

CITIES OF LONDON & WESTMINSTER TRADES COUNCIL

APRIL 2008

NEWS AND EVENTS

TRADES COUNCIL TEAM FOR 2008-9

At the AGM held in March the team of Officers and Executive Members was elected for this year. They are –

President Jim Smith PCS

Vice President Dan Ingreji PCS

Secretary Roger Sutton TGWU/UNITE

Assistant Secretary Dil Joshi PCS

Organising Secretary Chris Miles PCS

Treasurer Malcolm Key UNISON

Executive Members Tom Carty AMICUS/UNITE, Angy McKenzie PCS, Tony Thorpe PCS

GLATUC Delegates - Roger Sutton, Jim Smith, Dan Ingreji, Chris Miles -
Reserves Angy McKenzie, Tony Thorpe

*The AGM also marked the launch of the Trades Council web site at www.clwtc.org
There are still new parts being added to the site over the next few weeks.*



Driving Tests To Be Hit In Driving Standards Strike

19 Mar 2008

1,900 PCS members working for the Driving Standards Agency (DSA) will be taking part in targeted strike action tomorrow morning (20 March) and on the morning of Tuesday 25 March in a dispute over pay which will lead to the cancellation of driving tests the union warned. The strike action is part of a dispute over pay inequality and below inflation pay rises of as a little as 1%

involving the DSA, the Department for Transport (DfT) and four other DfT agencies. The strike will see driving examiners walkout for two and a half hours tomorrow morning and for one and a half hours on the morning of Tuesday 25 March. They will be supported by non-examiner staff in the DSA who will be walking out for the whole of tomorrow morning. To supplement the strike action an overtime ban involving all staff in the DSA will be in place over the Easter weekend. This will be followed by a month long work to rule by the remaining staff in the DfT and its agencies.

The ongoing dispute in the DfT, DSA, Driver and Vehicle Licencing Agency (DVLA), Highways Agency, Vehicle Certification Agency, Vehicle and Operator Services Agency (VOSA) has already seen a strongly supported one day strike on 29 February leading to the cancellation of an estimated 5,000 driving tests. Elsewhere in the civil service, below inflation pay resulting from the government's pay cap has created growing industrial unrest with this week's second strongly supported two day strike hitting jobcentres, the Pension Service and Child Support Agency (CSA).

Commenting, Mark Serotka, PCS general secretary, said: "With starting salaries as little as £12,528, low pay across the department has been compounded by a series of below inflation pay offers which in some cases amount to little more than 1%. Added to this are unacceptable pay gaps between the predominantly female staffed DVLA and the predominantly male DfT and related agencies.

"Pay cuts in real terms and growing pay inequality do nothing for morale serving only to breed resentment and anger. The DfT and the government need to act swiftly in dealing with pay inequality and below inflation pay to stem the growing tide of industrial unrest."

Strong Support On First Day Of Work And Pensions Strike

17 Mar 2008

The first day of a two day strike in the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) received strong support today as PCS members walked out for the second time over the imposition of a three year pay offer, which sees 40% of staff receiving 0% this year and the lowest paid increases which take their wage to only 24 pence above the minimum wage.

The second two day stoppage hit Jobcentres, benefit offices, the Pension Service and Child Support Agency (CSA) with some offices closed and those remaining open offering little or no service to the public. On the phones the public had difficulty contacting call centres with people encountering a recorded message to call back later. The union called on the department to scrap plans to spend £30 million on bonuses and use the money to ensure that all staff receive a pay rise in line with inflation. The union also warned that annual bonuses and pay rises for senior managers exceeding the yearly wage of some of those on strike would further anger staff whose starting salaries are as little as £12,500. Below inflation pay as a result of the government's pay cap has also prompted strongly supported strike action in the Maritime and Coastguard Agency (MCA), the Department for Transport, Driving Standards Agency (DSA), the Driver and Vehicle Licencing Agency (DVLA), Highways Agency, Vehicle and Operator Services Agency (VOSA) and Vehicle Certification Agency.

Commenting, Mark Serotka, PCS general secretary, said: "Support for this latest two day stoppage is as strong as the last one and illustrates the strength of feeling over the imposition of a pitiful pay offer that results in real term pay cuts for some of the lowest paid in the public sector. The government and the department have provoked unnecessary conflict by capping pay and squandering millions of pounds on a divisive bonus system which instead could ensure pay rises in line with inflation. The government and the DWP cannot continue to ignore the damage to morale that low pay is having and need to start paying a fair wage to the many not the few."

from www.pcs.org.uk



RMT and TSSA call joint strike dates in London Tube safety dispute: Workers to walk out from April 6th to 9th

Publication Date: March 28 2008

LONDON UNDERGROUND'S two biggest unions today (Friday) announced joint strike dates for more than 7,500 of their station staff and train operator members.

