



upfront

www.rmtlondoncalling.org.uk/trains - November 2021

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Drivers to strike Over Night Tube shifts

NO to compulsory Night Tube duties and unsafe shift patterns

London Underground management are going ahead and reintroducing Night Tube (NT) without fixing any of the problems. They consistently told us there was no intention to bring it back before Christmas, yet here we are with a planned reintroduction on 2 lines at the end of November.

The reps on the Central and Victoria lines have now had full access to the duties and rosters and have identified many anomalies. The team at Schedules has been beavering away making changes where possible at the request of the reps; but you can't make a silk purse out of a sow's ear! What is left is still a bag of shite.

Have they addressed our concerns?

No increase in weekend working. There is a huge increase in weekend working – across the board the numbers of Saturdays and Sundays has gone up. The company says that as some of the turns incur a bonus payment they don't count as weekend working! LUL has single-handedly reinvented the meaning of the "weekend" and they are not even embarrassed about it.

Furthermore, they have increased the number of Fridays worked. Soon the days of spending a Friday evening out with friends and family followed by a

relaxing weekend will be just a distant memory.

A guarantee that nobody will be forced to work NT. Some guarantee that turned out to be. Management keep repeating the mantra "there are plenty of volunteers". When we asked that they carry out a survey to ascertain how many would volunteer they said they would not do it because it "may be interpreted as a referendum".

Well, guess what – we did our own survey and discovered that the vast majority will not volunteer to work extra shifts, with a clear majority stating they don't even want to work their own shifts!

Furthermore, management say that they won't be encouraging Admin Staff to organise the changeovers because the sheer volume of work involved is prohibitive. And syndicate organisers in some depots say they will find it almost impossible to facilitate changeovers because of the nature of the rest day patterns spread over 2 weeks.

Safety implications

The adverse effect of fatigue on our health and well-being is a major concern for LU workers. Pressure from both unions representing drivers has been instrumental in getting LU take the issue more seriously and employ a degree of risk management to

Strike Dates

RMT instruct all train operator and instructor operators working on night-tube lines (Central, Jubilee, Northern, Piccadilly & Victoria) not to book on for any duty commencing between 04:30 on 26/11/21 and 04:29 27/11/21.

Further all train operator and instructor operators working on the Central and Victoria lines are instructed not to book on for any duty commencing:

- ⇒ between 20:30 on 27/11/21 and 04:29 on 28/11/21
- ⇒ between 20:30 on 3/12/21 and 04:29 on 4/12/21
- ⇒ between 20:30 on 4/12/21 and 04:29 on 5/12/21
- ⇒ between 20:30 on 10/12/21 and 04:29 on 11/12/21
- ⇒ between 20:30 on 11/12/21 and 04:29 on 12/12/21
- ⇒ between 20:30 on 17/12/21 and 04:29 on 18/12/21

All train operator and instructor operators working on night-tube lines (Central, Jubilee, Northern, Piccadilly & Victoria) are also instructed not to book on for any duty commencing from 04:30 on 18/12/21 to 04:29 19/12/21.



tackle the worst aspects of fatigue. Slowly but surely, progress was being made. The Night Tube grade consolidation proposal has driven a horse and cart right through all the good work that has been done.

Fatigue leads to slower reactions, reduced ability to process information, memory lapses, absent-mindedness, decreased awareness, lack of attention, underestimation of risk, and reduced coordination. Fatigue can lead to errors, accidents, and injury. It is often a root cause of major accidents.

Disasters such as the capsizing of the ship MS Herald of Free Enterprise in 1987 (193 dead), the Chernobyl meltdown in 1986 (31 direct casualties, tens of thousands of indirect deaths) and the Clapham Junction train crash in 1988 (35 deaths) have all been attributed in part to the fatigue of the workers involved.

When Night Tube was initially proposed, LU wanted existing full-time drivers to work the night shifts, exactly as they are proposing now. Both unions objected, and we went on strike; part of our argument was that the proposed shift patterns would be massively fatigue-inducing. Those strikes succeeded in forcing an agreement from LU to create a dedicated Night Tube workforce on both trains and stations.

LU's fatigue working party, attended by unions, senior management, and experts on the topic, has looked closely at duty scheduling and the allocation of shift patterns within rosters. Scientific evidence has shown that certain shift patterns are more fatigue inducing than others. For example, moving from lates to earlies is deemed worse than vice versa. Shift work is bad for

your health, full stop. Studies have shown that it can reduce life expectancy by several years. Studies by the World Health Organisation have shown links between shift work and increased risk of cancer.

While we might not be able to eliminate shift working and fatigue entirely, we can combat its worst effects and put mitigations in place. The Night Tube grade consolidation, meaning we'll work late shifts and night shifts in the same week before moving to a different shift pattern the following week, is the direct opposite of what both unions have been trying to achieve. It's all very well citing the few extra quid we get for doing this work, but you can't spend that in your early grave.

To improve our health as railway workers, we need all unions to work together to combat fatigue, and not accept fatigue inducing shift patterns because they are politically expedient. But management have ignored repeated requests from the Safety Council to properly risk assess the reintroduction of NT.

The gift that keeps on giving

Earlier this year ASLEF and LUL reached an agreement on NT which tore up your Framework Agreement without even asking you if it is what you wanted. It has resulted in turmoil as the RMT refused to sign up to a deal which sees TO21 drivers being forced to drive in passenger service through the night for the first time ever.

It will mean that you will work more weekends than ever before. It will leave you fatigued through not only working mixed shifts in one week but also working until

07.30 on a Sunday and having that Sunday imposed on you as one of your 2 rest days that week. Think what that means – working until breakfast time on a Sunday and then having to drive on 5 of the remaining 6 days on your roster!

And what if you somehow manage to swap your Friday and Saturday NT duties? Do you really imagine that you will be swapping them for Friday and Saturday rest days? It is far more likely that you'll be getting Friday and Saturday late duties with rest days on Monday to Thursday – so you'll still miss out on quality time with friends and family but won't be getting a bonus for doing so.

Next Steps

Management think it's all over - but it isn't. The RMT has secured a strike mandate through a ballot which returned a tremendous yes vote. We have named strike dates (see text box) in the hope that LUL will finally see sense and not force you to work unsafe rosters.

If you want to help us stop the imposition of these NT duties support the strikes, join us on the picket lines – whichever union you are in, you have legal protection if you decide not to cross a picket line.

It's not too late to stop this madness.

Join train drivers' union RMT today

It is simple to join the RMT:

- = Scan the QR code,
- = Go to www.rmt.org.uk/join,
- = Call 0800 376 3706,
- = Or talk to your local rep.

