



**Your Safety is non-negotiable—Its time to act**

## **Unite to consult its members on action should the 225 helicopter be brought back into service in the UKCS**

Ever since the CAA announcement that they will lift their restrictions on the EC225 and AS332 L2, Unite has been speaking to our members, offshore shop stewards and offshore workers.

The unanimous feedback from workers is that these helicopters are no longer fit for purpose, unsafe to fly in and should not be used to transport workers offshore. Our recent survey of members across the industry confirmed this.

The reputation of the helicopter is now synonymous with fatalities and no amount of assurances given can remove the fact that the amount of incidents involving these aircraft points to a fundamental flaw in the helicopter.

The sobering facts of these aircraft are uncomfortable to see but must be presented for everyone to be reminded how unsafe this aircraft is :

Ditched 6 times in the last 8 years

65 people have been rescued from the Sea

33 souls lost forever

### **The Airbus Survey**

The CAA announcement was linked to the questionable Airbus survey, a survey whose results Airbus do not want made public and which will ultimately show what we already know.....**workers do not want to fly in these aircraft.**

Unite understands that over 4000 workers took the time to complete the survey. These numbers show the depth of feeling on this issue.

Unite will be pushing for the results of this to be shared for all offshore workers to see and we repeat the call by the Offshore Co-ordinating Group (OCG) that an independent body be appointed to produce a report on those findings.

## The time for action is now

Unite is now firmly of the opinion that the time for talk and debate on how and when these may be returned to service is over. No more surveys on the 'Super Puma' from any organisation, no matter how carefully worded or spun, will change the fundamental issue that it is unsafe to fly on the 'Super Pumas'.

Unite are backing the view of the workforce that these aircraft have to be permanently removed from service in the UKCS.

Unite has been running a petition on this issue and the petition has been backed by thousands of offshore workers. The petition was taken to the Scottish Parliament by Unite offshore shop stewards and 19 MSP's signed the petition.

Lewis MacDonald, MP has also tabled a motion on the issue on behalf of offshore workers.

## Protecting our members

Unite will continue to put pressure on the operators to scrap these helicopters but every Unite member may in the future face a choice should an operator bring these back into service.

Unite continues to be asked if **'They will back members who refuse to fly?'** The answer is of course Yes but full legal protection and legal backing may only be achievable if the refusal to fly is covered by an industrial dispute which will require a legal ballot of members.

Unite at this stage is looking to consult our members via an electronic secure ballot on this issue. The question you will be asked is below :

***'Would you, if required, support a legal ballot of members calling for action against any re-introduction of the 225 super puma and in defence of any worker or groups of workers who refused to fly on a 225 super puma aircraft?'***

We want all our members to think about the consequences and required outcomes that would be needed to protect members who refuse to fly. For industrial action to be taken over 50% of those balloted must vote. This 50% threshold has previously stopped Unite members taking action in the OCA and some areas of COTA.

Protection of members who refuse to fly may only be achievable if we can get over the 50% threshold on a legal industrial action ballot.

We must begin to prepare for the inevitable fights ahead as some operators may look to introduce these again if they feel the workforce will accept it.

The first steps in doing this is for Unite to consult its membership. Unite is proud to be a membership led union and we want to hear your voice on this.

The consultation ballot will be sent to you electronically if we have your email address on our records, by post if we do not. You will receive a unique ID number which will allow you to vote. Further details will be included in the email/letter. This is a secure vote and cannot be manipulated.

Its time now to put words into action.

## A risk to far

Much debate on this topic has and will centre around what is deemed to be an acceptable risk. Risk assessments are designed to eliminate and mitigate risks that can occur in work. The offshore industry makes much headlines promoting its Health and Safety objectives and Unite welcomes initiatives to protect workers.

If you are risk assessing the 'Super Puma' and looking to eliminate risk then surely the only decision that eliminates the risk of flying on these aircraft is to permanently ground them, take them out of service and end any uncertainty.

A workers life is not a variable that can be calculated into a formulae that may or may not decide the fate of a discredited aircraft. **How many lives does it take before something stops becoming an unacceptable risk?**

## People not profits

The rush to bring these aircraft back can only be for commercial reasons and profit. There are alternative aircrafts available and investment needed. If the industry truly believes in protecting its workforce and eliminating risk then the operators should be bold enough to join together and commission a fleet that is fit for purpose in 2017 and for the future.

## Remember the dead but fight for the living

Unite has a proud record of campaigning and fighting for improvements in health and safety. We are clear in our commitment to supporting our members who do not want to fly on these aircraft. We now want you to have your say and tell us if you would support action if it was needed.

With your backing Unite will use all of its industrial and campaigning strength to support and fight for our members in this campaign.

Should a decision be made to return these aircraft to the UKCS then Unite will discuss all options up to and including legally balloting our members on action to halt the reintroduction.

## Join Unite and get protected

If you are not a member of Unite then now is the time to join and ensure you can have your say in this issue and consultative ballot.

Its now the time to join to ensure your rights are protected going forward. More workers joining Unite will send another message to the operators that workers are serious about their safety and are prepared to fight for it.

Unite is the Offshore Trade Union that is taking this and other issues head on with support from our membership.

**Don't let your safety be decided by someone else, Join Unite today and be part of the campaign to end the Super Puma in the UKCS for good.**

# Frontline—Your Unite, Your Views

As our members are well aware the Organising Team at Unite can often be seen outside the Heliports at Dyce. Most recently we have been supporting the Back Home Safe 2017 Campaign, Unite's campaign to have the Airbus Superpumas H225 and AS332 L2 permanently removed from the service of transporting offshore workers.

In support of this call we have been talking face to face with offshore workers about the potential return of the Super Pumas and asking them to sign the Back Home Safe 2017 petition.

**Pat Rafferty, Unite Regional Secretary :**

*"The response to the petition has been at once positive and overwhelming. The Unite Organising Team have found that offshore workers are prepared to queue up to sign the petition, despite being on a tight schedule and the fact that any delay to their check in time delays when they start getting paid.*

*"During hundreds of conversations it has become abundantly clear how the offshore workforce feels about the potential return of the Super Pumas. To say there is a mixture of real anger and a good degree of fear would be an understatement. Nothing has evoked the same visceral response as the prospect of having to climb back into one of these choppers"*

## **Some quotes from Offshore Workers on the potential return of the Super Pumas:**

"I will not be getting back on one of those [Super Pumas] again. They can send me for a psych evaluation. I'll go off long term with work related stress. It's not happening." – **Offshore contractor mobilising to a BP installation.**

"It's all about the money, everyone knows that. We've done without them [the Super Pumas] while they've been banned. The only reason to bring them back is that the companies see them as workhorses that can save on running costs and boost profits." – **Offshore Contractor mobilising to a Repsol installation.**

"Here give me some of those [asking for paper copies of the Back Home Safe 2017 petition to take offshore]. All the lads will sign that." - **Catering Contractor mobilising to an EnQuest installation.**

"Never again." (The closing remark by a member who recounted to us that he had been on the inbound Super Puma flight to the BP Miller fields in 2009. The return flight crashed into the North Sea following a catastrophic mechanical failure. All 16 people on board we killed.)

What are your thoughts on the potential return of the Super Pumas? We want to publish as many views as possible. If you would like to send us a quote but would like to remain anonymous that is fine, just let us know.

Send your views to: [offshoreunite@gmail.com](mailto:offshoreunite@gmail.com)

You can follow our campaign on Facebook 'Back Home Safe' and on twitter @BackHomeSafe



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