

GMB strike threat could derail famous whisky brands production

By [Simon Warburton](#) ⌚ February 22, 2023, 5:24 pm 0



Edrington's Famous Grouse brand is one of those which could see strike action. Image: DC Thomson

Scottish whisky brand stalwarts such as Highland Park, Famous Grouse and The Macallan could face severe production disruption as GMB union members vote on potential strike action.

The threatened shutdown – adding to the cascade of industrial action currently sweeping the UK – centres on union anger concerning what they say is a failure to agree to new shift allowance rates for unsociable working hours.

More than 300 [GMB](#) workers across two manufacturing sites, [Edrington's](#) Great Western Road in Glasgow and the [Macallan's](#) Easter Elchie's estate in Moray, will be balloted from March 1 until March 22, meaning industrial action could take place in early April.



Highland Park is one of Edrington's stable. Image: DC Thomson

The union says against the “backdrop of the highest cost-of-living in 40 years” and a year-long squeeze on incomes and households, its members are seeking a significantly above inflation shift allowance rate to support the basic rate of pay.

Unions served statutory notice of the ballot to the employers this afternoon after months of consultation and what it maintains was “exhausting the conciliation process” at arbitration service [ACAS](#).

[GMB Scotland](#) organiser David Hume said: “The Edrington Group is in good health. It bounced back spectacularly from the pandemic last year on the back of increased sales and profits and the boardroom and shareholders are enjoying the benefits of this in their bumper remuneration packages and dividends.

‘Only right to enjoy share of spoils’

“This resilience and recovery are built on the back of its workforce and the premium brands they produce day-in and day-out.

“Our members in across Scotland are the fulcrum of this success and it’s only right they enjoy a fair share of the spoils in their terms and conditions.

“That senior management have failed to recognise this significant contribution through a proper shift allowance for workers who keep the products flowing is deeply regrettable.

“Let’s be clear, we are talking about the equivalent of a drop in the ocean from the sales and profits generated last year.



Image: The Macallan

“This ballot is a direct response to management’s chronic intransigence and a clear demonstration of their desire to make work better across Edrington.”

A spokeswoman for Edrington said: “We are disappointed the GMB Union has decided to ballot its members on industrial action after a protracted period of negotiation including discussions at Acas over shift allowances.

“GMB members who have moved to the new shift arrangements will see their earnings increase by a minimum of 27.8% compared with 16 months ago.

“We urge our employees to reject the proposed industrial action and join us in negotiations to reach a further fair and competitive wage agreement.”

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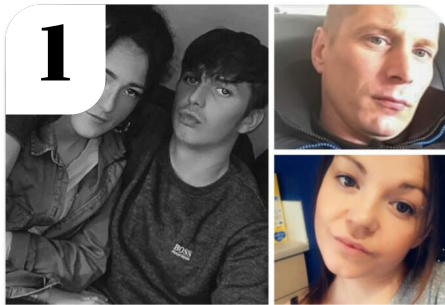
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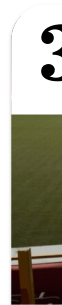


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