

# Asda Distribution (ALS) Noticeboard

Last update: 26 Jun 2023

## Latest Bulletins

### GMB CONVENIENCE SURVEY

Posted on: 26 June 2023

Dear GMB transport members,

Thank you for completing the recent convenience surveys, conducted by your local representatives.

Your assistance in raising experiences & concerns has been vital to ensuring we can challenge ASDA on the issues that matter to you.

The feedback that you gave was raised and fully discussed between the NJC committee and NSSF Transport members at a specially convened meeting on the 4<sup>th</sup> May.

From this meeting a comprehensive list of points covering health, safety, training & company policy has been generated and we have begun to address these issues directly with ASDA.

The starting point of the discussions with the company has been to ensure that we have a Risk Assessment process that is robust and consistent.

We also felt it necessary to have an escalation process if there is a difference of opinion on necessary control measures. We can report that a two-stage escalation process has now been agreed.

We have also agreed framework to periodically review Risk Assessments to ensure consistency across the network.



**All the above will be rolled out in joint training for GMB Transport representatives and Trainer Managers.**

The concern most frequently highlighted within **your** survey feedback was cage weight and we can report that we have successfully negotiated with the company to reduce the weight of cages for convenience deliveries, from a maximum of: 450kg (509 kg including the weight of the cage) down to 320kg (379kg including the weight of the cage).

This is a reduction of 25% and is consistent with best practice within the convenience sector.

The above agreements are the first steps to resolving the issues that you have highlighted, and we will continue to keep you updated as we work through the points that you have raised.

Thank you for your continued support.

## **Your NJC Stewards Committee**

### **ASDA MERGER WITH EG GROUP PETROL STATIONS**



**Posted on: 30 May 2023**

Dear GMB member,

Today, ASDA have announced they are to merge with EG Group petrol stations. Essentially this is an ASDA buy out of over 300 EG Group's UK petrol stations.

The GMB is primarily concerned about the impact of this on our members' jobs and conditions.

GMB has been negotiating with ALS for several months around the introduction of 'convenience' stores, with ALS drivers now being increasingly asked to deliver to Asda on the move petrol stations and ASDA express (convenience) stores. This will continue in the months ahead.

The feedback from our members on this relates to concerns around changes to the job of a driver and ensuring robust health and safety measures are in place to protect our members.

GMB will be meeting ALS senior management in the coming weeks and months to further discuss the impact of the merger. GMB is anticipating further proposed changes, but we do not know, at this stage, what that may look like.



As always, you will be fully consulted and communicated with throughout these discussions with your union always keeping the protection of your jobs and conditions at the forefront of our campaigning activity.

Your NJC reps will shortly be sending out further communication in relation to the convenience deliveries and pallet heights.

Thanks, as always, for your continued support.

In solidarity,

**Nadine Houghton**

**NATIONAL OFFICER**

## CONVENIENCE STORES



**Posted on: 27 March 2023**

Dear GMB member,

We wanted to take the opportunity to inform you of the ongoing discussions that have been taking place between your GMB representatives and senior ASDA management about the increase to cage only deliveries.

As you will be aware one of the main objectives for ASDA is to move from Britain's 3<sup>rd</sup> largest retailer to Britain's 2<sup>nd</sup> largest, currently occupied by Sainsbury's. One of the key enablers to achieve this has been identified as ASDA's expansion into the convenience sector.

ASDA, together with EG Group have rapidly started converting EG PFS stores from other 3<sup>rd</sup> party retailers into ASDA on the move stores and started to open new ASDA Convenience offerings to the public.

While this has increased the amount of work available to ASDA core drivers it has also brought about new challenges in the way we evaluate and manage risks and we are currently working through this with senior ASDA management team.

We will shortly be taking time to speak with each transport member through a specific 'convenience' consultation and we encourage you to take this opportunity to give your views to your Transport Stewards.



Thank you for your continued support.

**Your NJC committee**

## **1.8m PALLET HEIGHTS**



**Posted on: 27 March 2023**

Dear GMB member,

During our most recent NSSF meeting the subject of pallet heights was discussed. Your senior GMB stewards raised concerns about the safety of pallets, particularly in relation to them exceeding the 1.8m rule.

During those conversations it was noted that the company have made comment that there is a formal agreement with the NJC over the current interpretation of measuring the height of a pallet.

As a result of this communication a request was made for the NJC to confirm our opinion on what the most recent agreement is.

For absolute clarity – the staff side NJC have not agreed that the way of measuring a pallet should be from the floor to the bottom of the top box.

In our view the only way of measuring any pallet safely is from the floor to the highest point which should not exceed 1.8m in total. Your NJC has not agreed to training material or risk assessments being changed where the measurement of pallet heights is referenced – but we note, this is something that the company have done without our agreement.

A meeting has been requested and agreed between GMB NJC staff side, our National Officer with the assistance of Dan Shears and representatives of the company to address this matter.

Your NJC are deeply concerned about some of the pallet heights we are seeing across the network and we are working hard to resolve this issue for the safety of our members.

We will update you on further developments as they progress. Thank you for your continued support.

**Your NJC committee**



## GMB – ASDA ALS Pay 2023 Ballot Results



Posted on: 21 March 2023

Dear GMB member,

I'm pleased to announce that this year's pay offer has been overwhelmingly accepted by GMB members.

The results of the GMB ballot are:

**89% Accept**

**11% Reject**

The pay award would not have been possible were it not for the hard work of our GMB reps, thank you once again for all that you do for GMB members.

There is still much to talk about this year, not least the driver convenience piece and the potential changes this could have for drivers. A full consultation with our driver members on this issue will begin in the coming weeks.

Thanks again for your continued support.

**Nadine Houghton, GMB National Officer and the ALS NJC negotiating team**

## ASDA ALS PAY 2023 – PAY OFFER & BALLOT



Posted on: 23 February 2023

Dear GMB member,

Your GMB negotiating committee has been engaged in extensive negotiations with Asda over the past 4 months with a view to reaching an agreement on a pay deal in time for the May 2023 pay anniversary.



We are pleased to say we have now concluded those negotiations and have an offer to recommend to GMB members.

The offer is:

- 8% across base pay and all other elements.
- £16ph for drivers in Band C (Lymedale / North East and Yorkshire / North West / Scotland).

The GMB ballot will open on the 6<sup>th</sup> March closing midday on the 20<sup>th</sup> March. GMB are recommending acceptance of the offer. This means that, if accepted by our members, over the last two pay rounds GMB has secured pay rises in ALS of between 16 and 21%. This comes with no loss of terms and conditions and has been achieved purely because of the hard work of your local reps.

As we look forward to the rest of the year one of our key campaigning priorities will be around Asda's move into convenience and the impact this will have on our driver members. We will be undertaking a full and thorough consultation on this issue with our driver members in the coming weeks and months and look forward to getting your views on this.

We have also had the issue of pallet heights raised with us following the company's response to a grievance raised by our reps in Washington. This is something we will be meeting with the company around urgently and will provide you with feedback as soon as we have it.

In solidarity,

**Nadine Houghton, GMB National Officer and your GMB Negotiating Team**

## **ASDA ALS – 2023 PAY NEGOTIATIONS UPDATE**



**Posted on: 16 January 2023**

Dear GMB members,

We all know that last year's pay negotiations were incredibly challenging. This year, I'm pleased to say that Asda are showing a commitment to reaching a deal in time for the May pay anniversary.

There is, however, still a long way to go in negotiations, but the tone of discussions has been positive.



We know how challenging it is to make ends meet at the moment and I want you to be assured that negotiations are taking place in an attempt to secure a deal that protects our members during this cost-of-living crisis.

It is the hard work of our reps and members in last year's pay round that has led to Asda taking a more proactive approach this year and I want to thank all of you for the part you played in that. Every member has a part to play in achieving a decent pay rise and you demonstrated your ability to do that last year, hopefully making this year's pay round much smoother.

