

## **Industrial Profile**

The UK construction industry, incorporating Civil Engineering, Building, Mechanical & Electrical Contracting and the Engineering Construction industries employs an estimated 2 million people.

Amicus is the union representing and organising the **total construction process**. Our construction membership predominantly consists of the engineering craft trades. Members are responsible for the building, repair and maintenance of key elements of Britain's infrastructure including Energy sources, Nuclear, Gas and Coal fired power stations, Petro-Chemical refineries, Chemical Plants, Pharmaceuticals, Steel and other industrial output centres, Structural Steel for public and commercial building, Major water treatment and steel bridge construction. Our members are involved in all aspects of construction including commercial, PFI, NHS and local authority construction projects through to the installation of plumbing, heating and electrical systems in domestic dwellings. Amicus also has the largest membership of Tower Crane and Mobile Crane drivers in the UK.

Our national industrial collective agreements are as follows:

- **JIB** (Joint Industry Board for the Electrical Contracting Industry)
- **SJIB** (Scottish Joint Industry Board for the Electrical Contracting Industry)
- **JIB (PMES)** Plumbing Mechanical Engineering Services
- **HVACR** (Heating, Ventilation, Air Conditioning, Refrigeration and Domestic Piping Industry)
- **SNIJIB** (Scottish & Northern Ireland Plumbing Industry)
- **EEI** (Environmental Engineering staff in EESA)
- **\*NAECI** (National Agreement for the Engineering Construction Industry)

\*The NAECI is a multi-union agreement between Amicus, GMB and TGWU who make up the NECC.

## **Current Issues and Activities**

### **NAECI Wages and Conditions Review**

Following a meeting of the National Shop Stewards Forum in Huddersfield in February, the stewards returned to the sites and a consultation took place regarding the ECIA employers offer. The membership rejected the offer and currently a national ballot for industrial action is underway.

### **MPA**

The Major Projects Agreement (MPA) is a new 21<sup>st</sup> century performance and employment framework for building services engineering on the largest M&E projects. The MPA is in addition to the established agreements. The first client to adopt the MPA is BAA at Heathrow Terminal 5. The signatories to the MPA are Amicus and the employers associations being the ECA, HVCA, SELECT and APHC. Logistics, planning, design and productivity are integral to MPA, with full workforce participation plus the highest employment rewards in the UK construction industry.

### **Posted Workers Directive**

The NECC are seeking a full commitment from the UK Government to the true spirit of the European Posted Workers Directive 96/71/EC. Lobbying is ongoing to press Government to pass **prevailing wage legislation** for the construction industry and protect the existing agreements. Industry-wide Collective agreements set the prevailing pay and conditions in the UK construction industry, not lesser national minimum employment rights and guidelines. The focus of the campaign is for a level playing field with Europe, to protect domestic jobs and stop the exploitation of migrant and posted workers.

### **Apprenticeships and Training**

Amicus is the joint stakeholder with the employers at the JTL and SECTT training organisations. Currently JTL have 8000 apprentices in the electrical and mechanical disciplines. The training organisations are an outstanding success. The perceived skills shortage is something that the union is actively tackling at both national and regional levels.

### **Bogus Self-Employment**

Amicus are campaigning for direct employment to eliminate corrupt employment practices in construction. The Chancellor has announced a review of employment status in the industry, and the CIS tax scheme is being reformed. This month, in the case of *Redrow v Wright*, Amicus won backdated holiday pay from 1998 to the present for a member who was deemed a 'worker'. This heralds a major victory for mis-categorised workers in construction.

### **Skills Accreditation**

Amicus are at the forefront of skills accreditation in UK industry. The Government drive to eliminate cowboy operators has meant that the UK workforce must be accredited for safety and competence. The JIB ECS scheme for electricians, and the ACE initiative in engineering construction are just two examples of how Amicus and the industry are meeting this challenge.

### **Health & Safety**

In 2002-03, 71 construction workers were killed at work, the highest proportion from any sector. A further 4,780 construction workers were reported as having suffered a major injury, over three times the average for the main industry sectors, which is completely unacceptable. M&E contracting and engineering construction buck this trend and have the best safety records in UK construction. On major nominated projects there have been no fatalities since