

RMT *news*

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Employer		RMT Branch	
Job Description			

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EDITORIAL

END OUTSOURCING



RMT's insourcing campaign has scored a major victory as the theoutsourced TransPennine Express dispatch contract will be brought back in-house.

By bringing these workers back in-house, passengers will benefit from a more stable, properly integrated workforce, while staff gain the security, conditions and a stronger voice that comes with direct employment.

This shows what can be achieved when campaigning to end the failed outsourcing model.

However, this victory has been tempered by the fact that Transport for London has awarded a five-year cleaning contract to Mitie instead of taking outsourced workers in-house.

This appalling decision means that RMT members working as cleaners will not enjoy the same terms and conditions as directly employed staff on London Underground.

RMT has estimated that Mitie paid out £41.5 million to its investment bank shareholders in the last financial year and have on average profit margins of 11 per cent on contracts they acquire on rail.

We must be clear that rewarding highly profitable companies with a dreadful track record of paying poor wages and not giving staff decent employment conditions, is a disgrace.

Labour has promised the biggest wave of insourcing in a generation, and it is now time a Labour Mayor takes tube cleaners back in house without delay.

Nearly £2 billion was taken out of the railway over the last 10 years to line the pockets of shareholders and private company bosses.

Even during the pandemic, when operators were entirely reliant on

public funding, dividends kept flowing out of the industry and often leaving the country altogether.

We need Great British Railways to bring track and train together as soon as possible to ensure every penny is reinvested in a railway run for the interests of rail workers and passengers.

The union is also fighting hard for a safer environment for all transport workers regardless of the grade they work in.

Part of our Action Against Assaults campaign has been for a reversal of cuts to British Transport Police which have led to a significant reduction of police presence across the network.

This includes the removal of over 500 jobs and the closure of BTP stations this year because of a £8.5 million funding shortfall.

The recent multiple stabbing in Huntingdon has, of course, brought this issue into focus and BTP funding was raised in Parliament following this incident.

While the BTP has increased its deployment across the network, it was only achieved through '12-hour shifts, overtime and a pause on non-urgent paperwork, including prosecution files' and that this 'cannot be sustained for long'.

Finally, RMT members at Network Rail have overwhelmingly backed a pay offer in line with the Retail Price Index (RPI) for one year with a no compulsory redundancy guarantee.

This follows a similar three-year deal in line with RPI on London Underground. These deals were only possible due to the campaigning stance of this union that negotiations must be around RPI and not the inferior figures created by the Consumer Prices Index (CPI).

Eddie Dempsey

DLR SICK PAY STRIKE ACTION



RMT members working as cleaners on the Docklands Light Railway took further strike action over New Years Eve following bouts of 48-hour strike action last year over a lack of sick pay.

Bidvest Noonan, the contractor at the centre of this storm, has failed to offer the company sick pay to its staff despite the fact that a fellow contractor Amulet did so on the DLR.

Both contractors operate on DLR under KAD who is a company hired by TfL to run the service.

RMT has tried repeatedly to engage with Bidvest Noonan over the issue, but the contractor said that it was "discussing the matter with TfL," despite having had more than six months to respond to the union's demand for contractual sick pay.

With no progress and no

sign of meaningful engagement from the employer, members had no choice but to take strike action.

RMT general secretary Eddie Dempsey said that Bidvest Noonan on the DLR had behaved appallingly and not made any offer on company sick pay that is remotely acceptable.

"Their refusal to engage properly with the union shows the contempt local company representatives have for their staff who do a vital job on DLR.

"Our members will not put up with this appalling treatment and are prepared to take sustained strike action if necessary.

"Transport for London, which oversees outsourcing contracts, must bring these services back in house, and pay workers proper sick pay, if we are to avoid these kinds of disruptions in 2026," he said.



LONDON OVERGROUND RE-PRIVATISED

London lines handed to First instead of cheaper in-house operation

Transport for London has announced that First Rail London will take over the running of the London Overground from Arriva Rail in May, a move slammed by RMT.

Four bids were received by TfL from private companies wanting to profit from running London Overground services.

First Rail London is part of the First Group, which currently runs Avanti West Coast and Great Western Railway, though both are in line to be renationalised by the government.

RMT general secretary Eddie Dempsey said that despite the London mayor claiming that he backed public ownership of rail, London Overground was being re-privatised on a lucrative eight-year deal that puts profit before passengers.

"It's beyond belief,

especially when a Labour government is bringing the railways back into public hands.

"This is another outrageous decision, landing on the same day we learn that cleaning staff are to be outsourced again despite previous commitments to bring them in-house.

"Transport in London is being turned into a haven for exploitative outsourcing and privatisation and RMT will not accept it.

"We will oppose any attempt by TfL to secure devolved control over publicly owned Great British Railways services while it continues down this path," he said.

First Rail London is part of the First Group, which currently runs Avanti West Coast and Great Western Railway and have sucked £200 million out of the rail industry

in dividends.

Avanti and GWR are both in line to be renationalised by the government.

Announcing The deal with First Group, TfL claimed that it was the "best way of delivering a high performing and cost-effective London Overground operation".

Yet TfL's decision to re-privatise London Overground will cost more than public ownership. Just last year, Labour's Rail Minister Lord Hendy, who has run TfL Concessions, explained why TfL's private concessions will cost more than public ownership: "Not only would concessions be more expensive than this government's plans for public ownership but they would be even more costly to taxpayers than the current contracts."

Under the last Concession, Arriva Rail London extracted

£57 million in dividends from London Overground.