In solidarity,

**Nadine Houghton, GMB National Officer and your GMB Negotiating Team**

## **GMB Health & Safety Meeting With Asda – Delivery To Asda On The Move And Asda Convenience Stores**



**Posted on: 6 January 2023**

Dear GMB members in ALS transport,

Your NJC reps met with Asda on the 6<sup>th</sup> December following immediate health and safety concerns we had regarding drivers delivering to Asda on the move and Asda convenience stores.

The specific health and safety concerns related to insufficient risk assessments being carried out and drivers being asked to deliver into the shops, moving cages over forecourts, pavements etc.

GMB recognises that moving into a convenience offering will be part of Asda's future, particularly under the new owners. Whilst this is something we want to work with Asda on, there are conditions that we expect to be met. Our key demands in relation to this work are:

- That Asda ensures the work can be done safely.
- That the work is properly compensated.
- That drivers who are unable to do this work are adequately protected.
- That drivers are given the right tools for the job.



The GMB believes this work represents a significant change to your current working practices. The manual handling required, the movement of cages and the increased requirement for the driver to work outside of the normal working arrangement of delivering into a safe 'drop zone' represent changes to your current roles.

This is an issue that currently impacts CDC drivers, but we expect will be rolled out nationally in the coming months.

We have a follow up meeting with ALS Vice President, Chris Hall, in the coming weeks, after which we will be reviewing our options with regards to taking this issue forward.

In the meantime, if you are a CDC driver with specific concerns about this work, please speak to your local rep in the first instance.

We will update you following our meeting with Chris.

Many thanks.

**NADINE HOUGHTON**

**GMB NATIONAL OFFICER FOR ALS**

## Previous Bulletins

### **Noticeboard Bulletin - 01-12-2022**



**Posted on: 1 December 2022**

Dear GMB member,

The GMB met with Asda on the 29th and 30th November to hold good faith negotiations over our members pay claim.

Asda failed to make an offer at these talks.

Nearly 6 months into the labour shortages and cost of living crisis and Asda continue to fail our members.





This is an insult.

Asda's employees have kept Asda profitable throughout the pandemic, you have faithfully worked as key workers coming into work when many were safely at home.

You are now facing a cost of living crisis with food and bills going through the roof. Asda should be taking steps to ensure your pay remains 'fair'. So far, they have failed to do this.

While competitors put their hands in their pockets to reward and keep their staff, Asda maintain that the coffers are empty when it comes to workers pay.

GMB members will not tolerate this, and we are now balloting our members on 0% and asking if you want to be balloted for industrial action.

***The GMB recommends you vote to reject the 0% and vote yes to begin a formal ballot for industrial action.***

This is not yet a formal industrial action ballot but is the first step in preparing for one.

The ballot will open on **Friday the 3rd December and close on Monday 20th December.**

Your senior stewards will consider next steps in the first week of January.

Thanks for your continued support.

In solidarity,

**Nadine Houghton**

**GMB National Officer**

**Date: 09/11/2021**

Dear GMB member,

You will know that the GMB submitted an early pay claim due to the current labour market conditions and cost of living crisis.

Asda initially made it clear they did not want to consider an early pay claim and were only willing to talk about pay for May 2022.

The GMB held constructive talks with Asda yesterday (8th November) where the NJC asked Asda, as per our pay claim, to make an offer that covers all groups of staff.



This morning (9th November) Asda have given a commitment to making an early pay offer for ALL groups of staff. The GMB has no idea whether this offer will come anywhere near to meeting our members expectations and ultimately any decision on this will be made by our members.

Asda have committed to making this offer at talks on the 29 / 30th November at Asda House.

We do not, at this stage, believe members should have high expectations on a potential offer and we remain of the view that members must still be prepared to fight for a decent pay increase.

However, we believe this is the start of positive steps in the right direction and we will continue to negotiate with Asda in good faith.

We will continue to keep you updated.

**Nadine Houghton**

**GMB National Officer**

**Date: 04/11/2021**

Dear GMB member,

Your negotiating team will meet Asda management on Monday to discuss pay. If no offer is made to the GMB we will ballot you in an indicative ballot on 0%.

You will all be aware the reasons why GMB are asking for this rise ahead of our normal pay anniversary, but I wanted to provide you with some of the information I have sent to Asda to support our pay claim:

1. Asda's agency and haulage costs are far higher than average - a decent pay increase will reduce the need to rely on external labour.
2. Asda's staff turnover is far higher than usual - the market is now much more competitive, and Asda need to respond to keep hold of loyal, long serving staff and attract new workers.
3. Agency rates of pay are becoming excessive - reflecting how tight the labour market is and what a commodity logistics labour currently is and how reliant Asda are on it.
4. RPI is currently 4.8% but the cost of living could in fact be far higher particularly with interest rates, food and fuel costs continuing to rise.



5. The national minimum wage is rising to £9:50 per hour, an increase of 6.5% – eroding further the differential between the lowest warehouse rates of pay and the NMW.
6. In 2020 Asda gave their directors a 38.8% pay increase with total remuneration at £9.3 million. Asda Group reported an operating profit of £486 million.
7. Basic hourly earnings in warehousing and transport are now £12.94ph (up 6.7% from last year) A base rate of £11.08 ph is now in the bottom 40% of the warehousing and storage industries pay distribution. (according to the latest ONS statistics.)
8. Pay increases in similar employers vary from 6.2 to as much as 35%.
9. Asda have chosen to ignore the union and offer an incentive payment to drivers only which is not fit for purpose.

We will keep you updated on the outcome of our negotiations on Monday and if necessary, our ballot will commence on Wednesday 10<sup>th</sup> November 2021.

In solidarity,

**Nadine Houghton and the NJC**

**Date: 28/10/2021**

Your senior stewards have concluded the first face to face NSSF meeting since lockdown. The NSSF were completely united in a clear strategy to win on pay.

We know how important the issue of pay is to our members and we are now ready to move forward – nationally and, most importantly, together.

The key points agreed unanimously at the NSSF are:

- The GMB meets with Asda on the 8<sup>th</sup> of November to discuss pay.
- Asda have previously stated that one-off driver payments have addressed any issues with driver pay and there is no appetite from the company to bring forward the pay award.
- If Asda fail to make an offer on the 8th, the GMB will conduct an indicative ballot on 0% and ask our members if they want to move forward with a formal ballot for industrial



action.

- The GMB have submitted a failure to agree regards the driver payments because they bypassed the GMB in making them and they are not fit for purpose.
- The GMB has written to Asda to ask for further information on recruitment, retention and agency and haulage costs. To date we have had no response to this.
- The GMB has raised a collective grievance regarding wage queries, we have not received a satisfactory response to this and will now have to be included in any potential dispute over pay.

You will receive continued communication regarding the next steps and an immediate update following our meeting with the company on the 8th November.

The senior stewards are here to lead and guide you, but it is our members that determine the next steps -the power to win only comes from you acting as a collective.

In solidarity,

Nadine Houghton and the GMB NJC.

**Date: 20/10/2021**

Dear GMB members,

I wanted to share with you a letter that I am today sending to Asda's owners - the Issa brothers. The GMB is concerned that saddling Asda with more debt could prove detrimental to our members jobs and conditions. We are seeking an urgent meeting with the Issa brothers to discuss this - and the sale and leaseback of the distribution centres.