RMT and TSSA members, who are in dispute with the company over a raft of safety and staffing issues, will walk out from 6.30pm on Sunday, April 6 until 6.30pm on Wednesday, April 9 after voting by five to one and four to one respectively for action.

The unions have told LUL that its plans for ticket-office closures, de-staffing, lone working, introduction of 'mobile supervisors', use of agency and security staff and other disputed policies amount to an unacceptable attack on safety standards and the casualisation of safety-critical work (details in notes below).

"Each of these issues is serious in its own right, but together they amount to a fundamental and unacceptable attack on staffing across the network, putting our members' and passengers' safety at risk," RMT general secretary Bob Crow said today.

"Tube workers will not stand idly by while the security of the network is compromised by managers who clearly believe that staff and passenger safety can be looked after on the cheap."

Gerry Doherty, general secretary of TSSA, said: "This is a dispute about the safety of our Tube system. The last people we want to hit are the travelling public but this seems to be the only way we can make London Underground listen.

"We have been trying to make them understand for months that we will not allow safety standards to be lowered by the use of agency staff. Even at this late stage, we want a negotiated settlement and remain ready to talk next week to achieve one."

ends

Notes to editors:

RMT's strike ballot saw 1,673 members vote for action with 333 voting against.

Ticket office closures and cuts to opening times: LUL temporarily halted plans to close 40 ticket offices and to cut the opening times of many more after the unions' campaign last year led to a public outcry. However, LUL has refused to say that the plans have been withdrawn completely.

RMT and TSSA are demanding the complete withdrawal of the plans

Staffing levels - emergency plans and guidelines: LUL has unilaterally decided to vary Section 4.2 of the Congestion Control and Emergency Plan to remove the specification of the minimum numbers of each grade of station staff that are to be on duty at any time.

RMT and TSSA are demanding the reinstatement of the original numbers of each grade of fully trained and fully familiarised station staff.

Refusal to work on grounds of safety: Under the guise of simplification LUL has changed its policy, undermining safety and breaching legislation.

RMT and TSSA are demanding the immediate re-instatement of the original policy.

Mobile supervisors: LUL wants to introduce 'mobile supervisors' responsible for several stations, and to continue to staff stations recently taken over from Silverlink only during the limited hours decided by the previous franchise holder. But what happens in an emergency when the mobile supervisor is in the wrong place - or even stuck between stations on a train?

RMT and TSSA are demanding that every station is fully staffed during traffic hours by the appropriate number of customer-service and station assistants, supervised by station supervisors in line with agreements and safety requirements.

Terminal 5 staffing: LUL wants to staff the new station with staff subcontracted from other firms but wearing LUL uniforms.

RMT and TSSA believe that this has serious safety implications and has demanded that the station is staffed by people trained and employed directly by LUL.

Use of agency staff: LUL wants to continue using agency staff on former Silverlink stations, including those used for ticketing and revenue duties

RMT and TSSA are demanding that the practice ends when the training of former Silverlink staff is completed and current contracts ends, and a guarantee that only directly employed LUL staff are used for stations and ticketing operations

Use of security staff: RMT and TSSA are demanding an agreement that security at all LUL-owned or -managed stations must be provided at all times by directly employed staff in appropriate grades, supplemented by the normal co-operation with the BTP and Metropolitan police forces.

Lone working: RMT and TSSA are demanding an agreement that there must be no rostered lone working unless undertaken from a place of safety.

Direct recruitment of station supervisors, train operators and service-control staff: LUL is now systematically denying career opportunities to experienced railway staff and recruiting externally, turning on its head an agreement that external advertising can take place if there are insufficient internal applications. **RMT and TSSA are demanding a complete review of recruitment policy to establish a policy that preserves and encourages a career path for experienced railway staff.**

from www.rmt.org.uk



Unions reject 2.2 per cent 'slap in the face' offer

19 Mar 2008

Heather Wakefield, Unison head of local government said a 2.2 per cent offer is a slap in the face for 1.4 million local government workers, who have already put up with ten years of below inflation pay settlements. Attaching strings to such a low offer, she continued, is adding insult to injury.

