



# Marks & Spencer Union Update

13/08/2013

## Marks & Spencer store closure talks break down

Mandate Trade Union say direct talks with Marks & Spencer management in relation to the closing of four stores have broken down as a result of the company refusing to engage in meaningful negotiations.

Mandate, which represents the workers in the Dun Laoghaire, Mullingar, Naas and Tallaght stores, say the company refused to discuss options of redeployment for their staff members and now the issue has been referred to the Labour Relations Commission (LRC) by the union.

Joe Donnelly, Mandate Divisional Organiser said, "The workers in the four stores were devastated last week to hear that they are going to lose their jobs and many of them requested that the company consider alternatives such as redeployment to other stores as a possible option, but management have so far refused.

He added, "Some of our members have been working with the company for decades and now they're distraught at how senior management has put them in such a vulnerable position, particularly after all the loyalty they've shown throughout the years."

Mr Donnelly also highlighted concern at the injustice of the company allowing senior managers from the stores to be redeployed, yet all other workers are being made compulsory redundant.

"It is clear that management are not against redeployment in principal so we are hopeful they will alter their position in the coming days, but for now we need to plan our next steps with our members," he said.

**Mandate confirmed that the workers will now ballot for industrial action at the end of the week.**

"We have been put in a very difficult position and we have very little time because of the deadlines imposed by management to obtain a satisfactory outcome for our members, and that to us is a very serious issue and a concern for all Marks & Spencer workers," he said.

"During the talks today, we sought an extension to the period of redundancy notice on the basis that both parties could meaningfully engaged in negotiations, but

regrettably the company point blankly refused. Therefore, we have been left with no option but to commence, in the first instance, a ballot for industrial action in the effected stores and we are reserving the right to extend the ballot to the wider company at a later date if necessary."

Mr Donnelly concluded by saying that the company did not engage in proper consultation before making last week's announcement.

"It is Mandate's position that Marks & Spencer not only had a moral obligation, but also a legal obligation in employment law to engage in genuine consultation with their workers in relation to this important issue. Unfortunately that didn't happen but it is not too late now to do what's right by their workers, so we're urging the company to reconsider their position immediately and engage meaningfully so that we can achieve a mutually beneficial outcome," he said.

Mandate intend to ballot all members in the effected stores this Friday, 16th August 2013.

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