

# BestFood Logistics

Last update: 10 Dec 2022

Bulletins

**Strike Ballot Results**

**Posted on: 18 November 2022**

Dear GMB members,

Thank you to all of you who voted in the GMB strike ballot. You have delivered a positive mandate to move forward with strike action.

The results of the strike ballot are as follows.

**ARE YOU PREPARED TO TAKE PART IN STRIKE ACTION?**

Yes 69.83%.

No 30.17%.

Turnout 52.19%.

**ARE YOU PREPARED TO TAKE ACTION SHORT OF STRIKE?**

Yes 72.07%

No 27.93%

Turnout 52.19%



We have informed the company of the outcome of the ballot and will be agreeing strike dates in the coming days.

We hope the company will want to get back round the table with a view to averting strike action and the union, as always, remains open for further talks.

We will keep you updated on the next steps.

Many thanks,

Nadine Houghton, GMB National Officer

**28/10/2022**

### **URGENT GMB UPDATE ON STRIKE BALLOT**

Dear GMB members,

***Today, GMB ballot papers are being dispatched to your home. Some of you may have already received a ballot paper IN ERROR.***

***Please disregard any ballot papers received before today. Only vote using the ballot paper received this weekend. Apologies for the confusion.***

I'd also like to take this opportunity to respond to some of the points made by Paul Whyte in his letter to you this week;

- The company have said that delaying the pay rise means you will receive nothing before Xmas, however Bestfood has, in the past, failed to award pay increases before Xmas due to talks being delayed etc.
- Delaying the pay rise until after Xmas is entirely a management decision – BF could chose to sit down with the GMB and make a revised offer that protects our members during this financial crisis, but they are chosing not to.
- What your union is fighting for now is about so much more than simply being paid before Xmas, it's about making sure your wages keep up with the ongoing cost of living crisis for now and years to come – not simply this Xmas.
- With inflation at over 12% – Best's offer of 6% is a large real terms pay cut – this is not acceptable. Energy and food bills will continue to rise and your pay is not keeping up



with that, meaning you are getting poorer. Your union is here to try to prevent that, we are on your side.

- Paul talks about an average pay offer of 18% over two years, however this 18% does not apply equally at all sites.
- In 2020 / 21 - GMB members accepted a pay freeze to help the company out at a challenging time, in 2021 / 22 the average increase into GMB members base pay was 4.5% - NOT the 12% the company are claiming.

However, the most important thing to remember is that for Best, as a subsidiary of Booker, whose ultimate parent company is Tesco it is simply not accurate to say that a pay rise is not affordable. The facts are that;

- The highest paid Booker director received £814,000 in 2021, which is an increase of 148% from 2020 (£327,000).
- Tesco Generated £2 billion in group operating profit in the UK and Republic of Ireland and Tesco PLC paid nearly £6 billion in dividends (£5.89bn) to shareholders in 2020-21.
- Best has a letter of support from Booker / Tesco pledging to provide ongoing financial support.
- Best expects to return to profit post pandemic.

There is plenty of money at the top, for the richest and yet your employer pleads poverty when it comes to the lowest paid workers in the company.

The company have said GMB only offer strike pay of £30 after 3 days. Whilst this is what our rule book states, GMB can make a decision to provide financial support and this is something we tend to do on a case by case basis, for example if someone is going to suffer particular hardship as a result of losing a days pay.

Ultimately we do not want this dispute to reach a strike and BF could very easily solve this. If Best / Booker / Tesco cared about the financial crisis facing our members they would get round the table with GMB to help solve this dispute.

In solidarity,

**Nadine Houghton,**



## BESTFOOD UPDATE



Posted on: 19 October 2022

Dear GMB members,

Last week, your union met management to discuss the ongoing pay dispute. Management told us there was no more money on the table.

GMB members have rejected the company offer of 6%. Today inflation sits at 12.6% and this is why we are now moving forward with a full postal ballot for strike action.

Best have told us they believe we have misrepresented some of the information contained in the company accounts of Booker Direct Limited, which is the company that Bestfood is a trading name of, according to Best's [website](#). Specifically, they say that GMB bulletins issued on the 9/09 and the 25/07 where we refer to Bestfood being owed £26.6m by other Booker companies and the exceptional costs of £7.4m resulting from the merger being the reason Best have only returned a small profit are not accurate.

