



NEWSBRIEF

For GMB Members in ASDA DISTRIBUTION

May 2010 – No 43

NATIONAL PAY

Dear Colleagues,

There have been a number of meetings to discuss the national pay claim. Thank you for being patient while these talks continue. I am also taking this opportunity to thank you in advance for what I expect will need to be your continued patience in the coming months! The point is these talks are constructive but slow as we are exploring how a new national agreement covering terms, conditions and pay would operate. We do not wish to rush this (nor do management) as we believe there are many ways to get this badly wrong.

If we felt the talks were no longer productive our intention would be to ballot your opinion about what we should then do.

The trade union side have presented your claim for higher wages arguing that improvements in productivity should be aligned with higher pay. This principle has been accepted by ASDA management. What is clear is that for any new agreement to work it is required to accommodate higher pay AND changes to terms and conditions and ways of working. This is more complicated than both sides originally thought and as a consequence we intend to organise a tour of depots to discuss what this might mean in practice (before completing negotiations).

In the coming weeks we are likely to hold some depot sessions in conjunction with management and some with only union members. The purpose of these meetings will be to better understand what people expect from an agreement and to explain the challenges faced by both teams of negotiators. In the meantime the parties are working up a memorandum of understanding to agree the way in which we will work with one another going forward.

We are aware that whilst these talks are proceeding many of you have not received a pay increase this year and we expect this to be included in any final settlement. If negotiations take even longer than expected we will seek your views on negotiating an interim cost of living award.

These talks are historic and we are looking to break new ground. If successful the result will help deliver more than higher pay as the union is looking to work with management to establish one agreement for ASDA distribution that also delivers better paid secure jobs for everyone. The union is looking to secure a long term profitable and therefore sustainable future for the business and everyone in it. We believe this approach best secures your jobs and gives you higher pay.

Thank you for your continued support.

Yours fraternally

GARY SMITH
National Secretary
Commercial Services Section

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GMB COMMERCIAL SERVICES SECTION