



# Strike action set to hit Prestwick Airport as Unite fights back over rock bottom pay

Wednesday 6 July 2022

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## Workers at Airport told to accept real terms pay cut

Prestwick Airport is set to be hit by strike action in the coming weeks as workers are to be balloted in a row over pay, the UK's leading aviation trade union, Unite, confirmed today (Wednesday 6 July).

Unite has hit back at the refusal of Prestwick Airport's management to pay shift pay and meet the Real Living Wage rate for new starters. The union is also angry that that workers are being told to accept significant real terms pay cuts whilst inflation reaches a 40 year high.

With real inflation now at 11.7 per cent, the offer on the table for the workforce of between 4 and 6.5 percent is a significant real terms pay cut, says Unite.

Unite is looking for across the board rises closer to real inflation for all workers at the airport, and an immediate lift in the wage of the lowest paid to take them to the Scottish Real Living Wage (£9.90).

The ballot opened 5 July and closes 19 July and will include airport security, firefighters, airfield operators, ground crew, ground handling, cargo, customer services, and cleaners. An earlier consultative ballot revealed that 86 per cent of Unite's members supported taking strike action.

Prestwick Airport is also a cargo base and hosts significant numbers of military flights and refuels from North America, along with domestic and international commercial flights.

Unite general secretary Sharon Graham said: *"Prestwick Airport and the Scottish Government need to urgently improve their pay proposals for these workers."*

*"While directors' pay is protected, workers are being told to take a substantial real terms pay cut. And disgracefully, they want to keep new starters on a rock bottom rate that is lower than the real living wage."*

*"Prestwick Airport and the Scottish Government need to put an improved offer on the table because Unite will resolutely support our members in their fight for better jobs, pay and conditions."*

The airport was taken into public ownership in November 2013 after being purchased by the Scottish Government for £1.

Unite is demanding the Scottish Government 'practice what it preaches' because Prestwick's failure to pay a Real Living Wage, despite being publicly owned, undermines its much-trumpeted Fair Work agenda.

Siohan McCready, Unite industrial officer said: *"Prestwick Airport is proposing to pay less than the Real Living Wage for some of our members, which makes a mockery of the Scottish Government's Fair Work agenda. Both the Airport and the Scottish Government should be setting a lead and practicing what they preach. It's double standards of the highest order."*

*"The offer on the table is completely unacceptable and our members are not prepared to tolerate lousy pay. Simply put, they have had enough."*

ENDS

Notes to Editor

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Unite Scotland is the country's biggest and most diverse trade union with around 150,000 members. The union is led in Scotland by Pat Rafferty.

## Further reading

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"This business is awash with cash but it is putting profits and dividends for the few at the top ahead of its duties as a public service."

"There is not a single aspect of these cuts which is about improving customer service." @UniteSharon

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"The strings attached to this so-called pay offer are outrageous – they reduce the value of the offer to zero. Arriva is asking our members to take a huge cut in the value of their earnings. That is simply unacceptable." @UniteSharon

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"We welcome that @British\_Airways has finally listened to the voice of its check-in staff. Unite has repeatedly warned that pay disputes at BA were inevitable unless the company took our members' legitimate grievances seriously." @UniteSharon

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