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Jobs lost as chemical firm awaits plant sale



SUPPLIED

Venator has sites in Greatham, Wynyard and Birtley in the UK

22 October 2025

Updated 23 October 2025

More than 270 workers at a chemical firm have been made redundant as one of its plants is left idle prior to a sale bid.

Venator Materials UK, which operates from Wynyard, Greatham and Birtley, went into administration in September, due to rising costs and increased competition.

The company said the decision to appoint administrators was difficult but would "provide an opportunity to restructure and pursue the sale process".

However, Unite the union described it as a cynical move and a betrayal of its members.

On appointment of Alvarez and Marsal as administrators, 273 staff were made redundant, and 232 retained to assist in the administration process.

In October an asset purchase agreement was signed for the Greatham plant, and administrators said they intended to maintain the facility in an idle state through to completion of the sale.

'Without warning'

Karen Askwith, managing director at Venator, said: "Despite extensive efforts to stabilise the UK business, the Venator Materials UK Ltd board of directors has taken decisive action to protect stakeholder interests and made the difficult decision to appoint administrators.

"This provides an opportunity to restructure whilst we continue to pursue the completion of the sale process for the Greatham plant and associated TiO₂ pigment assets.

"We recognise the impact this decision has and it is not one we have taken lightly."

She blamed the downturn in the TiO₂ industry and "financial pressures" for the decision.

Fazia Hussain-Brown, Unite regional officer, said: "Our members at Greatham and Wynyard have had the rug pulled from under by Venator.

"Unite has committed to working with Venator to support workers during the transition to the new ownership and instead, without warning, it has placed itself into administration and potentially destroyed the jobs of over 230 workers.

"This is a cynical move and Unite will be supporting our members over the next few days as the picture becomes clearer of what this betrayal looks like."

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