



RMT Station Staff and Associated Grades

Charter



A message from the RMT general secretary

Station staff are invaluable to a safe and efficient railway system yet, since privatisation, the pay, conditions, and safety of frontline station staff have been consistently eroded. Rates of pay, conditions of service, and staffing levels fail to reflect the valuable work carried out by station staff.

The introduction of a rail system run for profit has seen a steady decline in staffing of stations as well as an increase in the use of contract security and ticketing staff. It is no surprise that reducing staffing levels or de-staffing stations altogether has led to a steep rise in vandalism, threatening and anti-social behaviour, and assaults on passengers and staff. According to the Rail Safety and Standards Board, 871 rail workers suffered physical harm from assault in 2012/13. The RMT is campaigning hard to put pressure on TOCs, PTA/PTEs and LUL to protect their staff and provide a safe working environment.

The RMT's campaign for a better deal for station staff has already started to pay off in some areas. RMT has launched a joint campaign called Action for Rail with the TUC, and other rail unions, to defend all jobs on the railway and call for public ownership. This campaign has seen mass action to defend staff station working with wider society such as pensioners groups and representatives of disabled passengers.

The railways under public ownership could save the taxpayer £1.2bn a year according to a report from the Transport for Quality of Life. Such a saving, according to calculations in other independent reports such as that published by Professor Jean Shaoul at Manchester University, would allow for an immediate increase of 1,600 extra station staff per £200 million saved.

A Passenger Focus report, National Station Improvement Programme, published in January 2010 highlighted the importance of visible station staff to the travelling public and noted that for the vast majority this was a major precondition to improving rail travel in Britain.

Furthermore, an ICM poll in 2011, for 2000 people found that 71% of those asked believed privatised train companies were more concerned with making profits than providing affordable fares and a decent service for passengers and that only 19% believe that the railways should remain in private hands.

This national charter takes the fight for fair pay and safe working conditions to the TOCs, PTA/PTEs and LUL and sets out the reasons why all station staff should join the RMT.



Mick Cash, General Secretary

McNulty, the Rail Value for Money Study, and the threat to Station Staff

By extrapolating from the McNulty Review, RMT indicated the total numbers of jobs at risk broke down as follows:

Job type	Numbers at risk
Non-driver on-train staff	6,800
Maintenance, Signalling and Operations Staff	6,300
Ticket retail in E and D stations	2,000
Station staff	5,500
Total	20,600

McNulty states: *“Around 5,500 staff work on retail activities, of which 37% (approximately 2,000 people) are employed at small- and medium-sized stations.” and recommends: “the closure of all Category E station ticket offices; reducing the opening hours at Category D station ticket offices.”*

The Rail Value for Money Study states: *“Excluding those involved solely in retail, a further 5,500 staff work on stations on the platforms or elsewhere in the station environment. Their primary responsibility is dispatching trains.”*

Furthermore it recommends, *“that TOCs are free to make commercial judgements on the need for dispatch staff within the bounds of their safety responsibilities and recommends that TOCs should review station staffing as a matter of priority.”*

Clearly, all these estimates need to be treated with a great deal of caution and RMT are not claiming that the higher end figures will materialise in terms of job cuts.

However, RMT is confident that the figures contained within our briefing were an accurate reflection of those job numbers that will be under review or actively targeted for cuts as a result of McNulty recommendations.

Sir Roy’s assertion that we can expect only 6,000 job cuts looks unrealistic given the content of his own report, the figure for Network Rail job cuts in Control Period 4 exceeds that number alone.

Moreover, RMT figures may also be on the conservative side given that they do not include other groups within the industry such as catering or cleaning workers.

RMT has been consistently fighting these proposed cuts and will continue to do so.

RMT - Fighting for a fair deal for station staff

Your union is demanding the following for all station staff:

- No cuts to staffing levels
- Improved Rates of Pay
- Improved conditions of service
- An end to lone working
- A zero tolerance approach to staff assaults
- Increased staffing at all stations
- Station staff work to be carried out by railway employees, not contracted out
- No station closures or reduced opening hours

Improved pay and conditions

Pay and conditions of station staff have fallen far behind those of other grades in the years since privatisation. The RMT is committed to campaigning for parity between different grades and companies. Station staff are invaluable frontline workers and this should be reflected in pay awards.

