

Industrial Sector

General Industries



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Industry profile

General Industries (manufacturing):

- In June 2010 British manufacturing accounted for 8.2% of the workforce and 12% of the national output
- The East Midlands and West Midlands (at 12.6 and 11.8% respectively) were the regions with the highest proportion of employees in manufacturing. London manufacturing had the lowest at 2.8%
- The total number of jobs in manufacturing as at December 2010 was 2.549 million, up from 2.535 million in the previous quarter although there remained 60,000 (2.3%) fewer manufacturing jobs than a year ago
- **The UK is one of the World's leading manufacturers contributing £140 billion per annum to the UK economy**

Trade union profile

- Unite represents members within the general industries sector.
- Other unions with significant membership are the GMB

Major organised employers:

Siemens IMI Bosch FG Wilson SKF Cleveland Potash Schlumberger

Collective bargaining:

The majority of members in the general industries manufacturing sector are covered by single site agreements..

Business services:

This includes cleaning, security and facilities management companies, with ISS, MITIE and Sodexo as the leading companies in the sector. There are a number of other smaller companies with most of them covered by single site negotiations. There are also zonal agreements – mainly around Canary Wharf – which have been negotiated due to the Justice for Cleaners campaign. Other business's in the group include Mersey Tunnels and NCP.

The sector is affiliated with the European Metalworkers Federation (EMF), International Metalworkers Federation (IMF), the European Mine, Chemical and Energy Workers Federation (EMCEF), the International Federation of Chemical, Energy, Mine and General Workers Union (ICEM).

The sector skills councils are SEMTA and Cogent.

Workers Uniting

The General Industries 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 global 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.

An example of this is Unite members standing in solidarity with our locked out brothers and sisters at the Honeywell Plant in Metropolis, Illinois.

Key sector issues

Skills

The Manufacturing sector needs to employ a wide range of skilled people from engineers to technicians and maintenance staff. Supply of skills is a problem that is hampering the competitiveness of the industry and the UK's reputation for science.

Unite continues to work closely with SEMTA: the sector skills council for Science, Engineering and Manufacturing Technologies, working to provide strategic solutions to the acquisition of skills, to enhancing employability and to improving competitiveness in the sector.

Achieving a Level playing field

In the UK's competitor countries workers have more and better rights and are better protected from the worst effects of international competition. These protections have not limited the ability of countries to compete, for instance in Germany manufacturing employment has grown by over a quarter of a million over recent years, while UK employment in the sector has decreased by the same amount over the same period.

Mainland European nations are also better at

supporting vulnerable workers, maintaining employment and investment in deprived regions and upholding international labour standards. The UK has created one of the most flexible labour markets in the world and this is threatening union recognition and long established agreements on terms and conditions.

In light of the fact that competition will continue and become stronger from rival manufacturing economies, recognition of International Framework Agreements and bargaining between multinationals and Global Union Federations will be essential if international labour standards are to be observed.

Pensions

UK manufacturing faces an uncertain future, facing challenges to compete in the global economy. Many companies traditionally employed large workforces entitled to valuable salary-related pension benefits. These pension schemes are continuing to be undermined and/or closed down. Unite the Union is determined to protect its members from this attack on their deferred earnings.



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