

Pay dispute could hit Ryanair flights from Stansted this summer

Ryanair flights from Stansted could be seriously disrupted this summer due to a pay dispute.

Unite the union said workers employed by baggage handler Blue Handling have rejected a 4% pay offer following a 10% pay cut in 2020 during the height of the [coronavirus](#) pandemic.

Blue Handling employs around 750 workers and handles around 200 flights a day during the summer holiday season.

Unite said that Ryanair and Blue Handling's parent company ABM are both doing well financially, making it "unbelievable and irresponsible" that Blue Handling is "still refusing to pay decent wages".

A meeting is taking place today between union representatives and management and Unite has said it will prepare for an industrial action ballot unless there is progress over the coming days.

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Unite regional officer, Burcin Bayazit said: "Spiralling food and energy prices mean that workers are struggling to afford the basics.

"Blue Handling's client Ryanair has recovered well from the pandemic.

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“Blue Handling must ensure that our members are repaid the money the workers lost during COVID.

“Our members have made it clear to us that they are ready to take part in an industrial action ballot.

“The company needs to get serious otherwise it could face significant disruption this summer.”

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A Blue Handling spokesperson said: "An improved programme of pay was agreed and signed by Unite the Union, the GMB union and ourselves.

"The recommended offer included an immediate 10.9% increase in pay, as well as an additional rise in 2023 of up to 4%.

"We were therefore very disappointed to learn that the offer recommended by the unions was subsequently rejected.

"The industry is still in the early stages of a fragile recovery, and we must be aware of further shocks to our business while recovering COVID-19 losses.

"The signed agreement reflected the current climate of recovery to ensure we can continue to provide a competitive service at Stansted, while accelerating pay restoration for our team members."

A spokesperson for Ryanair said: "We are aware of the ongoing negotiations between Unite and ABM who provide third-party handling services to Ryanair at Stansted.

"We understand these negotiations resulted in a signed agreement between ABM and Unite for significant pay rises for all staff which was subsequently rejected at ballot.

"We understand talks are ongoing and hope that they will be resolved with recourse to industrial action."

The news comes amid [worsening chaos at various airports in the UK](#), with hundreds of flight cancellations and lengthy delays.

Earlier this week, Unite said that British Airways check-in staff at Heathrow airport will be [balloted for strike action next month](#) in a separate dispute over pay.