

IKEA to pay £23,000 to employee unfairly dismissed over milkshake

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IKEA to pay £23,000 to employee unfairly dismissed over milkshake

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IKEA in Dublin has been ordered to pay €30,000 (£23,000) for unfairly dismissing a member of staff who had drunk a

milkshake without paying for it.

Ian Fortune worked in the store's bistro since May 2009. He was suspended from his post after a manager saw him and some colleagues drinking IKEA milkshakes which had not been put through the till. Each milkshake retailed at €1.25 (97p) and whilst staff had a free entitlement to soft drinks, this did not include milkshakes. Mr Fortune did not attend investigation and disciplinary meetings due to a pre-booked holiday and, in any event, he alleged he was not informed of the meetings. IKEA's HR department classified the incident as theft and therefore gross misconduct. It dismissed Mr Fortune. Mr Fortune brought an unfair dismissal claim.

The Irish Employment Appeals Tribunal upheld Mr Fortune's claim. Whilst it recognised that retailers need strict stock control rules, Mr Fortune had explained the incident as an honest mistake. The EAT was not satisfied that the incident was sufficient grounds for dismissing Mr Fortune.

Fortune v IKEA Ireland Limited UD1541/2014

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