An end to lone working

Under-staffed stations are leaving workers vulnerable to assault and abuse. The TOCs, PTA/PTEs and LUL have for too long been allowed to reduce staffing at stations to the point where many stations are totally un-staffed or are staffed by only one person. Lone working leads to dangerous situations where, for example, booking office staff have to leave the booking office unattended in order to use toilet facilities on the platform late at night, or where booking office staff are in charge of emptying cash from ticket machines. Our members are put in an unacceptably vulnerable position every time they are left to work on their own.

This cannot be allowed to continue as it erodes the job security and the safety of our members. The RMT is demanding that there should be a minimum of two members of station staff at every station at all times during traffic hours, with adequate relief cover for annual leave, sickness and emergencies.

Station staff at all stations

The Evening Standard's Make Our Rail Stations Safe campaign highlighted the threat to passenger safety at un-staffed stations with research showing that 229 stations in the London region are not guaranteed to have ticket or platform staff on the premises throughout the working week. Since privatisation there has been a steady decline in staffing levels at stations, and many smaller, rural stations remain un-staffed for much, if not all, of the time. DfT is keen to remind the public that

passenger numbers are at their highest level in over 60 years. However, the numbers of staff at stations has not increased in proportion to the rise in passenger volume. Un-staffed stations are a dangerous and threatening environment for passengers and an easy target for vandals. Increased staffing across the board is the only sensible way to improve safety for passengers and to curb vandalism.

The Passenger Focus report, published in January 2010, noted that the vast majority of respondents to their survey were not satisfied with the number of visible staff in the daytime and were deeply dissatisfied with the number of visible staff after dark. According to BBC weather: "In the depths of winter the nights in the UK are anything from 15-19 hours long". This demonstrates the length of time for which passengers are deeply dissatisfied with the levels of visible staffing at stations.

Station staff work to be carried out by railway employees, not contractors

Train Operating Companies, PTA/PTEs and LUL have been trying to stick a plaster on the safety and vandalism problems caused by un-staffed or under-staffed stations by bringing in security staff. This simply doesn't work. The RMT believes that the solution is to employ more station staff, working with the British Transport Police, providing a visible, uniformed railway presence for passengers. Bringing in contractors to do railway workers' jobs will only make the problem worse, not better.

Accessibility

The Department for Transport's Accessibility Action Plan (December 2012) aims to provide "an accessible and socially inclusive transport system, by removing the barriers to travel and ensuring that social impacts are addressed in policy development and service delivery". As part of this plan, all rail companies have to produce a Disabled Persons' Protection Plan (DPPP) which sets out how the company helps disabled passengers to use their stations and trains.

However, beyond a commitment to greater disability awareness training, there is little in the plan that commits to providing the visible staff presence that all passengers, but especially those with mobility and access issues, want on their trains and stations.

RMT believes that there is a major contradiction between the government's aim to remove barriers that prevent disabled and older people accessing our railways and the proposals to drive through significant staff cuts as part of wider cost-cutting measures.

Station staff are essential for ensuring access to the railways.

Use of CCTV

CCTV must be used exclusively for staff protection, but this is not always the experience of RMT members where CCTV in the workplace can feel intrusive. Employers who spy on their staff are infringing their privacy.

The Information Commissioner's Office issued a revised Code of Practice on the use of CCTV in 2008, which described the use of recording as "highly intrusive" and warns organisations that its use would only ever be justified under the Data Protection Act in "highly exceptional circumstances". The Code says covert monitoring of workers "can rarely be justified" and should not be carried out unless authorised at the highest level.

