



Dear TSSA Management Side Representatives,

No dispute can be resolved without meaningful communication, understanding and a re-building of trust. It is, therefore, important that we focus on these to resolve the current dispute.

Context, Commitment and Trust.

The context of this dispute must be kept in mind when seeking to identify a fair resolution. This dispute sits in a unique context. It is set against the backdrop of the journey the TSSA as an organisation has been on and the behaviours and cultures that staff working for the TSSA have experienced and been exposed to in recent history.

The Kennedy and Conley reports document this and make recommendations for the way forward to change behaviours, change the culture of the organisation and the steps necessary to do this and re-build trust.

At the crux of this dispute is the TSSA staff's reasonable expectation, and sincere hope, that management's behaviours reflect implementation of these reports' recommendations in words, spirit and actions. On this, sadly, TSSA's management have and continue to fail any reasonable test of commitment to implementing these recommendations.

There also appears to be a fundamental misunderstanding on the management side about the difference between TSSA as an Independent Trade Union where decisions and policies affecting TSSA members are rightly determined by the democratic structures, and TSSA as an employer where we (GMB) expect to be fully involved in decisions and policies affecting TSSA employees as the foundation of our recognition agreement. This basic requirement of any recognition agreement is amplified within our particular context, where Kennedy recognised the need for an over-abundance of transparency if trust was to be re-built effectively.

Anti-Trade Union Tactics and Misrepresentations

If a resolution to this dispute is genuinely being sought by you as a trade union employer of staff, you must surely understand that requiring your staff to agree to a "no strike clause" for twelve months as a pre-condition to an agreement is totally unacceptable.

That you are seeking to use an anti-trade union employer tactic to deprive workers of their ability to exercise their right to withdraw their labour does nothing to re-build trust and raises serious questions about the commitment of TSSA management to trade union values. Would you ever advise TSSA members to submit to such a demand?

It is also unhelpful to portray our last meeting at ACAS in the way you have. In essence we received a flat "no" to every point we sought movement on, and when we asked at the end of the day if you were

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prepared to reverse this position to enable further dialogue on the Friday, we were informed the answer was again “no”.

Effective de-Recognition and offer of partial re-Recognition

TSSA is a trade union that seeks to influence employers for the benefit of its membership. To do so with any credibility, TSSA must apply at least the same standards to its own employees as it demands of others. Taking a minimal approach to industrial relations, seeking to limit employee influence, and conflating our demands with attempts to “take over” TSSA, undermines both TSSA’s ability to speak up for its members, and staff confidence in your commitment to progress the Kennedy and Conley recommendations. Your position at the last ACAS meeting left us questioning your commitment to our recognition agreement and appeared to be seeking a much more constrained version of recognition in practice than we have experienced at TSSA, or indeed anything that TSSA would find acceptable for its own membership.

Moving Forward

We do however acknowledge the movement expressed in your letter since our last meeting. Whilst this in itself is not sufficient to resolve the dispute, we believe it can form the basis of further discussions at ACAS. We also firmly believe it will be beneficial to meet face-to-face on this occasion, as this is a complex and unique situation which requires detail exploration.

We are aware that Simon Long of ACAS is available to assist facilitating talks on the afternoon of Tuesday 2 July and we are content for these talks to occur at TSSA’s offices in London or alternatively the GMB may be able to accommodate the talks at their offices in Hendon or Euston.

Yours sincerely,

GMB TSSA Staff Representatives