

The logo for GMB (General Medical Body) consists of the letters 'GMB' in a bold, white, sans-serif font, centered within a solid orange square.The logo for GMB Scotland features the word 'SCOTLAND' in a bold, white, sans-serif font, centered within a solid black rectangular box.

LG/LHC

26<sup>th</sup> April 2019

Mr Jamie Hepburn MSP  
Minister for Business, Fair Work and Skills  
The Scottish Government  
St. Andrew's House  
Regent Road  
Edinburgh, EH1 3DG

Dear Jamie,

**GMB Scotland – Bakkavor (Caledonian Produce Bo’ness) Industrial Action and Fair Work**

I am writing to you concerning the on-going industrial action between GMB members and the aforementioned employer, and our serious concerns about the deteriorating industrial relations environment being fuelled by local management while staff remain mired in low pay.

Our members are campaigning for a fair pay offer for 2018 (negotiations for 2019 haven’t even started). In the last year, we have been unable to move the employer from a position where the majority of hourly paid staff would have been paid just 6 pence an hour above the previous National Minimum Wage. Since 1 April 2019, our members (those that are over 25 years old) are now receiving the current NMW of £8.21 an hour. Our members are predominantly employed as production operatives, manufacturing fresh produce for Bakkavor’s key client M&S.

As I write, our members are undertaking their second twenty-four hour strike action, and a third twenty-four hour strike is scheduled for 10PM on Sunday 28 April. Industrial action isn’t something that is taken lightly; our members are withdrawing their labour and with it their earnings for these periods on a point of principle against their employer: They want decent pay and not poverty pay.

This industrial dispute strikes at the very heart of the debate on fair work and Scotland’s aspirations to be a genuinely ‘fair work nation’. At STUC Annual Conference on Tuesday 16 April, the First Minister told delegates: *“Fair work is good for workers, good for wider society, and good for the businesses which promote it. It is not optional. In Scotland, we intend it to be the norm, not an exception.”* Your colleague, Angus MacDonald MSP, has stressed the company must move towards paying its employees the Living Wage of £9.00 an hour as a minimum, as quoted in the Falkirk Herald, also on Tuesday 16 April: *“I have previously impressed upon the Bakkavor management the need to move to paying the Scottish Living Wage, which would clearly benefit the workforce.”*

**GMB SCOTLAND – PROTECTING YOU AT WORK**

GMB Scotland Secretary: Gary Smith  
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The logo for UNIONLINE SCOTLAND features the word 'UNIONLINE' in a bold, purple, sans-serif font, with a thin purple wavy line underneath it. Below this, the word 'SCOTLAND' is written in a bold, black, sans-serif font.

**YOUR TRADE UNION LAW FIRM**  
**0300 333 0303**  
[www.unionline.co.uk](http://www.unionline.co.uk)

GMB Scotland agrees with the First Minister and Mr MacDonald. Bakkavor generates global revenues of over £1.85 billion; they can more than afford to pay their staff a living wage and they can also afford to make sure that 2018 was not a year of real-terms pay cuts for their hard working staff at the Bridgeness and Carriden plants.

What we need now is for the employer to step away from the intransigence towards unions and staff that has shaped their approach to industrial relations. Indeed, their actions and attitude towards striking staff has been a complete contradiction of the fair work principles which the Scottish Government promote. We are of the view that Scotland can never credibly hope to become a 'fair work nation' if employers like Bakkavor continue keep their staff mired in low pay and treat their trade union with contempt.

I would ask for your views on this matter and would be further grateful if you could indicate whether you would be prepared to intervene in this dispute to help us bring the employer back to meaningful negotiations that could suspend strike action.

Should you require further detail, I can be contacted at any time on 07921 289739 or via email at [louise.gilmour@gmb.org.uk](mailto:louise.gilmour@gmb.org.uk)

Yours sincerely



**Louise Gilmour**  
**GMB Scotland**  
**Senior Organiser**