

Asda shake-up risks job cuts and lower pay for 4,000 night workers

Asda's owners have revealed a planned shake-up that places hundreds of jobs at risk and will see thousands moved to lower-paid roles.

The UK's third-largest grocery chain by market share said its changes were the result of an "efficiency" drive but they were met with stinging criticism by the GMB union.

The company has proposed that some overnight restocking shifts at 184 stores are moved to the daytime, putting 211 night shift manager roles at risk.

[Asda](#) said the changes would also affect 4,137 hourly-paid workers as their shift patterns would also move to the daytime, resulting in the loss of their night shift pay premium of at least £2.52 per hour for restocking goods such as frozen food, tins and pasta.

The plans would also see the opening hours for 23 in-store Post Office branches cut by a quarter and seven in-store pharmacies, which employ 14 pharmacists and 48 other workers, closed down.

The shake-up comes at a time when supermarket profitability has been squeezed by the need to cut prices and compete as discounters Aldi and Lidl continue to eat away at the established grocers' customer bases amid the [cost of living crisis](#).

Value ranges and essentials have formed the main battle ground, with the sector signalling last year that the days when they competed for customers through loss-leading fuel

offerings were over.

Read more from Sky News:

[Tesco boss makes food inflation prediction](#)

[Workers stand up to 'bully' Amazon as first UK strike begins](#)

Asda retail director Ken Towle said: "The [retail](#) sector is evolving at pace and it is vital we review changing customer preferences, along with our own ways of working, to ensure we are operating as efficiently as possible so that we can continue to invest and grow our business.

Advertisement

"We are now entering a period of consultation with our colleagues on these proposals.

"We recognise this will be a difficult time for them and will do all we can to support them through this process."

The GMB union said its reps would be meeting later on Thursday to discuss its response but hinted that a fight was looming, fearing that more than 4,000 jobs could actually be lost.

National officer Nadine Houghton said: "The real term impact of this on low-paid retail colleagues is that a night colleague on 30 hours stands to lose in the region of £300 to £400 a month, during a cost-of-living crisis."

She added: "For this reason, we expect the proposals to result in significant job losses.

"GMB is also concerned the proposals are quite simply unworkable due to a reduced amount of time being made available to replenish the shop floor."

The union has been highly critical of Asda's owners, particularly on the issue of pay, in the wake of their debt-fuelled takeover in 2021.

The Times reported last week that Asda could be merged with

petrol forecourts business EG Group – also owned by Zuber and Mohsin Issa and London-based private equity group TDR Capital.

Such a tie-up, which would be subject to regulatory approval, would create a retail giant with more than 580 supermarkets, 700 petrol forecourts and 100 convenience stores in the UK.