

Dates for two-week strike at Port of Liverpool confirmed after Unite workers reject pay offer

The dates for a two-week strike by hundreds of Port of Liverpool workers have been confirmed.

Members of Unite will walk out from 6am on Monday, September 19, to 6am on Monday, October 3, in a dispute over pay.

More than 500 port operatives from Mersey Docks and Harbour Company (MDHC) [voted in August](#) in favour of a strike.

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The union said the 7% offer from MDHC, which is owned by Peel Ports, represented a real terms pay cut.

It added that more strikes are set to be scheduled in the coming weeks if MDHC fails to put forward an acceptable offer to the workers.

Unite general secretary Sharon Graham said: “MDHC is controlled by a tax-exiled billionaire and can well afford to pay these workers a proper pay rise.

“Workers across the country are sick to death of being told to take a hit on their wages and living standards while employer after employer is guilty of rampant profiteering. MDHC needs to think again, table a reasonable offer and fulfil its previous pay promises.”

Unite lead officer for freeports Steven Gerrard added: “MDHC has refused to honour the previous pay pledges it made to our

members and is refusing to put forward an acceptable pay rise now. It has no one else to blame for the disruption that will be caused.

“MDHC needs to deliver on the agreements it made in 2021 as well as tabling an offer our members can accept for 2022.”

Peel Ports said the move is “designed to disrupt operations” at the UK container port. The group also warned it has more than 200 CVs on file from applicants “awaiting recruitment opportunities at the Port of Liverpool”.

David Huck, chief operating officer at Peel Ports Group, said: “Despite a series of meetings, we are very disappointed Unite the Union has confirmed strike action by its Port of Liverpool Containers’ members.

“Whilst we fully appreciate our colleagues’ concerns on the rising cost of living, we have proposed an industry leading pay package of 8.3%.

“This is all in addition to a 4.5% increase in 2021, with improvements to shifts, sick pay and pensions, and following continuous and above-average pay awards over the last ten years.

“Our pay offer is well above the national average and represents a sustainable position for the business, taking into account stagnation in the container market, worldwide economic pressures, the conflict in Ukraine and global shipping disruption.

“We will continue to urge Unite the Union to keep talking with us so together we can find a resolution to avoid action that will be bad news for the sector, businesses and families, with the effects being felt for many months to come, at a time when container volume demand has started to reduce.”

Peel Ports Group said it has:

- Recruited an additional 150 staff for Port of Liverpool container operations over the last 12 months
- “Considerably improved” terms and conditions over the last four years across shift patterns, sick pay, pension contributions and other benefits
- Invested £500m into the Port of Liverpool Container Terminals, as part of a £1.2bn investment programme over the last ten years to “support sustainable business growth, creating over 400 quality new jobs”

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