



# TFL & LONDON UNDERGROUND *SPECIAL BULLETIN*

OCTOBER 2021

## DEFEND YOUR PENSION NO JOB CUTS DEFEND WORKING CONDITIONS



## WE CAN AND MUST WIN THIS BATTLE

The government, TfL and London Underground consider EVERYTHING that makes our job bearable and worthwhile as up for grabs. Pensions, job security, pay rises and your framework agreements are all threatened... If we don't stop them!

Last year we were heroes, now we're just a cost on an accountant's balance sheet.

Management are going to try and con us into believing that if we cooperate with attacks on jobs, pay, pensions and conditions they will be in a better position to negotiate with the government for funding. Let's be clear: RMT does not accept attacks on our members whether they come from TfL, the Mayor or the government. We will fight to defend ourselves.

TfL and the government are cynically using the Covid pandemic to argue that they cannot afford to maintain jobs, pay, pensions and conditions. But TfL

workers have created billions in profits for London's big businesses over the past decade and more. Even if ridership is still returning to the pre-pandemic level, we create massive value for the economy. Unless we are given a guarantee of no detriment to jobs, pay, pensions and conditions we will ballot members for strike action.

This is a fight we can and must win. If we allow the Mayor and the government to smash up our framework agreements and slash jobs we will pay for it every day that we come to work. Attacks on our pensions mean we will continue to pay in retirement.

Every RMT member can help build support for our fight against TfL and government cuts. Talk to your workmates, circulate RMT info to them. Attend your RMT branch and follow the latest updates on [rmtlondoncalling.org.uk/fundtfl](https://rmtlondoncalling.org.uk/fundtfl)



## TRAINS WITHOUT DRIVERS AND DRIVERS WITHOUT RIGHTS!

RMT is "London Underground's best organised and most militant trade union." These are the words of Oliver Gill, the Chief Business Correspondent at The Telegraph, in an article about Prime Minister Johnson's plans for the Tube.

The Telegraph has long been regarded as the "house journal" of the Tory Party, and when they are briefed that Johnson wants a "driverless" underground we must take the threat seriously.

The article went on to say that Johnson has a dream of "neutering the powerful RMT union" because it is recognised that the RMT is the only union with the political will and industrial muscle to stop the wholesale destruction of our terms and conditions.

Whether Johnson achieves driverless trains is a matter of conjecture, but what is clear is that the financial restraints he is placing on TfL are aimed at destroying the job as we know it.

They have already started by abolishing the

Night Tube grade and forcing TO21 drivers to work through the night in passenger service. This has created huge benefits for the company and equally huge disbenefits for the drivers.

Management has a shopping list of "flexibility" – an innocent sounding word with very sinister connotations.

Being flexible could mean extending parameters, working out of more than one depot, changing shifts at short notice, overtime and rest day working, changing rest days at short notice – the list goes on. But they also want to save money by changing the sick pay provisions, changing the Attendance at Work and Discipline policies, reducing the size of pools and the number of rostered spare turns.

Johnson and LUL believe they are on the front foot – it is up to us to prove them wrong. They can be stopped, but it will be the battle of our lives and only by standing together will we win.

## LU STATION & REVENUE GRADES STATIONS JOBS AND FRAMEWORK AGREEMENT IN BOSSES' SIGHTS



Girl walking across the tracks at Latimer Road after it was left unstaffed by Fit for the Future job cuts

Despite the lack of detailed proposals, it is fast becoming clear how management intends to move forward on LU stations. Management is looking at minimum numbers and staffing in non-section 12 areas. RMT believes that management plans could be for another massive cut in station staff.

LUL's Director of Customer Operations told union reps, at Company Council on 12 August, that "ticket hall staffing levels" haven't been reviewed in "absolutely ages" – as if Fit for the Future never happened. He quoted increased contactless usage to say staff numbers should be driven down, but in the next breath bemoaned revenue lost from fare evasion!

According to management, LU needs more "flexibility" and "efficiency", and "the present agreements are a barrier to this". Translated, this means: the Framework Agreement has to go. The Framework, whilst far from perfect, at least gives partial structure to shift patterns and allows some semblance of work/life

balance.

