

The Greyhound Lockout of 2014

This document contains the facts of the Greyhound Lockout of 2014. It has been compiled to counteract the misleading which have been distributed by the company. The Greyhound workers ask all Dublin City Councillors to read this document and those distributed by the company carefully.

Lockout of workers

On 17th June workers in the early shift at Greyhound Recycling and Recovery arrived at the company's Knockmitten Plant at 6.00 a.m. to begin the collection of wheelie bins in the Dublin City Council area.

On arrival the workers were confronted by a number of security guards, these men had been hired specifically for the day and had never previously been present at the plant. The workers also had to report through a hut with a CCTV camera trained on them – this had never happened before.

The workers were told they were not allowed into the plant unless they agreed to accept new conditions of employment that included wage reductions of up to 35% and other major changes. Management claimed that these new terms were a 'cost saving plan' agreed at the Labour Court – no agreement had ever been reached on these issues at the Labour Court between the company and workers' representatives.

The workers refused to accept the company's ultimatum stating that their union had been attempting to enter intensive negotiations with management on cost saving proposals in line with a Labour Court Recommendation issued in late May.

This group of the workers and later shifts were then locked out of their place of work.

Within minutes of management stating that the workers were to be refused entry to their workplace, agency staff began to assemble in a near by car park. These workers were then driven into the site and began manning collection trucks, which began working waste collection routes in the Dublin City Council area.

Company actions direct contravention of Labour Court Recommendation and company level Collective Agreement

Labour Court Recommendation

The company's actions directly contravene a Labour Court Recommendation which stated that further talks should be entered into by management and workers' representatives. The recommendation states:

“The parties engage in a concentrated process to identify and cost the level of Labour productivity savings that can be generated within the business and to agree on further adjustments to the wage bill necessary to return the Company to viability. The talks should be completed within 14 days of the date of this Recommendation. The parties

should engage the services of suitably qualified financial and productivity advisors to assist them through this process.” (For full text of recommendation see Note 1).

Rather than fully accept this Recommendation the company has decided to unilaterally implement massive cuts to the workers terms and conditions of employment without further negotiations. Knowing that no worker could accept such conditions the company had prepared for dispensing with the services of its workforce.

Collective agreement

There is a collective agreement in place between Greyhound management and workers’ representatives since 2009 that there is to be a 14 day lead in period to any changes to conditions of employment by the company or industrial action by workers.

Management breached this agreement by only informing workers five days prior to the cuts introduction (12th June) that there was to be changes to their terms and conditions of employment. Only on 17th June was the full extent of the massive changes to their conditions of employment, that were to be introduced immediately, fully revealed.

Legal preparations by company

The company had also legally prepared for the lockout of the workers. On the day it implemented its lockout the company instigated three injunction orders at the High Court. These orders sought to interfere with workers protesting outside Greyhound plants and prevent workers from describing the actions of the company as a “lockout.”

Interim injunctions granted to the company in relation to these court orders were lifted on 1st July when the High Court fully inspected the claims.

Injures to workers on picket duty

On two occasions in the last two weeks workers have been injured while conducting picket duty at Greyhound plants.

1) On 17th June worker Ray Reilly was hit by a truck at the Knockmitten Plant, he was knocked to the ground and hospitalised.

2) Wednesday, 4th July – SIPTU Shop Steward, Niall Geraghty, is hit by a van exiting the Greyhound Plant in Clondalkin at 6.30 p.m. Niall was taken to Tallaght Hospital and released the following morning after treatment for concussion and severe bruising.

The second incident was largely due to the company parking a van and erecting crash barriers at the entrance of the Clondalkin Plant thus causing a one way traffic system which caused a bottle neck. Since the establishment of a Garda investigation into the second incident the van and crash barriers have been removed.

Workers simply asking to return to work

The over 70 Greyhound workers currently locked out of their jobs are simply requesting to be allowed to return to work under their existing terms and conditions of employment while intensive talks on changes take place.

In recent years they have already agreed to major changes to their working conditions, including a nine-hour increase in their working week. They have also forgone any pay rises since 2008.

The company would seem to be intent on attempting to enforce massive cuts to workers wages without negotiations, that its workers simply cannot afford. These workers provide a vital service to the citizens of Dublin, under a licence issued by Dublin City Council; it is their belief that councillors should intervene to ensure they receive fair treatment.

Note 1 – Labour Court Recommendation (29th May)

Case No cd-14-167
Greyhound Waste v SIPTU

Hayes/McCarthy/Murphy/Foley

Draft

Having carefully considered the submissions of both parties to this dispute the Court finds that the Company's current cost base is not sustainable and requires immediate remedial action in order to both protect employment and secure its customer base. The Court notes that the Union side suggested that the necessary reductions could be achieved by way of productivity concessions that it was willing to jointly identify with the Company and thereafter to concede in order to achieve that objective. The Company was strongly of the view that productivity measures would form part of the solution to its present difficulties but would not generate savings of the magnitude needed to resolve the problems facing it. However both sides indicated that they had neither comprehensively engaged on this point nor fully evaluated the actual level of savings to be achieved thereby.

Accordingly the Court recommends that the parties engage in a concentrated process to identify and cost the level of labour productivity savings that can be generated within the business and to agree on further adjustments to the wage bill necessary to return the Company to viability. The talks should be completed within 14 days of the date of this Recommendation. The parties should engage the services of suitably qualified financial and productivity advisors to assist them through this process. The Court so recommends.

