

# Gilruth asks UK Government to act on rail strikes

July 26, 2022



In a new letter, Scottish Government Transport Minister, Jenny Gilruth has called on UK Transport Secretary Grant Shapps to act in disputes between rail bosses and unions.

As part of the letter, she explains the Scottish Government does not support compulsory redundancy of rail workers, nor their shifts being covered by agency staff while striking.

She said: "I asked you previously for assurances that you would do everything in your role as Transport Secretary to avoid further industrial action and the disproportionate effect this will have on Scotland's Railway. Instead, the UK Government continues to appear to be distracted rather than focusing on resolving this dispute as quickly as possible for the benefit of rail users, staff and taxpayers.

"The Scottish Government will not support any reforms which seek to impose compulsory redundancies. During the pandemic our rail workers were on the front line – they worked to ensure that passengers and freight could reach their destinations safely. Our railway staff should be recognised for their unstinting service during a time of crisis; not punished as the cost of living soars. The UK Government continues to appear determined to escalate the situation with recent proposals to overturn the ban on agency workers

covering striking staff. The Scottish Government was not consulted on this announcement and will not support any proposals which seek to undermine legitimate Trade Union activity.

“In your previous letter you pointed to a planned meeting with the Minister for Rail, Wendy Morton MP. You must be aware that Ms Morton cancelled this meeting at short notice. This follows the cancellation of planned meetings with the Devolved Governments before the last rail strikes. Subsequently I will expect you to instruct Ms Morton to treat our rescheduled meeting on 3 August as a priority.

“Network Rail is currently an arms-length body of the Department for Transport in the U.K. Government. Therefore, I once again urge you to instruct Network Rail to engage in constructive negotiations with the Trade Unions to reach a resolution. Resolution for staff and passengers is possible, but it will require both political willing and focus.”

Her letter follows the announcement from TSSA of strike dates on 18 and 20 August.