Management speak of "benchmarking" with other Train Operating Companies, looking enviously at low-paying rail operators, whose staff get 24 or 48 hours notice of duties. Management also made clear their belief that the Attendance at Work policy (AAW) is "too generous".

The vast majority of stations already open and close on minimum numbers, so any reduction in staffing would lead to rosters overwhelmingly composed of extreme turns, a trend that began with OSP (Operational Strategy Programme) in 2010/11 and accelerated with Fit for the Future in 2016. Sickness and ill health are part of life but rotating days and nights and extreme turns are known to increase levels of sickness and long-term ill-health. Add to that an increase in assaults on staff and all management want to do is make more job cuts and introduce a less "generous" Attendance at Work policy. If we allow this to happen our stations will become much worse places to work.

## LU FLEET MAINTENANCE Unfilled vacancies and use of agencies is preparation for job cuts

The recent announcement regarding TfL's need to save £900 million this year, as part of the funding deal with the government means Fleet management have already started to look at introducing a more casualised workforce by means of 350+ contractors or staff on short term contracts. Management has also imposed Automatic Train Movements in areas of the network where various staff are walking about the track to carry out their work. This is all part of the cuts agenda.

Talk of an increase in e-learning will lead to an unsafe work-place and reducing the number of trainers. This can only lead to one thing, a tragic accident.

On top of all this, Fleet management has

announced that they will not be filling vacancies. This all adds at up to more work and pressure on the staff to deliver well maintained trains safely for the traveling public to use.

But it won't stop there, as a union we haven't been given the details but are sure LU are looking at:

- Further extending maintenance across all fleets
- Wholesale changes to long established rosters and agreements over leave and working practices
- Outsourcing of vital support activities such as Stores, DMU and Admin

Fleet members will fight to maintain our core work agreement and to safeguard jobs and conditions.

# RMT will strike unless TfL withdraws demands for cuts

- TfL wants you to fund over £3bn of cuts to London's transport system
- Hard won framework agreements and protection from casualised working are at risk
- Unfilled vacancies suggest massive job cuts in the pipeline

## Fight to defend your pension

The TfL occupational pension is crucial to our ability to make ends meet in retirement.

The UK state pension pays an average of only 28% of a retired workers previous earnings. In most European countries the state pension replaces more than 50% with the Netherlands and Spain paying over 80% and Italy paying 92%.

With such pathetic state help for pensioners in the UK our occupational pension is absolutely vital.

It is a lie that Britain cannot afford to maintain occupational pensions. Even after the banking crisis in 2008 and Covid last year, Britain's national output per head of population (GDP per capita) is higher than at any time before 2004. So if we could afford pensions then, why can't we afford them now?

In fact, the TfL scheme is 98% funded. There is no economic reason to change it at all.

The truth is the super-rich elites and their friends in government want to grab an even greater share of our national wealth than they have now.

Twenty-four new billionaires have been created in Britain during the Covid pandemic.

They see every pound put in our pensions as money that should be used to pay subsidies to their firms or cut their tax bills. RMT will not let them grab our pensions.

See back page for more on defending our pension.



## EVEN WITH USAGE DOWN LUL MEMBERS CREATE THOUSANDS OF POUNDS FOR THE LONDON ECONOMY EVERY SHIFT

- The Tube is needed as much as ever
- London's big business is pushing to get workers back into the workplace
- There is still massive wealth in London
- 24 new billionaires were created during the pandemic
- Make the rich pay for public services
- Essential workers are still essential
- We will fight to save jobs and conditions

[www.rmt.org.uk](http://www.rmt.org.uk)

## Funding model is cause of cuts

TfL was already seeking £1bn cuts to its annual spending even before Covid hit.

In the face of Covid, instead of fighting for a restoration of the government grant the Mayor and TfL management have accepted that self-financing must still be implemented. TfL will now try to increase that £1bn cut and could end up cutting over £3bn, if they can get away with it.

RMT has demanded that instead of reviewing jobs and pensions there should be an investigation into the amount of money that TfL pays out to private firms who pay massive salaries to executives and dividends to share-holders.

