

Engineers at whisky plant begin strike action in 'escalating' pay dispute

Workers at a Fife whisky plant will begin a series of walkouts on Friday evening in an escalating pay dispute, their union has said.

Members of Unite at Diageo's plant in Leven will stop work in a dispute over shift changes which they say will effectively result in a 6% pay cut.

Affecting mainly engineering workers, the strike action will conclude just before 6am on Monday.

The union claims strike action will directly impact on engineering support for the bottling plant and it believes it will not be safe to operate the site without those workers.

The latest round of strike action follows previous stoppages, and more action is scheduled to take place until April 3 if a resolution is not found.

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Previously, Diageo told the PA news agency it is not introducing a lower rate of pay for new starters and said the dispute relates to shift arrangements for the people taking

industrial action.

The company told PA the number of workers taking part in the strike action is now four – it was previously 10.

Unite general secretary Sharon Graham said: “Unite’s engineering members at Diageo’s Leven plant have had enough of pay cuts, especially as the company’s profits are soaring. Diageo recorded £4.4 billion in profits – up nearly 20% – directly on the back of our members’ hard work.

“Yet some of our members are now facing considerable pay cuts when inflation has hit a 45-year high. This is totally unacceptable and we will stand with our members in their fight against corporate greed at Diageo.”

The union said workers in dispute will stage a protest outside The Johnnie Walker Experience in [Edinburgh](#) on Saturday February 11 and at the Leven plant on Sunday February 12, from 12pm each day, in a bid to highlight Unite’s claims that some of its engineering members are set to lose about 6% of their pay when moved to a proposed lower rate of pay.

Unite industrial officer Bob Macgregor said: “The weekend strike action is the latest round in our members’ fight for decent and fair pay. Diageo are one of the most profitable companies in the UK yet they are treating their engineering workers with complete disrespect.

“The workers keep the bottling plant safe and literally keep the drinks flowing.

“They will be taking their fight to The Johnnie Walker Experience next Saturday (11 February) so that the people of Edinburgh and all visitors to the centre get to understand what kind of experience the company is giving its workforce.”

A spokesman for Diageo said: “We are proud of the pay and benefits packages we provide. We have a very small number of

employees taking industrial action over weekend nightshift requirements.

“Our Leven site continues to operate safely and as normal, and we remain committed to seeking a resolution to this dispute.”