



Piccadilly News



August 2024

Why are we in dispute?

The Piccadilly line RMT has declared a dispute with London Underground over a number of ongoing issues. Declaring a dispute situation is a step we must take inside our agreed machinery before we can move to ballot and eventually take strike action.

It is an opportunity for your reps to meet with management and present the issues we are currently concerned with on the line in what is called a dispute resolution meeting. Ideally management would then take steps to solve all issues raised which would then negate the need to move to ballot, or alternatively tell us to stick it and we then ballot to force their hand.

The dispute resolution meeting took place on Monday July 8th, the issues your reps raised included workplace violence at T5, incorrect application of the disciplinary procedure too many drivers are being sent to CDI when the fair process should be used, inadequate training lead-

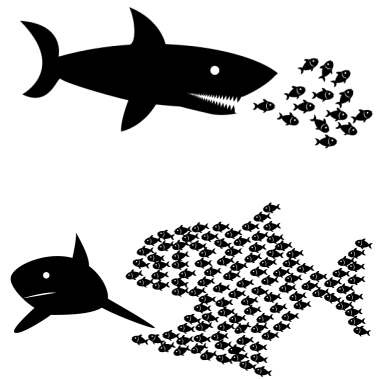


ing to too many incidents for new drivers, management at the east end refusing to abide by agreed trade union machinery.

It was agreed at the meeting that the issues were myriad and complicated, so your reps agreed to split into three sub meetings to discuss each issue in detail, a joint stations and trains meeting about T5, a comp assurance meeting on training, and an industrial relations meeting to look at cases where the disciplinary procedure has not been applied correctly. At this stage ASLEF reps will also be invited to

participate in these meetings, a courtesy which the RMT has extended to them.

Your reps will be pushing for concrete solutions on all of these issues, if we do not get progress then we will be forced to move to ballot.



Management fail to play FAIR

Are you aware of the FAIR (Flowchart Analysis of Investigation Results) process? No problem if you aren't, it's not your job as a train operator to know about or understand it, but you would hope that all our managers do.

The underlying principle behind it is that drivers or other operational staff do not deliberately set out to have safety incidents, as the document states "In almost all cases actions and behaviours are not intended to cause safety incidents". So why if this is the case are our managers so keen to send us to CDI.

Lots of people make mistakes at work all the time, oh you were distracted by something and you knocked your coffee over onto your computer, but there are very few jobs where making a simple honest mistake will end up with your job at risk, train driving at London Underground is such a job.

If we all agree that drivers don't set out to deliberately have safety incidents, then why are drivers sent to CDI instead of being offered support and training to help prevent future incidents. ■

Heathrow T5: the problem is terminal

For years now the design of the sidings has been causing us issues due to the necessity of having to remove all passengers before reversing in the sidings.

I'm sure we have all encountered a sleeping, often inebriated passenger, who is reluctant to even wake up, never-mind move from the train.

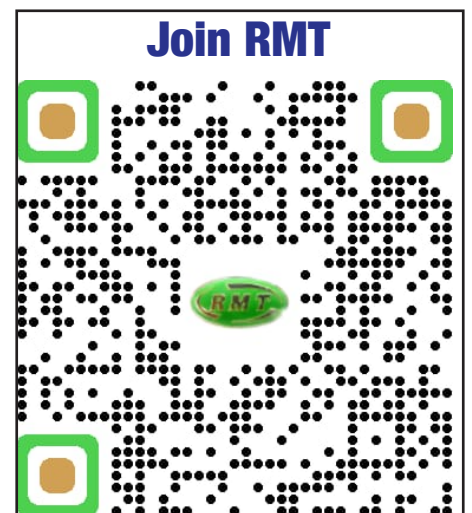
The station is managed by Heathrow airport limited so can open with no members of London Underground present, so often we can be left facing these difficult recalcitrant passengers alone, with the usual unhelpful impatience of service control over the radio exacerbating your stress levels.

On too many occasions service control will then allow a train to depart T2 & 3, despite the platform at T5 being occupied with a train that can't move due to a passenger refusing to alight, this train will usually have to be detrained via the front cab having tripped past signals to get to the platform edge. All of this palaver could have been avoided of course if they had just designed the track to allow reversing off the platform as we do at Cockfosters, but we are where we are.

The prime time for these problems is during night tube, at times when the air-

port is closed so there are no passengers on your train trying to make flights. Your reps have proposed that instead of sending all NT trains to T5 to divert around the loop or reverse at T2&3, this seems a reasonable and achievable partial solution, the company response has been it means too much work for duty schedules.

So making small time table changes is too much work, but drivers having to deal with threats and violence on the platform at T5 is not too much work. ■



Fight needed on training provision

Management is currently attempting to increase driver numbers on the Picc to an over-established 70. This is to allow for the release of drivers for training on the 24 stock. New I.Os have been recruited and put through their week-long training. The new trainees have to learn the line with new I.Os, and they are chopped and changed throughout alongside a training coordinator whose focus is the Bakerloo line.

