



INDUSTRIAL RELATIONS MELTDOWN

A Message to all staff on the Finsbury Park Group

LUL auditors are currently carrying out a completely one-sided management led investigation into "roster and working practices on the Finsbury Park Group".

Exactly what practices they are referring to we do not know because there has been no meaningful discussion with either staff or local Reps. The GSM has sent out a circular stating "these matters are potentially very serious" and has included a hotline number direct to the investigation team for any staff wishing to talk to them. Also, LUL's Director of Employee Relations has written directly to the General Secretary of the RMT asking him to encourage his members to co-operate with the investigation. Co-operate with what?

How can you, on the one hand, ask people to co-operate with an investigation and, with the other, refuse to give any details of what they are meant to be co-operating with? Are they trying to set staff a riddle to solve or are they trying to introduce a

psychological fear factor, which many staff feel to be the case. One thing is for sure: if this is the case, it has dramatically backfired. Members have never before been so united. All management have succeeded in doing is to create an air of suspicion and mistrust between themselves and staff, and to be responsible for the lowest state of morale this group has ever known.

The circular was addressed to "all members of staff on the Finsbury Park Group". Why is every member of staff on this group being investigated? Good, decent people who have never put a foot wrong are now the subject of a serious investigation. It stinks.

Management have used the catch-all umbrella "might be involved in inappropriate roster and working practices". For example, with this umbrella it could be interpreted that anyone who has not worked every minute of every duty for the last nine months is deemed to have been involved in "inappropriate roster and working practices". Breaking the framework

agreement could also come under this umbrella, as could unofficial changeover of duties or covering a shift to help a colleague who has domestic difficulties when no other option has been available. The list is innumerable. These are instances that are probably done in one way or another on every group on the underground with the only intention being to help out colleagues with a minor bending of the rules.

So, where previous to this investigation has the line been drawn as to what is appropriate and what is not? More importantly, who has been responsible for where this line has been drawn? All the examples given are where the line has been drawn and, ultimately, management has been responsible for drawing that line.

To take it further, it is openly known and acknowledged that in order to keep stations open and duties covered, managers have been directly responsible for staff working outside the framework agreement. Staff have often felt under pressure to

carry out duties which under normal circumstances they would not. Also, managers have walked on to stations when the staff on duty may not have reflected the names on the booking on sheets. The evidence of this can be found in the very same documents currently in the hands of the investigation team. What might look like one thing on paper may not explain the actuality of the situation.

Does anyone seriously believe that managers, who visit stations most days could, over a long period of time, fail to see what is happening at those stations they are responsible for? Make your own mind up.

Ask the managers.

Ask managers if they have ever been aware that staff have changed duties with a colleague without filling in the paperwork. Ask managers if they have ever been aware that staff have helped out a colleague in need by doing their duty for them.

Ask managers if they are aware that staff have, when circumstances allow, not worked every minute of their shift.

Ask managers if they themselves have ever done any of these things.

Ask managers if they have ever with good intention, concealed breaking of the framework agreement.

Local Management

Supported by senior managers the GSM has regularly boasted to staff that he knows exactly

what happens on his group (**five stations and over 120 staff**) and would know what is happening in his own small office (**about six managers and a couple of admin staff**) for the past **two years** of his tenure. Make up your own mind.

Let us be clear it is any GSM's responsibility to know exactly what happens in the office they are in charge of, and what has been common working practice by his managers and staff on this group for the past two years he has been in charge, or he is calling into account his capabilities to manage that office and his staff.

Again let us be clear, LUL go to great lengths in stressing the importance and effects of leadership from its managers, how examples set are likely to be examples followed. Staff on the Finsbury Park Group have been taking their lead from managers and what has become acceptable practice has come under this GSM's leadership.

So why has he chosen this path he has now taken?

He has recently and increasingly been complaining to staff that he has been getting pressure from above due to a large overspend on the group overtime budget. A budget he is responsible for managing.

He has, it seems, been looking for anything other than the fact that there has been straightforward and simple explanations for this overspend. Perhaps, due to continued

pressure from above, he feels the need to deflect any suggestion that his decisions and (mis)management of the budget and staff coverage are the major contributing factor for an overspend of the budget.

