsory redundancies. This is simply unacceptable and totally unnecessary. It demonstrates that the numerous strategic failings of the business and its executives will be paid for once again with further job losses and attacks on our members and the workforce.

If the new direction of travel is not changed it will be hard to avoid a protracted dispute as we defend members from these attacks. This is not what UNISON wants, but we will stand up for our members and defend their interests.

UNISON is consequently demanding that:

- British Gas comes clean on its plans for the business including its proposed launch of its cheap 'challenger' brand which is a threat to exiting jobs.
- British Gas agrees to talk to the trade unions about re-establishing commitments to avoiding compulsory redundancies and seeking volunteers first
- British Gas gives us details of the of its plans for the terms and conditions of members. We cannot accept reductions to members overall benefits package but have long called for pay harmonisation and simplification.

UNISON would reiterate it's disappointment at todays announcements and we will be consulting with our senior reps in the business on what next steps we take.

A great deal is at stake over the coming months and it is important we are able to fully respond. We need to be strong as we go forward and your membership is crucial to us securing better outcomes for all. If you are reading this and are not in a union - join UNISON today and be part of the UK's biggest trade union.

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