

Industrial Sector

Metals

(including Foundries)



National Officer: Paul Reuter

Industry profile

Steel industry:

- In 2008 the industry contributed £2.9 billion to the UK balance of trade.
- Manufacturing net exporter – trade surplus of £554 million in 2009

Aluminium:

- Employs 8,000 people

- Worth £425 million gross added value to the UK economy

Foundries:

- 400 Foundries in the UK
- Produced 650,000 tonnes of castings in 2010
- With a turnover of £1.8 Billion
- Employs 22,000 people

Trade union profile

- Unite has members within the metals and foundries sector.
- Other unions with significant membership are the Community union.

Major organised employers:

Steel

Tata Steel (formerly Corus)

Aluminium

Alcoa, Alcan

Foundries

Sheffield Forgemasters, Doncasters, Precision Disc Castings

Collective bargaining:

Unite has national recognition with Tata steel, and plant level recognition with the major aluminium companies and also with several foundries.

Unite is also affiliated to the International Metalworkers' Federation (IMF) and the European Metalworkers Federation (EMF).

The sector skills council is SEMTA.

Workers Uniting

The metals sector of Unite is working closely with our brothers and sisters in the steel and metals industry 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.

Key sector issues

Energy

Metals, as one of the most energy intensive sectors is heavily impacted by the ongoing rises in the cost of energy, as well as the government's tax hikes to energy intensive industries with regards to climate change policies and carbon pricing.

Recession

The metals sector continues to suffer from a lack of demand for its products, with construction , motor vehicle manufacturing and white goods production still in the doldrums the sector has significant over capacity.

REACH

The Metals sector is also impacted by the REACH Regulation. The EU has adopted a new system to control the risks which chemicals may pose to human health and the environment. The REACH Regulation (Registration, Evaluation, Authorisation and restrictions of Chemicals) came into force on 1 June 2007. It will form the EU's framework legislation for the management, control and use of chemicals, replacing much of the current patchwork of over 40 separate pieces of legislation over a phase-in period.

REACH is being introduced progressively until full implementation in 2018.



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