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LOCAL TRADE UNION REPRESENTATIVES AT GO NORTH EAST IN U-TURN FROM PAY AGREEMENT TO ALL-OUT STRIKE

Local Unite Representatives at Go North East have walked away from a settlement they themselves proposed to end the long-running pay dispute and will now take indefinite strike action.

On Tuesday, union representatives put forward a resolution that would see over 1,000 workers receive an inflation-busting 10% no strings attached pay rise, backdated to 1 July 2023, plus a guarantee of an 'inflation-proofed' pay

rise in eight months' time. The union also asked that the discussion of conditions be separated from pay.

Bosses at Go North East accepted the Union's proposals, and all was on course for an end to the dispute, with Unite ready to suspend strike action and ballot members on the deal.

However, local representatives today announced a sudden U-turn and called indefinite strike action from 28 October. This new action comes on top of seven days of strike action already in their diary, starting tomorrow, Saturday 14 October.

Go North East business director Ben Maxfield said, "Our workforce is beside itself with worry, but instead of a constructive dialogue what we are seeing from the local Unite representatives is moving goal posts, U-turns and knee-jerk reactions, with no consideration of the impact on the travelling public".

He also said, "This dispute and strike are entirely of Unite's making. All we want is for the local union representatives to work constructively and collaboratively with us to secure the region's bus services".

"There is mounting anger within the workforce over Unite's handling of negotiations and their call for a continuous strike. Unite are literally rejecting a deal they themselves proposed. Wild and unfounded claims by the union of 'paltry pay offers', and false claims that the company are 'not coming to the table' don't help".

No Go North East buses will run from 14 October for 7 days and from 28 October onwards, except for contracted School Services. The latest information on service disruptions is available on the company website.

Ben Maxfield said, "I deeply apologise to everyone in the region who will be affected by Unite's strike. Rest assured that we will continue to work towards the quickest solution possible."

13 October 2023

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Notes to editors:

Go North East runs a network of bus routes across the North East region including Newcastle, Sunderland, Durham, and surrounding areas.

The Go-Ahead Group is one of the UK's leading providers of public transport, enabling more than a billion passenger journeys each year on its bus and rail services. Go-Ahead places great importance on partnership, adopting a collaborative approach with governments, local communities and strategic partners; developing and operating services that create long-term value for all.

For more information about Go-Ahead Group visit www.goahead.com.

Press and media contacts:

Ben Maxfield

Business Director, Go North East

ben.maxfield@gonortheast.co.uk

Telephone: 07890 436531

[Go North East website](#)