



**Aberdeen &
Grampian
Chamber of
Commerce**

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Dear Ms Khan

I write in relation to a press release your organisation Uplift published on 16 January which claimed that 'Scots largely oppose new oil and gas drilling' and that some news publications covered.

The basis for this claim was a poll that Uplift commissioned but as is normal, transparent and standard practice, you chose not to attach the data set on which this claim was supposedly founded.

Indeed, it took your own organisation some four days before it attached a link to the data set on its website, and it is instantly apparent why you sought to suppress this information.

The question posed to garner this headline (attached below for ease of reference) invited responders to opt for one of three statements as a preferred answer. The one you chose to publish and anchor your 'story' on was, by even the most generous reading of it, leading and significantly qualified.

However, of even graver concern, Uplift chose not to reference or publish the two other posed statements within this question. Had you done so it would have revealed that only 8% of the Scottish public oppose drilling if it costs oil and gas jobs in the short term. As we both know that is exactly what is happening across the sector just now, with the Robert Gordon University highlighting, from 2023 to 2024 alone, the UK oil and gas workforce declined by 5,000 jobs.

It is hugely regrettable that by partially publishing an answer (that is already significantly qualified), Uplift has sought to misrepresent public opinion on an issue of critical importance to Scotland and the UK's job, energy and economic security.

It is vital that we rely on facts for the basis of any debate concerning the future of our energy industry. So, in that very spirit, let me furnish you with some key facts:

- According to latest data from the Office for National Statistics, the UK spent more than £50bn on oil imports in 2024 and over £14bn on gas.
<https://www.ons.gov.uk/economy/nationalaccounts/balanceofpayments/bulletins/uktrade/november2025>
- Latest annual Digest of UK Energy Statistics figures from the UK Government show North Sea oil and gas production is at its lowest level on record.
https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/68dbe477ef1c2f72bc1e4c4d/DUKES_2025_Chapters_1-7.pdf
- This is despite the NSTA regulator highlighting proven and probable reserves of 2.9 billion barrels of oil equivalent in the UK Continental Shelf, with significant discovered but undeveloped resources of 6.2bn barrels of oil equivalent.
<https://www.nsta.co.uk/news-publications/reserves-and-resources-as-at-end-2024/>



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The biggest frustration of the majority of the Chamber's members is that energy policy has become so politicised with organisations such as Uplift seemingly hell bent on pitting oil and gas against renewables.

Our position is one of common-sense and pragmatism. This is not a binary and/or situation - very few countries in this world are blessed with an abundance of hydrocarbons and renewables. We should embrace them both and ensure the former is an enabler of the latter.

I hope you will reflect on this letter and issue an apology for Uplift's ill-judged and misleading intervention which has only served to antagonise many of the pioneering supply chain businesses the UK will rely on to accelerate renewables when they are available commercially and at scale.

These are very same businesses I would be delighted to introduce you to on your next scheduled trip from London to Aberdeen if you truly wish to understand the views of our world-class energy industry.

Yours sincerely

Russell Borthwick
Chief Executive



	Which of the following statements is closest to your view on what the Scottish Government should do when it comes to North Sea oil and gas drilling?				
	Unweighted total		Total		Male
			A	B	
Unweighted total	2341		2341		1009
Total	2341	2342	100%	1128	100%
Oppose new drilling to protect future generations, communities, and nature, even if it costs oil and gas jobs in the short term	184	188	8%	70	6%
Support new drilling to protect jobs now, even if it worsens climate change, harming communities, nature, and future generations	852	810	35%	530	47% B
Oppose new drilling and invest in creating jobs in Scotland's clean energy industries to protect future generations	1305	1344	57%	527	47% A
				817	67% A

Scots largely oppose new oil and gas drilling

The majority of Scots want to see the nation end its reliance on fossil fuels and make the most of its immense renewables resources.

- New research on Scotland's energy future found that **57%** of Scots think the Scottish Government should oppose oil and gas production in favour of **clean energy**.
- Younger Scots in particular do not support new oil and gas drilling, with **three in every four** prioritising renewable energy over further fossil fuel production.
- Even in **North East Scotland** - home to Aberdeen's oil industry - **almost half** of those surveyed oppose new oil and gas drilling.
- **Two thirds** would like to see the Scottish Government deliver a **robust plan for the energy transition**, with many already considering them to be **behind the curve**.

Thursday 15th January 2026- The majority of Scots oppose new oil and gas drilling according to new research conducted by *Diffley Partnership* and commissioned by *Uplift*.

The survey, which explored attitudes toward the country's energy future, found that most people in Scotland (**57%**) support the move away from oil and gas production in favour of investing in clean energy.

The figures among younger people are even more striking. The vast majority of Scots under 35 - **three out of every four** polled - oppose new drilling in order to prioritise renewables.

Even in North East Scotland, home to Aberdeen's oil industry, **almost half** of those surveyed oppose new drilling and consider climate change a key priority for the next Scottish Government.

Nearly two thirds (**63%**) consider energy to be one of the most important issues facing Scotland today.

Support for renewables among younger Scots is not just driven by concern about climate change. A clear majority (**61%**) of under 35s – those with the most working years ahead of them – believe clean energy industries will provide the most job opportunities for Scotland's energy workers **over the coming years**.

With energy set to dominate the lead up to next year's Holyrood election and conflict over oil resources once again causing global instability, pressure is on Scotland's politicians to ensure the nation benefits from the shift to renewables.

While energy policy is **largely reserved to the UK Government**, many of the levers for delivering a **successful transition** are devolved.



Most Scots, however, do not believe the Scottish Government has taken enough action to boost jobs in renewable energy, with **more than one in four (27%)** saying it has **completely failed to use the powers it has**.

Overwhelmingly, respondents of the survey showed that they back a **clear government-led plan for the North Sea transition**. Over two thirds of voters want to see the next Scottish Government deliver a plan for the transition to renewables now – with a third of Scots (34%) considering this to be **ten years too late**, given the years of decline in oil and gas production.

While Scotland is yet to experience many of the benefits of a clean energy transition, **two thirds (63%)** believe it offers the best route to a secure and affordable energy supply, compared to **just one quarter (26%)** who think this will come from more oil and gas drilling.

Commenting, Tessa Khan, executive director at Uplift said:

“Scotland’s voters are clear - they want an end to drilling and instead a complete focus on creating clean energy jobs in Scotland to protect future generations. They want a step change from the government, not more tinkering.

“It would be a tragedy if election debates were dominated by fossil fuel executives lobbying to hold back the transition to protect their profits, when people clearly want politicians focused on the real job: building a renewable energy industry Scotland can be proud of and delivering good, secure clean energy jobs for workers, especially younger people.

“Next year’s election is voters’ chance to demand more ambition and action from politicians on clean energy - not more delay.”

Professor Keith Bender of the Just Transition Lab at the University of Aberdeen said:

“This survey shows that Scots strongly support the shift to clean energy. Now they need to see the government reward them for their faith and have the government start delivering on this transition in a way that includes all stakeholders.”

“The North East, in particular, cannot wait another decade before politicians choose to act.

“The Scottish Government has powers to affect change, whether that’s developing clear plans, making strategic investments in supply chains, or ensuring a clear path for oil and gas workers into quality renewables jobs. There is no time like the present to put these plans into action.”

Note to Editors

Survey of 2352 Scots conducted by [Diffley Partnership](#) and commissioned by [Uplift](#) from 26th November to the 1st December 2025.

Invitations were issued online using the ScotPulse panel.

About Uplift

Uplift is a research and campaigning organisation advocating for a rapid and fair transition away from oil and gas production in the UK.