FirstGroup has also actively lobbied against the Labour government's rail reforms, attacking the DfT's position on Open Access and lobbying to ensure that devolved authorities like TfL are able to keep privatising services.

During Arriva's contract, which began in 2016 and was extended for two years, the Overground was rebranded by London mayor Sir Sadiq Khan, with its six sections each getting their own name: Mildmay, Windrush, Lioness, Weaver, Liberty and Suffragette.

In April this year, FirstGroup said: "It is vital that devolved authorities continue to be able to procure services from the private sector, as Transport for London and Merseyrail do now".



NEARLY TWO BILLION SUCKED OUT OF RAIL

CUT PROFITS: Protest at Victoria station, Southend on Sea, August 20, 2022 in support of striking railway workers.



New RMT report reveals £1.8 billion extracted by private sector in last ten years

Private rail companies have quietly extracted £1.8 billion from the railway in dividends since 2016, new RMT analysis has revealed.

The findings, published to mark the first anniversary of the Passenger Railways (Public Ownership) Act receiving Royal Assent, exposed the sheer scale of cash leaving the system under privatisation.

The report shows more than £510 million was paid out during and after the pandemic and £190.6 million in 2023/24 alone.

This is wealth extracted from the network into private shareholders pockets, instead of being reinvested to strengthen and modernise the railways.

RMT general secretary Eddie Dempsey said that nearly £2 billion had been taken out of the railway to line the pockets of shareholders

and private company bosses.

"Even during the pandemic, when operators were entirely reliant on public funding, dividends kept flowing out of the industry and often leaving the country altogether.

"The Public Ownership Act is a major step forward and we need Great British Rail to bring track and train together as soon as possible to ensure every penny is reinvested in a railway run for the interests of rail workers and passengers.

"That also means tackling fragmentation and the scourge of outsourcing which also leaks money out of the network and into the hands of privateers.

"Tens of thousands of workers are sub-contracted on our railways, including cleaners, caterers, security guards, revenue protection and infrastructure maintenance, renewal and engineering workers," he said. ■

Key report findings:

- FirstGroup extracted £203.7 million post-pandemic, including £60 million from Avanti West Coast, and spent £92 million on share buybacks in 2025 with another £50 million planned for 2026.
- Govia paid out £154 million, mainly from its Thameslink operations, even after its Southeastern franchise was removed for financial misconduct.
- Transport UK, the rebranded Abellio, took £114 million from three franchises now back in public hands.
- Arriva, owned by a Luxembourg-based private equity firm, paid out £35 million, almost all from CrossCountry.
- Publicly owned LNER returned more than £90 million to the Treasury.



NO DOO ON EAST WEST RAIL

Disabled groups join union protest against Driver Only Operation (DOO)

RMT activists and supporters demonstrated in early January outside Marylebone station in opposition to plans to introduce Driver Only Operation (DOO) on the new East West Rail line.

Chiltern Railways had announced that it intended to operate services on the new route without a second safety-critical member of staff, despite RMT's long-standing opposition to DOO.

RMT is clear that a second safety-critical person onboard trains plays a vital role in protecting passengers and workers, including providing reassurance, deterring anti-social behaviour, coordinating responses to incidents, managing emergency evacuations and dealing with fires.

The recent mass stabbing on

an LNER service at Huntingdon station has once again highlighted the importance of trained staff being present onboard to react quickly, raise the alarm and ensure effective coordination with control, signallers and the British Transport Police.

The union is demanding clear guarantees that East West Rail services operated by Chiltern will not be DOO and that a second safety-critical member of staff will be a mandatory requirement for trains to run. RMT general secretary Eddie Dempsey said that a guaranteed safety-critical second person onboard trains was essential for carrying out a wide range of duties and responding properly to dangerous and fast-moving situations.

"It is vital that any method of dispatch is agreed with the union and properly reflects the safety-critical skills and responsibilities of the second crew member.

"The horrific incident at Huntingdon showed exactly why having trained staff onboard matters.

"The quick actions of the guard and other crew meant the seriousness of the situation was immediately understood by control, signallers and the British Transport Police, allowing swift and decisive action.

"We need a clear commitment from Chiltern that East West Rail services will not be Driver Only Operation and that a second safety-critical member of staff will be guaranteed.

"Passengers value the

reassurance of having staff onboard, and RMT remains totally opposed to DOO.

"If Chiltern management continue to be unreasonable, we cannot rule out Industrial action to defend this safety-critical role," he said.

RMT members were joined by disabled groups including *Bucks Vision* which supports people with visual impairment and Disabled People Against Cuts (DPAC).

According to the Department for Transport's own survey, crime on the network has also been going up in the last year and only around a third of women feel safe when travelling on public transport.

Get your MP to sign Early Day Motion 2454 using the QR code above.



INSOURCING VICTORY AT TRANSPENNINE

RMT celebrated a major victory for rail workers after it was confirmed that the outsourced TransPennine Express dispatch contract will be brought back in-house and transferred to Northern Trains.

The decision will see RMT members currently employed by Carlisle Support Services at Manchester Piccadilly and Leeds stations TUPE-transferred into direct employment with Northern Trains.

The transfer is expected to be completed by May.

The union said that the move represented a significant step forward for the national insourcing campaign and the end of years of fragmented employment arrangements for staff carrying out critical frontline duties.

RMT general secretary Eddie Dempsey welcomed it as a superb victory for members, the national campaign to end outsourcing and for common sense on the railway.



PROTEST: RMT regional organisers Craig Johnston and Steve Shaw join a public leafleting campaign at Manchester Piccadilly

"Dispatch workers perform a vital safety-critical role, and they should never have been outsourced in the first place.

