

10 December 2013

TO: ALL UNION MEMBERS IN MARKS AND SPENCER

RE: CURRENT INDUSTRIAL DISPUTE – THE FACTS

Dear Member


As we face into the second day of strike action this Thursday, disappointingly management have continued to put their energies into distorting the facts. For example, continuously stating that the dispute is only about the Pension Scheme, as opposed to making a genuine effort to resolve it. It is vitally important at this crucial stage that you do not allow yourself to be distracted from the facts and we should only be concerned with those facts.

1. The current dispute is about four issues which will negatively impact on all our members should the Company succeed with its plans. Whatever the outcome of this dispute it must be resolved through a negotiated settlement as was outlined on the ballot paper upon which you and your fellow members overwhelmingly voted to take industrial action on.
2. The attempt by management to convince workers that the dispute is just about the pension scheme is a crude tactic to divide and conquer and should be seen and treated for what it is.
3. As late as today – your union informed the Labour Relations Commission (LRC) that we are prepared to enter into negotiations provided there are no pre-conditions attached. Amazingly, this offer does not seem to be acceptable to the company. Management have and are continuing to wrongly state that we actually refused invitations to attend talks at the Labour Relations Commission (LRC). This is factually incorrect as was confirmed by the LRC in writing last week.
4. Based on the very limited financial information provided by the company we requested further relevant details – however management are refusing to provide it. Surely you as a worker will need to be convinced that any attempt to remove existing entitlements must be justified by reference to the company's current trading/financial position.

It is crucially important at this stage that both unions and their members remain collectively committed to achieving the desired outcome that we set out at the beginning of this dispute. Anything less will be seen as a sign of weakness by the company who will no doubt push ahead aggressively with its stated plans. We must remain strong and trust each other, the message and guidance which comes from your union Officials, Shop Stewards, Local Committees and National Negotiating Team.

Think about it, it serves no purpose for your representatives to give nothing less than a full and accurate account of events as they occur. We unlike the Company, have nothing to gain from engaging in such activity. Our sole focus is to act in your interest.

We appreciate these are difficult circumstances for our members however we have no doubt that if you remain united we will achieve a more positive outcome to all four issues.



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