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FAO: Simon Goodley  
Guardian News and Media Limited

### **By email**

11 July 2016

Dear Mr Goodley

### **Proposed Sports Direct article**

I am taking the unusual step of replying to you in person because I believe it is in the interests of the people at Sports Direct for me to set the record straight.

Whilst I accept that not everything we do is perfect, I believe the picture you have painted is not an accurate reflection of the company that I love.

Following my appearance in Westminster, I had hoped for a period of calm during which I could make a real difference.

I am therefore disappointed that The Guardian intends to publish at a time when a large amount of work is taking place to ensure that all our people are treated with dignity and respect.

We have subsequently set in motion a review – as was confirmed in our results statement - so I am frustrated that you have declined to give me further details of the cases you have raised so that I can investigate.

Many of your allegations are in my opinion incorrect and defamatory (I attach a list of points). What I can tell you categorically is that it is my belief that no person should ever be fearful in the workplace.

It has always been my intention that Sports Direct should be a great employer that handsomely rewards people at all levels.

There is a wonderful cleaning lady at Shirebrook who previously received a share bonus of £48,305 in a single year (rightly so in my opinion). Does that strike you as a company that doesn't care?

In December, you wrote a story that made allegations about conditions for agency workers and others in our warehouse. I would like to invite you to attend our AGM in September and see how things have changed.

In the meantime, please stop attacking Sports Direct. You are only causing harm to the people whom you claim to help.

**Mike Ashley**

## Appendix

I address in turn each of the numbered points in your email of July 5th to KBA:

1. I am not aware of this. If you provide me with further details about the relevant store(s) I will investigate.
2. I deny this. Please provide details.
3. Categorically incorrect. We do not operate a "strike" policy in Sports Direct stores.
4. This is incorrect. There are various incentive schemes across different brands at different times.
5. This is not our policy and I therefore dispute this. Please supply details.
6. Strongly disputed. Our policy is to pay our people above National Minimum Wage. Provide details so that I can investigate.
7. Please send me the contract you refer to so that I can investigate.
8. Categorically incorrect. Come to Shirebook and I will show you our fully-equipped staff training academy.
9. I have no further comment to make about HMRC at this time.