

Underground customers told to brace as strikes on last weekend before Christmas confirmed

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Transport for London has told its customers to brace for more strikes in the last weekend before Christmas — with strikes confirmed as going ahead.

Strikes, TfL said, would cause disruption on the Central, Jubilee, Northern, Piccadilly and Victoria lines all day tomorrow (Saturday 18 December). Furthermore, today's Night Tube services (Friday 17 December) would also face the prospect of severe disruption.

The dispute, between RMT and London Underground, has seen no signs of coming to an end as Christmas approaches – although these dates are the last of the Union's planned action. TfL has called the action "unnecessary"; the RMT has likewise said the action its members is taking is "avoidable" because TfL, it says, had axed dedicated Night Tube staff. It calls the new rosters an imposition of "unacceptable" shifts.

Nick Dent, director of London Underground customer operations, said: "I can only express my deep regret that the RMT union has decided to disrupt Londoners and our transport network once again. This needless

action comes at a time when we need to be delivering the best service we possibly can so Londoners can safely comply with the Government's guidance and deal with the new COVID variant.

"The other union has agreed to and is benefitting from our roster changes, and we remain willing to work with RMT to review the changes. In the meantime, despite no job losses, more flexibility, more job certainty and more roster options for drivers, five major Tube lines – the Central, Jubilee, Northern, Piccadilly & Victoria lines – are set for disruption for one full day tomorrow and overnight services on the Central and Victoria lines could be disrupted tonight. Londoners are therefore urged to check before they travel and consider using other modes as needed."

General Secretary of the RMT, Mick Lynch, said: "We are angry and disappointed that the tube management have refused yet again this week to move forward based on genuine and realistic proposals that could have enabled us to recommend the suspension of the planned action. As a result the strike action this weekend goes ahead.

" The issue at the heart of the dispute is that the dedicated Night Tube driver grade, which was popular with women and those with caring responsibilities, and which the union fought to get written in to the original Night Tube agreement, has been ripped up with the loss of 200 posts and complete disregard for the staff themselves.

"The union remains available for further talks even at this late stage and it's time for the Mayor to stop siding with the management against the union and start using his offices to push for a resolution. "