

# National strike action begins today

June 20, 2022



The biggest national rail strike in 30 years begins today.

Only a fraction of services are running — one operator, for example, said it will only be able to run 10 per cent of services they usually provide.

About 40,000 rail workers are involved in the industrial action over pay, job security and safety. About 10,000 RMT members are also striking on the London Underground over pensions and job losses.

## Strikes confirmed

Despite attempts to avert the strikes yesterday, RMT has said that proposed deals were not acceptable to its members at that industrial action would go ahead.

Strikes will also go ahead Thursday 23 and Saturday 25 June.

RMT told reporters at a press briefing at 15:30 yesterday that they would continue to partake in any talks throughout the strike period or days in between.

## Yesterday's RMT statement in full

*Discussions with Network Rail and the Train Operators have continued today. The Train Operators have now made an offer and there is no further offer from Network Rail following the one which was rejected last Friday.*

*The RMT National Executive Committee has now found both sets of proposals to be unacceptable and it is now confirmed that the strike action scheduled this week will go ahead.*

*It is clear that the Tory Government after slashing £4bn of funding from National Rail and Transport for London, has now actively prevented a settlement to this dispute.*

*The rail companies have now proposed pay rates that are massively under the relevant rates of inflation, coming on top of the pay freezes of the past few years.*

*At the behest of the Government, companies are also seeking to implement thousands of job cuts and have failed to give any guarantee against Compulsory Redundancies.*

*As a result of this transport austerity, the employing companies have taken decisions to:*

- Attack the Railway Pension Scheme and the TFL scheme, diluting benefits, making staff work longer and making them poorer in retirement, while paying increased contributions.*
- Cut thousands of jobs across the rail network while not giving a guarantee of no compulsory redundancies.*
- Cutting safety inspections on the infrastructure by 50% in order to facilitate mass redundancies.*
- Attack terms, conditions and working practices in a form of internal fire and re-hire, including lowering existing salaries and increasing the working week.*
- Re-starting the disputes on the role and responsibility of the guard and massive cuts to catering services.*
- Closing every ticket office in Britain regardless of the accessibility needs of the diversity of passengers*
- Cutting real pay for most of our members through lengthy pay freezes and well below RPI inflation pay proposals.*

*Faced with such an aggressive agenda of cuts to jobs, conditions, pay and pensions, RMT has no choice but to defend our members industrially to stop this race to the bottom.*

*The strikes on Network Rail, the Train Operators and London Underground will go ahead, and we again call on our members to stand firm, support the action, mount the pickets and demonstrate their willingness to fight for workplace justice.*

*The RMT supports the campaign for a square deal for all working people in the face of the cost-of-living crisis, and our current campaign is a part of that more general campaign which means that public services have to be properly funded and all workers properly paid with good conditions.*

*RMT remains available for discussions that will settle this dispute and ensure our transport system can operate without disruption.*

## Disappointing

Following the RMT statement, a government spokesperson told BBC and [Sky reporters](#): “This is deeply disappointing.

“It’s destructive that these self-defeating strikes will take place this week.

“Striking does nothing to address the long-standing issues that we need to sort to make sure our railway that the public use and treasure is fit for the long term.

“At a time when numbers are already down on what they were before the pandemic it is simply self-defeating to drive people away with these disruptive strikes.”

## DfT involvement in talks

Speaking in the House of Commons, transport secretary Grant Shapps has said that they would not be taking part in discussions with unions as they were not the employer: “On occasions like this it is the employers and unions that need to get together,” he said. We are not the employer and we will not undermine the process.”

In his speech, Shapps pointed to employment rules about overtime and suggested that the strikes were not about pay but dated ways of working — and that the strikes are in the way of progress on the railways.

“Your bosses have got you striking under false pretences,” he said. “Rather than protecting your jobs they are endangering them and the railway’s future.”

Shadow transport secretary Louise Haigh (Labour) said that the government had “tied the hands” of train operating companies at the negotiating table, giving them no mandate where they can negotiate with unions.

Shapps denied this was the case, and that they did have a mandate.