

## London Transport Region 25.4.20

# Government looks to ramp up rail services

# RMT demands social distancing and safety must be protected



RMT is now in dispute with LUL over the imposition of train operator duty rosters.

Management have imposed rosters from 26.4.20 though, under pressure from the unions they have agreed not to actually require drivers to book on according to the new rosters for a further week. Talks will continue during that week.

The rosters would allow for a huge intensification of the service from current levels. RMT has also been briefed by managers across the national rail industry that they've been told by government to plan for a major ramping up of services from mid-May.

It is not clear whether the government will try to go ahead with this. RMT will be telling employers across the rail industry, including of course LUL/TfL, that we will not accept a politically driven ramping up of services that ignores social distancing and the safety of staff and passengers.

If LUL is able to run the imposed timetable then emergency measures put in place in stations, service control, fleet and engineering would all be called into question. That means our ability to socially distance and work as safely as possible would also be compromised.

RMT reps in all functions are now challenging management to reveal any plans they have to increase services.

## 7000 TfL Staff on Furlough

TfL and LUL has furloughed 7000 jobs across the two companies. This will come as a concern to many members who've been furloughed so RMT has ensured that the permanent position, pay and conditions of all furloughed members has not been changed.

In a response to RMT TfL/LUL has given the following commitments:

- *All employees who are placed on furlough leave will receive 100% of their contractual salary whilst on furlough leave. All terms and conditions of employment, as well as other benefits will remain unchanged, including continuity of service and pension entitlements.*
- *The only impact on furloughed employees is that they will not be required to carry out their contractual duties whilst participating in the scheme. They will be able to undertake training whilst on furlough leave and can volunteer in external organisations.*
- *Employees who participate in the scheme will return to their substantive roles. Once individuals resume their duties I can confirm they will suffer no detriment as a result of having being placed on furlough leave compared to those who are not furloughed.*

If you are being furloughed and have any concerns speak with your local rep or call the RMT helpline on 0800 376 3706

## TFL/LUL tell cleaners - Tough luck, You've still got to pay to travel

Buses are now free to all, all RCIs are deemed unnecessary and furloughed...But cleaners on the tube still have to pay to get to work.

That's the message from TFL/LUL management. When we challenged senior management we were told it was a tough choice but unaffordable.

RMT cannot think of much that is more important right now than the heroic role of our cleaners.

They are doing the most valuable and dangerous work of all on the tube network during this pandemic.

Allowing our cleaner members free travel would have been an insignificant cost compared with the 95% fall in usage and loss of other commercial income.

It is despicable that our cleaners have been outsourced in the first place. They play just as important and fundamental role to the tube as drivers, signallers, stations staff and engineers. Without them there could be no service.

We will redouble our efforts to get them free travel immediately. The NEC has instructed the General Secretary to raise the matter with the mayor.

But we will also redouble our efforts to end all outsourcing on the tube. In this pandemic crisis we've seen self-employed members such as protection staff and specialist engineers laid off without pay. The so-called TFL family looks decidedly dysfunctional right now and the cause is outsourcing.

## Solidarity with TFL Cycle Instructors

Another group of workers who are self-employed contractors used by TfL are cycle instructors, who are organised in IWGB (Independent Workers of Great Britain).

These workers provide lessons to TfL via a local authority. With the lockdown TfL has cancelled all lessons and the local authority is only partially compensating them.

You can sign their petition using the link below.

<https://actionnetwork.org/petitions/support-london-cycle-instructors-through-covid-19>

<http://islingtontribune.com/article/cycle-instructors-turn-to-handouts-as-lessons-are-cancelled-in-outbreak>

## Provision of testing for key workers tells us all we need to know about government's response to Coronavirus and the need for a socialist alternative

The rail industry has been told to get ready to ramp services back up as the government looks to lift the Coronavirus lockdown. That's why we're now being offered testing. It's got nothing to do with wanting to help tube staff and other rail workers. Rather, they want to identify who they can get back into the workplace as quickly as possible.

Of course, testing is an essential part of preventing a further spread of the virus so it is important that it is done well and administered by experts in the field. So who has the government appointed to run the flagship testing centre at Chessington? Of course, Deloitte. Deloitte are one of the big 4 management consultants and accountancy firms that, together, carry out the checks on the governance of about 97% of FT350 companies in Britain.

Deloitte has a much criticised, incestuous relationship with both big business and government. They provide financial donations and second staff to all three of the main political parties. Listed as receiving personal assistance from Deloitte is that paragon of the Labour movement, Luciana Berger, who was in the front ranks in the charge to undermine Jeremy Corbyn as Labour leader.

Deloitte has also lent staff and given money to the Tories but this will have had nothing to do with their appointment to run the Chessington testing centre. No, their undoubted expertise in these matters will have won them the contract. The results have been predictable. The Guardian (24.4.20) has reported that NHS staff who have been tested have been sent either no results or the wrong results. Others have been refused their results altogether. Many have had to re-tested elsewhere.

The involvement of management accountants in health-care has been an unmitigated disaster. There is a strong correlation between their increased use and increased deficits, which the government has now had to write off to prevent hospitals collapsing during the pandemic.

But the management consultants, and the private sector firms they insist the NHS uses, have had their cut already. The bail out of deficits is, in reality, not a bail out of services to patients but a bail out to the management consultants and private healthcare sector. They won't be returning any of the cash they've siphoned off from the NHS.

This episode is just one more scandal in the uber scandal Coronavirus has been the catalyst for. RMT has the aim of bringing about a socialist society at the heart of our rulebook. AGMs have reaffirmed this. The rule remains not as a nostalgic

celebration of our unions historical roots but because socialism is needed more today than ever.

An NHS that has adopted just in time ordering of equipment, a private sector that has no mechanism for the quick transition to manufacturing even cheap basic essentials

like gowns and masks and many workers left destitute in the zero hours and self-employed sectors all expose the lunacy of the 5<sup>th</sup> wealthiest nation on earth being unable to cope with a predictable, indeed predicted, pandemic.

### Why RMT remains a Socialist Union

The years ahead will expose the crisis of capitalism even more clearly as a government of the rich and powerful seeks to protect the 1% and asks the rest of us to pay for the crisis. It will be like post 2008 austerity in spades. Some of the more far-sighted media commentators and political figures are now questioning whether we can go back to the free-market neo-liberal capitalism of recent decades. But history shows that private financial interests can't help themselves. Without a powerful trade union movement and a threat from a politically and industrially organised working class the bosses will seek to restore business as usual as soon as possible.

It is crucial that RMT continues to mount a militant industrial defence of our pay and conditions and offers the hand of solidarity to other unions and other workers who want to do the same. But we must also continue to offer a way forwards politically too. We must discuss what the defeat of Corbyn and his replacement as leader of the Labour Party by the pro-business Starmer means for how we organise politically. But most of all, we have to argue that just as our rulebook says, there is a better way to run society – a socialist way.



**A bunch of management consultants asked to run Coronavirus testing. What could possibly go wrong?**

