

# THE FIGHT GOES ON



In November, ABM cleaners on London Underground voted by a 98% majority for strikes to win free travel passes, company sick pay, and improved pensions.

48% of those eligible to vote returned their ballot papers. In any other area of democratic life, a 98% majority on a 48% turnout would be considered an overwhelming mandate. But not for trade unionists in Tory Britain. The anti-trade union laws require an arbitrary 50% turnout in all strike ballots. Our cleaners' ballot fell just 11 votes short of this threshold, meaning RMT cannot call official industrial action.

While this is hugely disappointing, we will not let it derail our campaign for justice for cleaners. The 98% majority shows there is a massive strength of feeling amongst cleaners to win better rights at work and greater equality with directly-employed staff. Our fight goes on.

The injustices that drive our fight have not gone away: cleaners are still exploited by ABM and TfL/LU, paid low wages to perform vital work that the Tube relies on. Job cuts have made this work much harder, and the lack of company sick pay means cleaners can't afford to be ill. On top of all these issues, cleaners are denied the staff travel passes and good pension conditions that directly-employed staff have access to.

The ongoing impact of job cuts not only means that cleaners have increased workload, but that additional risks and hazards are created by build-ups of rubbish. RMT's demand is for the reinstatement of every position cut by ABM.

We may experience setbacks along the way, but RMT will never stop fighting to address these injustices and win equality.

RMT continues to press ABM to agree collective bargaining arrangements, creating officially recognised positions for both industrial and health and safety reps. This will give us a formal structure via which to raise concerns about safety, equipment, training, and other workplace issues with the company.

The RMT London Transport Regional Council is planning direct action, possibly in the form of a demonstration, aimed at maintaining momentum in the campaign and putting pressure on TfL, LU, and the Mayor. Details will be announced soon. You can help shape and organise this action by getting involved with your RMT branch, the Regional Council, and the cleaning grades committee.

We will learn lessons from this experience, and ensure that we do not fall short again. RMT plans to re-ballot our cleaner members early in 2020, and will be preparing a renewed campaign to make sure every member receives their ballot and is spoken to directly about the need to vote.

The union will also be renewing our political campaigning against anti-trade union legislation, fighting for the abolition of all laws that restrict unions' abilities to organise and workers' right to strike.

The next RMT London Transport Region Cleaning Grades Committee meets on Monday 13 January at 15:30 at Unity House, 39 Chalton Street, NW1 1JD (near King's Cross/Euston). We also have a WhatsApp group for RMT cleaner members; speak to a union rep about how to join.

## OUR DEMANDS

- Staff travel passes for cleaners
- Company sick pay
- Decent pensions
- Reverse job cuts

[rmtlondoncalling.org.uk/cleaners](http://rmtlondoncalling.org.uk/cleaners) - 0800 376 3706