

Amazon faces legal challenge over workers' rights revelations



GMB Union has today filed legal proceedings against Amazon

The union claims Amazon has engaged in widespread attempts to coerce staff to cancel their trade union membership.

Known as an Inducement Claim, Amazon workers formally lodge a claim against their own employer for encouraging them to pass up their trade union and collective bargaining rights.

The challenge just days after GMB won a formal recognition ballot at the company, a process which requires the union to prove they have meet a threshold of GMB members in the company's fulfilment centre [1].



Union recognition would mean Amazon would be forced to sit down with GMB on matters relating to pay, hours, and holidays; the first time this has been achieved anywhere in the world outside of the USA.

The claims include that Amazon has:

- Pressured staff to leave the union. Company bosses have erected QR codes in Amazon fulfilment centres which generate an email to the union's membership department requesting that membership is cancelled.
- Forced workers to attend hour long anti-union seminars. Led by senior company managers, these briefings forced workers to listen to anti-union messages on work time.
- Displayed anti-union messages throughout Amazon workplaces, including on billboards and screens.
- Bullied and intimidated union representatives amongst Amazon staff.



Amanda Gearing, GMB Senior Organiser, said:

"This is a company out of control.

"Amazon is a multi-billion-pound corporation, doing everything in its power to stop minimum wage workers from forming a union.

"Their latest American-style anti-union campaign proves they will stop at nothing to beat the rules that every other employer in the UK is expected to follow.



“It’s desperate measures and goes someway to show why Amazon workers as so determined to win the union recognition they deserve”.

Rosa Curling, Director of Foxglove Legal, said:

“In Britain, everyone has the right to join a union and organise for better working conditions. In Coventry, Amazon have driven a bright orange truck through that basic British right – and the law.

“Workers are cornered in the warehouse and told to leave the union, hustled into anti-union propaganda seminars, then have a QR code shoved in their face that terminates their membership with just one click to quit. If only it was so easy to quit Amazon Prime!

“All this while Amazon is raining cash on Coventry to flood the warehouse with new hires and shut down GMB’s union recognition push.

“That’s why Foxglove is supporting this case: to make Amazon obey the law, stop workers being cheated – and get them the protection at work they so desperately need.”

ENDS

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