



# Closing the skills gap for HV electricians in offshore wind

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As the UK's offshore wind industry surges ahead with ambitious targets, the sector's most pressing challenge is not just technological, it's human. The race to build, connect and maintain vast offshore wind farms depends on a steady pipeline of skilled professionals. Nowhere is this more evident than in the recruitment of electricians and high-voltage (HV) cable jointers: two roles that are critical to the sector's success, yet increasingly difficult to fill.

Recruitment in offshore wind is no longer a simple matter of matching CVs to vacancies. It's about guiding candidates through a labyrinth of training requirements, supporting them as they navigate certification hurdles and ensuring they're truly 'offshore ready.' For recruiters, employers and candidates alike, understanding this journey and the barriers along the way has never been more important.

The UK is a global leader in offshore wind, with more than 14 GW of installed capacity and a government target of 50 GW by 2030. This expansion is creating tens of thousands of new jobs, from turbine technicians to project managers. But behind the headlines lies a stark reality: the sector faces a significant skills shortage, particularly in specialist roles such as electricians and HV cable jointers.

Industry forecasts suggest the UK will need to recruit around 70,000 new offshore wind workers by 2030. Globally, the shortage of skilled wind technicians is expected to reach 6-8% by 2028. For recruitment specialists with over 30 years of experience like Mane Energy, this means a fiercely competitive

market for talent, with companies vying to attract, train and retain the best people.

## **The recruitment challenge: finding the right people**

Recruiting for offshore wind is unlike any other sector. It demands a unique blend of technical expertise, safety awareness and adaptability. For electricians and HV cable jointers, the stakes are even higher: these professionals are responsible for the safe installation, connection and maintenance of the electrical systems that power entire wind farms.

What makes recruitment so challenging? First, the candidate pool is limited. Offshore work is physically demanding, often requiring time away from home and the ability to work in challenging conditions. Second, the technical requirements are stringent. Employers are looking for candidates who not only have the right qualifications but also the right mindset: people who thrive in a safety-critical, team-oriented environment.

The reality is that, for many roles, there simply aren't enough qualified candidates to go

around. This leads to intense competition between employers, rising salaries and, in some cases, project delays as companies struggle to fill key positions. Experienced energy sector recruiters like Mane Energy, with networks spanning five continents, are working to address these challenges daily.

### Training and certification: the candidate journey

One of the biggest hurdles in offshore wind recruitment is the complex landscape of training and certification. Before a candidate can set foot on a turbine platform, they must complete a series of mandatory courses and obtain industry-recognised qualifications.

The essentials include:

- Global Wind Organisation (GWO) Basic Safety Training (BST): This suite of courses covers manual handling, fire awareness, first aid, working at heights and sea survival. It's the baseline requirement for anyone working offshore.
- GWO Basic Technical Training (BTT): For electricians and HV cable jointers, this adds modules in electrical, mechanical, hydraulic and installation skills.
- High-voltage training: HV cable jointers need specialist training in handling and connecting cables at 33 kV, 66 kV, or even higher voltages. In the UK, this may include EUSR registration, City & Guilds qualifications or manufacturer-specific courses.
- Medical requirements: Candidates must pass an OGUK medical and, often, a Chester Step Test to demonstrate fitness for offshore work.

Each of these requirements represents a potential barrier for candidates. Training courses can be expensive and time consuming and not all are available in every region. For those coming from outside the wind sector, or from overseas, navigating the UK's certification landscape can be daunting.

### Barriers to entry: cost, access and recognition

From a recruitment perspective, the biggest obstacles are often practical. Many candidates are deterred by the upfront cost of training. GWO courses alone can run into the thousands of pounds. Access to approved training centres can also be a challenge, especially for those living outside major cities.

Recognition of overseas qualifications is another sticking point. While the GWO standard is increasingly adopted worldwide, there can still be discrepancies in how certifications are recognised between countries. This can slow down the recruitment process and limit the pool of available talent.

For recruiters, supporting candidates through these hurdles is essential. It's not enough to simply advertise vacancies; companies must be proactive in helping candidates access training, understand requirements and transition into the sector.

Global energy recruitment specialists with multilingual capabilities are particularly well-positioned to help international candidates navigate these complexities.

### Supporting candidates: best practice in recruitment

The most successful recruitment strategies in offshore wind are those that put candidate support at the heart of the process. Leading firms like Mane Energy have found this means:

- Clear communication: Providing detailed information about required certifications, timelines and costs from the outset.
- Partnerships with training providers: Working closely with accredited centres to secure places for candidates and, where possible, negotiate group rates or discounts.
- Funding and sponsorship: Some employers offer to cover the cost of training for promising candidates or provide loans that are repaid once employment begins. This can be a powerful incentive for those considering a move into offshore wind.
- Guidance and mentoring: Assigning mentors or 'buddies' to new recruits can help them navigate the certification process and settle into offshore life.

By investing in candidate support, companies not only widen the talent pool but also improve retention, as candidates who feel supported are more likely to stay and progress within the sector.

### Retaining talent and building careers

Recruitment doesn't end with a signed contract. Retaining skilled electricians and HV cable jointers is just as important as attracting them in the first place. Here, ongoing training and clear career pathways are key.

- Upskilling: The offshore wind sector is constantly evolving, with new technologies and higher voltage systems coming online. Regular upskilling ensures that workers remain competent and confident in their roles.
- Career progression: Offering structured pathways, from entry-level technician to specialist or supervisory roles, helps retain talent and motivates employees to stay within the sector.
- Diversity and inclusion: A diverse workforce brings fresh perspectives and innovation. Companies that actively promote diversity and create inclusive environments are more likely to attract and retain top talent.

### Looking ahead: collaboration and innovation in recruitment

No single company can solve the offshore wind skills gap alone. Industry-wide collaboration is essential to standardise training, share best practice and create a sustainable pipeline of talent. At Mane Energy, our recruitment specialists have observed that the most effective approaches include:

- Shared training hubs: Regional training centres, supported by multiple employers, can reduce costs and improve access for candidates.
- Apprenticeships and outreach: Engaging with schools, colleges and community groups helps raise awareness of offshore wind careers and attract new entrants.
- Promoting the sector: Offshore wind offers exciting, well paid careers with a positive impact on the environment. More needs to be done to communicate this message and inspire the next generation.

As the UK strives to meet its offshore wind ambitions, recruitment and training are more than just operational necessities; they are the engine driving the sector's success. For electricians and HV cable jointers, the journey from candidate to offshore professional is challenging, but with the right support, it's also highly rewarding.

By investing in people, through clear recruitment processes, accessible training and ongoing development, the offshore wind industry can build the skilled, resilient workforce it needs for a sustainable future. The challenge is great, but so too is the opportunity.

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#### About the Author

Dragana Tomic is a Senior Consultant at Mane Energy with extensive experience in energy sector recruitment.

Fluent in English, Croatian and Serbian, with a working knowledge of German, Dragana specialises in connecting skilled professionals with opportunities in offshore wind across Europe.

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