ASOS warehouse branded 'cradle of disease' by terrified workers

GMB survey reveals 98% of Asos workers feel unsafe at warehouse amid the Coronavirus crisis

Terrified Asos workers say they feel ‘like rats’ in a warehouse they have branded a ‘cradle of disease’

Up to 4,000 people work at the Asos warehouse in Grimethorpe, Barnsley – and 98% of them feel unsafe at work amid the Coronavirus crisis, according to a GMB survey.

While competitors have closed down to keep the British public safe, Asos has ramped up their operations in Barnsley.

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ambulance

The warehouse is now processing orders from the company's German warehouse - which has closed – and hundreds of extra staff have been drafted in to deal with the million online orders Asos received over the weekend.

Workers report no social distancing measures, a complicated clocking in system which means large numbers of people gather in a small area, and hundreds of workers all breaking for lunch at the same time.

Almost 500 people responded to GMB's survey of Asos workers over the weekend.

Responses include:

"I am with high risk so if something happens to me, they will look the other way because I am not important enough. Who is going to raise my 1-year-old son?"

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“It is an infectious centre, you can get the COVID at any given time. Why am I still there? I can't live on 94 pounds per week. I cannot help my family with that. It sounds stupid but making money to live is more important than being healthy right now.”

“No social distance, not enough sanitiser, not safe at all, I am scared to go as I have a 3 years daughter.”

“4000 people touching six turnstiles to enter and exit building no working fire registers hardly any cleaning going on in warehouse never seen handrails cleaned.”

“Social distance impossible to keep, the aisle are less than 2m wide and it happens many times to pass face to face with another person, you can only hope that is not going to sneeze or coughing and if he does you can only pray that he doesn't have the virus.“

“If one single worker it contact corona virus all warehouse workers (over 3000) we will get. We are not key workers.....we are used just for them profit.”

Tim Roache, GMB General Secretary, said:

“Conditions at ASOS are scarcely believable – workers we’ve spoken to describe it as a ‘cradle of disease’. It’s absolutely horrifying, a real catalogue of shame.

“Here you’ve got people packed onto public transport, a lack of social distancing, thousands of workers going into one warehouse then back to their families - it’s only going to get worse with a huge sale promoted over the weekend.

“The Government’s scheme for furloughed workers is there to support employers to do the right thing and keep people safe. ASOS can more than afford to pay the extra 20% to help stop the spread.

“We no longer believe ASOS can keep their workplace safe – they need to shut it down.”

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