DIRECTOR AID

Confidential help for company directors facing a Winding-Up Petition

PRESS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

POUNDLAND FILES TO APPOINT ADMINISTRATORS, PUTTING 12,000 JOBS AT POTENTIAL RISK

> *Poundland has filed a notice of intention to appoint Administrators at the High Court, putting around 600 stores and 12,000 jobs at potential risk.*

A notice of intention to appoint Administrators for Poundland Limited was filed at the High Court in London earlier today, under case number CR-2026-008394. The High Court of Justice record shows the notice was filed in the name of the company itself. Earlier reports had differed on who would file: the Guardian reported on 28 October that the owner, Gordon Brothers, was understood to be poised to file, while BBC News reported this morning that Poundland's bosses were filing it. The notice gives the company ten business days' protection from creditor action while it tries to secure a rescue or sale.

According to the BBC, Managing Director Barry Williams told staff in a memo this week that the owner, Gordon Brothers, had given instructions restricting Poundland's access to funds under its existing loan agreement. "This business simply does not deserve to go into any kind of administration," the memo said, as quoted by the BBC. The Guardian reported that the memo described the rejection of the management's bid as "unexpected, unwanted and wholly avoidable".

Gordon Brothers, a US investment firm, bought Poundland from Pepco Group in June 2025 for a nominal £1 and reportedly began a formal sale process in September 2026, hiring Alvarez & Marsal to run it, Retail Gazette reported. Poundland confirmed on 13 October that its management team was working on a buyout with Northern Ireland's Martin Property Group, its "preferred partner", the BBC reported. That bid, for the whole business as a going concern, was rejected this week, the BBC and the Guardian reported. The Guardian reported it as worth more than £15m with only a portion paid upfront; the BBC understands it was £5m with the rest deferred. Both outlets reported that Gordon Brothers is seeking to recover a £30m shareholder loan it took on with the company.

Three independent directors appointed on 14 October to oversee a sale resigned after disagreeing with the rejection of the solvent offer, the BBC reported. Business Secretary Jonathan Reynolds has reportedly written to Gordon Brothers and instructed his Chief Strategic Business Adviser, David Bickerton, to establish the facts, the Guardian reported on 28 October.

The BBC reported that Gordon Brothers has lined up AlixPartners as Administrators; at the time of writing no appointment had been made. A pre-pack sale is possible, the BBC said, but a break-up, with parcels of stores sold to different buyers, is the most likely outcome. Fortress, the owner of Poundstretcher, is reported to want 200 to 250 stores; another large retailer more than 100; and Iceland, Lidl and B&M are reportedly among more than half a dozen retailers to have expressed interest, according to the BBC. The Guardian reported as many as eight interested parties, including

the owner of The Range. The Press Association reported on 27 October that CDS Superstores, owner of The Range and Wilko, Fortress and Modella, owner of TG Jones, were among companies interested in buying parts of the retailer.

A spokesman for Gordon Brothers said on 27 October, as reported by the Press Association: "While Martin Property Group had been identified as the preferred bidder by Poundland's management team, attention must now turn to other active bids. As well as interest from buyers for the whole business, the sale process has also surfaced a number of formal and indicative offers for significant viable parts of the business from established retail operators. These options will now be objectively evaluated, with a view to minimising uncertainty for Poundland's people and all relevant stakeholders."

Poundland's estate is about 600 stores across the UK and the Republic of Ireland: around 530 Poundland shops in the UK and about 70 Dealz shops in the Republic of Ireland, which Gordon Brothers has considered selling separately, City A.M. reported in September. Poundland Limited is registered in England and Wales. Which shops and which staff a UK insolvency filing would cover depends on which group company owns the shops and employs the staff.

Poundland's Wigan Distribution Centre, on Three Sisters Road in Ashton-in-Makerfield, is in Makerfield, the constituency of the Prime Minister, Andy Burnham. Sky News reported on 27 October that Martin Property Group's offer included preserving that distribution centre.

This is a developing situation. Apart from the court filing, the facts above are as reported by the outlets named, at the time of writing. They, and the position of the company, its owner, its staff and its suppliers, will become clearer as more information comes into the public domain. Director Aid's web page on the story will be updated as it does.

