



Bakerloo news



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October 2021

We can defeat cuts

London Underground bosses are in the process of attacking our pensions and other terms and conditions. How do we know? Because they have told us.

In 2018, the Tory government abolished TfL's annual grant, making the system heavily reliant on fare revenue. Since that revenue necessarily disappeared due to the pandemic, LU has relied on government bailouts. These bailouts have come with strings, with the Tories demanding TfL/LU make drastic cuts and "reform" the staff pension scheme. We, key workers hailed as heroes for keeping an essential service running during the peak of the pandemic, will now be expected to make up our employer's budgetary deficit with cuts to jobs and conditions.

A pensions review is now underway, with an initial report due on 31 October. The review will offer LU different options for reforming the scheme. Let's be clear: none of them will be good for us. They will either involve us paying more in contributions, or the employer paying less.

Another option they might propose is closing the pension scheme to new entrants. On the surface this might seem an attractive option, as it seems to



protect the terms of existing workers. This is not the case. Evidence shows pensions doing this quickly fall into financial difficulties. With fewer people contributing, there is less money to invest. This usually results in existing members paying more and ultimately receiving a smaller pension.

CLASS SOLIDARITY

But even if terms are protected for existing staff, we still have a responsibility to fight for the rights of the next generation of workers.

Agreeing to worsen the conditions of tomorrow's Tube workers in exchange for a precarious, short-term "protection" for ourselves would be an act of selfishness that affronts the trade union spirit of class solidarity.

With regards to our hard fought for terms and conditions, LU says it needs us to be "flexible". This usually means us working harder and longer for less. Bosses have made clear that everything from staffing levels to Framework agreements to annual leave

entitlement to the Attendance At Work policy is under the microscope and could be "reformed". These will be drastic cuts and detrimental changes to the job we currently know.

All LU staff, regardless of what union you are in, should be prepared to take action to fight these cuts. We are only waiting on the fine detail of the attacks, but they are imminent. Most of what's good about our jobs is the result of union-negotiated agreements, won through struggle. We have to fight to defend and improve them, against the cuts the company will propose.

This is way more important that what union you are in: it's about what side are you on.

ON THE BACK:

- ♦ How cuts will affect you
- ♦ The changes we want
- ♦ Get active in your union
- ♦ How we can win

Bakerloo News is a monthly newsletter from the Bakerloo branch of the RMT union. To submit a story for *Bakerloo News*, or to contact the branch, please email jimmcdaid36@gmail.com, or ring Branch Secretary Jim McDaid on 07917 131692

Get active in your union

The RMT Bakerloo branch meets at least monthly, on the first Tuesday of the month at 16:00, in the upstairs room of the Fountains Abbey, 109 Praed Street, W2 1RL.

All members can attend. Every meeting will discuss the latest developments and info, and organise our branch's response. Branch meetings are also the place where all your reps and branch officers are elected every year. If there's an issue you want to raise, or an initiative you want the union to take, the branch meeting is the first port of call.

RMT Bakerloo Zoom

Pensions experts and Level Two/Tier Two reps will be present to answer questions. All members encouraged to attend.

Thursday 21 October, 16:00

Scan to log in:



bit.ly/21oct-meet

If you've never been to a branch meeting before and want to know more about how they work, please speak to a rep or branch officer.

For the foreseeable future we will also be organising regular update meetings via Zoom, for all members to attend.

How we can win

Strikes

Our labour runs the railway. If senior bosses, or even your local manager, didn't turn up for work... who'd notice? But if we don't turn up, the Tube doesn't run. That is our ultimate source of power. We must be prepared to use it.

Political campaigning

RMT will work with other groups across the labour movement and working-class communities, including passenger advocacy groups and disabled people's groups, to build a campaign to demand sustainable funding and accessible services.

Other industrial action

Large parts of the job, especially in engineering, rely on overtime. An OT ban or working-to-rule could have a massive impact.

"If we fight, we may not win. But if we don't fight, we've already lost."

How will cuts affect me?

Cuts will impact all functions and grades.

LU has made clear they will be reviewing the AAW policy, which covers all directly-employed staff. This could mean company sick pay policy changes. Across many other transport providers, Statutory Sick Pay (a meagre £96/week) for initial periods of sickness is the norm.

Here, we highlight further possible impact of cuts on three specific groups of workers.

Trains

Being "flexible" means losing all the things that make the job bearable.

Being "flexible" could mean risking our driving parameters. All our handle time agreements will be at risk. They will no doubt be looking at rest day working and voluntary overtime.

This would allow management to run the job with no rostered spares or pool drivers. So, fewer drivers at all depots.

Stations

During Fit for the Future, LU wanted much more extensive reforms to the framework, allowing them to send station staff to work almost anywhere, at almost no notice.

Such proposals could return in the current reviews. Think about the impact it would have on your work/life balance if you'd planned your day around working at Elephant and Castle, only to book on and find you're being sent to Harrow & Wealdstone, or vice versa.

The company has also made a point of emphasising that it has carried nearly 500 vacancies throughout the pandemic, many of them on stations, strongly implying vacant positions could simply be deleted.

This means fewer opportunities for promotion and transfer, and an increased workload for those remaining.

Cleaners

TfL/LU may use austerity and financial restraint as a pretext for refusing to make significant changes to procurement policies, including the in-housing of the cleaning contract.

RMT will be redoubling its efforts to fight for direct employment for cleaners, as well as improved terms and conditions such as full sick pay.

Our demands

We are not fighting simply to preserve the status quo. RMT has its own programme for change across TfL/LU.

A sustainable funding model

The Mayor needs to tell Westminster that it's not possible to operate the transport system of a major global capital without sustainable government funding. The Labour administration in City Hall must support any action we take to protect jobs and conditions.

Reverse privatisation, bring services in house

Everyone who works on the Tube should be employed directly by LU, on LU terms and conditions. Cleaning, catering, security, and track protection work should be brought in house.

Increased staffing levels

Lone working must end. More jobs across stations and revenue, trains, and other functions does not only mean improved work/life balance for us, it creates secure, unionised jobs for future generations of workers in London.

Equalise the CSA grade

All CSA2s should be converted to CSA1s, and a single CSA grade - paid at the current CSA1 rate - should be the entry grade on stations.

No compulsory Night Tube working

All Night Tube working should be voluntary. Plans to force drivers to work NT shifts by consolidating them into full-time rosters should be scrapped.

A four-day, 32-hour week for full-time staff

Studies show extreme shift working shortens life. A radical reduction in the working week, with no loss of pay, is good for both workers and the environment, by reducing commutes.

Decarbonise the Tube

TfL/LU has to play its role in confronting the climate crisis. All energy used to power the Tube should be sourced from renewable sources, and waste heat and energy from running the Tube should be converted for domestic use, as in the scheme currently in operation on one section of Northern Line track.