DATA MUST BE FAIRLY AND LAWFULLY PROCESSED

Guidance from the RMT's solicitors states that the only situation where an employer may be entitled to secretly video employees is where there is suspected criminal activity. However, even if it is permissible, surveillance should not be carried out in an area which would be considered private such as cloakrooms, toilets, employee's private offices or mess rooms. It is not illegal to install hidden cameras in the workplace but the employer may have to justify its use and they may be in breach of the Data Protection Act 1998 as well as the Human Rights Act 1998. Even if the data is obtained lawfully it still needs to be obtained fairly and the employee should know the purposes of obtaining the data, how it is to be used and to whom the data is to be given.

For the data to be obtained fairly, employers may have to alert employees that surveillance is taking place.

THE DATA SHOULD BE RELEVANT, ADEQUATE AND NOT EXCESSIVE

It is also required that the surveillance should not be overly intrusive and should be proportionate, for instance, the wholesale monitoring of the workplace to protect against a small risk or problem may not be tolerated and the employer may have to show why they did not use a less intrusive method.

USED FOR LIMITED PURPOSES AND SECURE STORAGE

If video surveillance is used for the purpose of preventing crime, or introduced for a specific purpose which staff have been told about, then the employer should not use that information for any other purposes unless it reveals for example, serious misconduct which no reasonable employer could be expected to ignore.

The data should not be kept for longer than is necessary for the purpose it was processed. It must be processed in accordance with the employee's rights contained in the DPA 1998 and data must be kept secure.

How campaigning pays off - Rachael Tombling

An Employment Appeals Tribunal awarded RMT member Rachael Tombling £79,200 – the maximum possible award – after it rejected trumped up claims by her employer Virgin that she had deliberately injured herself while at work and damaged company property.

Rachael was employed as a Customer Service Assistant by Virgin West Coast at Manchester Piccadilly when, in February 2007, she suffered facial injuries after being thrown against the Iris computer screen whilst working in the onboard shop. She suffered two black eyes, concussion and whiplash and the screen was damaged.

Management accused Rachel of deliberately head butting the screen in order to cause wilful damage and that the CCTV evidence proved it. This was proven to be false by a unanimous decision at the Employment Tribunal.

RMT supported Rachel from the outset. Following a ballot her work mates took two days of strike action for her re-instatement. This forced the company to meet with RMT representatives and when no progress was made in the meetings the Union brought the case to the Employment Tribunal.

If you think an employer is monitoring or using surveillance in a way which is not allowed, inform your union reps of your concerns. If necessary, the Information Commissioner's Office can advise reps if an employer is meeting its obligations under the data protection law. The Information Commissioner's Office helpline number is 01625 545 745.

However, there should be a workplace policy on surveillance and monitoring which sets out what an employer is prohibited from doing and the necessary safeguards.

Only a brief summary of the Advice to members and advocates on the Use of CCTV equipment is provided here. The full advice is available from RMT Head Office - Unity House. Any member interested in knowing more should speak to their rep, or their branch, or contact RMT Head Office on freephone 0800 3763706.

Staff Travel

The two-tier travel facilities provision for the workforce is a great source of bitterness amongst railway employees. A member might have spent the last decade working alongside a colleague doing exactly the same job, yet one receives the full entitlement because he or she was employed on the railways prior to privatisation, and the other does not. Not only are they aggrieved, they are perplexed - the RMT has continuously highlighted the nominal administrative cost to the employer of extending full travel facilities for all. In these circumstances, there is no logical reason to withhold the benefit from some employees. A reasonable solution could easily be obtained with the will of the Industry to do so.

As a result of the RMT highlighting the inequities of the current situation, a number of companies have recognised they should do more to help their employees in this area. In a prelude to what we hope is eventual full travel facilities for all, the Union concluded an agreement with AMEC in 2003 that all non-safeguarded employees would receive residential travel in the form of a 75% reduction in standard fares when travelling on services provided by C2C, West Anglia Great Northern and Silverlink (successor franchises now in operation). In 2004 London Underground agreed to reimburse all employees who joined post-April 1996, 75% of the cost of an annual season ticket on national rail services. In 2008 Network Rail proposed to provide non-safeguarded Signal and Operations staff with an increase in travel subsidy to 50% from April 2008 and 60% from April 2009 and to raise the level of the maximum season ticket loan subsidy to £2,750 in this year and £2,850 in 2009.