Please read below:

*'Dear Mohsin and Zuber Issa*

*I am writing to introduce myself as the new national officer for the GMB responsible for Asda. I'm looking forward to working with you and hope we can begin the relationship in an open and constructive fashion.*

*I am also writing regarding the sale of the petrol forecourts which has fallen through; leaving Asda now saddled with a further £500m of debt.*



*This, on top of the sale and leaseback of the distribution centres, compounds uncertainty about the future stability of our members employment.*

*You will of course be aware of the vital role our members have played throughout the pandemic; you will also know that our members have been through an exceedingly tough time with the imposition of 'Contract 6' in the stores.*

*Distribution and retail workers are now in short supply, and more than any other time, it makes sense to ensure your loyal colleagues feel secure and valued.*

*I hope that you can agree to a meeting with GMB representatives to discuss what the added debt and sale and leaseback of the distribution centres means for the future of Asda's staff and what steps you will be taking to secure our members employment considering the financial circumstances.*

*I look forward to hearing from you.*

*Yours sincerely'*

**NADINE HOUGHTON**

**NATIONAL OFFICER**

**Date: 11/10/2021**

Dear GMB member

As you will know, Asda have refused to negotiate an interim pay award to address the crisis in labour shortages.

They say that GMB cannot bring the pay anniversary forward as it is outside of the bargaining arrangements, despite the extenuating circumstances.

In complete contradiction to this they have bypassed the recognised union to impose a driver payment which is not fit for purpose. Pay - including bonus, should be collectively negotiated.

Considering all of this we have requested a meeting with the company to put forward our case on an early pay increase and to address the issue of imposed driver payments.

We will keep you fully updated on all meetings and next steps.

In the meantime, please talk to your workplace representatives and if you would like to be more involved in fighting for fair pay - please let them know you are happy to help - a union is only as strong as its members.



In solidarity,

**NADINE HOUGHTON**

**NATIONAL OFFICER**

**Date: 05/10/2021**

Dear GMB member,

Following the submission of the GMB's interim pay claim last week, I have written to Asda to request an urgent meeting. I can confirm that, to date, I am yet to have a response with a date to meet.

This comes as we are seeing Asda job adverts for agency drivers offering excessive hourly rates of pay.

Instead of sitting down with the GMB to discuss pay, Asda are rolling out recruitment and retention bonuses and offering increased rates of pay. This will do nothing to quell the groundswell of anger amongst the current workforce.

This approach is leading to a huge amount of ill feeling from staff, with many loyal staff leaving or contemplating leaving. This does not bode well heading into the golden quarter.

The GMB is clear, the current crisis requires decisive action, negotiated with the union. If we do not see commitment from Asda to address this crisis, we will be forced to ask our members what next steps they want to take.

I will keep you updated as soon as I have any further information.

In solidarity,

**NADINE HOUGHTON**

**NATIONAL OFFICER**

**Date: 01/10/2021**

Dear GMB member,

As promised, after consultation with your RJC reps, the GMB is now able to submit a pay claim to Asda.

The pay claim is as follows:



- Pay anniversary to be brought forward to October 1st.
- £2 per hour increase for warehouse and clerical staff
- £4 per hour increase for transport
- Harmonisation of shift premiums

GMB members know this is no less than you deserve. Whether Asda will see it that way remains to be seen.

You will all know why we are making this claim, staff are leaving the business for higher paid jobs elsewhere. The staffing shortage will only grow more acute. Asda must act.

But I want to be very clear with every one of our members, your reps and your lead negotiators will not win this pay increase on your behalf. The only people that have the collective power to make Asda take this claim seriously - are you, the members of our union. It is only by standing together that we can win.

We will keep you updated on next steps in the campaign and how you can take a lead on it in your workplace.

In solidarity,

**Nadine Houghton**

**GMB National Officer**

**Date: 27/09/21**

Dear GMB members,

Just a quick update.

I can confirm that your representatives are in the final stages of agreeing a pay claim to submit to Asda, the claim is in response to the labour shortages being experienced across the country and calls on Asda to get its house in order to stem staff losses as workers take higher paid jobs elsewhere.

As soon as the claim is finalised, we will share this with you.

I have also been told about rumours that the GMB have turned down a £3 per hour pay increase for drivers. Nothing could be further from the truth. The GMB has had no pay offer from the company.



The claim will be submitted imminently, and we expect Asda to get round the table with us urgently before staff losses seriously hamper their operations in the golden quarter.

Many thanks,

**NADINE HOUGHTON**

**NATIONAL OFFICER**

**Date: 20/09/2021**

Dear GMB member,

Today (20th September), GMB reps were informed that the company will be paying a 'welcome payment' to new drivers starting from the 1st October. The payment will total £1,200, paid over 6 pay periods, with the final payment in June 2022. They will also pay a driver retention payment to all drivers who started before October 2021 and are still with the company by April 2022, a total of £1,000 paid in two payments.

I want to be very clear with you that the GMB have not agreed to these payments, we think they are a kick in the teeth for long standing members of staff, particularly after the last derisory pay deal.

The GMB will be submitting a pay claim imminently. It will be a pay claim that calls on Asda to respect all its distribution staff, instead of applying a sticking plaster to a problem and rewarding only a few. Asda's actions are a kick in the teeth for GMB members. There is a staffing crisis and Asda need to act to sustain their operation. Your union will be at the forefront of making the case that Asda need to reward its staff properly to recruit and retain for the long term.

We will agree the pay claim based on feedback from our members and will update you as soon as it's been finalised.

In solidarity,

**NADINE HOUGHTON**

**NATIONAL OFFICER**

**Date: 16/09/2021**

**NATIONAL OFFICER**

Dear GMB member,





First of all I'd like to start by introducing myself as your new national officer for Asda. I'm really looking forward to working with you all - particularly as we push forward on the issue of pay in light of labour shortages and adjustments in the employment market.

It's time for Asda to take action on pay in distribution.

The acute shortage of drivers - and increasingly warehouse workers too, is clear for all to see. With workers being attracted by higher rates of pay, Asda can't afford to sit back and do nothing.

I want to reassure our members that the GMB will not sit back while distribution employers elsewhere continue to offer higher rates of pay - the GMB will act over this issue.

The next steps in this campaign will be determined by our members and we will be communicating with you soon about how you can get involved and have your say on pay.

**Nadine Houghton**

**National Officer**

**6th May 2021**

#### **FAO ALL GMB MEMBERS IN ASDA DISTRIBUTION**

Following the binding arbitration meeting with ACAS we have now received the decision from the arbitrator.

The decision is to find in favour of the company.

We are now in discussions with ASDA on the implementation of the pay increases for 2020 and 2021 and the dates when members can expect their back pay.

A full copy of the ACAS decision is available on the GMB website and is posted below this bulletin.

Thank you for your patience in this matter.

**Roger Jenkins**

**GMB National Officer**

**ADVISORY, CONCILIATION AND ARBITRATION SERVICE Arbitrator's Report And Award**

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**Posted on: 1 December 2021**

**Parties:** Asda Logistics Services (ASL), GMB

**Arbitrator:** Professor Lynette Harris

1. By a minute of Appointment dated 8 April 2021, I was appointed by the Advisory, Conciliation and Arbitration Service to settle a difference reported by the parties with the following terms of reference:

*The arbitrator is asked to make a pay award for May 2020 and May 2021.*

*The arbitrator is asked to make a determination in support of;*

*EITHER*

*The employer's position for the two-year period as follows*

- A two-year deal in respect of 2020 and 2021.*
- Year 1 - 2% total inclusive of 5 depots shift premium harmonization\* – those not in the 5 harmonised depots will receive an increase of 1.77% across all rates. The depots which would receive harmonisation are Washington ADC, Washington CDC, North East Clothing, Brackmills and Teesport). This Year One payment would be backdated to be effective from May 2020.*
- \*Harmonisation would involve the bottom 5 depots moving up to the shift premium rates in the next shift premium bracket.*

*AND*

- Year 2 - 2% total for all colleagues in the bargaining population across all rates. This would be effective from May 2021.*

