

Urgent questions for Amazon



Amazon must come clean on how it monitors workers in the UK.

GMB Union has today responded to reports that Amazon is deploying sophisticated AI powered systems to monitor union activity amongst its workforce.

The report [1] highlights use of Atlas, an AI powered tool that combines hundreds of data points to assess union organising risk at individual workplaces, and predict where future unionisation efforts may emerge.

The report focuses on its use in Canada, but source data [2] from the company reveals that company bosses have identified the retail giant's Coventry and Minworth sites as at risk of unionisation efforts.

Described as **"Risky"** by the company, these sites have been the focus of worker-led campaigns for union recognition in recent years.



The classification of sites is reportedly based on the collection of multiple data-points by the Atlas system and company bosses, including correspondence between staff and even comments made on external websites such as Reddit.

Coming just weeks before new trade union workplace access rights come into force, the union has today called on Government to urgently seek answers from Amazon about the use of Atlas in British workplaces [3].

Rachel Fagan, GMB Organiser, said:

"This is a shocking revelation.

"Amazon, one of the globe's wealthiest corporations, could be deploying Orwellian AI-fuelled tools to monitor workers right here in the UK.

"We've long warned that Amazon top brass is uninterested in the norms and expectations of British industrial relations.

"We've written to the Government demanding urgent answers.

"Workers deserve to be able to work free of the fear of excessive surveillance.

"If Amazon bosses are using Atlas or similar AI-fuelled systems in the UK, the British public deserve to know".

Rosa Curling, Foxglove co-executive director, said:

"It is shocking that Amazon think they can deploy a nakedly anti-union spy tech tool for the purpose of disrupting workers' legal rights to organise and form a union.

"Foxglove is urgently considering this new development with the warehouse workers – and their lawyers – already suing Amazon for their unlawful one-click-to-quit QR code inducement tool."

Notes

[1] The report on Atlas and it's use within Amazon is at:

<https://truthout.org/articles/amazon-is-deploying-ai-to-spy-on-its-workers-and-bust-unions-before-they-form/>

[2] The data and documents identifying UK sites within Amazon's risk framework are at the below, from page 19:



https://drive.google.com/file/d/1nosR5ER-VFYiw52si_M5kM9ZBfDXmRxJ/view?pli=1

[3] GMB has written to Liam Byrne MP, Chair of the Business, Innovation, Science and Trade Committee and Kate Dearden MP, Minister of State (Department for Business, Innovation, Science and Trade).

Press office

07958 156846

press.office@gmb.org.uk

Member requiring help?

Click to contact your local GMB Region

info@gmb.org.uk

