

Uber drivers stage 24 hour strike over employee rights

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Uber drivers are striking across the UK over the next 24 hours as the company continues to appeal against a court ruling giving them employee rights.

Although not all of the ride-hailing company's drivers will be on strike, members of the Independent Workers Union of Great Britain (IWGB) will not be using the app for 24 hours from 1pm on Tuesday.

Instead, they gathered outside of the company's offices in London, Birmingham and Nottingham to demand fairer pay and to be treated under the conditions of a 2016 court ruling.

The IWGB is calling on potential passengers to show solidarity with striking drivers by not using the app during this period, as it calls for the company to cease delaying the implementation of the court ruling.

Uber lost a court battle two years ago when an employment tribunal found against its classification of drivers as independent contractors, although the company continues to appeal against that ruling.

James Farrar, IWGB's united private hire drivers branch chair, told Sky News that despite the court ruling Uber was required to class its drivers as "limb b workers" – entitling them to the minimum wage and holiday pay – Uber's continued appeals have meant that ruling has not yet been implemented.

The strike on Tuesday is the first time that a trade union has taken action against Uber.

Speaking during the demonstration outside Uber's London offices, Mr Farrar told Sky News Uber was only paying heed to complaints ahead of an Initial Public Offering next year.

He said: “Uber has done just about enough, or what it thinks is just about enough, to keep the investors happy while it heads for an IPO next year.

“The trouble with these so-called benefits is that they’re fleeting and they can be taken away or they can be given to some people and not to others, and we really don’t have any say.

“What we want is our statutory rights, not just some fiddling around the edges. We want Uber to obey the law, give us our statutory rights, to be paid fairly and to have holiday pay.

“If they want to give extra benefits on top of that, that’s fantastic, but they can’t offer these marginal benefits in lieu of proper worker rights and obeying the law.”

The union is currently engaged in legal efforts to secure private hire drivers’ rights through the courts, and has cases against Uber, Green Tomato Cars and A2B Cars.

(Sky News)