*OR*

*The Union's position for the two-year period as follows*

- Pay Award year 1 May 2020 – 2.73% increase made up of 2.5% on all rates with the additional 0.23% used to harmonise the lowest five sites shift premiums – backdated to May 2020*

*AND*



- *Pay Award Year 2 May 2021 – 2.75% increase made up of 2.5% on all rates with the additional 0.25% used to further harmonise the shift premiums across the bargaining unit by raising the lowest late and night premiums.*

*\*Please see the two attached tables which form part of these Terms of Reference and set out (1) Asda's current and proposed rates for colleagues in the bargaining population for 2020 and 2021 and, (2) Asda's understanding of the GMB's proposed rates for colleagues in the bargaining population for 2020 and 2021. In the table that refers to the GMB's position, Asda has made its own assumption about the depots where the GMB would choose to allocate the additional 0.25% available for further harmonisation in Year 2.*

*Both sides agree to accept the Arbitrator's decision*

1. Prior to the hearing both parties had submitted to me and exchanged copies of written statements.
2. The hearing was held at 9.30 Thursday 22<sup>nd</sup> April 2021. Due to Covid-19 restrictions, the hearing was conducted as a virtual meeting.
3. The Employer was represented by:

Brian Napier – QC

Alistair Paton – Senior Director, People, Asda

Mickey Greenhalgh – Senior Director, People, ALS

Neil Kelson – Senior Director, Food South, ALS

1. The Union was represented by:

Roger Jenkins – GMB National Officer

Carlo Bailey – GMB Shop Steward, ALS

Darren Pollock – GMB Shop Steward, ALS

Tracy Sanderson – GMB Shop Steward, ALS

## **Background**



1. Asda Logistics Services (ALS) is a division of Asda Group Limited and includes its UK distribution operation which covers 18 food depots and 5 non-food depots with a work force of some 11,780 hourly paid employees working in transport, warehousing, and clerical roles, at the time of the hearing.
  2. GMB is the sole recognised trade union for collective bargaining purposes for hourly paid employees (referred to as colleagues) working in transport, warehousing, and clerical roles. The collective bargaining arrangements, including pay, are set out in National Recognition Agreement (NRA) agreed between the parties in 2012.
  3. Annual pay awards run from 1<sup>st</sup> May and pay negotiations can start from September onwards for the following year's pay settlement. The Union submitted the following 2020 pay claim to the Employer on 12 December 2019.
    - a) A substantial across the board pay increase above the RPI rate of inflation, on all basic rates of pay and fixed allowances, i.e., shift premiums and overtime rates.
    - b) Shift premiums to be increased and harmonised upwards to the highest level across the network.
    - c) A work life balance and weekend working policy to be negotiated and agreed covering all hourly paid employees.
    - d) Drivers' working hours to be reduced to a 40-hour working week without loss of pay.
1. A couple of meetings took place prior to the May 2020 pay anniversary date resulting in an offer that was rejected by the Union without referral back to its membership. Following further negotiations, the Union withdrew points c) and d) of its pay claim (see para 8) and the Employer offered a final 2 year pay deal to the Union on 30 November 2020.
  2. The Employer's final offer is as set out in the Terms of reference in Para.1. In Year One the offer was for a 2% increase in pay inclusive of shift premium harmonisation at 5 specified depots to address a historical discrepancy in shift premiums at different depots. This means that hourly paid colleagues, other than those working at the specified 5 depots, would receive a pay increase of 1.77% across all rates for the pay year from 1 May 2020. In Year 2, the offer was for 2% for all colleagues in the bargaining unit across all rates from 1 May 2021.



3. This 2 year pay offer was then put to the membership but rejected by a reported 84% of those voting. In accordance with the procedure set out in the NRA, as there was a failure to agree, the difference between the parties was referred for conciliation. As agreement could not be reached through conciliation, it was then referred for pendulum arbitration.

## The Union's Case

1. Roger Jenkins, GMB National Officer, presenting the Union's case, explained that the 2020 pay claim submitted to the Employer in December 2019 was informed by extensive membership consultation to reflect their thoughts and aspirations as well as the Union's pay report attached to its submission.
2. Mr Jenkins said that what had been asked for was 'an across the board' one year pay increase above the RPI rate of inflation which applied to all basic rates of pay and fixed allowances, including the shift premium and overtime rate.
3. The Union's 2020 pay claim had included a first step towards the upward harmonisation of depot shift premiums which it had been jointly agreed to address as part of the 2012 National Recognition Agreement (NRA). Page 91 of the NRA states 'it remains the aim of both parties to harmonise contracts of employment as well as policies and procedures across all sites on a regional basis.'
4. The shift differential issue had not been addressed in any pay awards since 2012. The Union's 2020 claim sought to address this as the differences in shift rates were a long standing source of grievance that needed to be resolved.
5. The Union's position was that its pay claim was a reasonable one. It had taken into account that the level of RPI was 2.2% for the 12 months up to December 2019 and average pay settlements at the time were running at 2.8%.
6. The Union had modified its initial claim in in September 2020, following discussions with the Employer, with the aim of progressing a negotiated settlement. It dropped point c) on work life balance and weekend working policy as well as point d) on the reduction of Drivers' working hours from the pay claim.
7. Whilst ASL colleagues had been fortunate that Asda had been able to continue trading and had achieved good profits during the pandemic, it was the case that members had



come into work day after day at considerable risk to themselves during the past 12 months. Their efforts should be properly rewarded and, whilst there had been a 'one off 'thank you payment' in June 2020 to colleagues for their work during the escalation in demand during February and March 2020 prior to the first lockdown, the membership would have preferred an increase in their basic pay.

8. Turning to the process of the pay discussions, Mr Jenkins pointed out that because of the Covid pandemic the parties had to conduct these virtually which was not the same as 'face to face' meetings.
9. The two meetings held prior to May 2020 annual pay date did result in a pay offer from the Employer of 1.4% increase on the basic rate and the harmonisation of shift payment upwards at 5 depots. This offer was rejected without referring it back to the membership as it fell so far short of the claim for an above cost of living pay award. Further meetings after May 2020 had led to the Company's final 2 year pay deal being offered at the end of November 2020 which is the offer now under consideration.
10. The 2 year pay offer was put to a membership ballot with a recommendation to reject it from the Union on the grounds that it did not meet its pay claim based on members' aspirations and it was rejected by 84%. Further negotiation was attempted but, in the Union's view, it was clear that the Employer wanted to move directly to binding arbitration. In accordance with the NRA procedure a conciliation meeting took place with the aim of achieving a pay settlement acceptable to the membership but there was no movement in the offer made by the Employer in November 2002 so no negotiated agreement could be reached.
11. Mr Jenkins observed that the Union had not asked for a two year pay deal and this had not been discussed with the membership in drawing up the pay claim. In some ways he said he understood why the Employer had proposed this but any offer needed to start at a 2% increase in basic pay to be acceptable to the membership.
12. Turning to the issue of the adjustment in shift differentials, Mr Jenkins pointed out that fairness in pay was an important consideration and the present shift differentials did not reflect that which was why the Union wanted to move forward on upward harmonisation.
13. Acknowledging that any pay increase had to be affordable, Mr Jenkins pointed out that Asda had reported an operating profit of £582 million in 2019 and that a £1.15 billion dividend reported as 'surplus cash' was paid to Walmart by Asda in March 2020. As



reported in the Union's written submission comparable retailers, Morrisons, Sainsburys and Argos and Tesco had all concluded higher pay settlements for the period than the offer made by Asda.

14. Summing up, Mr Jenkins said that the Union's pay request was a very modest one. The membership had contributed to the Company's profitability in difficult, unprecedented times and what was being sought was a fair and just settlement that reflected the profitability and position of the Company.

