

Felixstowe port workers threaten a second eight-day strike in pay dispute

Workers at the UK's largest container port will walk off the job for eight days starting later this month, as their pay dispute continues.

Unite has said workers at Felixstowe will strike from 7am on Tuesday 27 September until 6.59am on Wednesday 5 October, in what will be their second eight-day strike this year.

The union blamed management at the Felixstowe Dock and Railway Company for ending pay talks after announcing it was "imposing" a pay deal of 7% on the workforce.

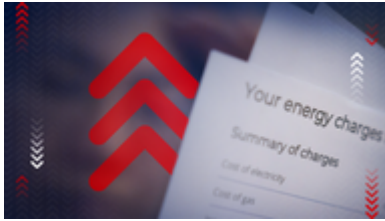
The union said the pay deal "is in reality a sizeable pay cut" compared to the retail price index (RPI, an older measure of inflation) of 12.3%.

Unite general secretary Sharon Graham said: "Felixstowe and (its owner) CK Hutchison are both eye-wateringly wealthy but rather than offer a fair pay offer, they have instead attempted to impose a real terms pay cut on their workers.

"Since the beginning of this dispute Unite has given its total support to its members at Felixstowe and that will continue until this dispute is resolved."

The port's management said on its website: "We are very disappointed that Unite has announced this further strike action at this time.

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"The collective bargaining process has been exhausted and there is no prospect of agreement being reached with the union.

"The port is in the process of implementing the 2022 pay award of 7% plus £500 which is backdated to 1 January 2022."

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Unite represents around 1,900 workers at Felixstowe and their recent strike – the first since 1989 – was an eight-day walk-out in August.

News of a second long strike will make many UK retailers nervous as many ports are starting to unload Christmas stock this month.

The situation could be worsened further by a planned two-week walkout by workers at the port of Liverpool from 19 September to 3 October.

They are also fighting over pay.