

1. Why is industrial action taking place?

We highly value the work of our museum team, including our dedicated museum guides and are deeply saddened at the decision to commence industrial action. We are proud to be a Living Wage employer, committed to fair and ethical pay for all our staff.

Following further negotiations with UNISON, industrial action, largely affecting our Underground tours, is confirmed to take place.

After serious consideration, mindful of the wellbeing of our wider workforce and our visitors, the museum proposed an increased offer to all staff of 80p per hour or 5%, whichever is the greater. This equates to a pay rise of over 6% for many and is much higher than pay settlements in the public sector including police, local government, schools and other museums.

This increased offer was rejected by UNISON. The Union refused to share our revised offer with their members to see if they wished to accept it

As a charitable organisation, the museum, which relies on external funding and donations, continues to face considerable financial pressures.

Our Trustees feel this offer is fair and the £1 per hour ask by Unison, which equates to 8% for many is simply unaffordable. It would jeopardise people's jobs across the organisation and threaten the long-term sustainability of the museum.

We hope UNISON will reconsider their position. We remain committed to working closely with union representatives in the hope of a resolution.

During this period, the Museum will remain open and continue to share the important history of coal mining with our visitors. Although our Underground Tours will not be running throughout the industrial action, there will still be lots to see and do including a full programme of activity and entertainment.

Please see our full statement here www.ncm.org.uk/news/statement-from-the-national-coal-mining-museum/

2. Who is taking part in the industrial action?

An updated offer equating to over 6% has been rejected by Unison, who refused to put the offer to their members. This has resulted in industrial action going ahead. We know that this is not supported by the majority of our workforce of over 100 people and is largely made up of the museum guides who deliver our underground tours.

3. When is the industrial taking place?

Wednesday 20 August to Sunday 14 September.

4. Will the museum still be open during the industrial action and can I visit?

Although we cannot offer Underground Tours during proposed strike action the rest of our museum will be open. There will be lots for families and visitors to experience, with a full programme of activities, performances, music, and entertainment. The museum will continue to be open Wednesday – Sunday.

There will be additional activity on site during the industrial action including:

- Thomas the Tank Engine Land Train (charge of £2.50 for unlimited daily ride)
- Emergency Services Weekend
- Dino weekend

Entry will be free for the last two weeks of the holidays with donations encouraged.

To find out what is happening at the museum visit www.ncm.org.uk/whats-on/

5. What if I have an Underground tour booked during industrial action?

All prebooked tours will be reviewed on a week by week basis. Should tours be cancelled because of industrial action notice will be given and a full refund provided.

6. What if I have an activity booked?

All other activities will be taking place and will not be affected by the industrial action.

The strike involves a small number of our team, primarily museum guides. As a result, you may notice a small number of peaceful picketers at the museum entrance upon arrival.

Please be assured that your planned activity will go ahead as scheduled with no disruption, and our team will be there to ensure you have an enjoyable and engaging visit.

7. How will this affect my visit to the museum

Underground tours will not be taking place during this time but there's still lots to do at the museum including, above ground tours, outstanding exhibitions inside and out, our Beach Time at the coal mine summer spectacular, crafts, family activities, Caphouse Creators, STEAM Club, horse keeper talks, performances, music, entertainment and cafe.

You may see a small number of museum guides peacefully picketing outside. We want to reassure you that the museum remains open to visitors, and you are warmly welcomed. Please don't feel intimidated, your visit is important to us, and we're here to ensure you have a positive experience.

8. I have an Underground Tour booked who do I contact?

Please contact reception on 01924 848 806 with any queries about your Underground Tour booking.

9. I have a school visit booked who do a contact?

If you have any queries about your school booking please email bookings@ncm.org.uk

10. Who should I contact with any media enquiries?

For any media enquiries, please email marketing.manager@ncm.org.uk