

'It's not coming, it's here' – Aberdeen charity warns MPs of energy transition crisis- Mathew Perry

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Aberdeen Cyrenians warns UK MPs of homelessness and mental health toll from North Sea oil and gas job losses.

An Aberdeen homelessness charity has told MPs the human cost of the North Sea's decline is already visible in rising food bank use, housing insecurity and mental health crises among former oil and gas workers.

At a meeting of the Westminster Energy Security and Net Zero committee in Aberdeen, witnesses warned promised low-carbon jobs have repeatedly failed to materialise.

Donna Hutchinson, chief executive of [Aberdeen Cyrenians](#), said the economic transition away from oil and gas was translating directly into hardship for households across the city.

She told MPs warnings of a future economic crisis in Aberdeen amid falling oil and gas production were out of step with the reality on the ground

"It's not coming, it's here," Hutchinson said.

"Evidence from Aberdeen shows transition is already having a material impact on households, not just jobs, but on households.

"Headline indicators would suggest resilience and the underlying reality is one of financial fragility, so rising demand, persistent pressures, widening inequality."

Hutchinson said that, for the Cyrenians, talk of a "just transition" means "people remain secure in their income, their housing and their health as change happens".

"I think too often this is being framed as jobs alone," she said of the political debate around the North Sea oil and gas sector.

"And what we're seeing on the ground is that the transition is affecting whole households.

"So housing, health and economic participation are completely interdependent. And if one is disrupted, the others quickly follow.

"And if we don't address those together, we will see the same pressures cycle through the system, whether that be in Aberdeen or any other part of the country."

Hutchinson said demand for support from the third sector in Aberdeen is "rising" and the "early warning signals are there", and warned of potential long-term implications.

"We know from the past that industrial transitions impact poverty, poor health, long-term inequality, and that can persist for decades," she said.

Energy transition being done 'to Aberdeen, not with Aberdeen'

Hutchinson warned of a widening impact on mental health, family stability and child poverty, telling the committee "redundancy is a traumatic event".

Hundreds of North Sea oil and gas workers have lost their jobs in recent months, with [industry data showing 55% of surveyed firms cut staff between 2024 and 2025](#).

Companies including [Harbour Energy](#), [Repsol](#), [Nexos](#), [EnerMech](#), and [industry body Offshore Energies UK \(OEUK\)](#) have been among those reducing their UK headcounts.

The industry has blamed the losses on UK government policy, including the decision to increase and extend the energy profits levy (EPL) windfall tax and ban new oil and gas exploration licences.

And Scottish MPs have [warned transitional jobs in cleaner energy sectors are not being created at the pace or scale needed to match the decline of oil and gas](#).

Hutchinson said the lack of jobs in renewables was causing frustration in the community.

She said her charity had held a recruitment session with GB Energy earlier in the week attended by 20 men, describing it as “quite a heightened environment” in which attendees repeatedly asked whether local people would be prioritised for local jobs.

She said the level of frustration reflected people who were “hurting”, and criticised what she described as a lack of engagement between government and the third sector, saying transition policy was “being done to Aberdeen, not with Aberdeen”.

Hutchinson argued that housing, health and economic participation were interdependent and that failing to address them together would see the same pressures cycle through the system.

“I need systems that are designed around people and not sectors,” she told the committee.

North Sea workers face redundancy after renewables switch

[Prospect](#) national secretary for Scotland and Ireland Richard Hardy told MPs renewable energy job creation has failed to deliver on its promises in the region.

The union leader spoke of workers who had been encouraged to leave oil and gas roles for renewables jobs with ScottishPower and the Scottish government, only for many of the same people to be made redundant seven months later.

Hardy also pointed to [shelved plans by subsea cable manufacturer XLCC to establish a factory at Hunterston](#).

Renderings of the scrapped plans for an XLCC cable manufacturing site at Hunterston in Ayrshire.

Hardy said examples of these projects falling through become “yet another thing that those people who do not want to see an energy transition can beat people with”.

While he criticised the UK government for its management of the energy transition, he also placed some of the blame on the UK private sector.

“Here is yet another industrial transition that we’re going to make an absolute pig’s ear of because, and apologies to colleagues in the room, we’ve solely left it to the market largely,” Hardy said.

“And strangely enough, the market didn’t manage it very well.”

Meanwhile, [Aberdeen Grampian Chamber of Commerce](#) chief executive Russell Borthwick spoke of the risks for firms operating in the oil and gas market in attempting to pivot to renewables.

He pointed to supply chain firm Beam, formerly Rovco, which [collapsed into administration after investing heavily in a pivot toward offshore wind](#).

Borthwick also said Port of Aberdeen had invested £420m to serve the offshore wind sector, but that [only 1% of its revenue currently came from offshore wind work](#).

Scotland risks losing future energy workforce

Hardy also warned that a failed energy transition risks losing Scotland’s future skilled workforce overseas.

He raised the case of apprentices at Forth Valley College who had trained partly through the oil and gas contractor INEOS.

Of nine apprentices in one group, eight, all under 20, already had jobs lined up in Saudi Arabia, Texas and Australia.

Workers at the Kincardine floating wind project off Aberdeen.

He said only one planned to remain in Scotland, reflecting a wider drain of transferable skills leaving the country rather than being retained for domestic clean energy projects.

“Much as I love Scotland, if I’d gone to Australia at the age of 18, 19, I’m probably not coming back,” he said.

Robert Gordon University [Energy Transition Institute](#) director Professor Paul de Leeuw said “prevention is better than mitigation” when it comes to managing the offshore oil and gas sector.

He argued keeping existing jobs was preferable to relying on retraining people into jobs that are “simply not there” at the moment.

“We need to manage this in such a way that we can have a seamless transfer from one industry to the other, so we can actually maintain a world-class ecosystem, supply chain and workforce here,” de Leeuw said.

He also warned of the economic multiplier at stake, telling MPs that the average offshore energy salary in the region was twice that of non-oil and gas roles.

“So if we lose a job in oil and gas, we need to backfill up to two jobs somewhere else,” he said.