How campaigning pays off - Flat rate pay increases

Ever-widening pay differentials can be avoided with the application of a substantial flat rate sum to lower salaries, whilst the wages of other grades are improved by the agreed percentage increase. All RMT pay submissions include this demand.

An agreement negotiated by the RMT and Northern Rail in 2011 awarded our members 5% or £800 whichever was greater. Other flat-rate increases negotiated include C2C Ltd which awarded £600 to some station staff grades and 3.75% for all other grades.

Annual Pay Increases

Since 2003 every pay submission, including this year's, has included a claim for a harmonised pay anniversary date where it has been required. In 2003 RMT offered train operating companies the opportunity for talks on the creation of a National Bargaining Forum but not a single company took up this offer. RMT continues to press for the establishment of such a forum.

Piecemeal pay negotiations are, unfortunately, widespread. For example, at Southeastern there are currently different pay anniversary dates for the following grades:

- Engineering, Retail, & Conductors
- Shunter Drivers

Southeastern is not alone. Other companies with fragmented pay negotiations include; Arriva Trains Wales, C2C, First Capital Connect, First Great Western, and Merseyrail.

It is clear that these fragmented pay negotiations set grade against grade, damaging industrial strength and allowing differentials to grow between different grades of employee. In order to remedy this situation, RMT has implemented a long term

strategy to ensure that all companies have a single anniversary date. This strategy has been highly successful to date with single anniversary dates achieved at a number of companies.

Protecting staff from assaults

Physical assaults, threats and verbal abuse of railway staff have increased by 33.8% over the past 10 years to 5253 in 2012/13. Of these some 871 led to physical injury.

It is station staff who bear the brunt of this alarming trend. Your union is campaigning for a zero-tolerance approach to violence against railway staff, as well as an increased British Transport Police presence and alcohol bans in trouble spots.

Protection of Members – BTP

Through RMT's membership of the Rail Personal Security Group (RPSG), the union has been able to push for greater protection of members. As a result of pressure from RMT, it has been agreed that the RMT will be represented on the Department for Transport's 'Transport Security Working Group'.

A Memorandum of Understanding has been agreed between BTP and the Crown Prosecution Service which details the procedure to be followed in all instances of assault on rail staff. This agreement will be trialled in the London area and, if successful, RMT will be pressing for it to be extended nationwide.

The agreement reinforces the commitment from the CPS that an offence against a member of rail staff while on duty will be considered as an assault against a person "serving the public". The BTP have committed to a "positive arrest" policy and will not use the simple caution. All cases will be presented for a charging decision by the CPS. When collecting evidence, the BTP will give victims the opportunity to make a "victim personal statement".

The CPS has agreed to support the policy and, where there is sufficient evidence, will support a prosecution in the public interest. Conditional cautions will only be used in exceptional circumstances and only for low level offences.

How campaigning pays off – the Charter of Protection for Transport Workers

The problem of workplace violence has always been a great concern to RMT and increasingly high levels of assaults on our members indicates that employers are failing to implement procedures that adequately address the issue.

The Charter of Protection has been developed from decisions reached at the 2007 AGM and using information gained from a survey of the RMT membership. The full Charter of Protection is available from Unity House and members are encouraged to request copies through their rep or branch.

The 3 main aims of RMT's campaign:

1. To raise awareness with the RMT membership, employers and the public of the scale of the problem and to highlight the need for members to report violence at work.
2. To secure the strongest possible legal protection for transport workers against assault and press for the strongest penalties.
3. To establish effective cross-company forums in all transport sectors and to persuade employers to adopt best practice when developing policies to prevent staff assaults and provide care for those who are victims of assault.

How campaigning pays off – Serious and Imminent Danger

As a result of a resolution to the Annual General Meeting 2008, a pamphlet has been produced to give RMT members a better understanding of the law as it relates to 'serious and imminent danger'.

Please contact your rep or branch in order to obtain copies of the pamphlet from RMT HQ - Unity House.