We want an investigation into the level of state support that TfL gets compared with other similar transport systems like the New York subway and Paris Metro.

A small surcharge on City of London bonuses paid to millionaires would easily cover the TfL funding gap.

Massive cuts on TfL/LUL are not an unavoidable consequence of Covid. They are a choice made by the Mayor and TfL management who bow down to demands from government.

RMT will not stand by and let it happen.

# TfL MEMBERS

From Transformation to Financial Sustainability: it's all just an excuse to attack jobs, pay, pensions and conditions



Following three years of Transformation from 2016 to 2019, which hit thousands of staff who sit under LU & TfLs MATS Functional Councils, the Covid pandemic has obviously given senior management the idea that they now have carte blanche to carry out further cuts to staffing levels and pile even more of a work load onto those of us who will be left behind to pick up the pieces....well it's time to say a resounding NO.

We won't accept this and we will fight!

It's time to stand up to the scores of directors and senior management who just keep making the working lives of us integral core workers more difficult.

It is us who actually keep the underground operating everyday as we all did throughout this dreadful pandemic. We have to tell management, in no uncertain terms, enough is enough!

Management wants to get rid of real face to face training and replace it with more e-training or virtual training. This would be the 3rd cull of trainers in the last six years.

Our hard-working admin staff all around the business have already been treated appallingly over the past five years with enforced location moves, new ways of working (which don't work), and relocation into hubs with increased workloads.

These members will once again be in the firing line to cop even more work kindly handed down from above.

The new round of cuts will be impacting on TfL, LUL, contractors and all grades. RMT's message to the MATS members is clear... if we all stick together and all say NO to the attacks on all of our hard earned & fought for terms & conditions, they will have to listen to us.

## French Rail Unions Successfully Defend Retirement at 57 (or 52 for Drivers)

RMT spoke with CGT branch secretary (Paris) Matthieu, he told us:

The pension system in France was born in the beginning of 20th Century, after strikes of railway, bus and underground workers, miners, power-workers, and dockers.

After WW2, the government from the resistance against fascism created a public and unified Social Security to give pensions to all French workers.

The present retirement age in France is 62 for all but it is 57 for the railway-workers (SNCF) and the bus/metro workers (RATP), power-workers and dockers. For train drivers the retirement age is 52.

President Macron tried to change that to a retirement age of 64 for all. Unions responded with a huge general strike, demonstrations and strong actions against the attacks and to defend our pension system!

Transport workers were at the head of the movement and received strong support from our brothers and sisters all over the world, including the British RMT and the World Federation of Trade-Unions (WFTU).

After two months of strikes and class actions, in the beginning of the Covid situation in France, the government decided to take off its bill: The French working class officially won!!!

Of course, we know that the bosses and the government still want to destroy our pension system and our Social Security, but this victory shows us that it's possible to fight and win to defend our class interests.

Long live CGT, long live RMT: solidarity forever!

## LU ENGINEERING GRADES Privatisation and non-filling of vacancies prepares job cuts in Engineering



Management has run down engineering staffing levels by failing to fill vacancies. This has undermined promotion opportunities for years and LU have now come clean saying they want to remove those jobs completely and use fixed term contracts to fill future positions. Some 540 non-permanent workers already maintain the lines. This is a huge number of staff, yet there is no money to recruit for our direct staff! At the same time, the private companies are laughing all the way to the bank.

We are constantly fighting against unsafe changes to standards that affect our safety inspections and maintenance regimes. We used to patrol the track daily, then up to every three days, then a week in depots. The relentless push to do more with fewer people. What next, patrol once every four weeks on a risk assessment and probability that people will not be

killed? Signal maintenance such as boxes and points are constantly under review. Less maintenance means fewer staff and in case you do not get it, that means YOUR JOB GONE.

When London Underground privatised us into Metronet and Tubelines under the failed PPP model, we organised and we got stronger. We upped our game and forced the fat cats into numerous hard-won agreements. LUL want to review and combine these now as part of their drive for 'cost savings'.

The Martini model of employment, meaning anytime, any place, anywhere means being flexible, as LUL put it. But for us it will mean misery, despair and cuts. We will not be shaken but we will be stirred into action. We will give not one inch or leave any stone unturned to defend what is ours and what we have won previously.

