

## Sorry, the PR doesn't help!

What more can be said that hasn't already been said?

The OCG unions dealing with the passengers travelling offshore continue to register workforce concerns, the low confidence and the questions around root causes, and we will continue to do so. However, putting these issues aside for a moment we can't help but comment on Airbus Public Relations (PR). They have stumbled from the launch of a survey, 'sneaked' out with no input from any other parties, then refused to release the findings, before opting to do so but in a 'sanitised' way and telling us what? We think the Airbus PR team should be looking at P45's never mind H225's! So let's have a brief look at the survey results! The opening line of the "Key Insights" says it all;

***"Whilst 62% of H225 passengers are uncomfortable and unlikely to ever fly again, this is not the same figure of 90% who would refuse to fly in it, as quoted in the latest Oil & Gas People survey."***

Different surveys, different figures, but it doesn't change the fact that over 60% of the 6,000 returns Airbus got don't want to fly in the H225! That's a total of 3,720 people and doesn't take into account those "uncomfortable" with the H225. There's something like 30,000 people working offshore, so if we extrapolate the Airbus survey figures, it would be reasonable to say that over 22,000 people don't want to climb into the H225! Are the company and the industry really going to try and dismiss this figure on the basis that it's less than a figure produced in another survey?

Looking further at the Airbus findings, did we really need a survey to tell us that "space" was an issue? They tell us that shoulder and leg room are "very important" to passengers! Has the Airbus PR team ever spoken to or even met any offshore workers? We are also told "access to emergency exits" is very important, as is "visibility and large windows". It's good to see those University Degrees are being put to good use, we would never have thought about these issues without the Airbus survey, right!

There's also information about how important the "opinion" of different groups and organisations may

be when it comes to helicopter safety and this does throw up something that all trade union members and workers generally should seriously think about. As you might expect most people said the opinion of their employers was **not** important. The opinion of colleagues was slightly more important, as was the opinion of the pilots. The opinion of Step Change in Safety was pretty important, but the one that caught our eye was the figure about the opinion of "your union"; we are told there was almost as many said this was not important as there was saying it was very important! In short, Airbus are telling industry that workers travelling offshore on helicopters don't consider the opinion of the Trade Unions to be of any importance?

We are not in a position to dispute this with Airbus, but think about this; Airbus have released this data and will stand by it. No matter that the Trade Unions have run their own surveys, ran petitions, lobbied MP's and MSP's, spoken publicly and to the press about the concerns of members and so on, Airbus have got their survey! You should think long and hard about that!

**If you and your colleagues genuinely do not want to fly in this aircraft type again it is time you said it loud and clear! In 1986, after 45 workers died in a Chinook crash, workers on platforms across the North Sea did their own petitions. No trade unions, no employment rights, thousands paid off after the oil price crash, NRB's a daily event! The workforce had the courage and commitment; they stood up collectively and said NO! Every worker signed the petition on their platforms and those petitions were sent to the oil companies. The Chinook never flew again!**

This is not an attack on Airbus, there are many committed and ingenious people working for the company and producing fantastic aircraft and safe systems. The H175 looks like a great helicopter and we hear good things about it. But for what it's worth, the "opinion" of Unite, RMT, GMB and Nautilus of the OCG is that the H225 has had its day in the North Sea. It's for you as workers, as passengers to decide though.

## Bristow Helicopters 2017 Pay Negotiations Update



As you know we submitted our 2017 pay claim to the company earlier this year. The claim covers Oil & Gas

pilots as well as Pilots and Aircrewmembers employed in Search and Rescue.

As part of our on-going negotiations we met with the Bristow senior management team in Aberdeen.

Following the recently published quarterly statement, it will come as no surprise that the company continue to be in an extremely difficult financial position.

The management team made it crystal clear to us that at this very difficult time that they are not in a position to make us an offer to settle our pay claim.

The company have agreed with us that pay negotiations should be temporarily suspended until after the publication of the next quarterly financial statement which is expected to be in November.

If you have any questions please do not hesitate to contact one of us:

**Mick Brade**

*National Officer*

**Euan Gibson**

*Company Council Chairman*

**Marc Richards**

*Company Council Vice Chairman*

**BALPA** raised concerns at the Trade Union

Congress that the Governments movement towards 'light touch' regulation is inherently unsafe and puts public and employees at risk. Leo Nugent of BALPA's National Executive Council spoke at congress to highlight the indiscriminate removal of regulation under the guise of being 'better for businesses, which we believe is leading to firms being allowed to regulate themselves. The motion was submitted by BALPA and supported by the CWU, RMT, ASLEF and Prospect. It said that weak regulation and dwindling resources for enforcement agencies such as HSE has been at the heart of many, if not most, disasters, including the banking crisis, industrial accidents, care failings and operator fatigue accidents in the road, rail and maritime sectors. BALPA called for the government to scrap the dangerous experiment of light touch regulation

and provide additional funding for regulators. The motion was carried by congress.

