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MANDATE
TRADE UNION

Arcadia Update

WALLIS WORKERS TO BE 'LOCKED OUT' THIS SATURDAY

MANDATE TRADE UNION members in two Wallis stores in Limerick have voted unanimously in favour of industrial action following the company's decision to implement 'restructuring plans', including widespread redundancies, without agreement with the workers or their representatives.

The company plans to close its Cruises Street store this Saturday and they also plan a major restructuring program in the Childers Road store from Sunday – which will affect 21 workers in total. Mandate has now served strike notice on the company and will place pickets on the two Limerick stores on Monday, 23rd September.

Management at the Arcadia Group, which owns the Wallis brand along with stores such as Topshop, Miss Selfridge, Evans, Burtons and Dorothy Perkins, are refusing to implement a long standing agreed redundancy package, despite paying a dividend of €92m to the parent company in 2012. They're also refusing to offer any compensation to workers who transfer and lose hours.

The company is also planning to close their Grafton Street store in Dublin and the restructuring of their stores in Clerys and Jervis Street, again, without agreement.

Mandate say their members' key concerns include:

- The reduction in the agreed redundancy terms by 45% (5 weeks per year of service to 2.75

per year of service);

- No compensation for workers transferred who will lose hours and therefore income;
- The refusal to accept a legal requirement for transfer of undertakings to apply to the closing store on Grafton Street where the company will sub-lease to the retailer Cath Kidston.

Mandate's Divisional Organiser, Karen Wall said: "**The treatment of the long serving loyal workers in the two Wallis stores is reprehensible. The company is bulldozing its way through the rights and the living standards of these workers, with little or no regard for the loyal, hard work they've given the company over the years. They've essentially told the workers they're being locked out of employment starting this Saturday.**

She added, "These workers have an established agreement in place that the company is blatantly ignoring which is obviously a major concern for us. They are offering a substantially reduced redundancy package to their long serving staff members despite applying this agreement less than nine months ago to workers with considerably less service than the workers involved in this dispute.

"It's totally unfair and it's worrying for



all the other workers in the Arcadia Group who should now be very concerned about the deterioration in their living standards the company has planned for them," she said.

Ballots for industrial action will take place in the three Dublin stores next Tuesday ahead of the restructuring of those stores, scheduled to take place on 5th October.

Mandate is calling on the company to do the responsible thing and abide by their own agreements and come to a reasonable settlement before this dispute escalates.

Ms Wall said, "**Our members are determined not to be walked all over by this company and the unanimous result in our ballot show's they're prepared to stand by each other and fight for a positive outcome for all concerned. We simply will not allow this company to just trample on the rights and entitlements of our members while at the same time paying out an incredible €92m in dividends when it suits them.**"

For further information on this circular, please contact your shopsteward or local official.

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