SPADs are already through the roof; 187 were recorded for the year 2023/24!

According to management's statistics, 60% of these SPADs are novice drivers with under two years of experience. Novice drivers make up 16% of the total drivers on the line. To give some context to our 187 SPADs, the entire UK-wide national rail network recorded only 260 SPADs in 2022/23. To quote our own management, "there is a problem"

Resolution

Back in 2018, a dispute resolution and concurrent ORR report recommended numerous improvements needed in the delivery of training. With the arrival of COVID all plans for improvement were binned. Your reps were invited to two line-based training meetings in 2023, where management agreed something must be done.

Unfortunately, these meetings now look like little more than lip service. Management is still focused on getting all trainees passed out in 14 weeks, regardless of whether they are ready. TFL constantly talks about diversity and the different needs and skills of the people who work here, yet when it comes to training for the Piccadilly line, they want everybody to pass out in 14 weeks regardless of their training needs.

LUL has systematically failed to take any responsibility for increased SPADs and related safety incidents. Instead, it has shifted the blame entirely onto individual drivers, fast-tracking new drivers, who they have accepted are not being trained properly, onto CDIs and safety case conferences. This has created a culture of blame and fear on the line. That results in new drivers looking to escape the line as quickly as possible. This continuous exodus of new drivers from the line has made it difficult to maintain staffing numbers. We are left with increased handle time for the drivers, more ONAs, fewer spare turns, more fatigue and an increased likelihood of SPADs. LUL must recognise and address its organisational failure and stop the culture of singling out individual drivers.

New drivers are being pushed into taking their road test after 14 weeks, despite

I.Os saying they are not ready. They pass the road test but end up at CDI or safety conferences within a year. This makes no business sense for LUL, even before considering the personal cost for the individual involved.

New stock

All this occurs under the looming shadow of the introduction of the 24-stock to the line. A train designed to be run on ATO signalling, but which will be driven manually, its windows are so small that 600 odd co-acting signals are being added to the line because we won't see our legacy signalling. All wrapped up with a handle that works in the opposite direction to the 73 stock! We'll be pushing forward to accelerate and back to brake. This will increase the complexity and risk, in the network's most complex line. We have heard from the company so far that they are looking to qualify new drivers for the 24 stock using the simulator only!

We know from experience that Piccadilly line management only sits up and listens to us when the threat of strike action looms. The issues on the line are multiple: training, staffing levels, breakdowns in industrial relations, and pending CDIs across the line. Its time to draw a line in the sand. ■

Ballot prepared for action on pay

LUL's pay offer to trade unions for 2024-5 is for a 3.8% increase, with an additional £1,820 flat-rate for grades earning below £40k. This is an improvement on the initial offer of 3%, with no

flat-rate minimum, but falls short of meeting RMT's demand for an above inflation pay rise.

With other public sector workers such as teachers and health workers set to get a 5.5% increase, we should not settle for anything less, and should aim for more. The offer also includes no movement whatsoever on key union demands such as a reduced working week. Worse still, there are considerable strings attached. Yet again, LUL is proposing to freeze pay bands, so members in banded grades near the top of their current band will only receive a non-consolidated lump sum rather than a consolidated increase. Longer term, the company has indicated its intention to move all workers, including drivers and station staff, onto banded pay via grouping our roles into "job families".

This is also a threat to company-wide collective bargaining, as bosses say they will unilaterally determine which bands within each "job family" will receive pay settlements. For all these reasons, RMT has formally rejected the offer and will be moving to ballot. Reps and activists from across LUL, along with reps from TfL, where workers are also in dispute over pay, met on 7 August to plan to next steps in the campaign.

We know from our experience last year that the threat of sustained action, that will shut the job down for a week or more, can force concessions from the employer. We were less than 12 hours into a planned week of strikes when the Mayor's office contacted the union to make a new offer. The first step is to ensure we win a ballot mandate.

Make sure your address is up to date. Keep an eye on emails and text messages from the union confirming when the ballot is due to start. Vote yes for action! ■

Contact your reps

Cockfosters

IR: Adam Rozbicki
07827 778 961

H/S: Dave Rayfield
0771 9132 161

Arnos Grove

IR: Frank Curtis
0793 1130 849

H/S: Lee Maybin
0790 1574 904

Acton Town

IR: Tim Henry
0797 6027 662

H/S: Noel Doyle
0796 0094 488

Northfields

IR: Ash Abdulla
0758 63066 092

H/S: Sarpreet Birk
0798 2915 704

Have your say: attend your branch!

Finsbury Park:

Every second Tuesday 1600 at The Star Of Kings, 126 York Way, London N1 0AX (hybrid meeting). Plus third Thursday every quarter on Zoom only. Contact dohanlon@aol.com for the Zoom link

Piccadilly and District West:

Every third Wednesday 1600 at Irish Cultural Centre, 5 Blacks Road, Hammersmith, W6 9DP (in person only)