## The Employer's case

1. Presenting the case on behalf of the Employer, Brian Napier said it was important to make a fundamental initial point about the Union's pay claim before moving to the detail of the ALS's written submission. The Union's pay claim had been submitted in November 2019 based on the RPI figure at the time but this figure had changed by the time the pay award was due in May 2020. The Union's claim referred to RPI as averaging 3.5% and CPI as 2.2% in November 2019 whereas Table 6 on page 10 of the ALS's submission showed RPI at 1% in May 2020, the pay anniversary date.
2. It was important to consider the pay award in the context of what the actual figure was at the time rather than on projections. Between November 2019 and May 2020 both the RPI and CPI figures had fallen and the Covid pandemic had begun. Inflation fell to one of the lowest levels on record during 2020. According to the latest ONS update the annual rate for the 12 months ending March 21<sup>st</sup>, 2021, the RPI figure was 1.5% and CPI 0.7%.
3. It was accepted that the Union's pay claim had not specified a figure for the increase in pay but the Employer's argument was that the final offer made to the Union did meet its request for an increase above the RPI rate of inflation and its request to address shift differentials. Historically ALS had provided pay offers above CPI and its 2 year pay offer from May 2020 continued to do so with no efficiency benefits being sought from the Union in return.
4. Turning to the impact of pandemic, Mr Napier explained that whilst ASDA had been able to continue trading it had resulted in major changes in its business operation and significant Covid-19 related operating costs.
5. Changes in consumer behaviour had led to an increase in online shopping across the industry and, whilst Asda had experienced healthy revenue growth in food sales, there



had been a decrease in higher margin products such as clothing and homeware.

6. In addition, there had been Covid-19 related costs arising from a number of factors including staff absences, ensuring safe and secure stores and depots as well as goodwill supplier payments leading to Asda identifying £226 million of incremental costs for the first three quarters of 2020. ALS's Covid costs in 2020 amounted to £25 million arising from colleague shielding and self isolation, health and safety and social distancing requirements at depots as well a 'thank you' payment made to all hourly paid colleagues equivalent to one week's pay made in June 2020.
7. Mr Napier pointed out that Asda had waived claiming the relief in business rates provided to help businesses during the pandemic and would continue to pay full business rates in 2021/22. Furthermore, it had not made use of the Government's furlough scheme.
8. The final pay offer made to the Union had to be viewed in the context of the circumstances facing ASDA. Referring to Table 1 on page 4 of the Employer's submission, Mr Napier observed that during the past year its 3 major competitors had grown their market share more than Asda had been able to do in part due to its lack of smaller convenience stores. Asda was also in the process of defending equal value pay claims which, depending on the outcome, could have considerable resource implications.
9. Whilst it was not currently possible to provide details of the operating profit for 2020 as these figures were not yet available, it was the case that for the year ending 2019 Asda's operating profit had dropped to £584.2m from a figure of £803m in 2018. Table 9 of the ALS submission illustrated that the Union's pay option set out in the terms of reference would mean an additional cost to the business of £7.3 million over the two year period. This would be at a time when there was significant uncertainty about the economic outlook due to the impact of the pandemic as well as the change of ownership of the business.
10. It was difficult to predict the extent to which the changes in consumer behaviour due to the pandemic would be permanent. Unemployment was predicted to rise as the furlough scheme ended and this would impact negatively on consumer spending which made it even more important to focus on the known evidence.
11. Mr Napier said it was important to correct the Union's argument that their pay claim was affordable because of the payment Asda had recently made to Walmart. This was





actually a dividend payment for a period of 4 years due to Walmart as a return on its investment in Asda based on historical profits.

12. Taking account of external benchmarks for pay settlements, recent surveys indicated that private sector pay awards were ranging from 1% to 2%. It was difficult to make comparisons with the pay deals of major competitors referred to by the Union without knowing the pay starting point as well as the business context but the evidence was that Asda's hourly pay rates compared well to those of similar employers. The majority of Asda distribution sites were in the upper pay quartile for the warehouse industry and in the median quartile for transport. Furthermore, there was no evidence that pay was an issue from hourly paid colleague labour turnover at ALS which was circa 15% in 2019 and 2020 and in line with the most recent statistics for the industry.
13. Recent pay settlements had maintained ALS colleagues' pay position in the industry. The 2 year pay deal from May 2019 to April 2020 had increased basic pay and all premiums by 3.2% in year one and 3.12% in year two.
14. Taking into account internal benchmarks, Mr Napier pointed out that hourly paid colleagues in Asda retail received a 2% increase to base pay in April 2021 having received a 2% increase in base pay in April 2020 and that managers across Asda in Retail and ALS would receive a 1% increase to base pay in 2021, having received an average increase in 2020 of 1.5%. Depots where there was an outsourced logistics service had resulted in a 1.5% pay increase in 2020 agreed with the GMB at the Rochdale Depot and a 1.5% increase in 2020 agreed with Unite at Larne, Northern Ireland.
15. The Employer pointed out that whilst retail colleagues at Asda had received a 2% increase to base pay from 1<sup>st</sup> April 2021, they did not receive an enhanced rate for additional hours worked as ALS hourly paid colleagues did (a point that was checked and confirmed in writing after the hearing).
16. Mr Napier said that proposed increase in base pay would apply across all premium rates, including overtime and shift pay. The difference in shift pay was a discrepancy that the Employer was committed to addressing as part of a programme of harmonisation although there was no specified time scale for achieving this in the 2012 National agreement. There was an opportunity to do it in the proposed 2 year pay award and the Employer's offer reflected the Union's request to do so in its 2020 pay claim.



17. The pay negotiations had progressed as described by the Union in its submission. The GMB had advised its members not to accept the final pay offer put to the ballot and it was understood that it had been rejected by 84% of those voting although this was not officially confirmed.
18. Prior to referring the difference to conciliation, the Union had been asked whether there was any flexibility they could offer which could be explored but as there was not, it was referred to Acas in accordance with the agreed procedure.
19. Summing up, Mr Napier said it was recognised that colleagues had made considerable sacrifices hence the one off 'Thank You' payment of one week's pay in June 2020 but the assumption that Asda had done pretty well and could afford to pay was to overlook certain realities of the situation. Any increase in pay had to be considered in the context of a decrease in Asda's profits, its fall in its market share and significant Covid related costs.
20. The Employer's position was that its pay offer had met the Union's request for an above the level of inflation increase and for shift differentials to be addressed. It was important to be circumspect and act with caution at a time when there were considerable economic uncertainties arising from the pandemic as well as those specifically facing the industry and the organisation.

## Considerations

1. The terms of reference in this instance require the arbitrator to find either in favour of one party's position or that of the other. In finding in favour of one, it should not be construed that the arguments of the other have been dismissed. In reaching a decision, my responsibility is to consider the balance of the arguments put forward in the parties' written and oral submissions.
2. It is accepted that the Union's 2020 pay claim for a substantial 'across the board' pay increase above the RPI rate of inflation was based on the reported RPI figure for the 12 months prior to December 2019 and its claim reflected the aspirations of its members following a consultation exercise and a comprehensive pay report. The normal practice reported by both parties was for pay negotiations to begin in the autumn months prior to the May award date which requires the Union to work with the known published inflation figures when drawing up a pay claim. It was also confirmed by both parties



that the available inflation figures historically had informed their pay negotiations although the Union used the RPI figure and not the official CPI figure as its measure of inflation.