GMB is only able to interpret and report from information contained in the accounts that are publicly available or from information otherwise provided to us by the company, and that is what we have done. However, Best have said that the £26.6m owed by other companies are in fact 'inter co-receivables' from wholesale items being sold between companies and therefore not money 'owed' to Best by other Booker companies.

However, GMB still maintains the position that Best is part of a group of very wealthy companies, companies that have paid their directors and shareholders very well indeed.

GMB has, in the past, recommended pay freezes to our members to support the company. However, during this current crisis, a below inflation pay offer is simply not an acceptable position.

**The GMB urges you to vote YES to strike action in the postal ballot. The ballot will open shortly. If you do not receive a ballot paper, you must let your local rep know.**

Thank you for your ongoing support.

In Solidarity,



## BESTFOOD PAY CLAIM UPDATE



Posted on: 4 October 2022

Dear GMB member,

We know you are all struggling with the cost of living - and this year's pay offer is at the forefront of everyone's minds.

On the 19th September, we informed the company that GMB members had rejected their offer of 6%.

To date, we still don't know how the company intends on responding to our members' rejection.

The GMB does, however, know how to respond.

Our members told us they wanted to be balloted formally for industrial action. Due to the lack of response from the company that is exactly what we are now preparing to do.

We will notify you shortly of the ballot timeline.

Please ensure that we hold up-to-date home address and contact details for you, so you can receive your ballot paper.

Thank you for your continued patience and we are sorry it has had to get to this stage.

In Solidarity,

**Nadine Houghton GMB National Officer and your GMB negotiating team.**

## Noticeboard Bulletin - 21-09-2022



Posted on: 21 September 2022

Dear GMB member,



I'm writing to confirm that GMB members have rejected the company pay offer of 6%.

GMB members have also indicated they wish to be balloted for strike action if the business aren't prepared to make a revised offer.

The results are as follows;

Q1.

Do you accept the company pay offer?

To Accept 7%

To Reject 93%

Q2.

If the offer is rejected do you want the GMB to run a formal industrial action ballot?

Yes 85%

No 15%

We have shared our results with the company and will update you on next steps.

In solidarity

**Nadine Houghton**

**GMB National Officer**

## **Noticeboard Bulletin - 09-09-2022**



**Posted on: 9 September 2022**

Dear GMB member,



Thank you for those of you that have already voted in our national pay ballot, for those that haven't please ensure you do so by 16th September.

The GMB is recommending you vote to reject the company's 6% offer and vote in favour of moving forward with a formal industrial action ballot.

I am aware that BestFood Logistics have written to you setting out their reasons as to why they believe you should accept the offer, and I wanted to take this opportunity to ensure you understand why the GMB believes you should reject:

1. Inflation has been forecast to potentially reach 18% later this year. The company offer of 6% is a dramatic real terms pay cut. With service levels and customer satisfaction high, you deserve better than real terms pay cut.
2. The main reason the company has only made a small profit is not related to sales but is because of the exceptional costs associated with the merger with Tesco (£7.4m)
3. Bestfood Logistics say they are a stand-alone company within the Booker group, however, BestFood Logistics is owed £26.6m by other Booker Group companies.
4. The company accounts say they expect the company to return to profitable growth.
5. Booker Directors pay has increased; the highest paid director received £814,000 in 2021 which is an increase of 148% from 2020!

Nobody wants to take strike action and we hope it doesn't come to that point, but during the worst cost of living crisis in a generation the GMB will not sit back and accept an offer which leaves you dramatically worse off.

We will inform you of the outcome of the ballot and any next steps.

Thanks in advance for your support.

**Nadine Houghton**

**GMB National Officer**

**Noticeboard Bulletin - 24-08-2022**

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Posted on: 24 August 2022

Dear GMB member,

Your national negotiating team met with Bestfood this week to discuss pay.

Your GMB negotiating team submitted your pay claim on the 16th May. It has taken the company 3 months to respond with an offer. The offer sadly fell well short of your union's expectations.

Bestfood offered only 6%. With inflation continuing to soar and currently at over 12%, the current offer is nothing more than a real terms pay cut.

