

Industrial Sector Graphical, Paper and Media

(Paper, Tissue and Board Industry)

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Industry profile

Paper, Tissue and Board:

- Number of companies in sector: 72
- Paper and board production* ('000 Tonnes) 4,300
- Corrugated production (Million Sq. Metres) 3,603
- Recovered paper collection ('000 Tonnes) 8,003
- Tissue parent reel production ('000 Tonnes) 729
- Unite members work in the paper, board and tissue mills in every capacity – from the office staff, through to production workers as well as the engineers and electricians who keep the whole process working.

Trade union profile

- Unite has members within the Paper, Tissue and Board sector
- The GMB are also organised in the sector

Major organised employers:

DS Smith Plc, Smurfit Kappa, Kimberly Clark, SCA, Georgia Pacific, UPM Kymmene, Iggesund, SAICA (Sociedad Annima Industrias Celulosa Aragonesa) and Arjo Wiggins

Collective bargaining:

Unite GPM Sector holds national pay and conditions agreements with:

Confederation of Paper Industries (Paper, Corrugated Packaging, Board, Tissue & Paper Products).

Besides these national agreements many Unite members work under national group agreements including paper and paper products companies such as Robert Horne and Arjo Wiggins.

Unite is affiliated in this sector to the European Mine, Chemical and Energy Workers Federation (EMCEF) and also the International Federation of Chemical, Energy, Mine and General Workers' Unions (ICEM), Uni-Graphical and Uni-Europa Graphical.

The sector skills council is Proskills.

Workers Uniting

The Graphical, Paper and Media sector of Unite is working closely with our brothers and sisters in the USA/Canada via Workers Uniting. Workers Uniting is the name of the new international union created by Unite and the United Steelworkers (USW). Workers Uniting is the union of 3 million members of Unite and the USW working together to protect their jobs, pay and

benefits in the face of the ever increasing power of multinational companies.

Half a dozen companies in the paper sector including Georgia-Pacific, SCA and Kimberley Clark employ workers from both unions, and they have been busily coordinating bargaining strategies and sharing information.

Key sector issues

Energy

The Paper, Tissue and Board industry is a highly intensive energy usage industry. The UK's current energy market arrangements, particularly for intensive users of energy, are undermining the sustainability of the UK's paper, tissue and board industry. Unite agrees with the UK Government that energy policy has to be framed within the context of a sustainable framework and the threat posed by climate change. However, large-scale users of gas and electricity are paying more than their European competitors. Unite is concerned that the current energy prices will displace manufacturing in the UK and is actively lobbying the Government on the issue.

Corrugated Packaging

This sector of the industry is higher profile and consumers, led by the media, complain of "unnecessary packaging" as contributing to "Global Warming". Largely speaking this is nonsense and it should be noted that Paper and Packaging production is sourced through sustainable means; (fast-growing forest that is managed for the purpose) and about 65% recycling.

The industry represents about 3% of the total European GDP and employs workers across the European community.

Health & Safety

The paper manufacturing industry, in particular has serious potential health and safety problems in as much as the occasional fatality occurs as well as limb-detachment injuries. The industry takes these issues very seriously at senior level, but we have problems at plant middle-management level with productivity sometimes taking precedence over H&S particularly in the event of short-notice absence when a machine can run down-manned.

Skills

The UK paper, tissue and board Sector is faced with severe skill shortages. The shortages caused by an ageing workforce and failure to recruit young workers will lead to a culture of overtime, as employers seek to produce more without recruiting. Sub-contractors continue to provide an alternative to employing direct staff for many companies.