Administration is not a winding-up. A Winding-Up Petition is a creditor's application to have a company compulsorily liquidated. Administration is a rescue procedure: an independent insolvency practitioner takes control of the company to keep it trading and find a buyer for all or part of the business. Director Aid advises the directors of companies facing a Winding-Up Petition, and is commenting because the questions now facing Poundland's staff, suppliers and directors are the ones it deals with every day. Its forthcoming free guide for employees, *Before You Sign*, covers what staff facing redundancy need to know.

WHAT POUNDLAND'S 12,000 STAFF MAY BE ENTITLED TO IF THE BUSINESS, OR PARTS OF IT, CLOSE

This is the worst case. In an administration, a pre-pack or a break-up, staff in stores that a buyer takes on and keeps trading transfer to the buyer rather than being made redundant, although a buyer can still make transferred staff redundant later, subject to the rules. The entitlements below apply to anyone who is made redundant because a store, or the whole business, closes. If the company cannot pay, they are claimed from the government's Redundancy Payments Service instead; staff do not have to wait for the company to find the money.

- Anyone kept on while the shops keep trading is paid as normal, as a cost of the administration.
- Anyone made redundant with two years' service gets statutory redundancy pay: half a week's pay for each year worked under the age of 22, a week for each year from 22 to 40 and a week and a half for each year from 41, counting at most 20 years and capped at £751 a week, so no more than £22,530.
- Statutory notice pay: at least a week after a month's service, and a week for each full year from two years' service, up to 12 weeks.
- Up to eight weeks' unpaid wages and up to six weeks' holiday pay.
- The first £30,000 of redundancy money is tax-free. Notice pay is taxed as normal.
- Savings above £6,000 reduce Universal Credit, and above £16,000 stop it, so the timing of a claim matters.

Full breakdown, updated as the story moves: directoraid.co.uk/poundland-administration-what-staff-are-owed.html
Source: *Before You Sign*, the forthcoming free guide for employees facing redundancy.

Alastair Redfern, a Solicitor and the founder of Director Aid, which advises company directors facing insolvency, said:

> *"The notice of intention is not the end of Poundland. It is a legal breathing space: for ten business days no landlord or supplier can take legal action against the company without the court's permission, which gives the company time to land a buyer for some or all of the stores."*

> *"For staff, nothing changes today. Shops stay open, contracts stand and wages should still be paid. The real decisions come if Administrators are appointed, and that is when people will learn which stores have a future."*

> *"Anyone who is made redundant can claim from the government's Redundancy Payments Service even though the company cannot pay: up to eight weeks' unpaid wages, up to six weeks' holiday pay, statutory notice pay and, with two years' service, statutory redundancy pay. Each is capped at £751 a week."*

> *"The full picture will only emerge as more information comes into the public domain. Staff should go by what they are told in writing by the company or the Administrators, not by rumour, and should keep every payslip and letter."*

WHAT A BREAK-UP, A PRE-PACK OR A LIQUIDATION WOULD MEAN FOR STAFF: THE LEGAL POSITION

THE TEN-DAY BREATHING SPACE.

A notice of intention to appoint Administrators filed by a company or its directors starts an interim moratorium: no creditor can begin or continue legal proceedings, enforce security or repossess goods without the court's permission. It lasts until an Administrator is appointed or ten business days pass,

whichever is first. A notice filed by a lender holding a floating charge gives five business days. Insolvency Act 1986, Schedule B1, paragraphs 26 to 28 and 44

WHO THE ADMINISTRATORS WORK FOR.

An Administrator must try, in order, to rescue the company as a going concern; failing that, to get a better result for the creditors as a whole than a liquidation would; and failing that, to realise property to pay secured or preferential creditors. The duty is owed to the creditors as a whole, not to the shareholders. Schedule B1, paragraph 3

WAGES WHILE THE SHOPS TRADE.

Staff kept on for more than 14 days after the appointment have their contracts adopted by the Administrators. Wages, salary, holiday pay and pension contributions for work from then on are paid ahead of the Administrators' own fees and ahead of lenders with a floating charge. Schedule B1, paragraph 99

WAGES OWED FROM BEFORE THE APPOINTMENT.

Up to four months' unpaid wages, capped at £800 per employee, and all accrued holiday pay rank as preferential debts, paid before floating-charge lenders and ordinary creditors. Anything above that is an ordinary unsecured claim, but the government's Redundancy Payments Service pays it within the statutory limits, below. Insolvency Act 1986, Schedule 6, category 5, paragraphs 9 to 12

STORES SOLD AS GOING CONCERNS: STAFF TRANSFER.