"By bringing these workers back in-house, passengers will benefit from a more stable, properly integrated workforce,

while staff gain the security, conditions and a stronger voice that comes with direct employment.

"This shows what can be achieved when union's campaign relentlessly to end the failed outsourcing model,"

he said.

RMT will continue to campaign to end outsourcing and hold the government to its commitment to undertake the biggest wave of insourcing in a generation. ■

STRIP FIRSTGROUP OF AVANTI WEST COAST CONTRACT

RMT has called for FirstGroup-owned Avanti West Coast to be stripped of its remaining rail contracts and its operations returned to public ownership.

The demand follows continued attacks on station and retail grades, with the company refusing to address serious staffing, safety and accessibility concerns.

Avanti has failed to fill long-standing station grade

vacancies or retain staff on permanent contracts, while pushing through a de-staffing agenda that threatens passenger safety, accessibility and service quality.

These include unsafe single staffing of gatelines, ongoing uncertainty around ticket office staffing and opening times, and a sharp increase in disabled passenger assistance duties, placing additional strain on staff and raising clear

safety concerns.

The union will now step up its campaigning work with Disabled People Against the Cuts and Transport Focus.

RMT general secretary Eddie Dempsey said that FirstGroup's poor record running Avanti West Coast was characterised by a business model which put cost-cutting and private profit ahead of safety, accessibility and decent long-term jobs.

"Our members are being stretched to breaking point, particularly as demands around disabled passenger assistance continue to rise without the staffing levels needed to do the job safely.

"FirstGroup has shown it is not fit to run a railway and Avanti West Coast should be taken out of its hands and returned to public ownership as soon as practically possible," he said. ■

NO SPY IN THE CAB!

THE TRIAL OF IN-CAB ATTENTION AND ALERTNESS MONITORING DEVICES IS CURRENTLY BEING TRIALED ON A LIMITED NUMBER OF TRAINS



The union has made clear that it opposes the use of such devices in driving cabs as fatigue monitoring equipment does not constitute an appropriate control measure for loss of alertness or consequences of fatigue in operational rail staff including train drivers.



rmt.org.uk



BTP CUTS MEAN JOB LOSSES

Police funding continues to fall while staff assaults steadily rise

RMT has slammed a decision by the British Transport Police Authority (BTPA) to back a three-year funding deal that will leave BTP facing frontline cuts, creating a less safe railway.

The Authority voted

through uplifts of eight per cent in 2026/27, five per cent in 2027/28 and just one per cent in 2028/29.

BTP made clear in the meeting that the third-year settlement creates a £2 million hole in its budget and would

force reductions in headcount, mainly in frontline roles.

When BTP ran visible evening patrols at Kings Cross and St Pancras for three weeks in autumn 2025, staff assaults dropped by 59 per cent, violence by 21 per cent,

public-order incidents by 41 per cent and shoplifting by 25 per cent.

Rail unions and the TUC wrote to all Authority members ahead of the meeting, warning that any further loss of headcount would be

unacceptable.

While the first two years of the settlement allow BTP to recruit after more than 500 posts were lost this year, the year-three cut threatens to undo that work.

RMT general secretary Eddie Dempsey said that the decision was the responsibility of ministers and builds in cuts to jobs as part of the funding package, putting the safety of rail workers and passengers at risk.

"You cannot rebuild police numbers in years one and two only to slash them again in year three. It is very reckless and undermines safety.

"By 2028/29, Great British Railways will be up and running and delivering savings through nationalisation.

"RMT is calling on the Secretary of State to urgently review the 2028/29 settlement so BTP can plan with certainty and keep a visible police presence on the network as crime continues to rise.

"We call on the British Transport Police Authority to guarantee no headcount cuts," he said.

CAMPAIGNING

Part of RMT's Action Against Assaults campaign is focused on campaigning for a reversal of the cuts which have led to a significant reduction of BTP presence across the rail network.

This includes the removal of over 500 jobs and the closure of a number of BTP stations this year because of a £8.5 million funding shortfall. This has restricted BTP's ability to provide a visible police presence on the railway, impacting staff and passenger safety and security at a time of rising crime and violence.

The recent multiple stabbing in Huntingdon has brought this issue into clear focus and BTP funding was raised in Parliament on a number of occasions.

Following the incident, the

BTP increased deployment across the network was only achieved through 12-hour shifts, overtime and a pause on non-urgent paperwork, including prosecution files' and that this 'cannot be sustained for long'.

Activity around this part of the campaign has involved the union meeting with the Chief Constable of the BTP to discuss the issue of assaults against staff.

The union has been highlighting concerns about BTP funding, including new data which showed a decline in the BTP officer to passenger ratio of a third between 2009/10 to 2025/26.

The union's analysis of the latest staff assaults data also showed a 17 per cent increase of assaults against staff in the summer months compared to last year.

RMT will continue to campaign for sufficient funding for BTP, including no reduction in head count, and a

further restoration of BTP levels, given that around 1,000 more officers would be required to restore historical policing levels.

Actions

The union also organised a webinar for RMT safety representatives giving advice relating to the AAA campaign.

RMT has written to all employers with campaign demands set out a process with RMT regional organisers on how to progress demands contained in the letter - depending on the response of the employer to it.

RMT national executive committee members and regional council representatives and regional organisers and the RMT's health and safety advisory committee will meet at the end of January to discuss next steps in the campaign including the potential for balloting members for industrial action in relation to tackling assaults. ■

ASSAULTS RAISED IN PARLIAMENTS

The convenor of RMT's Scottish Parliamentary Group Richard Leonard MSP recently raised the issue of assaults against public transport workers in the Scottish

Parliament. This followed his attendance at the RMT Scotland Council meeting where he heard first hand from members including from the rail and ferry sectors about their experiences of violence and abuse at work.

