

Passengers should plan journeys in advance and only travel by train if absolutely necessary on 15 and 17 September due to continued industrial action says RDG

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The rail industry will strive to keep a limited number of trains running on upcoming strike days, but passengers are being reminded that some parts of the country will have few or no rail services.

Thousands of specially trained and fully qualified back-up staff will step in during the walkout to keep vital services running for those who need them said the Rail Delivery Group (RDG). However, the RDG said that is likely to prove exceptionally difficult on the first of the two strike days – Thursday 15 September – as both RMT members and train drivers, who are members of ASLEF, will be on strike.

The RMT's second strike, on Saturday 17 September, will also have a significant impact with around 20 per cent of trains running and trains only likely to run between 0730 and 1830.

Passengers are asked to only travel by train if it is absolutely necessary, to allow extra time and, once the

special timetables are published, check when their last train will depart.

Network Rail and train operators are also warning passengers that there is likely to be some disruption in the early morning of the day after each strike – Friday 16 September and Sunday 18 September – as staff return to their duties. Services might also be affected on Wednesday 14 September due to the additional impact of the combined industrial action.

Final timetables for the strike dates will be published on 11 and 13 September respectively – although most changes will be published on operator websites and National Rail Enquiries 48 hours earlier.

Steve Montgomery, RDG chair, said: “As a result of next week’s strikes many will be left out of pocket because they can’t get to work while others will miss vital appointments and businesses will continue to suffer. Thousands of children and young people who depend on the train will struggle to get to school or college. Come the weekend, football fans, day trippers and those visiting friends or family will suffer similar disruption.

“While we will do all that we can to minimise the impact and to get people where they need to be, passengers should only travel by rail if absolutely necessary and be aware that services may start later the morning after the strikes. Customers unable to travel on 15 or 17 September can use their ticket either the day before or up to and including 20 September, otherwise they will be able to change their ticket or claim a refund.

“We absolutely want to give our people a pay rise as we know these are challenging times for everyone. However, the unions must recognise that with revenue consistently at 20 per cent below pre-covid levels, pay rises can only be funded through long-overdue reforms that will put the industry on a sustainable footing and improve services for passengers.

“We all want the industry and its people to thrive – we ask the RMT and ASLEF to do the right thing, call off these damaging strikes and work with us to make that happen.”

Passengers with advance, off-peak or anytime tickets affected by the strikes on 15 and 17 September can use their ticket either on the day before the date on the ticket, or up to and including Tuesday 20 September. Passengers can also change their tickets to travel on an alternate date or get a refund if their train is cancelled or rescheduled.

Passengers with a season ticket or who have an activated days’ worth of travel on a flexi season ticket who choose not to travel on 15 or 17 September, can claim compensation for these days through the delay repay scheme. People who need to travel on strike days and already have a ticket should check with their train operator before their journey for advice on the flexibility of their ticket.

Passengers can check on National Rail Enquiries or operator websites whether their local operator is affected by this industrial action and find alternative routes.

The 24-hour walkouts on 15 and 17 September will affect RMT and ASLEF members on the following operators: Avanti West Coast, c2c, Chiltern Railways, CrossCountry, East Midlands Railway, Greater Anglia,

Great Western Railway, GTR (including Gatwick Express), Hull Trains, LNER, London Northwestern Railway, London Overground, Northern, Southeastern, South Western Railway, TransPennine Express, West Midlands Trains, Heathrow Express and Stansted Express.

RDG said that on 15 September, the level of service will vary between operators with some offering key services only, with others either a limited or no service.

TSSA members working for Avanti West Coast are also due to strike on 15 and 17 September.