3. It could not be foreseen that there would be a rapidly changing situation in the first few months of 2020 due to the Covid-19 outbreak which culminated in the UK's first lockdown in late March, a fall in the inflation rate to one of the lowest recorded and significant changes in consumer behaviour due to the pandemic.
4. Whilst the Union's argument that its pay claim has to rely on the available evidence at the time it is submitted is accepted and this usually can be the basis for negotiations, I am persuaded by the Employer's argument that the circumstances had changed significantly due to the pandemic by the 1<sup>st</sup> May 2020 pay award date and that its pay offer had to take proper account of its impact on the business. It is the case that by the due date of the pay award ONS published RPI figure for the 12 months up to April 2020 was 1.5% rather than the 2.2% figure used by the Union in its December 2019 pay claim and the CPI figure stood at 0.8%.
5. It is recognised that the Employer's offer is informed by factors that are already known but also by a number of future uncertainties. Whilst Asda, along with its major competitors, has been able to keep trading it has incurred Covid related costs which have amounted to £226 million and £25 million at ASL to date. These costs have impacted on the business's profitability along with the shift to online shopping and more spending on lower profit food items than higher profit non-food items. It is, however, unknown the extent to which these changes in consumer behaviour will be permanent and uncertainty about the wider economic impact as government pandemic provisions and restrictions come to an end.
6. At the hearing both parties paid tribute to the contribution and sacrifices made by colleagues required to come into work each day throughout the pandemic. It is taken into account that a one off 'Thank You' payment equivalent to one week's pay was made in June 2020 in recognition of their efforts during the period of unprecedented demand prior to the first lockdown. Although the Union's stated position is that the membership's preference would have been for a permanent increase in basic pay, it cannot be discounted that the reported cost of this recognition payment was £6 million additional pay costs during 2020.



7. It is acknowledged that the Union's initial claim was for a one year pay deal although at the hearing the Union Officer did express an understanding of why the Employer had offered a 2 year pay offer and both pay options set out in the terms of reference are for a 2 year pay award from 1<sup>st</sup> May 2020.
8. Turning to the detail of the pay offer and pay claim, both parties are already jointly committed in the 2012 recognition agreement to addressing differentials in the shift rate between depots as part of a programme of harmonisation. The Union requested this should begin in its 2020 pay claim and the Employer reflected this request in its pay offer for the year from 1 May 2020 to April 2021 which includes harmonising the shift rate to the higher level at 5 depots, identified as Washington ADC, Washington CDC, North East Clothing, Brackmills and Teesport.
9. It is understood why the Union was seeking to address this long-standing discrepancy as well as gain an increase in basic pay. It is a difficult balancing act to formulate a pay claim which seeks an 'across the board' increase and addresses an issue that applies to a particular group in the bargaining unit. The impact of addressing the shift differential was that it reduced the Employer's basic pay increase from 2% to 1.77% across all rates in the 2020 -21 pay year other than for those colleagues working at the 5 specified depots where it was proposed to move the shift differential upwards.
10. Careful consideration has been given to the different pay awards reported externally and internally as benchmarks in the parties' submissions. It is difficult to consider such comparisons without knowing the full context and current pay rates. As a result, priority has been given to the known levels of ASL pay, its benchmarked position in pay surveys compared to its competitors and the parties' joint agreement to address discrepancies in shift pay as part of an upward harmonisation programme in reaching a decision.
11. Turning to the wider context, as already identified, the pandemic has led to a period of economic uncertainty as the government furlough scheme ends and other support mechanisms for businesses cease. It is unknown how this will impact on levels of employment and, in turn, consumer spending. It is also recognised the profits were reported as falling at Asda in the year prior to the pandemic and that it lost some of its market share during the past year.
12. The Union's pay request for the two pay years from May 2020 is not an unreasonable one, although it is not entirely clear from the information provided how its proposed shift premium adjustment would operate in practice during Year Two. It is also noted



that in an attempt to progress a negotiated settlement, in September 2020 the Union dropped points c) and d) of its pay claim.

13. The Employer did improve its initial pay offer in November 2020 although this was rejected by a reported 84% of the work force. Its argument that its pay offer does offer an above inflation pay award and addresses shift differentials as requested in the Union's pay claim is a fair one with the caveat that, whilst the last reported ONS RPI figure was 1.5% in April 21, projections are that this is likely to rise during the next 12 months

14. Notwithstanding, having carefully considered all the arguments, I have formed the view that it is important to adhere to what is currently known during a period of considerable uncertainty in reaching my decision

## The Award

60. Having considered the arguments of the parties, the Employer's position is upheld. This is for the following two-year deal to take effect from 1 May 2020 until 31<sup>st</sup> April 2022;

a) Year 1 - 2% total, inclusive of 5 depots shift premium harmonisation with those not in the 5 harmonised depots to receive an increase of 1.77% across all rates. The depots which would receive shift harmonisation are specified as Washington ADC, Washington CDC, North East Clothing, Brackmills and Teesport). This Year One pay increase is to be backdated to take effect from 1<sup>st</sup> May 2020.

b) Year 2 - 2% total for all colleagues in the bargaining population across all rates. This pay increase to be backdated to take effect from 1<sup>st</sup> May 2021.

I should like to take this opportunity to thank the parties for their contributions, assistance, and openness on the day of the hearing.

L. M. Harris

Acas Arbitrator/Mediator

3 May 2020

**ASDA ALS PAY UPDATES**

+



**Posted on: 29 November 2022**

Dear GMB members,

I am aware that not all of you will get the GMB videos that we send out, so I wanted to ensure you had an alternative update.

GMB is pleased to have been able to work with Asda to ensure pay will rise by an additional 10p per hour in January, following successful completion of the absence and Rota reviews. This concludes the final part of the 2022 pay deal.

We are now moving into negotiations for pay 2023 -2024. GMB has submitted a pay claim to Asda. GMB's pay claim is;

***A substantial pay increase above RPI across all elements.***

We met with the company on the 24<sup>th</sup> November to begin talks and we have further talks scheduled for January.

We will of course keep you updated on progress during these talks.

In the meantime I want to take this opportunity to wish you all a very merry Christmas.

In solidarity,

**Nadine Houghton,**

**GMB National Officer for ALS.**

**Wage Errors Update- Reduced Issues Following GMB Campaign**



**Posted on: 23 September 2022**

Following months of campaigning activity by GMB Union Reps I am very pleased to say that, for now, the GMB campaign to bring down wage errors in Asda is showing results. Wage errors are still not where they need to be but there is a direct link between the work the GMB has been doing on this and the errors coming down, as you can see from the graph below.



You told us that wage errors were impacting negatively on your mental health, some of you even told us that you dreaded pay day. We listened to your concerns and took action by publicising your experiences, engaging politicians and most importantly - negotiating with Asda on how they can get this right.

We are not finished and as you can see there is more work to be done. We are still negotiating on a repayment policy and we need to see wage errors continue to slow. But for now, we are seeing positive steps.

As always though, the proof is in the pudding, it is your feedback that shapes the direction of your union's campaigns - so please continue to tell us how you feel.

## Wage Errors Update



**Posted on: 4 August 2022**

This week (03/08/22), along with Shadow Chancellor Rachel Reeves, we met with ASDA management to push them to resolve the common issues with the HRSS system and put in place new ways to process colleagues' wages correctly.

We still have a long way to go, but by working together we are starting to see improvements. Watch the video update here:

<https://youtu.be/Z2UmmJU2Cr8>

In solidarity

**Andy Prendergast**

**GMB National Secretary**

## WAGE ERRORS - FURTHER UPDATE



**Posted on: 25 July 2022**

Dear GMB member,



I wanted to update you on the issue of wage errors and back dated pay from the 2022 pay award which as you know are two issues the GMB has been campaigning hard around over the past few months.

### **Back Pay:**

Following the urgent meeting, we called with management. Asda have confirmed that the majority of staff will receive all of their backpay in September, with some receiving most in September and the rest in October (no one should receive less than 80% in September). Although Asda say they are aiming to pay ALL back pay in September, they cannot, at this stage, guarantee this. All new rates of pay will be paid from September.

