

# Worker dies amid Covid-19 outbreak at Bakkavor factory



## **GMB Union calls on Bakkavor Tilmanstone Salads to offer mass testing to staff and full pay for all covid-related absence**

A worker has died amid a coronavirus outbreak at a factory which produces food for Marks & Spencer

Cases at the Bakkavor/Tilmanstone Salads facility in Kent have rocketed from 35 in the third week of November to 79 by the end of the month.

At least 97 staff have been instructed to self-isolate.

The factory has 800 employees, but many of those are office staff currently working from home.



GMB has called for the company to offer full pay to anyone taking covid-related absence, mass testing for staff and to perform a deep clean at the factory.

So far the company has only agreed to ask staff to wear face masks after pressure from GMB Union.

Bakkavor hit the headlines in April when **GMB exposed a boss** 'threatening to sack staff who miss work amid the outbreak'.

**Frank Macklin, GMB Organiser, said:**

"Bakkavor Tilmanstone Salads had only experienced a few positive cases of covid-19 before November, but we have now seen the virus sweep through the factory at an alarming rate in just over four weeks.

"Sadly, the Bakkavor factory has now suffered a covid-19 related fatality.

"GMB would like to express our deepest sympathies with this employee's family at this difficult time.

"25% of the workforce has been affected by this outbreak - unfortunately Public Health England does not feel that this is enough to step in.

"GMB has requested the factory close to allow mass testing of employees and a deep clean of its factory.

"Once this has been done, the factory can re-open with staff returning to work, safe in the knowledge every step has been taken to ensure they are working in the safest possible environment.

"We also call on Bakkavor Tilmanstone Salads to pay employees their full salary if they have tested positive for covid-19 or have to self-isolate. No one can survive on Statutory Sick Pay alone.

"GMB has now lodged a formal collective grievance on behalf of our members, as we believe the health and safety of our members has been seriously compromised at the factory."

---

## Press office

079859 1525698

[press.office@gmb.org.uk](mailto:press.office@gmb.org.uk)

## Member requiring help?

Click to contact your local GMB Region

[info@gmb.org.uk](mailto:info@gmb.org.uk)

