

Airbus strike ballot opens today in pay dispute involving 3,000 workers

Workers at Airbus' factories in Broughton in North Wales and Filton in South West England have begun balloting for industrial action in a dispute over pay.

Last week Business Live reported that around 3,000 workers [had turned down a pay offer from the aerospace giant and were to ballot on industrial action.](#)

Neither party is commenting on the offer figure but it is understood to be around 2.5%. It comes as inflation is currently at over 5%.

Airbus said it was "disappointed" after the move from union members but Unite say workers deserve a "fair pay increase" after a pay freeze in 2020 when the sector was in crisis.

The workforce at Broughton went from 6,000 to just over 4,000 over the pandemic but there are now plans to increase staff numbers as the sector rebounds.

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Unite general secretary Sharon Graham said: “Workers at Airbus are committed to their jobs and their hard work and dedication is the reason for the company’s success. They fully deserve a fair pay increase.

“Unite is dedicated to prioritising the jobs, pay and conditions of its members and it will be giving its full support to our members at Airbus until this dispute is resolved.”

The ballot opens today and closes on Tuesday 15 February. If the workers vote in favour of industrial action than strike action could begin in March.

Although Unite has begun balloting for industrial action, the union remains hopeful that Airbus will return to the negotiating table and a mutually acceptable agreement can be reached.

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Unite national officer for aerospace Rhys McCarthy said: “At the height of the pandemic workers at Airbus accepted a pay freeze. As the sector returns to normality, coupled with high inflation and increased living costs, workers deserve a fair pay increase.

“Workers are balloting for industrial action as a last resort due to negotiations having stalled. Unite remains committed to resolving this dispute through negotiations and is fully prepared to hold further talks with Airbus to secure an agreement which is acceptable to both sides.”

Airbus said: “Airbus is disappointed that trade union members have decided to hold a ballot for industrial action following

the rejection of the latest pay offer.

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“The company made the offer in the context of an ongoing pandemic, which is the worst crisis our industry has ever faced and the wider benefits structure which employees receive.

“Airbus in the UK managed to successfully navigate the first waves of the pandemic without the need for any compulsory redundancies at a cost of more than £100m.

“The members’ decision will have a detrimental impact on our ongoing recovery from the crisis.

“The company is keen to avoid damaging industrial action so we can focus on building a resilient, competitive and collaborative place to work for years to come.

“We are in discussions with the trade union to help achieve this.”

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