

Jeremy Miles MS
Cabinet Secretary for Economy, Energy and
Welsh Language

24 May 2024

Annwyl Jeremy,

Tata Steel UK

At our Committee meeting on 9 May regarding our green economy I was surprised to hear from skills providers that many Tata employees work on licences that are only valid on Tata property for example, an internal Tata forklift licence which is not recognised by external employers. This means that whilst someone may be a skilled forklift driver with decades of experience they cannot get a job doing this work elsewhere unless they upgrade to a certificate from a Health and Safety Executive approved accrediting body. I also note that forklift training is specifically mentioned as being provided under Welsh Government skills support to Tata staff in the 2019 review.

ColegauCymru told us they were working to map the skills gained at Tata across to widely recognised qualifications so the workers at risk of redundancy could use their skills with other employers. Whilst I was pleased to hear workers are receiving support, this situation is far from ideal. I expect those having to obtain new certification for a skill they are already proficient in will find this process frustrating. I am also concerned this might mean the public purse is essentially paying for this inefficiency, having to fund two presumably nearly identical qualifications for these workers.

As part of their evidence on 9 May ColegauCymru also told us "*communication [to the Tata workforce] is not great. We can't do it by ourselves. And that's not pointing the finger at the FE [Further Education] sector or the Welsh Government; it's got to be a collective thing. I spoke to over 100 Tata employees last week, when we held the first career event with a number of training providers there. I'd*



say that nearly all of them didn't even have a clue what the PLA [Personal Learning Account] was, and they were all coming in saying, 'Are we eligible for any help?' There's so much help available, but they don't know that." They went on to say that greater collaboration is required, and that all of those involved share the blame for this as "we're the ones delivering the training, but sometimes we can't get past those gates, we can't get there". They said that "People need to stop being so protective, I think, and just allow people in to communicate what is available to people, because people aren't aware."

I note in our session on 7 February your predecessor told the Committee the Welsh Government was *"happy to carry on supporting and investing in the skills of the workforce for a transition that could take place, and, if there are people that move into different sectors, then there are other parts of the economy that are growing that would want some of those workers, and the challenge then, I think, is about relative wage levels."*

Ongoing skills support for both retraining those laid off and to support workers who will continue to be employed at the plant in the new skills they will need is vital. However, it is important any skills support provided by the public sector is done so collaboratively and is transferable to ensure those receiving the support can freely choose where to utilise their skills and to ensure a repeat of this situation does not occur.

Please can you let me know your thoughts on the matter, including addressing the following points:

- How are the Welsh Government and other organisations working proactively to ensure that Tata workers at risk of redundancy are aware of the support that is available?
- Are there any challenges in securing access to the workforce to highlight the support available to them?
- Is the skills support for those at risk of redundancy being provided in a collaborative way, if not how can this be improved?
- Were there any requirements attached to Welsh Government skills funding, for example that any certification for courses should be widely recognised outside of Tata?
- Will there be any requirements attached to future skills funding both for Tata and more widely that certification must be widely recognised – not just usable in house?

I look forward to your considered response on these pressing issues.

Cofion cynnes,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Paul Davies". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial 'P' and 'D'.

Paul Davies MS

Chair: Economy, Trade and Rural Affairs Committee

We welcome correspondence in Welsh or English



Senedd Cymru
Welsh Parliament