

RMT announce new rail strikes over Christmas

December 6, 2022



Transport Secretary Mark Harper has accused the RMT of failing to play its part after the union has instructed its members to reject a new deal over pay and conditions.

RMT general secretary Mick Lynch says they will not bow to pressure from the employers and the government to the detriment of members.

The union has decided to put a new offer from Network Rail to members in an electronic referendum with a recommendation to reject. It closes on Monday, December 12, at noon.

Meanwhile further strike action will take place and members will be instructed not to book on from between 6pm on December 24 through to 5.59am on December 27. The RMT says the strike coincides with the wind down of passenger services and the commencement of engineering work. All scheduled overtime bans have been cancelled.

RMT general secretary Mick Lynch said that it was unfortunate that that union had been compelled to take this action due to the continuing intransigence of the employers.

"We remain available for talks in order to resolve these issues but we will not bow to pressure from the employers and the government to the detriment of our members," he said.

Responding to the RMT's latest statement calling more strikes, the Transport Secretary Mark Harper said: "It's incredibly disappointing that, despite a new and improved deal offering job security and a fair pay rise, the RMT is not only continuing with upcoming industrial action but has called more strikes over Christmas.

"It's especially disappointing given the TSSA union has described this new and improved deal as the 'best we can achieve through negotiation' and called off strikes.

"The Government has played its part by facilitating a fair and decent offer but, by instructing its members to reject it, the RMT has failed to play its part and our rail network now faces more harmful disruption rather than helpful discussion."

As mentioned in the Transport Secretary's comments, rail union TSSA has called off strike action planned for this month and is putting an offer to members in Network Rail. However, an offer from the Rail Delivery Group has been rejected meaning industrial action in train operators remains on the cards unless progress can be made.

Luke Chester, TSSA Organising Director, said: "This offer is the best we can achieve through negotiation, and it was undoubtedly improved because of the ballot results and strike action taken by our members, who we applaud. Our members will now have their say on this offer and we are suspending strike action.

"Our union is pleased that this offer provides job security and certainty for Network Rail staff through to 2025. And we're proud to have achieved a pay offer which provides for the lowest paid in the company with significant underpinning to ensure that those hardest hit by the cost-of-living crisis receive proportionately the most.

"This offer shows what can be achieved when employers and unions are able to negotiate in good faith. It is significantly better than the offer put by the Rail Delivery Group, which we have rejected. On every issue – job security, pay and conditions – the RDG offer falls short and is shackled by government interference. They need to look at what can be achieved when negotiations are not hindered and come back to the table with an improved offer that allows us to resolve this dispute once and for all."

In light of the offer, the re-ballot of members for industrial action within Network Rail has been suspended. The re-ballot of members in train operators continues.

TSSA entered the dispute on the core issues of job security, pay, and terms and conditions. The offer will be put to members in an online referendum with a recommendation to accept. TSSA will hold briefing sessions for members to explain the detail of the offer.

TSSA has released details of the key areas of the offer, which includes:

On pay:

Pay 2022

A minimum uplift of a consolidated £1,750 or a 5% increase (whichever is greater) up to a maximum uplift of £3,500 to the annual base rates of pay effective from 01 January 2022.

£250 uplift to employees who currently earn £24,000 pa or less in base pay.

Back pay for annual base pay, shift, and overtime, will be paid on the first possible pay day following acceptance of this offer.

Pay 2023

4% increase to the annual base rates of pay effective from 01 January 2023.

The top and bottom of the salary bands will be revised by the percentage increases offered.

On Job Security

No compulsory redundancies for general grades and bands 5-8 and Controllers until 31 January 2025.

Voluntary redundancy scheme to be opened to Section Planners and Section Admin before 31 March 2023.

Privileged Staff Travel

Discretionary privileged leisure travel which provides a 75% discount on all leisure travel and includes family members. Season ticket subsidy.

The season ticket subsidy cap of £2,750 will be removed and a discount of 75% uncapped will be applied for the total cost of the season ticket.

On terms and conditions:

No unagreed changes to terms and conditions of employment will be made by the company.

Company to review and discuss standardisation of contracts for Section Supervisor / Section Manager grades.

New standardised attendance and sickness absence management policy to replace all other policies.