If you are one of the people receiving 80% of your back pay in September, your line manager should sit down with you to explain why. We have also requested that all backpay be itemised separately on your pay slips to make this easier to understand.

We now have weekly meetings with management, where they will provide us with an update and we have requested a formal apology from Asda on this issue, but to date one has not been issued.

The reason for the delay relates to chronic under investment in the pay roll system. Operating on an outdated platform means that 'manual interventions' have to be made around certain elements of pay and this is what takes the most time.

### **Wage Errors:**

Much like the issue with back pay, wage errors have been caused due to ongoing lack of investment in the pay roll system. This isn't something Asda can fix over night, however the GMB has pressured them into putting measures in place to limit the impact of wage errors on GMB members. This includes:

1. Introducing 'super users' into depots to help assist managers and colleagues with wage errors.
2. Introducing a proper repayment / overpayment policy so colleagues can agree repayment plans with Asda when there has been an over payment. We have also pushed Asda to introduce a compensation package for when wage errors impact benefits or bank charges.
3. Providing better access to punch details.
4. Asda are now also putting plans in place to ensure their pay roll provider is giving a better service and they are working on setting up a proper 'escalation' process for when wages continue to be impacted or when a problem isn't being resolved.





The GMB will be meeting with Asda senior management and the Shadow Chancellor and MP for Leeds West (where Asda are based) Rachel Reeves in August and we continue to meet weekly with Asda to review the situation.

If you have a wage error, you should speak to your local rep and manager straight away. If you do not receive a satisfactory resolution you are entitled to raise a grievance. If the issue is ongoing and simply not getting resolved your rep can escalate the issue to me and / or your regional organiser.

**NADINE HOUGHTON**

**NATIONAL OFFICER**

## **Wage Errors Update**



**Posted on: 18 July 2022**

GMB has been raising the pressure on ASDA to resolve ongoing issues with wage errors after a survey of members revealed that over 60% of respondents had pay missing from their last pay check and colleagues mental health was suffering as a result.

On Friday (15.07.22) the issue hit the national press, with multiple news outlets reporting that Asda colleagues are having to '[skip household bill payments, take out loans, and even use food banks](#)'.

Politicians across the country have been getting behind ASDA colleagues, with Members of Scottish Parliament calling on ASDA to sort out the issues with SD Worx. The response they received revealed the scale of the problem, with ASDA admitting to 10,806 errors, affecting 5,529 staff in the last month alone.

[Shadow Chancellor, Rachel Reeves, met with ASDA Reps last month](#), where they shared harrowing stories of members up and down the country who as a result of wage errors could not afford to feed their families or pay their bills. As a result, a meeting between the Shadow Chancellor, GMB representatives and ASDA management is scheduled for the first week of August to try and get the company to meet GMB's key demands, including a complete overhaul of the payroll system.

The issue, which effects workers across both retail and distribution, is one that the GMB will not drop until workers are paid the wages they have earnt.

**Nadine Houghton**

**GMB National Officer**



Dear GMB member,

I'm pleased to confirm that the latest pay offer from Asda has been accepted by GMB members. The results were:

67% Accept

33% Reject

Thank you to all of you that voted and I hope that this increase will go some way to protecting our members against the cost of living crisis that is hitting working people.

However, it's important to remember that we will very shortly be back into the next pay round and that inflation remains sky high. In the Autumn energy bills will increase again. Over the coming months you will be receiving pay surveys for next year's pay award.

Thank you for your continued support.

Nadine (GMB national officer)

ASDA ALS NEW PAY OFFER

**Date: 27/05/2022**

Dear GMB member,

We are pleased to now have a pay offer that we are happy to recommend to our members. The headlines for the offer are:

1. In total a £1:48 ph increase for drivers and a 94p ph increase for warehouse.
2. 10p of this will not be paid until January 2023 after successful completion of an absence and driver rota review.
3. Some of the pay increase comes from a reinvestment of your bonus. This means that instead of a one-off payment that is non-contractual, you will have 75% of the total bonus reinvested into your base pay, which will then be guaranteed.
4. Warehouse colleagues would see a 40p an hour increase from January 2022 , an additional 25p in May 2022 band a further 19p from July 2022. With the final 10p paid in January 2023 if the reviews are completed.



5. Transport colleagues receive 98p from May 2022, an additional 40p in July 2022 and the 10p in January 2023 if the reviews are completed.

The absence review does not mean the GMB will agree to ANY changes to sick pay or terms and conditions and the driver rota review will focus on finding driver rotas that provide a better work life balance.

We know the deal isn't perfect but we are attaching a recommendation that our members accept. This is the best deal we can achieve through negotiation and we know that many of you need to see that pay rise as costs continue to spiral.

The GMB ballot will open on the **6<sup>th</sup> June, closing on the 20<sup>th</sup> June.**

Thank you for your continued patience and support throughout this process.

In solidarity

**Nadine Houghton and the NJC**

**Date: 06/05/2022**

Dear GMB member,

I want to say a huge thank you to every single one of you that took time to return your ballot paper. Together, we have secured an incredible turnout with a 95% vote in favour of industrial action – with every single depot voting in favour of industrial action.

The GMB will be holding last ditch talks with Asda on Wednesday 11th. We genuinely hope we can find a resolution at these talks, however our members have given us a very clear mandate in terms of next steps.

You have shown that you are willing to put the action in and that you will not allow the Tories anti trade union legislation to beat you. You can all hold your head high and know that collectively you have the strength needed to win.

Well done and once again, thank you.

We will provide you an update as soon as possible following the talks on Wednesday.

In solidarity,

**Nadine Houghton**



**GMB National Officer**

**Date: 06/04/2022**

Dear GMB member,

I'm writing to confirm the ballot timetable and next steps in the current GMB pay dispute with Asda.

1. The GMB's consultative postal ballot opens today. That means you should get your ballot paper, to your home address, by this weekend.
2. If you have not received your ballot paper by Wednesday 13th April, please inform your local steward or your regional office - we will need to confirm we have the correct home address for you.
3. The ballot closes on Wednesday 4<sup>th</sup> May.
4. Ideally, you should aim to post your ballot paper back by no later than Wednesday 27<sup>th</sup> April, this allows good time for the ballot paper to be returned in second class post.

The GMB is strongly recommending that you vote YES for strike action.

This is NOT a legal industrial action ballot; we cannot call strike action after this ballot. This is a consultative ballot for our members to confirm next steps.

If enough members vote in this ballot, we will be in a position to consider moving forward with a formal ballot.

This is now more important than ever after Asda announced that they want to cut your sick pay.

Only you now have the power to determine the next steps. Please give us a clear mandate to move forward.

Thank you for your continued support.

In solidarity,

**Nadine Houghton**

**GMB National Officer**



**Date: 05/04/2022**

Dear GMB member,

Please see attached the final offer from Asda. To be very clear, this is not an offer that we are putting to our members in a pay ballot.

### Final Offer

As you can see Asda have said they want you to sell the first 3 days sick pay for any sickness absence and have valued this at 13p per hour. **The average Warehouse worker would have to work for 13.5 months and have no sickness absence to feel the benefit of this increase.**

They also want you to sell the last 13-26 weeks of your sick pay. They have valued this at an additional 5p per hour. **It would take the average warehouse worker 67 years to recoup this if they ever had to use this part of their sick pay.**

The sick pay scheme was brought in at the same time as the increase in productivity for Warehouse staff, it was designed to protect colleagues suffering additional workplace stress and potential Musco skeletal issues.

The GMB is not prepared to put this offer to our members because we do not believe that key workers who kept the nation fed during a pandemic should have to self-fund a pay increase or have their sick pay cut.

In 2020 Asda's executives awarded themselves a 38.8% increase, this was not self-funded.

The new Asda Chairman, Stuart Rose, has called for government action over the cost-of-living crisis, the GMB say that Asda need to look closer to home.

