

STATIONS & REVENUE COUNCIL NEWS



REPS AND ACTIVISTS BRIEFING: DEALING WITH “PEOPLE MANAGEMENT ADVISERS” (PMAs)

PMAs (People Management Advisers) are employed by the HR department and sit in on case conferences, grievance hearings and appeals, and company disciplinary interviews (CDIs).

The company says their role is neutral, and that they are there to “advise both sides” (i.e., bosses and workers) about policy and procedure.

We know the reality is different. RMT objected to the creation of the PMA role, and continues to object to their involvement in any formal process. Their presence in meetings is something the company has imposed unilaterally. We object because, despite the claims of neutrality, all the evidence suggests they are there to back up the bosses. All reps will have experienced arriving for a meeting, only to find the manager cossetted away with the PMA having a private pre-meeting. If the PMA is neutral, why hold these behind-closed-doors sessions with our managers before meetings?

We have long suspected that the real role of the PMA is to help the bosses find justifications and methods within policy and procedure for a predetermined course of action. Sometimes, we have even suspected PMAs of pulling the strings themselves, and steering managers towards particular decisions.

Two recent incidents appear to confirm these suspicions, so we are issuing this bulletin to make sure our reps and activists are up to speed.

In an interview in a locally-produced publication, a Northern Line PMA said: “My role is to support managers to make the right decisions, based on service needs balanced against the needs of our people” They went on to discuss their role in the CDI process, stating that: “With clear, concise and robust evidence available, it will be easier to objectively counteract the individual’s claim”. They also said: “CSMs who are unwilling to develop themselves especially when offered support, will inevitably become a liability to the organisation”.

In short, the mask slipped. This PMA revealed that they saw their role as being about helping managers discipline, demote, and dismiss our members.

Since this was raised at the highest level of the machinery of negotiation within the stations function, LU have confirmed that the local publication in which the interview appeared will no longer be produced. Good: but our belief is that the problem is more fundamental and widespread than this.

RMT SFC reps have also had sight of an email from a Jubilee Line PMA, intended for a senior manager, asking that manager to hear a grievance appeal. The PMA wrote that a “draft outcome would be prepared on your behalf”, clearly suggesting that the presiding manager would not, in fact, be the decision maker, and that someone else, presumably the PMA themselves, would be deciding on the outcome, which the manager would only need to “approve”.

This casts immense doubt over the integrity of any formal process in which a PMA is involved, particularly on the Jubilee Line. Therefore, we are encouraging all reps to formally object to the presence of a PMA in any meeting, on the basis of these recent incidents which clearly contradict the company’s claims of the neutrality of the role.

If the manager refuses to proceed with the meeting unless the PMA is present, we are not advising reps and members to walkout, but we do suggest that you ask the PMA to formally state, for the minutes, that they are a neutral party and will only act to advise on the content of policy. Ask the manager to confirm that they will be making the decision themselves, and will be directly accountable for it. Reps, particularly on the Jubilee Line, can use the form of words in the box on this briefing to submit as a pro forma statement for the minutes of any meeting.

STATEMENT FOR THE MINUTES OF FORMAL MEETINGS

Due to recent events which seriously call into question the neutrality of the PMA role, including an email from a PMA to a manager in which the PMA told the manager “a draft outcome would be prepared on your behalf”, RMT is formally objecting to the participation of the PMA in this meeting and requests that the meeting takes place without them.

If management insists on the participation of the PMA, we request that this statement, noting our objection, is recorded in the minutes. We further request that the PMA make a statement for the minutes affirming that:

- They are present as a neutral party
- They have no role in decision-making
- Their role is not to guide management in arriving at a predetermined outcome

RMT believes that formal processes in LU should take place only between us as workers, supported by our elected union representatives, and our employers.

YOUR RMT STATIONS AND REVENUE FUNCTIONAL COUNCIL REPS:

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Mick Crossey – Camden 3 – 07931 570521

Neil Cochrane – Hammersmith & City, Neasden – 07947 784950

Eamonn Lynch – Jubilee South, East Ham – 07578 769943

Mac McKenna – Finsbury Park, Central Line East – 07801 071363

Daniel Randall – Bakerloo Line, Piccadilly & District Line West – 07961 040618