The GMB will be putting the offer to a ballot of our members. The ballot opens on the 5th September 2022 and closes on the 16<sup>th</sup> September 2022. Your reps will be holding workplace ballots so please make sure you visit them to cast your vote.

**The GMB is recommending rejection of the offer.**

We also want to know whether our members are prepared to vote for strike action if an improved offer is not made. We have asked the question as part of your pay ballot, so please let us know.

We will keep you updated on the outcome of the ballot and any next steps.

Thank you for your continued support.

**NADINE HOUGHTON**

**NATIONAL OFFICER**

**Dear GMB Member, Your National Negotiating Team Met With Bestfood This Week To Discuss Pay. Your GMB Negotiating Team Submitted Your Pay Claim On The 16th May. It Has Taken The Company 3 Months To Respond With An Offer. The Offer Sadly Fell Well Short Of Your Union's Expectations. Bestfood Offered Only 6%. With Inflation Continuing To Soar And Currently At Over 12%, The Current Offer Is Nothing More Than A Real Terms Pay Cut. The GMB Will Be Putting The Offer To A Ballot Of Our Members. The Ballot Opens On The 5th September 2022 And Closes On The 16th September 2022. Your Reps Will Be Holding Workplace Ballots So Please Make Sure You Visit Them To Cast Your Vote. The GMB Is Recommending Rejection Of The Offer. We Also Want To Know Whether Our Members Are Prepared To Vote For Strike Action**

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**If An Improved Offer Is Not Made. We Have Asked The Question As Part Of Your Pay Ballot, So Please Let Us Know. We Will Keep You Updated On The Outcome Of The Ballot And Any Next Steps. Thank You For Your Continued Support. NADINE HOUGHTON NATIONAL OFFICER**

Posted on: 25 July 2022

Dear GMB member

I'm sorry to report that the company have now, for the second time, cancelled this year's pay talks. We can only assume that the company do not care about the impact of the cost of living crisis on its loyal workforce.

The company may not think they need to hurry up and give it's workers a proper pay rise, but they have had no problem paying their Directors. The highest paid Booker Director received £814,000 in 2021, which is an increase of 148% from 2020 (£327,000).

We now have no choice but to move forward with a ballot on 0%, as this is what the company are currently offering. We will, of course, also be asking the question of whether or not our members want us to move forward with a formal ballot for strike action if as we expect, the 0% is rejected.

Bestfood are pleading poverty and yet the majority of losses incurred this year come from the merger between Bestfood / Booker and Tesco. Bestfood is also owed £26.6million by other Booker companies and is expected to return to profit after the pandemic.

With huge labour shortages across the economy it is essential that Best looks after the very people it needs most - you, their loyal staff.

We hope Best see sense soon but if not we will be continuing with a ballot of our members.

We will keep you posted with further updates as they come.

**NADINE HOUGHTON**

**NATIONAL OFFICER**

**Noticeboard Bulletin - 13-05-2022**

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**Posted on: 13 May 2022**

Dear GMB member,

The GMB met Bestfood management last week following ongoing concerns around inadequate risk assessments and members being asked to deliver orders to point of storage using potentially unsafe sets of stairs.

The GMB have agreed the following with management:

1. The GMB will provide a list of sites where we have immediate concerns regarding risk assessments, these sites will be reviewed immediately in conjunction with a GMB rep. If you have concerns regarding a specific site please speak to your GMB rep as a matter of urgency.
2. The GMB informed management that our members have the right to conduct a dynamic risk assessment and if they reasonably believe the site to be unsafe for POS delivery they will be within their rights not to deliver to POS. In this situation the driver should contact the customer service hotline and document their concerns, they should also put this in writing where possible.
3. We explained to the company that we did not expect any driver to be disciplined if they found themselves in this scenario and that the driver would have the full support of union if this were to be the case. The company have responded to say that they expect drivers to continue making deliveries in line with the current risk assessments even though we have clearly identified faults in the current risk assessment process.
4. The company have agreed to changes surrounding the ongoing risk assessments which should create a safer and more transparent process moving forward.

As always, please continue to raise concerns directly with your union reps, in particular please let us know of any specific concerns at certain sites so we can flag with the company immediately.

I want to remind you all that delivery up / down spiral staircases or external fire escape stairs (internal and external) has already been deemed unsafe by the company and you are not expected to deliver up / down these stairs. If you are instructed to do so by a manager this issue needs to be escalated.