The GMB is now running a consultative postal ballot for strike action. The ballot opens on Wednesday 6<sup>th</sup> April and closes on Wednesday 4<sup>th</sup> May. It is now over to you, the members, to return your ballot papers in the post.

With inflation soaring it is now down to you to put the action in to fight for a decent pay increase and to protect your sick pay.

I will provide further updates regarding the ballot process.

Thank you for your continued support.

In solidarity,



**Noticeboard Bulletin - 26-01-2022**



**Posted on: 26 January 2022**

Dear GMB members,

You now have a chance to vote on a pay offer from Asda. The GMB ballot opens on the 31<sup>st</sup> January and closes on the 14<sup>th</sup> February 2022.

The GMB is NOT attaching any recommendation to this offer. This means we are not advising you to either accept or reject the offer. This is a decision we are leaving to our members to make for themselves.

**The final offer from Asda is as follows:**

**Warehouse and Clerical:**

Step 1 - Base Rate increase 40p from Jan - April 2022.

Step 2 - Base Rate increase 25p from 1 May 22 - 6 May 23.

**Transport:**

2nd £500 driver retention payment will be paid in April 2022 with the same payment criteria as previously communicated.

No base rate increase in January 2022.

Base Rate increase 98p from 1 May 22 - 6 May 2023.

Depending on location, this represents an increase in the base rate of hourly pay of:

Clerical **4.98% - 6.10%**

Warehouse **4.98% - 5.87%**



Transport **6.49% - 7.53%**

In addition to the increased rates of pay, Asda are proposing:

1. To establish a joint working party to 'look into' developing more family friendly rotas. The GMB's view is that there is little substance to this proposal at present, although we are happy to look into whether rotas can be improved for our members. We do not believe this should form part of a pay deal.
2. Annual float day to be added to over all Annual Leave entitlement. **This does not affect Scotland.**
3. C. 22 colleagues to be paid accrued legacy holiday hours and then to cease the accrual of these holiday hours moving forward. This only applies to 22 colleagues and GMB does not believe it is appropriate to include this as part of a pay offer.

In Solidarity

**Nadine Houghton**

**GMB National Officer**

**Date: 19/01/2022**

Dear GMB members,

Thank you so much for your continued support throughout this pay campaign! Everything you and your reps have done so far have brought us to a place where we now have a revised offer on the table. You have achieved this by standing together.

Is it everything we asked for? Absolutely not. Is it everything our members deserve? No - your labour makes the company profits and you deserve all of that too.

But...

For our warehouse members, does the offer address the cost-of-living crisis many of you will face? Very nearly. Does it bring you in line with what Asda's competitors received? Yes. Is it a significant improvement on where we started? Absolutely.

A 65p per hour increase is what's on the table for our warehouse members. The GMB is not attaching any recommendation to this offer. We want you to decide whether its good enough or not. If you decide it is



not, you must be prepared to vote for and take part in industrial action to achieve something better. Do not vote to reject this offer unless you are prepared to take that next step.

In ordinary times a 98p per hour increase for drivers would have looked decent, but we are not in ordinary times for drivers. We understand the strength of feeling around this issue and again, we are leaving the vote for our driver members to decide for themselves, asking you to bear in mind that a vote against the offer must then be backed up by a separate vote for industrial action if the offer is rejected.

The GMB WILL be splitting the ballot between warehouse and drivers. We WILL be reporting two different ballot results to Asda.

Our position is that these are two different offers, and the driver shortage has created extenuating circumstances for this pay round. Our ballot results and next steps must reflect that.

Asda have said they will only accept one ballot result and they will not acknowledge a split result. That will be down to Asda to determine how they interpret our result but the GMB is clear on our decision to split the vote, the reasons for doing it and our interpretation of that result.

The pay offer is as follows:

- 1. Warehouse and Clerical; 40p per hour from January 2022 to April 2022. Additional 25p per hour from May 2022 to April 2023.**
- 1. Transport; 2nd £500 driver retention payment will be paid in April 2022 with the same payment criteria as previously communicated • No base rate increase in Jan 22 • Base Rate increase 98p per hour from May 22 to May 23.**
- 2. Depending on location, this represents an increase in the base rate of hourly pay of: • Clerical – between 4.98% and 6.10% • Warehouse – between 4.98% and 5.87% • Transport – between 6.49% and 7.53%**

ALL GMB members will be balloted on this offer from **31<sup>st</sup> January until the 14<sup>th</sup> February 2022.**

The GMB is NOT attaching any recommendation on this offer, we are leaving this decision for members to make themselves.

We will issue further comms in due course.

Thank you for your continued support.





Kind regards

**Nadine Houghton**

**GMB National Officer**

**Date: 11/01/2022**

Dear GMB member,

I hope that many of you will have seen my video messages.

I wanted to also provide the same updates in a bulletin to ensure everyone is receiving GMB communications.

We are disappointed that, despite the company asking us not to share the offer they made last week with our members, they went ahead and shared much of the detail of the offer with staff in the depots.

I want to be upfront with our members on the offer that was made to your GMB negotiating team last week. It was:

1. A 3% increase on basic pay from January 22 to May 23.
2. A one off 'top up' payment where CPI goes above 3% but capped at 6%.
3. Removal of the £500 one off payment for drivers to help fund this.

You are all seeing your cost-of-living increase. You see other supermarkets giving their staff a fair pay rise and you kept the nation fed through the pandemic.

It is time for Asda to do the right thing on pay. Sadly, this offer does not do that, and your reps rejected the offer.

It is not a cost of living pay increase, it is in fact a real terms pay cut. It also does nothing to address the woeful rates of pay for drivers when compared to other similar employers.

We expect to hear from Asda later this week and we will keep you fully updated on next steps.

Thank you for your continued support.

**Nadine Houghton**



**GMB National Officer**

Date: 21/12/2021

Dear GMB member,

I want to thank you all for giving yourselves such a strong mandate to push forward with a full industrial action ballot in the new year, if Asda fail to come to the table with a meaningful offer.

With the cost of living continuing to soar we will not accept anything that leaves you worse off in real terms.

The results of the ballot are as follows:

On the company offer of 0%

**Accept 1%**

**Reject 99%**

To proceed with a full ballot for industrial action:

**Yes 94.5%**

**No 5.5%**

The GMB is scheduled to meet Asda again on the 5th January with a full reps meeting on the 7th. You will receive a full update after the 7th.

Thank you for your continued support, for all you have done for this country throughout the pandemic and thank you for pledging to fight for the pay rise you deserve.

Merry Xmas and Happy New Year.

In solidarity,

**Nadine Houghton**

**GMB National Officer**

Date: 02/12/2021

Dear GMB member,



Please take a moment to reflect on the points below and make sure you cast your vote in the current pay ballot. The next steps in this pay dispute are determined by you.

In the last pay negotiations Asda enforced a below cost of living pay increase on its loyal workforce.

While you were working during Covid, risking your lives and your health to keep the nation fed, seeing some colleagues sadly lose their lives to Covid, Asda saw fit to impose a real terms pay cut on you.

In this same period, Asda's directors rewarded themselves with a 38.8% pay increase with a total remuneration of £9.3 million.

Asda now say GMB members pay claim is 'unaffordable' and yet your hard work and your sacrifice during Covid has made Asda a tidy operating profit of £486 million.

We don't think Asda's directors will be struggling with the cost-of-living crisis in the same way many of you will be. Fuel, food, clothing, bills, rent and mortgages - all going up and yet Asda still aren't listening to their workers union.

Please make sure you speak to your rep about our campaign for 'fair' pay and ensure you cast your vote in the ballot.

GMB says reject the 0% and give us the mandate to proceed with a formal ballot for industrial action.

In solidarity,

Nadine Houghton

**GMB National Officer**

