

Fresh West Midlands Metro strikes spread festive gloom for shoppers in Birmingham

November 15, 2022



The West Midlands Metro is the latest service to be hit with strikes, as workers announce that they will begin industrial action this month, starting on Monday, 28 November.

Unite general secretary Sharon Graham said: “The workers on the West Midlands Metro undertake highly responsible roles and are simply not going to accept poverty rates of pay any longer. They are being paid £5,000 less per year than workers on other metro networks.

“Andy Street needs to stop hiding behind his desk and end poverty pay on the West Midlands Metro.

“Unite is the union which always puts the jobs, pay and conditions of its members first and the workers on the West Midlands Metro will continue to receive the union’s complete support.”

The decision was made after 170-plus Unite members rejected a pay offer made by the organisation, despite extensive negotiations at the conciliation service Acas.

Extensive strike action has been taking place on the service since 15 October, and there are concerns that

the latest decision will severely impact festive shopping in the area.

Unite believes that due to the Metro's convoluted ownership structure it is now incumbent on West Midlands mayor Andy Street to intervene and to ensure fair pay rates are agreed. His absence from the dispute has been marked.

The West Midlands Metro workers' pay rates are far below the equivalent pay of workers in other cities carrying out the same duties. Tram drivers/customer representatives who are currently paid just £21,939, are seeking a pay rate of £27,000. Other grades who are paid £21,537 per annum are seeking a £5,000 increase.

Unite regional officer Sulinder Singh said: "All-out strike action will inevitably cause huge disruption throughout the Christmas period but this strike is of the employer's own making.

"West Midlands Metro has had every opportunity to resolve this dispute but even after extensive negotiations they were only prepared to make a derisory offer which workers found insulting."

Image credit: CAF