How campaigning pays off – Redundancies

RMT has undertaken a number of successful campaigns aimed at preventing compulsory redundancies. The Union does not accept compulsory redundancies and where management threatens compulsory redundancies RMT is prepared to ballot its members for industrial action to protect members jobs and futures.

Parliamentary Work

RMT has a very active Parliamentary group of Members of Parliament.

Through the parliamentary group, the transport select committees, production of research, the media and meetings with ministers and a lobby of parliament the Union has been demanding,

- An end to cuts in rail jobs and services. No more big fare hikes. A freeze in shareholder dividends with all profits instead invested to protect services and jobs and for fairer fares.
- An urgent industry-wide programme so our railways can provide a green stimulus to the economy to help fight the economic downturn.
- A wholly integrated, publicly-owned and accountable People's Railway and London Underground which puts people before profit and where passengers and workers have a real voice

How campaigning pays off – Bringing jobs back in-house

RMT successfully put pressure on Northern Rail, First Great Western and other operators to take jobs back in house, including cleaning staff and gateline staff. RMT believes that the purpose of contracting out jobs is to suppress working conditions and rates of pay. When jobs are taken back in house people get the benefit of collective bargaining, wage increases, pension schemes, career development, and staff travel benefits. It can also lead to greater job permanency.

Additionally, when jobs are taken back in house the industrial strength of members is increased through entering into bargaining units with members in different grades, and by doing so expanding their capacity for effective industrial action.

So what can you do?

Remember that this is your charter and it's your union. So what can you do to help your union help you? Here are a few suggestions:

Join RMT today

If you're not already a member of the RMT, complete the form in the centrefold and return it to a Union rep or Head Office as soon as possible.

Attend Branch meetings

This is the best way to find out what's going on and to get help and advice. If you don't know when or where your branch meets, check the RMT website (www.rmt.org.uk) or call the RMT helpline on 0800 376 3706.

Know your rights!

Check your Conditions and Job Description – make sure you know what allowances, length of turns, leave etc have been agreed. Your local representative will help.

Make contact

Make sure you know who your local representative and Health & Safety representative are. Contact your Regional Office (see list back page) for details.

Keep your reps informed

Report all workplace problems to your local representative and/or Health & Safety representative.

Never accept additional duties without question

Ask your local representative for advice. You might be doing someone else's work! Any changes in duties must be agreed with the union, at local or Company level.

All individuals should be afforded the opportunity to develop to their full potential and grading structures should be transparent, and clearly defined. All station staff and associated grades should have the opportunity for career development.

For some contract staff career development is blocked by the nature of the contract. For this reason RMT believes that all tasks on the railway should be performed in-house and all staff should have equal opportunities to develop to their full potential.

Organise

Help to strengthen union organisation by encouraging any non-members to join. You can use the membership form attached or call the helpline on 0800 376 3706 for more.

Report all assaults

Make sure you report any assault to your supervisor or your line manager.

Membership information

Due to the anti-union laws it is essential to keep your membership details up to date. This is essential if your grade changes, or your address and other contact details change. Please contact: 0800 376 3706

The RMT is the Union for station staff

Join us now to improve station grades pay and conditions

If you're not already a member of the RMT, complete the attached form and return it to a Union rep or Head Office as soon as possible.

HELP ENSURE THAT YOUR UNION IS AT MAXIMUM STRENGTH

If your workmate's not in the Union then give them this station staff charter and the attached membership form – the more station staff in the union, the more strength the RMT will have

If you would like to help build the RMT then please contact your local Rep or Regional Office.

Your RMT Regional Offices are: -

BIRMINGHAM	0121 212 2355
BRISTOL	0117 925 5018
GLASGOW	0141 332 1117
LIVERPOOL	0151 709 1786
LONDON.....	020 7529 8860 / 8853
NORTH EAST	01302 706 694
WESSEX.....	02380 335 412
FREephone RMT HELPLINE	0800 376 3706



To join us or for more information call
020 7529 8835

Members Helpline, **Freephone 0800 376 3706**

www.rmt.org.uk



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