Many thanks,



**Noticeboard Bulletin – 14-01-2022**



**Posted on: 14 January 2022**

Dear members

Thank you to all GMB members that voted in the recent GMB pay ballot. Your voice is important.

The results of the GMB ballot are as follows:

**TO ACCEPT: 85%**

**TO REJECT: 15%**

The company have been advised of the results and the pay uplift should reach 28th January pay and it will be backdated to 1st January 2022.

**Roger Jenkins**

**GMB National Officer**

**Noticeboard Bulletin – 04-01-2022**



**Posted on: 4 January 2022**

Dear Colleagues,

Your GMB Negotiating Committee met with the company in December to discuss the 2022 pay claim.

The economic background to the pay negotiations has been difficult due to the current pandemic, with Pret and many other similar companies seeing significant downturn in business, but this had to be balanced by the improvements in pay and conditions across the distribution sector. Bestfood have to keep pace with their competitors to ensure you our members are rewarded properly and for the company to attract and retain employees.



The GMB negotiating committee are pleased to report that we believe we have achieved a fair and balanced pay offer which we are recommending for acceptance to our members. The full detail of the 2022 pay offer is included in the GMB Ballot paper.

As part of the negotiations the company raised the issue of sickness absence, excluding Covid, which is currently running at around 10%. (4% is the industry norm). The company tabled the introduction of 3 waiting days for sickness, this was rejected by the GMB, however, we need to be aware that if sickness levels remain this high the company will want to impose changes to the current sickness policy. The GMB have agreed to work with the company to reduce absence levels, but our principle will always be that those who are genuinely ill do not suffer a financial detriment.

***The GMB are recommending to members acceptance of this pay offer.***

Only GMB members are entitled to vote, if you are not a GMB member and want a say on your pay and conditions then join today at [www.gmb.org.uk/join](http://www.gmb.org.uk/join).

Please complete your GMB ballot paper and return to your GMB Representative.

**ALL VOTES MUST BE RECEIVED BY THE GMB**

**BY NO LATER THAN MIDDAY ON THURSDAY 13<sup>TH</sup> JANUARY 2022**

Yours sincerely

**Roger Jenkins**

**National Officer, GMB Union**

## **Noticeboard Bulletin - 10-12-2022**



**Posted on: 10 December 2022**

Dear Colleagues,

Your GMB Negotiating Committee met with the company in December to discuss the 2022 pay claim.

The economic background to the pay negotiations has been difficult due to the current pandemic, with Pret and many other similar companies seeing significant downturn in business, but this had to be balanced by the improvements in pay and conditions across the distribution sector. Bestfood have to



keep pace with their competitors to ensure you our members are rewarded properly and for the company to attract and retain employees.

The GMB negotiating committee are pleased to report that we believe we have achieved a fair and balanced pay offer which we are recommending for acceptance to our members. The full detail of the 2022 pay offer is included in the GMB Ballot paper.

As part of the negotiations the company raised the issue of sickness absence, excluding Covid, which is currently running at around 10%. (4% is the industry norm). The company tabled the introduction of 3 waiting days for sickness, this was rejected by the GMB, however, we need to be aware that if sickness levels remain this high the company will want to impose changes to the current sickness policy. The GMB have agreed to work with the company to reduce absence levels, but our principle will always be that those who are genuinely ill do not suffer a financial detriment.

***The GMB are recommending to members acceptance of this pay offer.***

Only GMB members are entitled to vote, if you are not a GMB member and want a say on your pay and conditions then join today at [www.gmb.org.uk/join](http://www.gmb.org.uk/join).

Please complete your GMB ballot paper and return to your GMB Representative.

**ALL VOTES MUST BE RECEIVED BY THE GMB**

**BY NO LATER THAN MIDDAY ON THURSDAY 13<sup>TH</sup> JANUARY 2022**

Yours sincerely

**Roger Jenkins**

**National Officer, GMB Union**

**Noticeboard Bulletin - 12-11-2022**

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**Posted on: 12 November 2022**

Dear Members

The ballot on the 2021 pay offer is underway, the majority of depots have now voted, and we are receiving a 100% rejection of the final company pay offer.



We have kept communications open with Bestfood and they are aware of the overwhelming response from our members.