## WORKING ROTA SURVEY

The OCA and the Trade Unions, working with ACAS, have commissioned a survey of OCA employees to determine the impact of the changes to the offshore working rota. The Robert Gordon University (RGU) will undertake this work as independent and impartial experts.

This will be completed through an online survey questionnaire of all eligible OCA personnel. RGU will ensure that all responses will be confidential and anonymised. Confidential means that answers you provide will only be available to RGU and not seen by either your employer, or any trade unions. Look out for further details on how you can participate in this vital survey.

## ROADSHOW ALERT



Dates for the diaries everyone, OCG are coming to you once again and this time our hit list is:

### GLASGOW!

Premier Inn, George Sq – Monday 6<sup>th</sup> Nov – 6pm

### EDINBURGH!

Jurys Inn, 43 Jeffrey St – Monday 13<sup>th</sup> Nov – 6pm

All offshore workers welcome!!

**Register for the next OCG  
Webinar 11<sup>th</sup> October, 7pm  
with  
[ocg.project.coord@gmail.com](mailto:ocg.project.coord@gmail.com)  
alternatively follow the link [here](#)  
to register directly**

## ***With the legal go-ahead finally given***

in September for the sale of the offshore support vessel *Malaviya Seven*, the ordeal of crew members who have been stranded in Aberdeen for well over a year is reaching its end. But this terrible case is by no means over for the maritime unions. We are determined to prevent a repetition of this appalling situation— and we are working hard to get the government to put effective measures into place to eradicate the conditions which enable such exploitation to flourish. While shipping is the most globalised of

**EQUAL  
PAY**

industries, we think it is fair to question why we are allowing Indian-flagged ships, with Indian crews on Indian rates, to be operating on the UK Continental

Shelf – especially at a time when hundreds of British seafarers have lost their jobs or had their pay and conditions cut back because of the oil price slump.

We know of members who worked on ships that were unable to compete for contracts with the two *Malaviya* vessels – and perhaps no wonder when their crews were together owed more than US\$1.5m?

As Ken Fleming, the UK and Ireland coordinator for the International Transport Workers' Federation (ITF) noted: *'I am glad that we have made progress, but you could not describe such a scandal as a victory. We need to learn from this and make sure nothing like this happens again.'*

Sadly, the *Malaviya* ships are just the tip of a pretty big iceberg. Maritime unions and welfare agencies are having to deal with a rising tide of such cases as seafarers pay the price of cost-cutting by ship owners as a consequence of the reduction in global trade over the past few years. In 2016 alone, the ITF dealt with more than 1,860 cases of unpaid wages – recovering a staggering total of more than \$42m owed to seafarers around the world.

In the 21st century, this sort of thing simply should not be happening. We want to see a concerted drive to stamp out such practices.

Nautilus general secretary Mark Dickinson has told the shipping minister that the UK should

follow the example of Australia -- and ban ships that are repeatedly found to have substandard living and working conditions. In one recent case, the Australian Maritime Safety Authority (AMSA) barred the Bahamas-flagged bulk carrier *Rena* from the country's ports for six months after inspections revealed that the owners had failed to pay outstanding wages and maintain a safe workplace for its crew.

It's good to see a port state control authority taking a tough line with such unacceptable practices and Nautilus believes it is certainly an approach that the UK could benefit from, as our ships and our seafarers are suffering as a consequence of the unfair competition that these vessels present.

Banning repeat offenders needs to be backed up by long-awaited action by the UK authorities to enforce National Minimum Wage and work permit requirements for seafarers on ships

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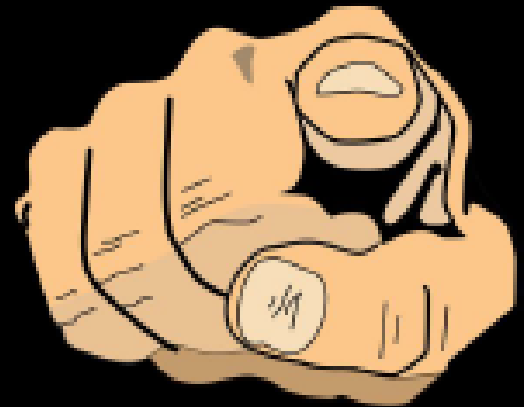
running in British waters. We wouldn't tolerate cases like the *Malaviya* ships in shore-based workplaces – and there should be no space for such scandalous conditions just because they are beyond the shoreline.



*The RMT Shipping and Offshore Branches purchased a substantial Christmas Hamper for the crew of the *Malaviya Seven* at Christmas last year and each crew member received a card with a cash gift. Branch officials and officers spent time with the crew and enjoyed lunch before sharing a bag of T-shirts, hats and badges supporting the RMT campaign "Save our Seafarers 2020".*

**The Offshore Coordinating Group**

**THERE IS  
STRENGTH  
IN  
NUMBERS!**



**ARE YOU WITH US?**

**Join an OCG union today!**