"The employers have completely ignored the justice of our claim and are prepared to let every teaching assistant, librarian, school meals worker, social worker and park attendant face increasing hardship. They talk about unpleasant choices, but our members are already facing unpleasant choices between feeding their families and heating their homes," said Ms. Wakefield. "Our members live in the real world, with real inflation and 2.2 per cent does not go anywhere near to covering the huge hikes in basic living costs such as food, housing, gas and electricity."

"You can't build world class public services on poverty pay and it's time that Local Government employers faced up to this," she warned and added, "The CPI rose 2.5 per cent yesterday and is expected to go even higher by the summer. The employers need to take stock and come up with a more realistic offer in the next round of negotiations."

Peter Allenson, Unite the union national organiser, said the local government employers had to recognise that a sensible pay increase was needed for staff who had pay cut after pay cut yet who had seen a chief executive appointed recently with a 46 per cent pay rise. "Our members in the front line have delivered for local councils and local communities," he said. "It is time the employers recognised this in their pay packets rather than propose a further cut in living standards."
Brian Strutton, GMB national secretary, said: "GMB is bitterly disappointed with this abysmal offer. The only positive thing we take is that there will be further negotiations so this is not the end of the road. There will need to be significant improvements, particularly for the lower paid, or there will be severe political and industrial consequences."

from www.tgwu.org.uk



GMB Submit Local Government Pay Claim Seeking 7.5% For 40,000 Craft Workers

GMB warns that members won't stomach another bad deal and councils need to take heed or face the industrial and political consequences

31 Mar 2008

GMB and other unions UCATT, Unite and the CSEU Unions representing 40,000 local government craft workers have submitted their annual pay claim.

GMB is seeking a 7.5% pay increase over the next 12 months. In recent years the rates of skilled craft workers in local government have fallen far below the rates of skilled workers in the private sector. A fully skilled local government craft workers annual salary is just £13,972 whereas the private sector rate this year will rise to £20,888. A skilled local government carpenters rate is also substantially below that of a private sector labourer, whose pay will be £15, 717 from July 2008.

In a full and comprehensive pay claim the joint unions are also seeking a reduction in the working week a substantial increase in extra payments and allowances, increased holiday entitlement and an enhancement in the bereavement leave.

In order to address the growing skills shortage of craft workers in the public sector the unions are also calling for a large increase in the number of apprentices being trained in local government.

GMB National Secretary, Brian Strutton, said: **“Local government craft workers have had too many years of low pay. They won’t stomach another bad deal and councils need to take heed or face the industrial and political consequences.”**

Last year craft workers in local government were reluctantly forced to accept a 2.475 per cent increase in paper, far below the rate of inflation. To add insult to injury the pay increase was finally delivered 9 months late.”

Alan Ritchie, General Secretary of construction union UCATT, said: “Skilled local government craft workers dedicate their lives to serve their local communities. They deserve to be paid fairly. The poverty rates of pay they have been forced to live on must be ended.”

John Allott, Unite National Officer, said: “The pay increase over the last four years have been below inflation and the pay gap between local authority craft workers and the private sector

construction craft workers has widened alarmingly. This is unsustainable and unacceptable and needs to be addressed in this year’s pay round. Industrial action is a strong possibility if a below inflation offer is tabled again.”

from www.gmb.org.uk

PROTESTS CONTINUE OVER PIMLICO SCHOOL

Protesters occupied the lobby of Sovereign Capital in mid-March in protest at plans to turn Pimlico School in south London into an academy.

Sovereign Capital is the private equity company founded by tycoon John Nash that wants to sponsor the academy.

WESTMINSTER UNIONS ON STOP THE WAR RALLY ON MARCH 15



NUT Westminister banner in Trafalgar Square

Trade unionists from Westminister were on the March & Rally including PCS, TGWU, NUT, AMICUS, UCU , ASLEF, TSSA, RMT and CWU.

UNIONS STEP UP CAMPAIGN TO STOP BNP GETTING Foothold ON GLA

There is growing action by unions in London to stop the BNP gaining any seats on the GLA in the elections on May 1st. The Trades Council has co-ordinated some leafleting locally but only had a very limited number of leaflets supplied. Part of the campaign is to increase voter registration to make it difficult for the fascists to get the 5% required to get a list seat.

SUPPORT GROWING FOR MAY DAY MARCH

The annual May Day March will take place on May 1st from Clerkenwell Green to Trafalgar Square. More union organisations have been giving their support for International Workers Day. Amongst the speakers will be PCS President Janice Godrich, CWU President Jane Loftus, Tony Benn and a REMPLOY campaign leader. The London May Day Organising Committee is appealing for donations and stewards for the march. Details from www.londonmayday.org.