Over the past 2 days we have re convened the pay talks and I am pleased to report that we have now achieved an offer from the company that the Joint Trade Unions Negotiating Committee can recommend to our members.

We have only been able to achieve this because you stood together and with one voice rejected the previous offer.

We will be running a full member ballot on the new offer with a recommendation to accept next week and the detail of that offer will be explained within the ballot paper.

Thank you all for your solid support and thank you to your GMB reps on the negotiating committee for achieving an acceptable offer.

**Roger Jenkins**

**GMB National Officer**

## **Noticeboard Bulletin - 15-11-2021**



**Posted on: 15 November 2021**

Dear members,

Further to pay discussions on Thursday 11 November 2021, we have now received an improved pay offer from the company and the ballot we were conducting has been suspended. We are now balloting on the new improved offer as follows:

- 4.5% investment into base hourly pay and existing permanent allowances
- All warehouse roles will be paid a minimum of £10 per hour as part of this investment
- Current temporary allowances reduced from table 1 to table 2 and becoming permanent allowances



- Future % pay increases agreed through annual pay negotiations will apply to the permanent allowances
- Increasing driver overtime from 'time and a third' to 'time and a half'
- To trial the removal of ACS shifts for 6 months from 1 January 2022 to 1 July 2022, with the intention to permanently remove them subject to the business being able to secure adequate voluntary overtime
- Introduction of enhanced family friendly policies:
  - 14 weeks paid leave for Maternity leave (1 years' service)
  - 14 weeks paid leave for Adoption leave (1 years' service)
  - 2 weeks paid leave for Paternity leave (26 weeks service)
  - Fertility support – 1 weeks paid leave per cycle of fertility treatment (up to 3 cycles) (1 years' service)
  - Foster care leave – 1 weeks paid leave for new foster carer training (26 weeks service)
  - Parental bereavement leave – 2 weeks paid leave for loss of a child under the age of 18 (no service req)

If accepted, this offer will be applied to weekly paid Warehouse and Transport colleagues within Shared User at Banbury, Hoddesdon, Royton, Taunton and Larbert. The 4.5% investment into base hourly pay and existing permanent allowances will be backdated to 1 July 2021, with all other amendments to be applied from 28 November 2021.

***Your GMB Negotiating are recommending acceptance of the improved offer.***

**Roger Jenkins**



## Noticeboard Bulletin – 08-11-2022



Posted on: 8 November 2022

Dear Members

The GMB ballot on the 2021 pay offer has commenced. The detail of the company's final offer is contained within the ballot paper. The GMB are recommending rejection of this offer.

If you have not received your ballot paper please contact your local GMB representative. Only Trade Union members can vote in this ballot, if you are currently not a member and would like a say on your future pay and conditions then join today and have your vote.

If there is a significant rejection of the final pay offer and no improvements are made to that offer, then this will lead to a formal ballot for industrial action.

It is the Joint Trade Unions wish to settle this matter through negotiations and to avoid any damaging Industrial Action. To this end we have informed the company that we are available to continue negotiating with a view to getting to a position that we can recommend an offer to our members, the issues over ASC days and Harmonisation of overtime rates still need to be addressed one of the 2 following principles need to be achieved.

1) An increase to the current hourly rate and the current "temporary allowances" to be amalgamated into that hourly rate guaranteeing a fair basic rate of pay for the future.

Or

2) If the "temporary location allowances" are not amalgamated into the hourly rate and remain "temporary" then the hourly rates need to be increased in excess of RPI.

We will keep you updated on any discussions and remain hopeful of achieving an offer that is acceptable to our members.

**Roger Jenkins, GMB National Officer**





Posted on: 29 October 2021

Dear Members

You will shortly be receiving your ballot paper for the 2021 Bestfood Shared User pay offer. The detail of the final offer from the company is included with the ballot paper which the Joint Trade Union negotiating Committee is **recommending rejection**.

**Background:**

The current economic climate both for Drivers and Warehouse Staff has seen significant pay increases across the industry leaving the current rates in Bestfood uncompetitive. A significant number of employees have left Bestfood and the company cannot attract and retain staff.

The company's response has been to bring in **temporary location allowances** in an effort to resolve this. Both GMB and UNITE believe that this will not have the desired effect and that permanent significant increases to the rates of pay are required both to reward union members fairly and protect the business in the long term.

