

# Time for Action!

**A**cross the country, rail workers are fighting back against employers' attacks — the beginning of the movement we will need if we are to stop the all-out assault on our jobs and conditions that is coming our way.

Workers involved in each one of these disputes deserve the full support of all other rail workers, as a victory for them is a victory for all of us.

The best solidarity of all is for all of us to take up action too. Every part of our industry is blighted by threats to job security, conditions and pensions, so we all have something to fight about!



**R**MT is balloting Transport for Wales cleaners for action.

TfW, a public transport authority ultimately run by Wales' Labour government, promised to level up cleaners' conditions. But with no real action since, it seems TfW bosses' promises were just talk.

When employers do not deliver on promises, we need to take action to force concessions.

**RMT members:**

**Vote SEAN HOYLE for National President**

**ALAN POTTAGE for Assistant General Secretary**

# Scotrail disputes continue but falter

**S**cotrail conductors and ticket examiners are still striking for pay justice every Sunday, with RMT naming dates until September, and are still refusing overtime and higher-grade duties. But with the ballot's six-month legal mandate due to expire, there's no news of a re-ballot and workers are unsure where this dispute is going.

Other grades are joining the action, albeit in a rather faltering way, largely due to anti-strike ballot thresholds.

**Team managers** voted to strike so they can not be made to cover other grades' work when they are taking action.

**Gateline staff** are refusing overtime and rest-day working, but can't lawfully strike. A clear majority voted to strike, but the percentage of those balloted who sent in a Yes vote fell 1.3% short of the 40% required by law. The vote for 'action short' did meet the thresholds. (Scotrail did not have to ballot anyone before refusing pay enhancements to any grade other than drivers.)

**Cleaners (traincare)** had a similar ballot result, and have been refusing overtime and higher-grade working since June.

**Engineers** voted by a sizeable majority for strikes and action short, but with 83 of 167 union members voting, fell half a

vote short of the turnout threshold. It is an indictment of how unfair the law is that if one more member had voted No, it would have given a legal Yes result!

Conductors and ticket examiners are solid, and are enjoying their Sundays off! Sundays are outside their working week, and on strike days, no trains run north of Glasgow and Edinburgh.

Along with the law, the main problem is lack of rank-and-file involvement in driving the dispute. Scotrail workers tell *Off The Rails* of their frustration at the lack of clarity on the union's strategy. Disputes are most effective when rank-and-file members decide the strategy: but if that is not happening, then at least they should be told what it is!

There have been no mass meetings (even online) and not much information from the union. Pickets do not happen any more. As far as workers can see, there is no plan, no talks – just silence.

The dispute is well-supported but lacks direction. Reps and activists feel they're being treated like foot-soldiers rather than consulted about the strategy.

To win its re-ballot, RMT needs to raise its game. Members will continue to fight if they have confidence in the union and its strategy.

# Rail Gourmet strike against bullying

**R**ail Gourmet workers on the LNER contract have been striking against management bullying. The action follows a 100% vote, showing the strength of feeling and resolve amongst the workforce. There were strong pickets at Edinburgh Waverley, where the workers are based.

Rail Gourmet provides outsourced

catering services to a number of Train Operating Companies. It is owned by Select Service Partners, which runs food concessions on railway stations and which cut thousands of jobs last year.

Beyond an immediate change in management culture, the next step is to fight for direct employment for catering and food workers on the railway.



## Sunday strikes on EMR

**S**enior Conductors at East Midlands Railway delivered a 74% yes vote in the recent re-ballot, with further Sunday strikes announced up until 10 October.

They are happy to be joined for the next seven weeks by EMR Train Managers taking strike action in a separate dispute over the safe working of 360s in multiple, putting more strain on EMR managers who have been scabbing by covering some guards' work. Hopefully they'll be stretched to the point where they'll follow the example of their colleagues on Scotrail who last week voted for strike action to stop the company forcing them to cover striking RMT members and understaffing.

Some of these managers really could do with the break, like the one whose impromptu attempt at bullying TMs at Kettering by imposing DOO backfired when ASLEF quickly threatened to go into dispute: perhaps he's secretly on our side.

# Hull Trains pension strike

**R**MT members at Hull Trains will strike every **Sunday from 8-29 August**, to stop the closure of the company's final salary pension scheme.

The company, which is owned by First Group, claims the closure is 'essential', but RMT rightly points to the fact that the scheme is well-funded and has a healthy valuation.

**Pensions are not a perk or a privilege, they're deferred wages. We do not have to accept bosses using cuts to pensions arrangements to offset costs elsewhere.**

With transport workers elsewhere, including on TfL, facing potential attacks on their pension arrangements, it's good to see workers at Hull Trains fighting back. Hopefully this will inspire and galvanise others. If the four strikes in August don't force concessions from management, action will need to be escalated.

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Check out the Off The Rails blog for more in-depth analysis and with regular updates on the campaigns covered in this issue and the new issues that regularly arise for railway workers.

**[www.workersliberty.org/blogs/rails](http://www.workersliberty.org/blogs/rails)**

For stories from London Underground's frontline, check out Tubeworker's blog:

**[www.workersliberty.org/twblog](http://www.workersliberty.org/twblog)**

## ***off the rails***

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- **is for all rail workers, whatever your job, employer or union**
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