

GMB takes British Gas to court over strike 'bungs'



Case on behalf of more than 3,000 workers concerns payments prior to strike

GMB Union today [Monday] begins the first day of a court case against British Gas owners Centrica over payments to engineers to accept worse terms and conditions.

The hearing at Reading Employment Tribunal is on behalf of 3,000 British Gas engineers – represented by Thompsons Solicitors – who GMB claims were offered inducements prior to the bitter fire and rehire dispute.



The Tribunal will decide whether the payments breached section 145 (b) of the Trade Union and Labour Relations (Consolidation) Act 1992 which prohibits an employer offering inducements to avoid the collective bargaining process.

Thousands of British Gas workers took more than 40 days of strike action in 2021 over the company's threat to sack them and rehire them on worse terms and conditions. [1]

Almost 500 engineers were eventually dismissed, putting the issue of fire and rehire into the spotlight – with the Labour party now pledging to ban the practice if they take power and then Prime Minister Boris Johnson condemning it during the dispute.



Andy Prendergast, GMB National Secretary, said:

"GMB is in no doubt that this offer, made whilst negotiations were ongoing, represented an egregious attempt to attack the trade union which represents more than 90 per cent of British Gas engineers.

"The decision to undertake fire and rehire was a terrible mistake by the business; one that both damaged the British Gas brand and caused terrible worry for loyal, long-standing staff members.

"It was one that cost millions and directly led to the 460 people being fired.

"Today GMB goes to court as part of our attempt to right that wrong.

"Winning won't get our members jobs back but it will ensure that British Gas pays for it's mistake.



"We are proud to stand by our members and are doing everything in our power to end the disgraceful practice of fire and rehire forever."

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Member requiring help?

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