CONTACT US:
Your North East Regional Council can be contacted at:
NorthEastRegionalCouncil@rmt.org.uk
And on our X (Twitter):
@RMTNorthEast

North East Region

NEW GENERAL SECRETARY FOR RMT

Eddie Dempsey takes over from Mick Lynch

After Mick Lynch's retirement, the North East region welcomes Eddie Dempsey into the position of General Secretary. Eddie has always been a friend to our region, regularly visiting branches and attending events in the North East, taking a keen interest in the struggles of members from every sector.

For those who don't already know, Eddie Dempsey has risen through the ranks of RMT, previously as a Regional Organiser and as Senior Assistant General Secretary. He of course started out on the front lines, with railway roles including station staff and train driver. He has supported the union throughout many disputes, and has been a key figure in fighting for our members' jobs, pay and security over the years.

Eddie has pledged to continue RMT's tradition of industrial strength and tough negotiation to protect members' interests.

Eddie Dempsey responded to his election: "I am honoured to be elected as RMT General Secretary. Our union has a proud history of standing up for working people, and I will ensure that continues. The challenges ahead are significant, but we will meet them with the same unity, strength, and determination that defines RMT.

"I want to pay tribute to Mick Lynch for his leadership and dedication to our members – he has set a high bar, and I will do my utmost to build on his legacy."

The North East region wishes Eddie luck in his new role, and looks forward to seeing him in the region soon.

John Leach, previously Assistant General Secretary, has moved into Eddie's previous role as Senior Assistant General Secretary. Ballot papers for the election for the new Assistant General Secretary will be sent out to members in the next few weeks.

RMT WINNING FOR MEMBERS IN THE NORTH EAST

Rail Gourmet (TPE Contract)

Rail Gourmet members voted overwhelmingly for industrial action due to Rail Gourmet's breach of its own disciplinary procedures, failing to provide formal notifications and outcomes. These workers had been instructed to withhold their labour in February after 97% of them voted for strike action.

Because of their stoic determination to seek justice and following meaningful discussions, Rail Gourmet committed to:

- Refresher training for all managers and team leaders on disciplinary, grievance, bullying, and harassment procedures.
- Reviewing the existing agreement with RMT to establish a stronger framework for negotiations.
- Ensuring disciplinary transparency and providing disciplinary appeal outcomes within 48-72 hours.
-

The region will keep an eye on developments and ensure Rail Gourmet management upholds its obligation to create a decent workplace where staff are treated properly. In addition to this victory your union recently achieved a pay offer for Rail Gourmet members. This offer was voted overwhelmingly in favour by members:

- A 10% pay increase for Customer Hosts, Customer Service Assistants, and Team Leaders, backdated to 1st November 2024.
- No additional productivity conditions, ensuring the raise comes with no extra demands.
- A set pay anniversary date of 1st April each year.
-

If you work for Rail Gourmet or speak to any of their members, let them know that being in the RMT can help us continue our fight to defend staff and achieve justice for caterers.

While RMT continues to fight to end the scourge of outsourcing and get all agency workers fully incorporated into the companies they work for, while they are still hired by these external agencies we will still work hard to make sure their pay and conditions are as good as they possibly can be.

Bidvest Noonan (TPE Contract

RMT members at Bidvest Noonan have voted to accept the company's latest pay offer.

Your union achieved a 10% pay increase for all grades within the Bidvest Noonan cleaning team, backdated to 1 st November 2024.

The productivity items that were included the original offer have been removed as a conditional part of the pay award. Bidvest Noonan and TransPennine Express are to commit to the pay anniversary date being 1 st April each year going forward. There is also a commitment from Bidvest Noonan and TransPennine Express to start tripartite discussions as soon as possible for the April 2025 award.

Once again we applaud members in our region who were determined to achieve a fair pay offer and justice for outsourced cleaners.

Newcastle Overhead Line Department (Network Rail)
Strike Action Called Off

After talks were held last month on the back of our members voting for industrial action, an agreement was reached to suspend all planned industrial action. During these talks RMT won:

Improved Roster
· A significantly improved roster than the one previously imposed on our members
· Management has agreed to ensure that RMT representatives will be directly involved in roster creation
· Before Stage 1 roster meetings, key data such as workload availability, fatigue and risk index defaults, and annual leave requests must be provided.

Protection of Team Working
· Despite the company's push for individual rostering under Modernising Maintenance (MM), we have secured a clear commitment that staff will be rostered together in teams wherever possible. This principle has now been recognised and agreed, providing a strong foundation for future negotiations.