Administration is not a procedure aimed at liquidating assets, so TUPE applies to it. When a buyer takes over a store and carries on trading from it, the staff of that store transfer to the buyer on their existing terms, with their continuous service intact. Debts the Redundancy Payments Service would pay (arrears of wages, holiday pay, statutory notice) can be paid by the Service rather than passing to the buyer, and the Administrators and buyer may agree changes to terms with staff representatives if the changes are designed to save jobs. TUPE 2006, regulations 4, 8 and 9; Key2Law (Surrey) LLP v De'Antiquis, Court of Appeal, 2011

STOCK AND LEASES SOLD WITHOUT THE BUSINESS: REDUNDANCY.

If a buyer takes only a store's lease, fittings or stock and does not carry on the business from it, there is no transfer of an undertaking, the staff do not transfer, and they are made redundant by the Administrators. The same applies to any store nobody buys. Those staff claim statutory redundancy pay, notice, arrears and holiday pay from the Redundancy Payments Service. Employment Rights Act 1996, Part XII, sections 182 to 186; GOV.UK limits

A PRE-PACK.

A pre-pack is a sale of the business negotiated before the Administrators are appointed and completed immediately afterwards. Staff in the parts sold transfer to the buyer under TUPE; staff in the parts left behind are made redundant. If the buyer is connected with the company (its owners, directors or their associates), a sale within the first eight weeks needs either the creditors' approval or a report from an independent evaluator, which the Administrators must send to creditors and Companies House. Administration (Restrictions on Disposal etc. to Connected Persons) Regulations 2021

LIQUIDATION.

A winding-up order made by the court operates in law as notice of dismissal to every employee; in a creditors' voluntary liquidation the liquidator dismisses the staff, usually at once. Either way, liquidation is a procedure aimed at liquidating assets, so TUPE does not carry staff over to whoever buys the stock or the leases. Every employee claims from the Redundancy Payments Service within the statutory limits. TUPE 2006, regulation 8(7); Employment Rights Act 1996, Part XII

THE LIMITS THAT APPLY TO EVERY CLAIM ON THE REDUNDANCY PAYMENTS SERVICE.

A week's pay is capped at £751 for dismissals on or after 6 April 2026. Arrears of pay: up to eight weeks. Holiday pay: up to six weeks. Statutory notice: at least one week after a month's service, one week per full year from two years' service, up to twelve. Statutory redundancy pay: up to 30 weeks' pay, so a maximum of £22,530. GOV.UK: Redundancy payments from the Insolvency Service

CHRONOLOGY

WHEN	WHAT HAPPENED	SOURCE
1990	Poundland is founded with a store in Burton-upon-Trent, Staffordshire.	BBC News, 29 Oct 2026 · Press Association, 26 Aug 2025
July 2016	Bought by South African retail group Steinhoff International for £597m; Steinhoff later becomes the majority owner of Pepco Group.	ITV News, 13 July 2016 · Retail Gazette, 26 May 2021
February 2019	A Winding-Up Petition is presented against Poundland Limited at the High Court in Manchester by First Property Sterling General Partner (Nominee 9) Limited, represented by Knights (case CR-2019-MAN-000104; record last updated 12 March 2019).	High Court of Justice record
May 2021	Pepco Group, Poundland's parent, lists on the Warsaw Stock Exchange at about £4.4bn.	Retail Gazette, 26 May 2021
June 2025	Pepco sells Poundland, then about 800 stores and 14,700 staff, to Peach Bidco, a subsidiary of US investment firm Gordon Brothers, for £1, with a £30m shareholder loan. Poundland announces plans to shut 68 stores.	Press Association, 26 Aug 2025 · BBC News, 29 Oct 2026 · The Guardian, 28 Oct 2026
July to August 2025	Poundland files a restructuring plan at the High Court (case CR-2025-004514). Sir Alastair Norris sanctions it on 26 August, days before the company was due to run out of money; up to £60m of new funding is injected and stores close.	High Court of Justice record · Press Association, 26 Aug 2025
2 September 2026	Gordon Brothers launches a formal sale of Poundland, hiring Alvarez & Marsal to run it; more than 100 stores have closed under the turnaround.	Retail Gazette, 2 Sept 2026
September 2026	Credit insurers reported to be withdrawing cover for Poundland's suppliers.	Retail Gazette, Sept 2026
24 September 2026	Poundland operates about 530 shops in the UK and about 70 Dealz shops in the Republic of Ireland; Gordon Brothers considers selling the two separately.	City A.M., 24 Sept 2026
Early October 2026	Poundland's management names Derry-based Martin Property Group as its preferred bidder; the Press Association later reports that the bid is understood not to be fully funded and to involve deferred payments, and that Poundland runs around 600 stores across the UK, including 15 in Northern Ireland, employing 12,000.	Press Association, 27 Oct 2026
13 October 2026	Poundland confirms it is in talks with potential buyers; management, with former Pepco chairman Andy Bond, is working on a buyout with Martin Property Group, its "preferred partner". Usdaw warns of administration if the deal fails.	BBC News, 13 Oct 2026
14 October 2026	Three independent directors, Andrew Kirkpatrick, Stephen Welch and Dominic Young, are appointed to oversee the sale (appointed 14 October per Companies House; reported as 15 October).	Companies House (officers) · Sky News, 27 Oct 2026
27 to 28 October 2026	Gordon Brothers rejects the Martin Property Group bid for the whole business as a going concern (reported at more than £15m with a portion upfront by the Guardian; £5m with the rest deferred by the BBC); the three directors resign.	Sky News, 27 Oct 2026 · The Guardian, 28 Oct 2026 · BBC News, 29 Oct 2026