**Joint Trade Unions Proposal (rejected by the company):**

In an effort to resolve the current pay talks the joint Trade Unions put forward the following proposal during the pay negotiations:

- 1) A 4.5% uplift to pay and allowances
- 2) The amalgamation of all location allowances, in full, into the hourly rate
- 3) Overtime to be paid at time and a half for transport colleagues in line with the warehouse
- 4) Removal of the 3 ACS days

The above we believe is affordable for the company and will resolve the issues over recruitment and retention.

The current temporary allowances would become permanent and part of the base rate giving members financial security and the ability to plan for the long term as well as providing an attractive hourly rate to recruit and retain employees.



The removal of ACS days will encourage more flexibility and the ability for the company to cover shortfalls.

Overtime is at the discretion of the company and is therefore a controllable cost.

There is a small cost in pension contributions for the company, but this is not significant.

**Bestfood have rejected the above proposals.**

We are now asking members to vote on the company offer and are **recommending rejection**.

Members need to be aware that a vote to reject is also a vote to go to a formal ballot for industrial action.

**Roger Jenkins, GMB National Officer**

**28 April 2021**

**Newsbrief No 5 April 2021**

**Dear Colleagues,**

We would like to thank all members for taking the time and trouble to participate in the recent vote on the outstanding 2020 pay anniversary. We know these types of decisions are not taken lightly by you our members, and also your families.

The results of the recent consultation exercise on the company offer of a pay freeze for the 2020 Pay anniversary is as follows.:

**THOSE VOTING YES 53%**

**THOSE VOTING NO 47%**

Therefore a majority of those members voting accepted the company offer of a Pay Freeze for 2020.

The next set of pay negotiations for 2021 will take place, and we are currently consulting you as members on what you would like to see in a pay and conditions claim, which we will further report on shortly.

Please continue to stay safe,

Best wishes

**Mick Rix**



**GMB National Officer**

**28 April 2021**

**Newsbrief No 6 April 2021**

**Dear Colleagues,**

Thank you to all members for taking the time and trouble to participate in the recent vote on the outstanding 2021 pay anniversary for Bestfood Pret colleagues at H4. These decisions are not taken lightly by you our members, and also your families.

The results of the recent consultation exercise on the company offer of a pay freeze for the 2021 Pay anniversary is as follows:

**THOSE VOTING YES 36%**

**THOSE VOTING NO 64%**

Therefore a majority of those members voting rejected the company offer of a Pay Freeze for 2021.

We are mindful that there were some issues that probably upset colleagues whilst the voting was taking place, along with other matters. Your GMB Team will have a discussion on how we can best articulate your views on this matter in our representations with the company. It may be, that we may need to further consult with you shortly, which may include seeking your views and an indication of some form of industrial action. We will be in touch further sometime next week.

Please continue to stay safe,

Best wishes

**Mick Rix**

**GMB National Officer**

**Newsbrief No 4 April 2021**

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**Posted on: 12 April 2021**



Dear Colleagues,

GMB prides itself on listening to our members. GMB is a lay member led union and our membership in the workplace are the backbone and collective strength of our union. It is only right that we ask members what they would like to see in any pay and conditions claim before we make our demands to the company on your behalf. GMB Union is the largest trade union in Bestfood. GMB members have a Voice in a GMB pay claim, and only GMB members get to vote on any pay offer negotiated with the company. *Any new member joining GMB can also take part in the survey and subsequent ballot.*

**IMPORTANT: Fully Complete the survey, it takes two minutes. When completed please hand back/or email a photograph or scan a copy to your Local GMB Stewards/or your GMB Regional Organiser at their Local GMB Office. The form must be returned no later than 11am 25<sup>th</sup> April 2021, PLEASE PRINT YOUR DETAILS in the boxes below:**

Name:

Job Title:

SU or Pret?:

Depot:

Mobile No:

Email:

