

Unite members vow to defeat pay pittance on the West Midlands Metro

October 17, 2022



Strike action lasting 53 days begun on Saturday, which will impact [West Midlands Metro](#) services.

The industrial action is taking place due to a dispute over rates of pay, which have been described by [Unite](#) members as a 'pittance'.

Scheduled to last until January 5th 2023, the strike, which involves 174 members of Unite employed by the West Midlands Metro was triggered following the employer failing to improve on it's pay offer, or propose fresh negotiations. Currently, some of the employees receive the lowest rates of pay in the country for the work they undertake.

The workers are seeking a minimum pay rate of £27,000 for tram drivers/customer representatives and a £5,000 increase for all other grades that can start at just £21,537. The tram drivers/customer representatives are currently paid just £21,939, which is among the lowest pay rates in the UK for this kind of role.

Despite extensive negotiations, West Midlands Metro has refused to make an offer that meets the workers' expectations. An offer of of £25,250 to drivers/customer representatives and just 5.25% to all other

grades.

Unite general secretary Sharon Graham said: "Our members are no longer prepared to accept substandard wages for the challenging work they undertake to keep Birmingham and the Black Country moving.

"These workers simply can't make ends meet on the pittance that they are being paid by West Midlands Metro. Unite is determined to win them a better deal and our members have their union's full support in this dispute."

A warning has been issued by Unite that the employer's efforts to operate a skeleton service during the strike could have serious safety implications for both workers and passengers.

Vehicles will be operated by supervisors, trainers and some control staff, who may have received only rudimentary or refresher training on driving the metro service. Unite understands that the service will operate without conductors, which they note also raises safety concerns.

Unite regional officer Sulinder Singh said: "Unite has serious safety concerns about the skeleton service that West Midlands Metro is intending to operate as conductors play a key role ensuring the welfare of passengers.

"Rather than attempting to operate a second rate service, West Midlands Metro should be tabling a pay increase which meets our members' expectations."