He asked in Holyrood if the Scottish government would legislate to create a standalone offence of assaulting a public transport worker at work, as the union has been campaigning for. In response, the Cabinet Secretary for Transport Fiona Hyslop MSP made reference to a working group on staff assaults which was set up as a result of RMT pressure, and was attended by rail unions, BTP, Transport Scotland and

ScotRail.

The Cabinet Secretary stated that the group was looking at issues including 'greater protections for rail workers' and the Scottish government was taking the issue 'extremely seriously'. The union will continue to pursue this issue with the Scottish government, including in the run up to the May 2026 Scottish Elections.

The issue was also raised in the UK Parliament by Rachael Maskell MP, most recently in a question to the Home Secretary following the Huntingdon incident and the union has worked with her to follow up this issue with the government.

The union is continuing to campaign for a standalone offence to be created through the Crime and Policing Bill which is now at Committee stage in the Lords.

■



ASSAULTS: Convenor of RMT's Scottish Parliamentary Group Richard Leonard MSP raised the issue of assaults against transport workers in the Scottish Parliament

PROTECTING OUR MEMBERS:

FREE £5,000 Accidental Death Cover with RMTProtect



At RMT, we're dedicated to looking after the interests of our members. Beyond workplace representation, we're proud to offer valuable benefits to enhance our members' lives. One standout benefit is the **Free £5,000 Accidental Death Cover** we've negotiated with RMTProtect on your behalf.

Over 74,000 members have already taken advantage of this offer, providing peace of mind and financial security for their loved ones. Here's how this free cover has made a difference:

MEMBERSHIP ENTITLEMENT: FREE £5,000 Accidental Death Cover

This free £5,000 policy covers you if you die due to an accident. There are no hidden catches, and it's guaranteed as long as you are a UK resident aged 18-69.

It lasts for one year and then you can renew it again for free. Terms and conditions apply. The cover will give you the following immediate benefits:

- ✓ **FREE £5,000 Accidental Death Cover**
- ✓ **Guaranteed acceptance** with no medical questions asked
- ✓ **Annual renewal** at no cost
- ✓ **Quick and easy online registration process**
- ✓ **Support from a UK-based friendly customer service team**
- ✓ **Peace of mind** for you and your loved ones in the event of an accident

How the FREE Cover Helped an RMT Member's Family

Mr. S, a dedicated London Underground worker, tragically lost his life after falling down the stairs at home.

When he didn't show up for work - an unusual occurrence - a friend checked on him and found him at the bottom of the stairs. Sadly, Mr. S passed away from a traumatic brain injury.

Thanks to his Free £5,000 Accidental Death Cover, RMTProtect provided £5,000 to Mr. S's family, offering much-needed support during a difficult time.

WHY MEMBERS ARE SIGNING UP

Here's what some members have said about why they registered for the free cover:

Customer Feedback, 2023/2024

"To help with the funeral arrangements and other expenses."

"I'm single, and I have three children and seven grandchildren. I want to know I'm covered if anything happens to me."

"Peace of mind if I die in an accident."

How to Register for Your Free Cover

It's easy to secure your Free £5,000 Accidental Death Cover:

1. Visit www.rmtprotect.com/benefit
2. Or simply scan the QR code opposite

Registration only takes a few minutes. Don't wait to take advantage of this invaluable membership benefit. Protect your family and gain peace of mind today!



RMTProtect is a trading name of Union Income Benefit Holdings Ltd (UIB) which is authorised and regulated by the Financial Conduct Authority, register number 307575. This can be checked on the FCA website www.fca.org.uk.

Free Accidental Death Cover is underwritten by Stonebridge International Insurance Ltd, authorised by the Prudential Regulation Authority and regulated by the Financial Conduct Authority and the Prudential Regulation Authority, register number 203188. Union Income Benefit Holdings Ltd and Stonebridge International Insurance Ltd are both members of the same group of Companies and are ultimately owned and controlled by the Parent Company Embignell Ltd, registered in England no 05871053.

ORGANISING AT RFA

RMT national secretary Darren Procter reports on the new unified branch at Royal Fleet Auxiliary

As one of the largest employers of seafarers in the UK, the Royal Fleet Auxiliary has always been a priority focus for the union within the maritime sector.

However, it was recognised through dialogue and shipboard visits that the union needed to improve how we organise and engage with members at RFA.

Surveys of members and internal dialogue provided evidence and support for an RFA specific branch that would allow the union to become better organised, encourage members to attend meetings that is solely focused on engagement of members within RFA, placing a greater emphasis on the priorities set out by the membership and evolving as a workforce.

During the dispute we identified that some branches with RFA members were not meeting and when they did attendance was often low and it is a fundamental requirement that we have effective organisation in times of dispute and particularly at RFA with the complexities of the RFA's operations.

I am pleased to report that the branch has now met twice and, on both occasions, has had attendance figures well into the 30s, but more importantly members volunteering to take up positions within the branch and participating in constructive discussions during the meetings.

Members have also contacted the branch officials after the meetings and provided positive feedback in relation to the direction of travel of your union at RFA.

At the last meeting I provided an update in relation to the scrutiny of RFA terms and conditions, policies and procedures and how we have identified leverage surrounding formulation of wages and/or application of leave.

