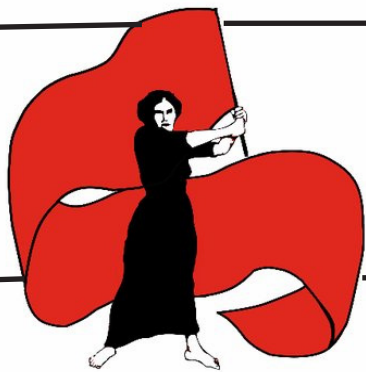




tubeworker

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Drivers: all out on 2 and 4 June!

➡ **Build the strike: effective picketing needed!**

➡ **Escalate to win: name further strikes**

➡ **Spread the dispute: coordinate with other functions' fights**

Drivers in RMT will strike on 2 and 4 June, after talks for which strikes due in May were suspended went nowhere.

The most important thing now is to ensure the strikes are as effective as possible. This means speaking to all workmates, in both unions, and persuading them to join the strike. Effective picketing is vital. Several pickets during the last strike reported some success in turning round wavering colleagues. This is what picket lines are for.

Prior to the cancellation of the May strikes, LUL appeared to firm up its commitment that participation in the 4DW scheme would be voluntary. That led some to query why RMT was still in dispute, given an apparent promise that no-one would be forced onto the new model. But subsequent communications from LUL, as well as simple common sense, expose the problems. LUL has refused to answer RMT's questions about how the company intends to operate two sets of frameworks, parameters, and transfer arrangements, without disadvantaging drivers. It says it will only be possible to answer such questions once the detail of the implementation is discussed at the Trains Functional Council. But it has

also said that discussions at TFC are not negotiations, and are merely a forum for the company to explain its plans and unions to ask clarifying questions. It has repeatedly insisted the actual detail of its scheme is non-negotiable.

The aim of our dispute must be changes to the scheme itself, either via its full withdrawal and a return to "blank-slate" negotiations towards an alternative 4DW model, or via substantial changes to the proposal to address our concerns. Even with firmer guarantees, and more clarity, about "voluntary" implementation, we can not sign up to the splitting of the grade. As we wrote previously, "Getting the employer to allow us to volunteer to smash up our terms and conditions doesn't feel like a win."

We also need to call further strikes, that escalate beyond two 24-hour walkouts. It will almost certainly take more sustained action to budge the employer.

And we also need to look at other ways to mobilise the wider RMT membership, either directly, on the basis of disputes around the impact of this scheme on other groups of workers (i.e., the restriction of promotional opportunities), or via coordinating action with disputes over issues in other functions.

Working in the heat

Stations during the May heatwave have been unbearably hot.

The hottest May temperatures ever recorded translated into gatelines of workers unable to cope with even regular shift patterns and duties, not to mention platform duties and more urgent passenger incidents. An hour of SATS on a platform in nearly 40-degree heat isn't just dangerous for the member of staff, it makes them less able to assist and prevent passenger injury, or worse.

A 10-minute PNR in a cool mess room, or to refill a water bottle, is welcome when facilities allow for it, but that can't replace shorter periods on duty, with more regular breaks as standard practice and adjustments to station temperatures where possible. To make that possible, more staff are needed on stations in hot weather, rather than the cuts in numbers we've actually seen.

The Heat Strike campaign is run by trade unionists across different sectors looking for ways to improve workers' rights in hot weather, including introducing a legal maximum working temperature and refusal of work in unsafe conditions. LU activists should discuss which measures we can demand.

A starting point would be for H&S reps to take temperature readings around different parts of the station in hot weather, as reps have done in other unions like the National Education Union.

This could then give us a basis to argue that working conditions at those temperatures are unsustainable for the Tube workforce.

LUL SAYS ITS OWN SCHEME RISKS HARMING WOMEN AND DISABLED WORKERS

LUL has finally published its Equality Impact Assessment (EqIA) of its four-day-week proposal.

EqIAs are undertaken by employers to assess whether changes could have a discriminatory effect on workers with protected characteristics.

The process has been far from ideal, as the company repeatedly stonewalled union requests to see the EqIA. There is also no obligation on employers to have EqIAs independently audited, meaning they are carried out by the employer itself — which obviously has a vested interest in concluding that whatever it wants to do will be fine!

LUL's EqIA found that "Increased intensity of working days may disproportionately impact individuals with physical or mental health conditions", and that "Existing reasonable adjustments may be harder to accommodate". Its mitigations for this included the fact that only 3.7% of drivers currently declare a disability... "It doesn't effect that many people" is hardly a "mitigation"!

The EqIA also said "There could be a disproportionate effect on colleagues with caring responsibilities, typically women." It says its existing flexible working policies can mitigate this risk, but anyone who's submitted a flexible working request knows how rare it is to have them approved.

The EqIA also stated, bluntly but correctly, that "The core trade-off underpinning this proposal is: Increased rest time vs increased work intensity." Throughout the EqIA, the additional rest day is cited as a "mitigation" for the increased risks the proposal carries with it. But if the extra day off, the only good thing about the proposal, simply serves to offset its detrimental effects, it's hardly an improvement!

It means the additional rest day becomes a recovery day that offsets the effects of "increased work intensity", rather than quality time away from work.

LUL'S DOUBLE STANDARD ON JOBS

Drivers in depots that move to new timetables because of "fleet recovery" — trains being taken out of service on a long-term basis — face a double-standard from LUL.

LUL says this must lead to cuts in roster lines, with rostered drivers displaced back into the pool. But when reps have demanded commitments to reinstate jobs when trains re-enter service, bosses say this is a "business decision" that will be "made at the time". Job cuts are automatic, but reinstating jobs isn't.

RMT and Aslef need to press the company over this issue at Functional Council level.

TRACK PROTECTION WORKERS MAKE A STAND

Protection workers picketed at Palestra on 27 May, as part of their fight for improved pay and conditions.

They are employed as contractors via Morsons, acting as a labour supply agency for LUL. They face low pay, and are informed of tomorrow's shift via text.

The fact they are "self-employed contractors" means they can strike without formal ballots. They are also at risk of reprisals, if managers target perceived troublemakers by refusing to give shifts in future. The whole union will need to defend them if is any backlash.

Ultimately, these workers should be employed by LUL directly.

ARSENAL PARADE: SAFETY FIRST!

Union reps are pressing management for adequate safety plans for the upcoming Arsenal parade.

The bottom line is: if overcrowding is unsafe, stations must close. Hopefully supervisors won't come under any pressure from area managers or service control managers to keep stations open.

Workers also have the right to refuse to work if we feel we are in "serious and imminent" danger.

CATERING WORKERS DEMAND BETTER

Workers in canteens in train and fleet depots are demanding improved pay and conditions.

A pay claim submitted by RMT demands an to at least £15/hour. The employer, Sodexo, says they already pay the London Living Wage. They have turned what is supposed to be a floor into a ceiling.

RMT is rebuilding organisation on the contract and has recently begun electing new reps. LUL workers in depots with Sodexo canteens must speak to staff and encourage them to join the union and get involved.

Like other outsourced workers, catering staff need to be taken in-house and employed directly, on LUL terms and conditions.

What is Tubeworker?

Tubeworker is a rank-and-file socialist bulletin, published at least monthly, written by Tube workers, for Tube workers. It is published by the socialist group Workers' Liberty, but is produced in editorial meetings open to all workers who support the bulletin's approach.

Supporters from outside London Underground can help with distribution.

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Tubeworker holds meetings on the third Thursday of the month, 15:00. We discuss a current political issue, as well as talking about

what's going on at work and deciding what to put in the bulletin.

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