Contact allowed via email/ mobile: for work and GMB info YES /NO

1. What is your No1 issue for Pay & Conditions this time round?

2. What would you like to see GMB Unions' Reps do to improve your depot locally?

Best wishes

**Mick Rix**

**GMB National Officer**

**12 April 2021**

**Newsbrief No 3 April 2021**

Dear Colleagues,



Throughout the pandemic your GMB Union Full time Officials and your Local GMB Union representatives have worked hard to ensure that the strictest safety measures are in place to help combat the spread of the Covid virus in your workplaces. GMB negotiated payments for members who had to self-isolate, or shield. Due to the downturn in business caused by Covid emergency restrictions, because of the pandemic and the effects it had on the business, ***a pay freeze for 2020 for Shared User and for Pret 2021 was put forward by the company, whose members are currently balloting on whether to accept or reject.***

The pay anniversary is due in July for Shared User colleagues at Larbert, Royton, Banbury, Taunton and Hoddesdon. The pay anniversary date for Pret Hoddesdon colleagues is in January. It is now time to seek the views of GMB members regards what you want to see as a member in a GMB pay and conditions claim with the company for the new anniversary of July 2021 and January 2022. We believe that GMB membership gives you an important voice in your workplace and your terms and conditions.

***If you are a GMB Union member you have the right to be consulted on what you want in a pay claim, and you have the right to be balloted on any final offer received from the company. That is the fundamental difference of being a GMB Union member. We have been practising workplace democracy for a long time.***

The Pay & Conditions survey of GMB Members will commence at all depots starting 12th April and will close on the 25th April 2021 at 11am. The survey will be conducted by GMB stewards/ GMB Regional Organisers where possible. Please hand back your completed Pay & Conditions Survey Form back to your GMB steward/ GMB Regional Officer.

***PLEASE NOTE: If you have not received a Pay Survey Form by the 18th April you must contact your local GMB steward/ GMB Regional Organiser or the Chair of the GMB NJC Stewards Mick Vearer by sending an email to [mick.vearer@gmbactivist.org.uk](mailto:mick.vearer@gmbactivist.org.uk) and we will ensure you get a survey form.***

**As a GMB Member you can make your Voice count!! New Members that join can take part too, and will be given a survey.**

Best wishes

**Mick Rix**

**GMB National Officer**

**12 April 2021**

**Newsbrief No 2 April 2021**

Dear Colleagues,



We have all lived through some unprecedented times in the last twelve months, the pandemic has caused havoc and a lot of personal despair and sadness. Your GMB Union representatives like you are human and some during this period have also had bad news to contend with. Everyone has been affected in some way.

We have been trying to keep our members safe whilst at work, and ensure that the procedures and policies in place are best in class, and that other issues which needed resolution were also dealt with too.

The business has suffered severe fluctuations in finances due to various lockdown orders and the effects of pandemic that have caused a downturn in the business volumes, the company has lost an incredible amount of money. Indeed if it had not been for the sale of the business to the Tesco/ Booker group in March 2020, the previous owners BFS group would have closed the business.

Sometimes these things may not always be appreciated, but it does have a bearing on colleagues security of employment. The losses of the business run in tens of millions of pounds. It has been impossible to hold any meaningful discussions regards pay, because as we have found, the company is simply not in a position to offer a pay rise. There is a great deal of sympathy in that it is not the fault of the company that these issues have happened, it is the effects of the pandemic. We only have to read and hear the news about what has happened to millions of other jobs in the UK economy.

It would also be wrong of your GMB NJC team to assume that colleagues are blind to what is taking place in the business, and that maintaining job security and job safety have rightly been our priority. You have all seen the problems with the business in the last twelve months, with the down turn and fluctuation of volumes, and we know that caused colleagues some worry.

Your GMB NJC have decided to put the company offer of a pay freeze to our members, and that you will be balloted as a member on the principle of a one year pay freeze for July 2020 to July 2021 for Shared User colleagues, and a one year pay freeze for Pret colleagues from Jan 2021 to Jan 2022. You will be given this newsbrief letter No2/ 2021, also a copy of the company letter, and a ballot paper.

***The ballot will take place from the 12th April until the 25th April at 11am. New members are allowed to vote as well.*** We know GMB Union members will use their judgement wisely.

Best wishes

**Mick Rix**

**GMB National Officer**

**12 April 2021**



Dear Colleagues,

For the last twelve months since the outbreak of the pandemic your GMB Union representatives have been trying to keep our members safe whilst at work. Because of the fluctuations of the business finances due to various lockdown and the effects of pandemic that have caused a downturn in the business volumes, the company has lost an incredible amount of money.

