

Tesco workers to ballot on Labour Court Recommendations – with potential for industrial action

Newsletter
March 2015

Dear Member

As you are aware, you and your fellow Mandate members lodged a pay claim with Tesco Ireland in March 2015 which the Company refused to accept. Following this, Tesco – without consultation – refused to pay the share bonus scheme to the majority of workers. This led to discussions which ultimately resulted in a Labour Court hearing where a Recommendation was issued on February 19th.

The Labour Court made two key recommendations:

1. **All Tesco workers should receive a 2% pay increase backdated to April 2015.**
2. **All Tesco workers who had so far not received a share bonus payment should receive a 1.5% bonus payment, backdated to May 2015.**

Prior to you and your fellow members having an opportunity to vote on whether to accept the terms of the Labour Court Recommendation – which is normal procedure following local negotiations or a Labour Court hearing – the Company announced on Friday 11th March that they were proceeding with plans to pay the 2% pay increase, but only to workers employed after 1996. The Company also said they had not made a decision on whether to accept or reject the Labour Court Recommendation on the share bonus payment citing “legal and revenue issues”, something that your Union believes is not insurmountable and can be easily overcome. Tesco’s decision not to apply the full terms of the Labour Court Recommendation is extremely disappointing.

In keeping with normal practice, a National Shop Stewards meeting was held on Sunday 13th March 2016 to consider the terms of the Labour Court Recommendation. The Shop Stewards unanimously decided to recommend acceptance of the Recommendation to all members and simultaneously to commence a national ballot for industrial action, **only in the event** that Tesco fails to honour and implement the full terms of the Labour Court Recommendation. **Remember, it was Tesco’s decision not to give any pay increase or issue a share bonus to the majority of their workers.**

The Company’s latest action is yet another crude but deliberate attempt to divide their workforce and we must not fall into this devious and dangerous trap. Comments by Tesco management and letters issued to staff advising that these issues ‘don’t affect you’ are clearly designed to divide the workers. Not complying with collective agreements and forced changes to contracts affects all workers – it may not be you this time, but if we don’t stand united it could be your terms and conditions next.

The progress that we have achieved to date proves that we are winning and if we continue to pull together in common cause, we will win fully what the Labour Court has decided is rightfully yours. We got to this point by sticking together as a united union membership and now we must use this collective strength to push forward **on behalf of all members**, for the full implementation of the Labour Court Recommendation.

Over the coming weeks balloting arrangements will be put in place for your store and you are strongly encouraged not only to note them but also to participate in your ballot meeting when they come around.

Your Shop Stewards also decided to step up in a very determined way the promotion of the **Tesco Workers Together Campaign** (www.tescoworkers.ie) and you will see many signs of this over the coming weeks such as the red wrist bands which members were asked to wear as a display of solidarity – yet management have now told members to remove wristbands under the threat of disciplinary action. You need to ask yourself why they have never given these instructions before in relation to wristbands and therefore why are they trying to deny you and your fellow members the opportunity to visually display your solidarity with each other?

Finally, the National Shop Stewards meeting also adopted a pay claim for this year and this will be served on your employer in the near future.

Yours fraternally,

Gerry Light

Mandate Assistant General Secretary