

Next accused of telling staff to give up Sunday bonus or lose jobs



Next wants about 800 of its 52,000 workers to agree contracts in which they will no longer get more money for working on Sundays. The shop has been accused of bullying workers into giving up overtime pay for working on a Sunday.

The fashion and homewares retailer, which employs more than 52,000 people, wants about 800 shop workers to give up the premium they are currently entitled to, worth up to £20 a week or £1,000 a year.

The workers all joined the company before 2008, when Next stopped offering a Sunday premium to new staff. In March, they were involved in a consultation on changes to their contracts. The GMB union said the staff rejected these, but Next said 99% of them accepted. The company said that as a result, all employees are now being moved on to contracts under which they do not receive extra pay for Sundays. Staff members that do not accept are to be made redundant.

Next said it had offered compensation equal to one-third of the Sunday premium that staff earned over the past year to those who make the change. A spokesman for Next said: "Working on a Sunday, since it was introduced back in the 90s, has become a new normal – so Next feels it is no longer justifiable to pay some of its staff up to 50% more than colleagues doing the same work on the same day."

Mick Rix, the national officer for retail workers at the GMB union, said: "Next claims that it considers Sunday to be a normal working day and uses this opinion to justify cutting pay on Sunday. There can hardly be a better example of a company that has a total disregard for family life."