Whilst this may not always be appreciated, it does have a bearing on colleagues security of employment. The losses of the business run in tens of millions of pounds. It has been impossible to hold any meaningful discussions regards pay, because as we have found, the company is simply not in a position to offer a pay rise.

The company have put their position clearly in writing stating they are unable to offer colleagues a pay rise for Shared User from the anniversary date in 2020, and the same for those colleagues who work on the Pret Contract whose anniversary date commences January 2021.

Your GMB NJC team considered the position of the company letter, and have concluded there are no possible alternatives. It would also be wrong of your GMB NJC team to assume that colleagues are blind to what is taking place in the business, and that maintaining job security and job safety have rightly been the priority. You have seen all the problems with the business in the last twelve months, with the downturn and fluctuation of volumes, and that has caused colleagues some worry.

Your GMB NJC have decided to put the company offer of a pay freeze to our members, and that you will be balloted as a member on the principle of a one year pay freeze for July 2020 to July 2021 for Shared User colleagues, and a one year pay freeze for Pret colleagues from Jan 2021 to Jan 2022.

***Your GMB Union site Reps and GMB Regional Officers will be visiting you and handing out information from the 12th April. Do have a conversation with us. The ballot will close on the 25th April at 11am. New members are allowed to vote as well.***

We need to check and update your contact details. At times we may need to make contact with you via email or txt message. Don't be left out from important news from Your Union.

Best wishes

**Mick Rix**

**GMB National Officer**



Posted on: 22 February 2021

Following advice from Public Health England and information that the new strain of Coronavirus is more contagious we have revised our Coronavirus control guidelines. We now require colleagues, with the exception of the list below to wear face coverings or face masks whilst on our sites. This will include:

- **ALL communal areas**, regardless of the 2 metre distancing rule being observed including reception, stair wells, corridors, toilets, locker/changing rooms, canteen, lifts & whilst moving around shared offices, where possible, 2 metre distancing must be maintained throughout

- - **AND where 2 metre social distancing is not possible** including;

- On entrance to the Depot including clocking in and out
- When leaving the Freezer Chamber for any reason
- On exiting the Depot at the end of shift along corridors, through the turnstiles and to/from the car park
- During 1-1 training activities for both trainer and trainee where physical proximity may be required

Drivers are required to wear a face covering in the following situations:

- When delivering to other Best Depots (If entering any part of the warehouse / offices)
- When delivering to customer delivery points
- In all DC communal areas (as above)
- When there is more than one person in the cab

Face coverings may be removed **ONLY** when:

- **In canteens – when seated and eating and drinking**





- **In smoking shelters – when smoking**
- **Forklift Drivers within the ambient/chilled/marshalling area when carrying out replenishment and/or put away tasks**
- **Whilst working in any part of the Freezer Chamber**
- **Whilst at your desk, protected by a screen and 2 metre distancing can be maintained**
- **In an office by yourself working alone**
- **Whilst working alone outside in the yard where 2 meter distancing can be observed**

Disposable face coverings / masks are available for colleagues and these will be provided by your line manager and placed in strategic areas. Alternatively, colleagues may wear their own face covering / mask if they wish.

If you have any safety concerns about wearing a face covering or if you are, exempt from wearing one for health reasons, impairment or disability, please speak to your line manager. A 1-1 meeting will be conducted to fully explore the reasons to why you are exempt. We requested that any supporting information was provided by .

Masks and snoods will be provided by the business to all colleagues who do not provide their own.

With the exceptions listed above, with immediate effect all colleagues will be required to wear a facemask/covering, face shields will be provided as an alternative for those who provide proof of medical exemption in regard to wearing a mask. Where exemptions to wearing a face cover or shield are authorised, the colleague will be asked to wear a Blue Hi Vis, this will help all to keep greater distance to help all to keep safe.

Please maintain and manage your personal face covering. Please take care to dispose of face coverings responsibly in the general waste bins provided around the site.

For colleagues that refuse to wear a mask/face covering without evidence of medical exemption or authorised exemption or refuse to wear the blue hi vis could be subjected to disciplinary action. This change of approach is supported by our recognised Unions.

**Thank you for your assistance and support in reducing the risk of transmission of Covid-19.**