Consider the following:

- *Several Supervisor vacancies requiring cover due to positions not being filled.*
- *One Supervisor position requiring long-term cover due to ongoing harassment claim against the GSM.*
- *Several CSA vacancies only recently filled.*
- *SAMF positions requiring long-term cover.*
- *One Supervisor released to work as full-time 'Project Liaison Supervisor' during the Finsbury Park station refurb.*
- *Another Supervisor released to cover the 'Project Liaison Supervisor' when he was on annual leave.*
- *Several positions requiring cover due to secondments.*
- *Numerous Victoria Line closures requiring many additional staff.*
- *Emirates Cup football tournament.*
- *Staff sickness, maternity leave, special arrangements, etc.*

All this at a time when numerous staff were on two and three week blocks of annual leave; many at the same time due to an unequal number of staff in the same holiday periods.

At times, only two out of seven rostered Supervisors from **one** station were available to cover duties, with other stations fighting against similar coverage problems. On top of this, at other times less than half the Reserve Supervisors were available. This when, on a weekly basis, management were sending out coverage amendments with as many as twenty duties (of all grades) uncovered due to no cover available.

Management has put the responsibility to arrange coverage for uncovered SCRA, SAMF and CSA duties firmly at the door of under-pressure Supervisors who can

spend half their duty fighting an uphill battle to make sure stations have enough staff to stay open and ticket offices have clerks to serve customers. It is touch and go at times whether stations can open up or stay open. This shambolic state of affairs has been caused through no fault of the Supervisors who are under intense pressure to make sure the paying public have the service their money has paid for.

Let the investigation team count the cost of overtime payments due to no cover available. That is where they will find the

overspend in the overtime budget. It is as simple as that.

Has mismanagement of coverage been responsible for the budget overspend? Could effective forward planning have managed this budget better? That is for others to decide.

This is all against a backdrop of several very serious and ongoing harassment and grievance complaints against this GSM. You could almost understand why he would want to deflect any more attention away from himself.

Let any investigation be fair. Members stand strong. UNITY IS STRENGTH.

CENSORED!

COMPANY BANS FREEDOM OF EXPRESSION AT FINSBURY PARK

In a pathetic display of petulance, management on the Finsbury Park Group have ripped down two important notices from RMT notice cases. Apparently acting on instructions from no less than the company's Employee Relations Manager, Gerry Duffy, management tore down the October issue of Monthly News and banned its circulation to staff on the group on 23rd October. Then, on the 26th, they removed from notice cases

a report by local Reps of a Level 1 meeting held with management that same day.

These blatant acts of censorship were recorded in the station log book, where it was made clear that copies of Monthly News and the Reps' Level 1 report are not even to be permitted on LU premises. ***However, our union will not be gagged by a management who are running scared of the truth. We will keep writing the truth, in letters***

ten feet tall if necessary, and we will ensure that our members receive it, no matter how hard managers try to suppress it.

So, with that said - and for the benefit of our members whom management would prefer to keep totally in the dark - below we reproduce the Reps' report of the Level 1 meeting held on 26th October:

Level One Meeting 26th October 2009

Dear RMT Member,

Today both Local Reps and the Functional Rep had a Level One Meeting with the GSM and the Employee Relations Manager to discuss the serious concerns in relation to suspensions at Manor House and the use of DSMs covering Meal Breaks.

Management were not prepared to discuss any matters concerning suspensions, stating that they could not discuss anything under investigation.

Staff side stated that there were many issues on the group that we would wish to discuss but because the **GSM is under investigation for alleged harassment** and the subject of a grievance and of at least one customer complaint, that staff side would need to speak to the Employee Relations Manager separately.

Staff side asked a number of questions but management would not respond regarding the suspensions.

Staff side moved to the use of **DSMs covering meal breaks** and DMRs. Management stated that they could do this within the framework.

Staff side complained that members were being **phoned by managers** asking them to take DMR payments. Staff side asked that this be stopped. **Management said** that they are permitted to do this; however if staff do not want this to happen then they should **make formal complaints via the grievance procedure**. Meeting ended.

Matters concerning our members and alleged bullying and harassment and customer complaints could not be discussed with the GSM present as he is under investigation, and they are confidential matters which are pertinent to him. Concerns regarding the relevant policies and implementation of same were discussed.

Please be advised per the GSM. If you have any concerns about being phoned and asked to take a DMR instead of an off-station meal break then you should put in a grievance.

Should you receive one of these calls then please contact your rep who will assist you with your grievance. If a manager phones you at home because you are sick or to ask for a change of duty or for any other matter then, again, please contact your rep. Submit a grievance; your rep will assist you with this.

Finsbury Park Branch