This update revealed the benefits of having a standalone branch. The content and discussion were RFA specific and members know that they are going to a branch meeting to talk about their concerns, terms and conditions and other priorities.

Members have demonstrated that they are more willing to attend and engage and your branch officials have set out dates for monthly meetings, which will be held virtually in the first instance and adapted as the branch see necessary.

During our last pay dispute with the RFA, the union achieved an agreed settlement accepted by the workforce but, whilst it was seen as a victory, RMT must continually analyse how to improve, maximise engagement, utilise modern technology to effectively communicate with members and broaden the number of members we have actively involved in trade union activities whilst ensuring that we're ballot ready at the RFA.

We should not rely upon a strategy being effective because it had been successful in the past. The union must strive to continually improve, listen to input from members and learn from improvements or initiatives in other areas of the union or within other trade unions too.

Whilst there was a very small minority who didn't want to see these changes, there is no doubt about the success to date but this must continue. RMT must build and develop arguments on issues such as 1 for 1 leave ratios, allowances, internet connectivity, shipboard welfare and accommodation standards.

We must build and develop industrial representatives, health and safety representatives, equality representatives and ensure that the RFA branch is represented across RMT conferences and forums.

This is the opportunity for every RFA member to build and mould your branch to be effective and pro-active, campaigning on issues. The time to organise and build is now!



TIDESURGE MEETING: RMT Southwest and South Wales Shipping branch recently held a meeting onboard the Royal Fleet Auxiliary vessel Tidesurge whilst in Cammel Laird shipyard with other members attending via zoom. 40-year union membership awards were handed out to former branch secretary Andy Clare, Paul Brown and Simon Jordan by current secretary Darren James. 10-year awards were also sent to John Lansdown and Scott Curtis as well as 25-year awards to Gareth Jenkins, Christian Jones, Nigel Swinden, Neil Jefferson, Terence Bottrill, Richard Yorke and Brian Oatley.

WOMEN DEMAND BETTER

DELEGATES: Mary Jane Herbison, Esther Burns and Angela Watts



Scottish TUC women's committee launch manifesto in Glasgow

Scottish Trade Union Congress delegates launched their manifesto in Glasgow recently, asking parties to work on many issues that women and girls must tackle daily in their communities, workplaces and schools.

The RMT Scotland delegation made up of Mary Jane Herbison, Esther Burns and Angela Watts participated in the two days of lively debate. Delegates also participated in a panel session on the rise of the far right and the use of social media.

RMT moved a motion on

the RMT campaign Action Against Assaults, exposing the fact that in 2024 British Transport Police recorded over 7,000 violent and serious public order offences against rail staff, marking a 47 per cent increase since 2021.

Further BTP cuts would mean guards having to deal with groups of drunk passengers alone and the risk of sexual harassment, verbal abuse and physical attacks increasing.

RMT is also asking for stronger legal protection for public transport workers who

are abused and assaulted at work and campaigns for staffing levels and an end to lone working.

RMT delegates also moved a motion against outsourcing and how it was an equality issue as most caterers and cleaners are women on lower pay, inferior conditions and sometimes no career prospects. RMT is fighting to create a single integrated, publicly owned railway with an integrated workforce.

A reasonable adjustments for Breastfeeding motion was also moved by the RMT

Scotland delegation. As most RMT members don't work in a set place, like an office, it is very important that facilities are in place for women to express milk in a private room, not a toilet.

Delegates also argued that flexible working must be given by the employer, obliging them to change shift patterns. It is well documented about the benefits of breastfeeding to both mother and baby, so it's important that the government must ensure that these reasonable adjustments are enshrined in law.



RMT national secretary Darren Procter met the Maritime Minister Keir Mather in December (above) to discuss the need for a comprehensive set of conditions in the mandatory Seafarers Charter.

This includes issues such as sick pay, holiday pay and pensions based on collective bargaining agreements (CBAs)

covering Stena Line and DFDS members who continue to be undercut on short sea international and domestic routes by rogue operators P&O Ferries, Irish Ferries and others.

The Minister confirmed in a parliamentary debate that the Seafarers Charter will "include additional powers to regulate safety, including through roster

patterns, fatigue management and training, as well as remuneration beyond just pay in UK waters.

"That will deliver on our promise to create a mandatory seafarers' charter. We will be consulting on the use of those powers in 2026," he said.

The union had briefed MPs widely before the debate

which included a strong intervention from RMT parliamentary group convenor John McDonnell.

This puts the union on course to deliver the changes needed to recover thousands of jobs and apprenticeships in the ferries sector for Ratings covered by RMT agreements.



RMT CONDEMNS BILFINGER FOR ZERO-HOURS EXPLOITATION

RMT has condemned the decision by Bilfinger to cut over 100 North Sea workers jobs and has criticised Harbour Energy for briefing the media before notifying the union.

Harbour which owns offshore platforms, made the proposed redundancies public but RMT was only formally informed days later.

The union warned that these cuts will not only hit those directly affected but will also ripple through the wider North Sea supply chain, with

potentially severe consequences for contractors, service providers and local economies.

RMT said the move exposes the broken business model underpinning North Sea employment where workers are kept on ad-hoc or "zero-hours by stealth" contracts for years, going platform to platform without knowing if they will have income from one trip to the next.

RMT general secretary Eddie Dempsey said that

Bilfinger and Harbour Energy were hiding behind a business model built on insecurity where skilled offshore workers are treated like disposable labour, kept on zero-hours style contracts only to be thrown on the scrapheap at the employers' whim.

"It is nothing short of contemptuous that the cuts plan was leaked to the media before sitting down with the union, and only then were we offered a token 30-minute consultation.