12-Hour Shifts Remain an Option
· While management initially refused any additional 12-hour shifts, it has been agreed that they must now consider them seriously where work demands allow, provided they comply with the Fatigue and Risk Index. This keeps the door open for more favourable shift patterns in the future and ensures we can challenge any inappropriate use of WD staff and protect our members' work.

Fatigue Defaults Will Be Challenged Nationally
· There remain concerns about how the Fatigue and Risk Index is used but we recognise that this is a wider issue within the company and so this will be raised with the company as part of the National Modernising Maintenance Post-Implementation Review.

Ongoing Monitoring and Accountability
· Management has committed to regular review meetings between the RMT National Representative and the IME to ensure that commitments are maintained.
· They have also agreed to genuine collaboration in future roster negotiations, guaranteeing that our reps remain at the forefront of decision-making.

RMT members in the Newcastle OHL Department have shown determination and resilience to achieve a fair roster. However, the dispute will remain until a final resolution is reached in this matter.

These commitments are significant in not only achieving progress in this local dispute but also have major significance in the wider Network Rail maintenance function in terms of rostering and fatigue in general. Members are asked to remain vigilant in the coming months to ensure Network Rail upholds the commitments outlined.

CONFERENCE SEASON IN FULL SWING

North East activists have been representing the region at a series of national conferences this Spring.

We have had a strong showing of members at conferences around the country this year, with delegates at the Womens' Conference in Birmingham, Signalling and Operations Grades in Buxton, Health and Safety in York, Supervisory Grades in Edinburgh, and Young Members' in Canterbury (to be hosted by Newcastle & Gateshead branch next year).

The North East was also represented at the TUC Women's and Young Members conferences in London, and the newly-merged TUC North East, Yorkshire and Humber conference in York.

As always, our delegates spoke on a variety of issues ranging from menopause and breastfeeding policies, to a four-day working week, showing our union's wide-ranging commitment to improving conditions not just for the transport sector, but the entire working class. We do not exist in exclusivity, and as a union with a national presence, it is important we continue to advocate for the rights of all workers.

Any member can be nominated as a delegate at a conference - please see your branch secretary for information. Conferences are an ideal way into activism for anyone who is passionate but doesn't know where to start: RMT holds conferences in Spring every year for each equality committee as well as each industrial sector. Most nominations are now closed for 2025, but please speak to branch or regional officials if interested in nomination for 2026.

REGIONAL CONTACTS

NERC CONTACTS

Jack Rawcliffe - Executive Member North East
necnortheast@rmt.org.uk

Martin McCleary - Membership Secretary North
Tel: 07711 570848
berwickrail@rmt.org.uk

Tim Butler - Membership Secretary South
Tel: 07757 425859
yorkdistrict@rmt.org.uk

Jessica Robinson - Regional Council Secretary & Women's Officer
Tel: 07784 224412
jpleather89@gmail.com

Nathan Reynolds - Regional Council President
Tel: 07922 020589
kopex@gmx.com

Connor Slomski - Regional Youth Officer
Tel: 07468529849
slomskiconnor@gmail.com

We welcome contributions to this newsletter - if you would like to write an article, please contact any one of the officers above.

BRANCH EMAILS

Bedlington: bedlington@rmt.org.uk
Berwick Rail: berwickrail@rmt.org.uk
Darlington No.1: darlington1@rmt.org.uk
Hexham: hexhamrail@rmt.org.uk
Newcastle & Gateshead: newcastlegateshead@rmt.org.uk
Newcastle Rail & Catering: newcastlerailcatering@rmt.org.uk
North East Shipping: northeastshipping@rmt.org.uk
North York Moors: north.moorsRail@rmt.org.uk
Teesside: teesside@rmt.org.uk
York & District: yorkdistrict@rmt.org.uk

Branch meeting dates will be communicated in local depots - if you have any concerns, please contact your branch representative.

REGIONAL OFFICES

Thomas Steels House
49a Thorne Road
Doncaster DN1 2EX
Tel: 01302 760694

North East Shipping Office
Unit 17 Cookson House
River Drive
South Shields NE33 1TL
Tel: 01914 561308

SOCIAL MEDIA

NERC on X: @RMTNorthEast
RMT on X: @RMTunion
Facebook: www.facebook.com/RMTunion

A UNION FOR ALL

OCS cleaners at LNER are vital.

You are the backbone of the railway and were called heroes during Covid. But where is your reward? Where is your recognition?

RMT represents cleaners all over the country with the eventual aim to end the scourge of outsourcing - why should you not have the same benefits and conditions as everyone else who works for LNER?

Join RMT today to protect yourself and fight for your rights.

If you earn under £24,308 per year, you can join for as little as £2.39 per week and will be fully protected from the moment you sign up.

Scan here to join or visit:

www.rmt.org.uk/about/join-rmt