



# Policy Briefing

9th November 2022

## Why RMT members on London Underground are striking

### RMT's offer rejected

On Tuesday 8<sup>th</sup> November, at last minute talks held to try to avert the strike, RMT made an offer to suspend the action scheduled for Wednesday.

RMT asked management to:

- Suspend the implementation of 600 station job cuts until the end of this year.
- Make a clear statement that they would not agree to detrimental attacks on Tube workers' pensions.

London Underground managers rejected that offer and the strike action will now go ahead on Thursday 10<sup>th</sup>.

### TfL's latest Funding Deal and the attack on workers

On 30<sup>th</sup> August, the DfT and TfL agreed what they called a Long-Term Funding Settlement that would run to March 2024. The conditions of the deal represent a continued attack on our members:

1. The funding deal mandates TfL to pursue pay restraint at a time of rising prices. It ties TfL pay awards to the public sector for the period of the Funding Agreement.
2. TfL must continue to waste time and resources on the futile project to deliver more 'driverless trains' on the Underground.
3. TfL must now produce two proposals for reform of the pension scheme with the aim of ensuring it is 'financially sustainable' and 'protecting members benefits built up to date'. By 30<sup>th</sup> September it had to produce two options for 'future service reform', which will aim to reduce 'future service liabilities by circa £100 million'.

These conditions are underwritten with the threat to remove funding if TfL fails to comply. It is because of these deals that our members continue to face the attacks that underpin our dispute:

- London Underground managers have now begun imposing rosters based on the deletion of 600 stations staff posts. London Underground is attempting to permanently reduce its staffing complement, leaving the remaining staff to cover

more work.

- In addition, London Underground has sought to impose new policies that it says 'maximise flexibility' by giving managers more power to change shift times and locations, sweating their remaining staff harder. These breach agreements that specifically seek to defend work-life balance and ensure that staff don't become fatigued and they are being imposed in breach of agreements on consultation and negotiation. Driving up workloads, lengthening shifts and increasing unsocial hours working for safety-critical staff is highly dangerous and counter-productive.
- The shameful attack on the TfL pension scheme continues, despite the Mayor and TfL increasingly publicly distancing themselves from the rationale for doing so. On 23 June Sadiq Khan said that he was "not persuaded that there are any grounds to change the pensions of those who work for TfL. It's for the Government to make the case." TfL has effectively echo the Mayor's line, admitting that there is now no sustainability rationale for reform of future service benefits, confirming what RMT has said from the beginning. Despite knowing that what they are doing is wrong, TfL go on to map out pathways for the government to make detrimental changes to our members pensions in retirement to achieve the target set by government of saving £100 million from the cost of future service benefits. The options they set out would result in cuts to pensions in retirement of around 30% in order to fulfil the savings target set by government of £100 million, far more punitive than cuts seen elsewhere in the public sector.

## **From heroic keyworkers to a cost to be cut**

These attacks are deeply unfair and completely unnecessary. London Underground workers are being targeted by a government that is trying to drive down workers' living standards. The Mayor and TfL know that these attacks are wrong.

Unnecessary cuts to pensions are morally indefensible and will increase hardship for transport workers already struggling with the cost-of-living crisis. Reports to the TfL Board have stressed that winning back passengers will require the Tube to be properly staffed. Rebuilding ridership will require more visible cleaning and 'a safe, reliable and frequent service with real-time information and staff available when they are needed.' Yet 600 station staff jobs are being cut, while around 170 Full-Time Equivalent staff are leaving TfL each month and the levels of passenger happiness with the availability and help received from staff are falling.<sup>1</sup> Cuts to safety inspections regimes and maintenance work have truly frightening potential consequences. The transport industry has been here before in the 1990s and it ended in appalling tragedy and mass loss of life.

The Mayor and TfL should stand firmly with their workers, the people who kept London's transport services moving during the pandemic. Instead, they are allowing London Underground managers to cut jobs and undermine employment conditions on the Tube and they continue to indulge the government's spiteful raid on the TfL pension scheme.

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<sup>1</sup> <https://board.tfl.gov.uk/documents/g678/Public%20reports%20pack%20Wednesday%2008-Jun-2022%2010.00%20Board.pdf?T=10> – Finance Report p. 6; See also the reports to the Customer Service and Operational Performance panel – March 2022

## **Negotiated settlement is possible – but only if LU negotiate**

RMT has been seeking assurances that London Underground would

- shelve its plans to cut station staff jobs,
- withdraw its threats to existing agreements and
- commit to not attacking the TfL pension scheme.

London Underground has consistently refused to do this, including just this week. Given the failure of London Underground to provide assurances on any of the headings of dispute and the continued attacks on members pensions, condition of employment and on staffing levels. That is why RMT will take strike action on Thursday.

**We ask that you contact the Mayor and ask him to instruct his managers to negotiate a settlement with the RMT.**

### **Further information:**

Contact Jonathan White,  
National Policy Officer  
[j.white@rmt.org.uk](mailto:j.white@rmt.org.uk)