"These workers have kept

the platforms running, only to be tossed aside as a cost-saving measure while viable and profitable companies benefit at their expense.

"We want urgent government intervention through the North Sea Jobs Service, alongside reform of the North Sea Transition Authority, including public stakes in oil and gas assets, with the goal of ultimately putting an end to this farcical and exploitative employment model," he said.





PROTEST: RMT assistant general secretary John Leach addresses protest outside London City Hall to demand an end to outsourcing

OUTSOURCING- EXPLOITING THE RAIL SECTOR

New report exposes how outsourcing privateers sweat money out of the industry

A new RMT report has exposed that the top six outsourcing facilities management firms in rail – Mitie, OCS, Bidvest Noonan, Churchill, Carlisle and ABM – are raking in profits of over ten per cent a year.

As a result, every year, more than £150 million is taken out of the rail industry by outsourcing companies who profit from contracts for cleaning, security, catering and gateline services in rail.

Last year, these profits are

likely to have amounted to around £152 million. On this basis, since 2016, outsourcing companies are likely to have extracted more than £1.6 billion in profits.

Analysis of outsourcing firms' accounts has revealed that they have retained these healthy profit margins, in spite of the cost-of-living crisis and the rises in the National Minimum Wage by using contracts that pass the costs on to the government.

The same is true of rising

National Insurance costs which means that outsourcing firms' profits are protected at the expense of the taxpayer.

The outsourcing firms tend to be owned by super-rich financial institutions and private equity funds who use clever financial engineering to extract more profits and turn them into shareholder value.

This involves holding down workers' wages and passing costs onto the taxpayer while making dividend payments, charging interest on

intercompany loans and using accumulated cash to buy back their own shares to ramp up their share prices.

For instance, Mitie Plc paid out £54.5 million to its investment bank shareholders last year as well as also spending £104 million in the same year on buying back its own shares to ramp up their value in the stock market. In the last two years, it has awarded its CEO a total of £20.5 million.

OCS Group has been

bought by a large US Private Equity Fund, CD&R, which has loaded it with £1 billion of debt, including £600 million in 'preference shares' held by the private equity fund and carrying a 10 per cent coupon. Its borrowing costs doubled last year as a result, with £55 million going to CD&R. OCS's UK arm saw its borrowing costs leap to £17 million last year.

Bidvest Noonan is part of the massive transnational South African facilities management conglomerate Bidvest. The accounts of its UK parent company Bidvest Group UK plc show that, as of June 2024, the latter lent Bidvest Noonan £91.5 million at 5.05 per cent with a repayment date of June 2027. Bidvest Noonan paid £4.1 million in interest on this loan. By June 2025, the loan had increased to £144 million carrying an interest rate of 6.39 per cent.

Churchill Group was bought and sold by a Private Equity fund between 2020 and 2023. A £43 million dividend was extracted from Churchill and then used to fund the acquisition of the fund's stake and repayments of a £25 million loan with more than £35 million payments.

The stake was sold to an Employee-Owned Trust set up by the owners and the fund to buy it at a price they determined. This also helped avoid capital gains tax. Churchill now owes £19 million to another private equity fund and the EOT owes £30 million to three financial institutions.

The employees know nothing about what has been done in their name. Nor have they received anything from the Trust. Churchill's highest paid director, meanwhile, received a remuneration package of £863,000 in 2024, an uplift of 230 per cent on the previous year.

Carlisle Support Services Ltd is 68 per cent owned by Lord Ashcroft, former Deputy chair of the Conservative Party

and famously non-domiciled for tax purposes. Lord Ashcroft, who is resident in Belize, holds the stake through a stock-broking firm which legally holds it as a 'nominee-shareholder, though he is the sole beneficiary of this holding.

ABM Facility Services UK is a subsidiary of the US facilities management giant ABM Industries. ABM's contract with TfL accounts for 40 per cent of its UK revenue and the company have been building up their profits on the contract in part by cutting the number of cleaners they employ on the Underground, increasing workloads on the remaining staff.

By 2024, ABM accumulated enough to pay out a dividend of £30,461,000, which was

then funnelled up through its UK group structure and £20 million was paid out to ABM International Limited, a company based in Bermuda.

SSP Plc the catering multinational, did not stop paying out dividends during the pandemic and the company has paid out £544 million since 2018, at an average of £68 million a year. SSP is also amid a £100 million share buyback programme.

RMT general secretary Eddie Dempsey said that Great British Railways was an historic opportunity to tackle parasitic profiteers who sweat the rail network.

He said that the government had already taken a major step in the right direction by bringing the rail companies into public

ownership and working to create a single, publicly owned company.

"This single operator will inherit a thicket of contracts for 'ancillary' services in passenger operations, as well as extensive sub-contracting and the use of agency workers on the infrastructure side.

"A wave of insourcing on rail would be good for workers because it would remove the parasites who profit on exploitation and inequality and create an integrated, trained workforce.

