

RMT accept Network Rail offer

March 20, 2023



Rail union RMT has announced that its 20,000 members have voted to accept a new and improved offer covering pay, jobs and conditions by a margin of three to one.

In a turnout of nearly 90 per cent members voted by 76 per cent to 24 per cent to accept the offer.

The RMT National Executive has announced that the vote means the end of the trade dispute with Network Rail.

The new offer which was also improved with the new money was made following the most recent strike action in January and the threat of more action.

Key features of the offer include:

- An uplift on salaries of between 14.4 per cent for the lowest paid grades to 9.2 per cent for the highest paid
- A total uplift on basic earnings between 15.2 per cent for the lowest paid grades to 10.3 per cent for the highest paid grades. This represents an additional 1.1 per cent over the duration of the deal

- Increased backpay
- Renewing of the no compulsory redundancy agreement until January 2025
- Network Rail withdrawing their previous insistence the offer was conditional on RMT accepting the company 'modernising maintenance' agenda, which the union will continue to scrutinise and challenge including on safety
- Discounted rail travel benefits

RMT general secretary Mick Lynch said that when the union first declared the dispute with Network Rail a year ago in the Spring of 2022, RMT was told that Network Rail workers would only get two per cent to three per cent.

"However, since then strike action and the inspiring solidarity and determination of members has secured new money and a new offer which has been clearly accepted by our members and that dispute is now over.

"Our dispute with the Train Operating Companies remains firmly on and our members recent highly effective strike action across the fourteen train companies has shown their determination to secure a better deal.

"If the government now allows the train companies to make the right offer, we can then put that to our members but until then the strike action scheduled for March 30 and April 1 will take place.

"The ball is in the government's court," he said.

Network Rail chief executive Andrew Haines said: "I'm pleased that RMT members were able to vote on this offer and the overwhelming vote in favour is good news for our people, our passengers and our country.

"I'm grateful for everyone who worked so hard at Network Rail and in the RMT to find a way through this dispute. My team and I will now focus all our efforts on rebuilding our railway so we can provide a better service for our passengers and freight customers."

Reacting to the agreement, Transport Secretary, Mark Harper said: "I am pleased Network Rail's RMT members have voted to accept a fair and reasonable 5% plus 4% pay offer, over two years, that the Government worked hard to facilitate.

"While this is good news, unfortunately, RMT members who work for train operating companies are not being given the same chance to bring their dispute to an end. That's because the RMT has refused to put the Rail Delivery Group's very similar offer to a vote, denying these members the pay rise they deserve.

"That's why I am once again urging the RMT to call off their upcoming strikes across train operating companies, put the Rail Delivery Group offer to a vote, and give all of their members a say."

Scotland's Minister for Transport Jenny Gilruth said: "We welcome the resolution of this dispute, which will come as a real relief to passengers in Scotland. Of course, it will also be a huge relief for Network Rail RMT members, who've waited over three years for a pay rise.

"In Scotland, we have maintained constructive discussions between ScotRail and the Scottish representatives of the RMT members. By doing so, we have settled our pay negotiations. We cannot ignore the knock on impacts of this dispute in Scotland, leading to 19 days of strikes, but I welcome that the Secretary of State for Transport has recognised the need for a different approach and worked with the Trade Unions to secure a railway that benefits users, staff and taxpayers.

"Scotland has embraced the concept of fair work, so it is disheartening to see our own progressive activity in this regard being put at risk by the inevitable wider consequences of the UK Government's ill thought out, hasty and hostile approach to industrial relations. It again underlines the need for rail infrastructure to be devolved back to Scotland.

"We do not welcome UK Government plans for so-called radical rail reform agenda which have yet to be explained to Scottish Ministers in any detail, but which appear to be a guise for compulsory redundancies in the Network Rail workforce, including in Scotland.

"The Scottish Government remains committed to our long-standing policy of no compulsory redundancies. We will continue to work collaboratively with the Trade Unions in Scotland to make a publicly controlled ScotRail a success."

Photo credit: RMT