

TSSA announces rail strike dates as passengers warned ahead of this week's RMT action

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As the railways prepare for strike action this Wednesday, another union has announced strike dates for its members.

TSSA has said it will take strike action and action short of strike in 11 train operating companies in an industry-wide dispute over pay, job security and conditions.

Rail workers spanning station staff, operational, maintenance, supervisory and management staff, will take part in industrial action on 18 and 20 August.

This is the first rail-industry wide industrial action taken by TSSA in more than a generation, the union said.

Strike action will be taken on 18 and 20 August in: Avanti West Coast, c2c, East Midlands Railway, CrossCountry, Great Western Railway, LNER, and Southeastern.

Action short of strike will be taken in: West Midlands Trains, Northern, Greater Anglia, TransPennine Express and Southeastern.

TSSA is re-balloting members for strike action in West Midlands Trains, Northern, Greater Anglia and TransPennine Express. Those members will take action short of strike in this first collective day of industrial action by TSSA members.

TSSA has held off on serving notice for industrial action in Network Rail in order to hold eleventh hour talks over pay, job security and conditions. It said there is still time to serve notice for action on 18 and 20 August if these talks are unsuccessful.

Manuel Cortes, TSSA General Secretary, said: "This is a momentous day for our members. They Tories' cost-of-living crisis is the worst in living memory. Essential items like food, energy and clothing costs are going through the roof yet the government has chosen to pick a political fight with rail workers.

"Most of our members are going into a third or fourth year of pay freezes, seeing their real take home pay decrease. For many rail workers in our union this is the first time they have been directly involved in an industrial dispute.

"We do not take strike action lightly, but enough is enough. The Conservative government is the clear block to a deal for rail workers. Grant Shapps must either personally come to the table or empower train operators to reach a deal on pay, job security and conditions.

"Instead of wanting to resolve this dispute, we now see proposals for hundreds of ticket office closures and widespread job cuts across our railways.

"We've been warning of a Summer of discontent across our railways for months, and sadly it is an ever-closer reality."

Rail Delivery Group, said this action, alongside that from the RMT and ASLEF means passengers will have their travel plans disrupted in June, July and August and affect high profile events like the Commonwealth games, Women's EUROs the start of the English football leagues and the Premier leagues.

A spokesperson said: "We're really disappointed that the TSSA leadership has decided to impose yet more uncertainty and disruption for passengers and businesses. Co-ordinated action by the union leaderships of the TSSA, RMT and Aslef shows a cynical approach to talks, a total disregard for passengers and is putting summer plans at risk. Like any public service we have to change with the times, and it's only by making necessary reforms that we can give our people a pay rise. Which is what we want to do.

"Now is not the time for further strikes, so we urge the TSSA leadership to resume talks to reach a deal that is fair to staff and taxpayers, and which secures a bright, long-term future of our railway."

RMT strike warning

Passengers are being warned of the severe disruption set to be caused by RMT action on Wednesday.

Network rail has said that “thousands of specially-trained and fully qualified back-up staff will again step in during the walkout to keep vital services running for those who need them.” But it says only 20% of services will run on about half the network.

As such, people should only travel if they must and if doing so plan ahead.

Thursday morning will also be disrupted as services see a return to duty.

If passengers with an advance, off-peak or anytime ticket are affected by the strike on 27 or 30 July, they can use their ticket either on the day before the date on the ticket, or up to and including Tuesday 2 August. 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 that is monthly or longer, or have an activated days' worth of travel on a flexi season ticket who choose not to travel on 27 or 30 July, can claim compensation for these days through the delay repay scheme. Further information is on the [National Rail website](#).

Andrew Haines, Network Rail chief executive, said: “Despite our best efforts to find a breakthrough, I’m afraid there will be more disruption for passengers this week as the RMT seems hell-bent on continuing their political campaigning, rather than compromising and agreeing a deal for their members.

“I can only apologise for the impact this pointless strike will have on passengers, especially those travelling for holidays or attending events such as the UEFA Women’s Euro 2022 semi-final (Wednesday 27th) and the opening ceremony of the Commonwealth Games (Thursday 28th). It is frustrating to yet again ask our passengers to change their plans and only make essential journeys.”

Only around half of Britain’s rail network will be open on Wednesday, with a very limited service running on lines that will only be open from around 7.30am until 6.30pm. Passengers who must travel are urged to plan ahead to ensure that they can complete their journeys within this window, with last services from London to Scotland, for example, leaving in the early afternoon.

Steve Montgomery, Chair of the Rail Delivery Group, said: “We are incredibly disappointed that the RMT and Aslef leadership are continuing with this action, disrupting the summer plans of millions – including those attending the Commonwealth Games.

“While we will do all that we can to minimise disruption to passengers, our advice is to only travel if it is necessary, and if you are going to travel, please plan ahead. If you’re not able to travel, you can use your ticket either the day before or up to and including 2 August, otherwise you will be able to change your ticket or claim a refund.

“We have a responsibility to bring our railway up to date and give our passengers a more punctual and

reliable service so that we're able to give our staff the pay rise they deserve. But it is wrong to continue asking taxpayers to shoulder more of the burden when they have already contributed £600 per household during the pandemic, or to expect passengers to fund it by paying more for their tickets, when they too are feeling the pinch.

"We ask the RMT and Aslef's leadership to continue talking so we can come to a deal that works for our people, our passengers and for taxpayers."

Separately, Aslef has called strike action across seven train operators on Saturday 30 July that will significantly disrupt some routes, so passengers are asked to check their journeys before travelling over the weekend as well.

Further information for passengers is available on the [National Rail website](#).

On publishing its reduced services, Rob Mullen, Managing Director for c2c, said: "We are really disappointed that this disruptive action is taking place again, impacting summer holiday plans for many of our customers, as well as those travelling for work. Our teams are working to deliver a service on this latest day of action but we must warn customers to only travel if their journeys are essential as we will be running a significantly reduced service with trains stopping much earlier than usual. If customers have essential journeys, we are asking them to allow plenty of time, expect disruption and be sure to plan ahead."