"The government and the industry can start this work now by mapping their contracts, identifying end dates and sitting down with the RMT to negotiate and agree a programme of insourcing," he said. ■

GROSS PROFIT MARGINS FOR OUTSOURCING COMPANIES 2020-2024

	Mitie	OCS	Bidvest Noonan	Churchill	ABM	Carlisle	Average
2020	16%	10%	12%	16%	3%	6%	11%
2021	13%	12%	14%	20%	7%	8%	12%
2022	10%	12%	14%	23%	10%	8%	13%
2023	9%	14%	12%	22%	11%	9%	13%
2024	11%	12%	11%	22%	10%	10%	13%

TURNOVER OF UK ARMS AND ULTIMATE OWNERS

Company	Turnover 2024 (£m)	Ultimate parent	Ultimate parent revenue (£m)
ABM	203.2	ABM Inc (US)	6,690
Bidvest Noonan	500.0	Bidvest Group (SA)	5,659
Carlisle	144.5	Lord Ashcroft	Not known
Churchill	382.3	UK Owners	382
Mitie	5,091.1	Mitie Plc	5,091
OCS	840.8	OCS Topco (Clayton Dubilier and Rice Private Equity)	2,258
SSP/Rail Gourmet/Gate Gourmet	892.4	SSP Group Plc	3,443

RMT 2026 CONFERENCES

Health and safety conference	Liverpool	February 11/12
Young members' conference	Newcastle	February 27/28
Women's conference	Liverpool	March 7/8
Organising conference of signalling and operations	Eastbourne	March 11/12
Education Conference	Poole	March 12/13
Organising conference of hotel, catering and ancillary Grades	Tenby	March 20/22
Black and ethnic minority members conference	Peterborough	March 24/25
Organising conference of supervisory and associated Grades	Nottingham	March 27/28
Organising conference of engineering grades	Ashford	April 8/9
Disabled workers conference,	Exeter	April 14/15
Bus workers organising conference	Chesterfield	April 17
Organising conference of train crew and shunting grades	Plymouth	April 23/24
Retired activists' conference	Manchester	April 30
Organising conference of transport cleaning worker	Aberystwyth	May 8/9
Organising conference of station and associated grades	Wakefield	May 8/9
LGBT+ members' conference	London	May 14/15
Branch and regional council secretaries conference	Southend	May 30/31
RMT Annual General Meeting	Liverpool	June 21/26

For more information about these conferences contact your branch secretary.

OFFICIAL RMT BRANDED MERCHANDISE

Show your support for the union. Go to the RMT webshop on the RMT web site for more details.
Promote your branch, region and the union - call Pellacraft on 01623 636 602 if you have any queries.





EU MILITARISATION INTENSIFIES

Growing EU military build-up ignores transport workers' rights

The European Transport Workers' Federation (ETF) has warned that European Union plans to further militarise the bloc represented a threat to transport workers' rights and raised the spectre of forced labour.

The European Commission has presented plans to create an EU-wide military mobility area by next year, bringing the EU one step closer towards a 'Military Schengen.'

In order to move troops and military equipment across Europe rapidly, the Commission wants to remove regulatory barriers to allow cross-border movements.

This would involve an emergency framework: a new European Military Mobility Enhanced Response System (EMERS) for fast-track procedures and priority access to infrastructure, supporting armed forces acting in the context of EU or NATO.

NATO secretary-general Mark Rutte has also recently urged EU member states to prepare for large-scale war, warning that "we must be prepared for the scale of war our grandparents and great grandparents endured".

EU authorities are already allocating unprecedented sums for military hardware. According to the European Defence Agency (EDA), the combined arms spending of member states shot up by 19 per cent in 2024 reaching 343 billion euros. For 2025, that figure is expected to hit a staggering 381 billion euros.

The ETF has pointed out that transport was a critical infrastructure for moving military hardware.

"When policymakers talk about 'military mobility', they are talking about the roads, railways, ports, airports, bridges, tunnels and vehicles that our union members operate every single day. And they are talking about the workers who drive, sail, fly, load, maintain and control those vehicles and infrastructures.

"The ETF has always stood for peace. Our Constitution explicitly states that we 'promote peace and oppose all forms of physical, political or social violence'.

"Peace is a precondition for the full exercise of human rights and stable democracy. "There is no peace and

security without social justice," it said.

Last year, the Commission and the EU High Representative for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy Kaja Kallas, also put forward the White Paper for European Defence – Readiness 2030, complemented by the Commission's ReArm Europe Plan/Readiness 2030, an ambitious arms package providing financial levers to EU member states to drive an investment surge in military capabilities.

The military mobility package has been developed in close coordination with the European External Action Service (EEAS) and the EDA, ensuring coherence with NATO standards and procedures.

The European Commission published proposals for a Regulation on Military Mobility, to facilitate the rapid movement of troops and military equipment.

However, the ETF has warned that the Commission's Communication failed to even mention workers once.

"It also ignores the persistent problem of labour

shortages and how to address them, as well as the well-known deterioration in working conditions in the sector.

"Disregarding such fundamental issues is a serious threat to the success of this proposal for military mobility. If we can't attract workers in times of peace, how can we expect to do so in times of war?" it said.

The ETF insisted that the requisitioning of civilian transport workers or assets in a crisis must never become forced labour.

"The derogations on driving time, rest periods and cabotage rules announced by the European Commission send an extremely worrying sign.

"Transport workers may be called to act in a crisis at a moment's notice, with hundreds of lives depending on their decisions they make under extreme pressure.

"Security and preparedness can only be built on the highest standards of safety, training and working conditions – not on cost-cutting and liberalisation," a statement said. ■

YOUNG MEMBERS STUDY GROUP

Connor Slomski reports on a study group for RMT young members



RMT young activists from across the country, including myself, gathered for this year's Introduction to Trade Unionism course at the Marx Memorial Library (MML) in Clerkenwell.

The course, led jointly by RMT Young Members Chair Sarah Cundy and Simon

Renton of the MML, explored the history of the British trade union movement.

It included sessions on political economy and workshops on the union's development from the 1966 Seaman's Strike to the privatisation of British Rail. These sessions were delivered

by experts in their fields and were accessible to young members of all educational backgrounds.