WHEN	WHAT HAPPENED	SOURCE
28 October 2026	Business Secretary Jonathan Reynolds writes to Gordon Brothers and instructs his Chief Strategic Business Adviser, David Bickerton, to establish the facts. The Guardian reports that Gordon Brothers is understood to be poised to file a notice of intention to appoint AlixPartners as Administrator; City A.M. reports a notice is imminent.	The Guardian, 28 Oct 2026 · City A.M., 28 Oct 2026 · GOV.UK ministers
28 October 2026	Bids for parts of the business reported from Fortress (Poundstretcher), said to want 200 to 250 stores, CDS Superstores (The Range and Wilko) and Modella (TG Jones); B&M, Iceland and Lidl also named. Gordon Brothers says the options "will now be objectively evaluated".	The Guardian, 28 Oct 2026 · Press Association, 27 Oct 2026 · City A.M., 28 Oct 2026 · BBC News, 29 Oct 2026
29 October 2026	Sky News reports that suppliers are threatening to cut ties with Poundland as the chain nears collapse, with several large suppliers said to have begun cutting back deliveries over fears of not being paid on time; it also reports that a notice of intention could be filed as early as Thursday, naming AlixPartners as the proposed Administrator.	Sky News, 29 Oct 2026
29 October 2026	BBC News reports that Poundland's bosses are filing a notice of intention to appoint Administrators; Managing Director Barry Williams's memo to staff says Gordon Brothers has restricted access to funds; AlixPartners reported to be lined up.	BBC News, 29 Oct 2026
29 October 2026	A notice of intention to appoint Administrators is filed at the High Court in London in the name of Poundland Limited (case CR-2026-008394, filed 29 October 2026). No Administrators had been appointed at the time of writing.	High Court of Justice record

FURTHER COMMENT FROM ALASTAIR REDFERN

> *"Poundland's problems have reportedly been building for well over a year: a restructuring plan sanctioned by the High Court in August 2025 after the court was told the company was days from running out of money (Press Association, 26 August 2025), more than 100 store closures (Retail Gazette, 2 September 2026), credit insurers reported in September to have pulled cover, and now a sale that has not produced a buyer for the whole business."*

> *"For any director worried about their own business, the lesson is to act early. The sooner you take advice, the more options you have."*

NOTES TO EDITORS

About Director Aid. Director Aid offers advice to company directors facing a Winding-Up Petition in England and Wales. It gives directors a free, confidential first consultation with a Solicitor, explains in plain English where the petition has got to and what can still be done, and publishes the Winding-Up Petition Index, an open-data series on Winding-Up Petitions, orders and liquidations in England and Wales by region, sector and petitioner. Website: directoraid.co.uk. Email: help@directoraid.co.uk.

