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Arcadia Update

WALLIS WORKERS STRIKE FOR WHAT IS RIGHT AND FAIR

LAST MONDAY (23 Sep 2013) 17 Mandate members employed by the Arcadia Group in two Wallis stores in Limerick began all out industrial action.

These workers took the brave and difficult decision to go on strike after the company refused to honour a long and well established redundancy agreement between Mandate and Arcadia. The company is also refusing to offer compensation to staff that will potentially lose hours as part of Arcadia's re-structuring process.

The 're-structuring process' and refusal to honour the agreement comes after Wallis paid out an incredible €92 million to the owners of the company.

Mandate Divisional Organiser, Brendan O'Hanlon said, "The action taken by our members in the Cruises Street and Childers Road in Limerick has proven to be very effective with massive support from the general public and fellow Mandate members.

"We continue to urge all members of the public to support these workers who are standing up for what is right and fair. The workers have been buoyed by some great people attending the picket line and offering their sympathies for how the company has treated them," he said.

The company have now selected certain staff for redeployment – with no clear criteria being used – and issued redundancy notices to the remainder. The union will now initiate complaints to the Employment Appeals Tribunal under The Unfair Dismissals Act citing unfair selection for redundancy.



Caption: Wallis workers on strike in Limerick this week

DISPUTE ESCALATES

Mandate members in the Grafton Street, Clerys and Jervis Street Stores in Dublin have also voted unanimously in favour of taking industrial action. The action was due to take effect from the 5th October; however, Mandate has since been advised that the date of the store closure (Grafton St) and the restructuring of the other two outlets will now not take place until the 26th October.

Mr O'Hanlon explained, "As a result of the company's decision to move the proposed closure date, members in the three Dublin locations will now be balloted for industrial action in support of their Limerick colleagues."

"We're very confident that all workers in the Arcadia Group will stand united in their support for their colleagues in Limerick because they're fully aware that it might be them targeted by the company next. We know from experience that when workers stand collectively together, we've a much better chance for a positive outcome

for all workers."

TRANSFER OF UNDERTAKINGS COMPLAINT

Mandate is now preparing to prosecute complaints against both the Arcadia Group and Cath Kidston on behalf of the members in the Grafton Street store under The Transfer of Undertakings legislation. It is the unions' contention that the workers have a legal right to retain their jobs with their current terms and conditions being protected.

COMPANY REQUESTS MEETING

Following receipt of correspondence from the company advising of its willingness to meet, a meeting has been scheduled for Tuesday 1st October next.

Mr O'Hanlon said, "We understand how important these issues are for all our members in Arcadia so of course we will keep everyone informed of developments as the arise.