**RMT members working for subcontractors of TfL are also in the firing line**  
Cleaners, protection staff, catering members, security guards and engineering contractors will all be expected to do more for less as TfL squeezes the contracts. The only people you can be sure won't lose out are the senior managers in both TfL and the contracting companies.

# FIGHT TO SAVE YOUR PENSION

## Why is the TfL pension so important?

**Pensions are deferred wages that form part of your contractual wages and conditions. The current State Pension Age (SPA) for most workers is between age 66 or 67 and is set to increase to age 68 for anyone born after 1978. The current single persons Basic State Pension is £179.60 a week (£9,339 a year). So if you are thinking that you won't be able to work into your late 60s and there is no way you can afford to live on £179.60 a week, you are going to need to make sure that we maintain our TfL occupational scheme.**

The TfL pension fund currently has approximately 26,000 contributing members, 32,500 pensioners, 16,800 deferred members and assets to the value of £10.5bn. The importance of the fund should not be understated when considering not only the level of benefits you will receive at retirement but also the protection members of the fund receive in respect of ill health and death in service benefits. At present the fund is 98% funded. There is no justification for changing its terms.

The TfL Pension Fund is what is known as a Defined Benefit (DB) arrangement and members of the fund are given a "promise" that they will receive a certain level of pension at retirement which is based on their contributory service and their final salary before retirement. This is simply known as a final salary promise. Having this promise allows members to accurately plan for their retirement. Our pension scheme gives members a better benefit outcome at retirement than career average schemes and a much better outcome than Defined Contribution (DC) schemes.

The level of pension at retirement in a DC pension scheme is dependent on the amount of contributions paid into an individual's 'pension pot' and the investment returns during the run up to retirement. The level of pension at retirement depends on the size of the pension pot built up before retirement so you at the

mercy of financial markets at the time you retire.

RMT has recently carried out some research into DB versus DC and what we have found is that if a member was to contribute the level of contributions into a DC arrangement (5%) for 20 years they would receive less than one-third of the pension they would have received had they been a member of the TfL Pension Fund.

TfL has commissioned a laughingly misnamed independent report into our pension. Rather than be independent though, it starts from the completely unjustified position that our final salary pension is, "expensive, outdated and must be reformed". This is nonsense of course. The Independent view is nothing more than politically motivated and is timed to take advantage of the financial situation TfL finds itself in. It is unacceptable that workers are being asked to balance the books by potentially losing some of their future pension rights.

**RMT will fight against any attempt to make us pay more contributions, cut the pension payout or restrict who can be in the fund.**

The closure of the TfL Pension Fund to new members in our experience will result in more financial pressure being placed on TfL as the TfL Pension Fund becomes underfunded. The maths is simple as more members retire or leave LUL, and fewer members join, this results in lower contributions coming into the fund which then places more strain on the employer to meet any shortfall. This often results in further benefit changes as employers try to balance the books.

This scenario has been played out across many DB pension schemes leaving members in poverty in their retirement. But RMT will not go along with the lies that say Britain in the 21st century can no longer afford to pay decent pensions.

Britain remains a wealthy country and we will never accept the impoverishment of our members just to cut costs for the bosses.

## YOUR RMT PENSION REPS ARE FIGHTING TO DEFEND YOUR PENSION

**RMT is represented on the board of trustees of the TfL pension, the pensions consultative committee and the Pensions Working Group.**

**Your RMT pensions reps have told TfL that our union will not agree to any changes to our pension scheme that reduce benefits or raise costs to employees.**

**There is no justification for undermining our pension fund, which is 98% funded and is part of our members agreed terms and conditions of employment.**

**Your RMT pensions reps are:**

**Steve Hedley  
Paul Murphy  
Sonja Folarin  
Mark Harding  
Jane Gwynn  
Pete Woods**

**Trustee & Pensions Working Group  
Trustee & Pensions Working Group  
Trustee & Pensions Consultative Committee  
Pensions Consultative Committee  
Pensions Consultative Committee  
Pensions Consultative Committee**