About the book. *The Winding-Up Petition Handbook: A Director's Guide to Petitions, Deadlines, Frozen Bank Accounts and the Options That Remain*, by Alastair Redfern LL.B., Solicitor (Director Aid, 2026). Free to download from directoraid.co.uk/winding-up-petition-handbook.html; paperback (ISBN 978-1-0655322-0-0) and Kindle (ISBN 978-1-0655322-1-7) on Amazon. It explains what a petition is, every

deadline that follows, why the bank freezes the account, how a validation order keeps the business trading, and the wider options of liquidation, administration and a company voluntary arrangement.

Administration is not a winding-up. A notice of intention to appoint Administrators, and an administration, are different procedures from a Winding-Up Petition, which is a creditor's application to have a company compulsorily liquidated. Nothing in this release suggests that Poundland is being wound up. The Winding-Up Petition Handbook is mentioned as the author's published work on company insolvency, not because its subject applies to Poundland.

Why it matters here. The Handbook was written for the directors of companies in financial difficulty, including the suppliers and contractors of a large business that fails: what a petition means, what the deadlines are, and what can still be done.

For employees. Alastair Redfern's next guide, *Before You Sign*, is written for employees who are being made redundant or offered a settlement agreement. It covers statutory redundancy pay, notice, holiday pay, what the Redundancy Payments Service pays when an employer is insolvent, how redundancy money is taxed, and what it means for Universal Credit. It is due out in November 2026 and will be free to download. Early review copies are available to journalists now on request.

Media contact. Alastair Redfern LL.B., Solicitor, founder of Director Aid, is available for comment or interview the same day, including broadcast. Mobile: 07340 985684. If the call is not answered, please leave a voicemail or send a text with your name, outlet and deadline, and the call will be returned promptly. Email: help@directoraid.co.uk.

SOURCES

1. High Court of Justice records: Poundland Limited cases CR-2026-008394, CR-2025-004514 and CR-2019-MAN-000104, checked 29 October 2026 (not linked)
2. Companies House: Poundland Limited, company number 02495645 (officers, including appointment dates; owners and charges)
3. Poundland terms of use (company name, number and registered office)
4. GOV.UK: Redundancy payments from the Insolvency Service (the limits and the £751 weekly cap)
5. BBC News, 29 October 2026: Poundland's future hangs in the balance as chain edges towards collapse (Emma Simpson and Tom Espiner)
6. BBC News, 13 October 2026: Poundland in rescue talks as owners seek buyer
7. The Guardian, 28 October 2026: Business secretary writes to Poundland owner as administration fears build (Sarah Butler)
8. Sky News (via Yahoo Finance UK), 27 October 2026: Poundland close to collapse as new directors head for exit
9. Sky News, 29 October 2026: Suppliers threaten to cut ties with Poundland as chain nears collapse
10. City A.M., 28 October 2026: Jobs on the line as Poundland poised to appoint Administrators
11. City A.M., 24 September 2026: Poundland owner could carve out Irish business in rush sale
12. Press Association (Irish News), 27 October 2026: Poundland could be broken up and face insolvency as bids assessed
13. Press Association (Irish News), 26 August 2025: Poundland saved from administration as judge approves restructuring plan
14. Retail Gazette, 2 September 2026: Poundland owner launches auction just over a year after £1 takeover
15. Retail Gazette, September 2026: Poundland moves to reassure suppliers after credit insurers pull cover
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18. UK Parliament: Andy Burnham, MP for Makerfield since 18 June 2026 (postcode WN4 9GD returns this constituency)
19. Poundland careers: distribution centres at Springvale, Harlow and Wigan
20. Poundland job advertisement (Job&Talent): Warehouse Colleague, Three Sisters Road, WN4 9GD, Ashton-in-Makerfield
21. Insolvency Act 1986, Schedule B1 (administration): paragraphs 3, 26 to 28, 44 and 99
22. Insolvency Act 1986, Schedule 6 (preferential debts)
23. Transfer of Undertakings (Protection of Employment) Regulations 2006, regulation 8
24. Administration (Restrictions on Disposal etc. to Connected Persons) Regulations 2021
25. Employment Rights Act 1996, Part XII (insolvency of employers)

26. ITV News, 13 July 2016: Poundland in £597m South African takeover
27. Retail Gazette, 26 May 2021: Poundland owner Pepco Group enters Warsaw stock market
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