The MML's rich resources helped us understand how and why our union developed into its current industrial structure.

I would like to thank the

staff at the MML for their knowledge and hospitality during the course, and to all participants for their contributions. Working class education that is accessible to all should be at the core of what our union is about, and it was great to see this in action in Clerkenwell. ■

MML YOUTH PROGRAMME FOR 2026

Study group on 50th anniversary of political activist Paul Robeson's death	20 Jan	Onsite only
Wapping strike at 40	24 Jan	Hybrid
Working class history series with GFTU – Mary Macarthur	29 Jan	Online only
Andy Friend 'Comrades in Art' book launch	12 Feb	Hybrid
Working class history series with GFTU – 1918 Equal Pay strike	26 Feb	Online only
Lecture on Wilhelm Liebknecht	12 March	Online only
Marx Oration	15 March	
Working class history series with GFTU – General Strike and its aftermath	26 March	Online only
Book Sale	28 March	Onsite only
Lenin Reds on the Green	20 April	Onsite only
AGM – run up to general strike (Mary D)	26 April	Hybrid
Working Class history series with GFTU – British Day Nurseries	30 April	Online only
May Day	1 May	Onsite only
General Strike symposium	9 May	Hybrid
Working class history series with GFTU – part time work in post war years	28 May	Online only
Radical Clerkenwell – a trio of talks in partnership with Amwell Society	27 June	Onsite only

For more information about these conferences contact YMChair@RMT.org.uk.



LAUNCH: Awarding-winning Apprentice Charter launched at Young Member's Conference last year

CALLING YOUNG MEMBERS!

RMT young members' chair Sarah Cundy outlines plans for conference and beyond

The young members advisory committee is organising a year of activity starting with the annual young members' conference which is getting bigger every year.

Over 60 delegates attended conference in Canterbury last year and we are hoping for more in 2026 which is generously being hosted by Newcastle and Gateshead branch (wae aye!).

Conference will be taking place on 27/28 February 2026 so ask your branch secretary for a form to attend.

This annual event is a coming together of young members from across the country to take part in educational sessions with guest speakers, debate and discussion on motions, and lively socials in the evenings.

In previous years, we've had practical training on organising your workplace, sessions on lobbying politicians, and high-profile guests such as campaigning economist Gary Stevenson and RMT speakers including officers and NEC members.

There are informal and inclusive workshops focused on the big changes facing our

industries, including the transition to Great British Railways.

Conference is also a great way to meet other reps and activists and to gain the knowledge, tools and confidence needed to become more involved in the union going forward.

This year will bring more of the same: engaging speakers, hands-on organising workshops, and plenty of time to share experiences and get to know people from across the length and breadth of our union.

As you can see, this year's young members' Introduction to Trade Unionism course at the Marx Memorial Library has also started with plenty of room for more participants. This time, in collaboration with the library, we have sought to introduce a new approach to the course: one that was more self-led and less lecture heavy.

However, this is only part of a packed year of organising, courses, and events led by RMT young members.

We were also honoured to receive a highly commended award for 'Best Recruitment and Organising



AWARD: Rhys Harmer of RMT's young workers' apprentice organising committee and Sarah Cundy accept the TUC award for the Apprentice Charter from general secretary Eddie Dempsey.

Communication' at the TUC Communications Awards for the RMT Apprentice Charter produced by the RMT apprentice organising committee.

The charter was part of our wider apprentice organising campaign, which has seen young members get organised in their workplaces, run socials and events, and put pressure on politicians and employers to improve the pay and terms and conditions of apprentices.

So, if you are aged 30 or under, don't miss out. Ask your branch or regional council if

you can come along as a conference delegate.

Please submit nomination forms to the National Education Centre, Doncaster, or via email to m.cudjoe@rmt.org.uk by 9 February, 2026. For any general enquiries about the RMT young members, you can contact me (Sarah) at YMChair@RMT.org.uk.

Equally, if you're an activist over 30, please encourage young members in your branch or workplace to think about attending!



STANDING IN PRIDE AND POWER



RMT's Black & Ethnic Minority Members (B&EMM) advisory committee celebrated Black History month with an event in London called Standing in Pride and Power.

Committee chair Wale Agunbiade said that the programme blended history, organising, and lived experience—underscoring how pride fuels collective power in the workplace and beyond.

Speakers included Diane Abbott MP, RMT assistant general secretary John Leach, RMT national executive committee Lee Williams and committee members Harj Singh and Chris Hamblen.

All speakers traced the roots of Black workers' contribution to Britain, diagnosed present-day challenges and set out a collective strategy for the period ahead.

Lee Williams framed pride as a source of power and he argued that Black workers' presence has to translate into voice, agency and decision-making—breaking glass

ceilings and changing the culture of our industries.

"Justice, not revenge; confidence, not complacency, the task is to organise so that representation leads to real, measurable change in policies, promotions and protections," he said.

John Leach spoke about recent London Underground disputes in their real human context, stressing how many affected workers come from black and ethnic minority backgrounds and why union victories must deliver for everyone.

"With a significant proportion of outsourced rail workers identifying as Black and ethnic minority, the fight against casualisation and fragmentation is inseparable from the fight for racial justice at work," he said.

As the UK's first Black woman MP since 1987, Diane Abbott argued that modern Britain would not be where it is without the wealth extracted through slavery and empire and said that recognising that legacy was essential.



MP: Committee chair Wale Agunbiade with committee secretary Catia Efunile and Diane Abbott MP for Hackney South

She paid tribute to the post-war migrants—especially the Windrush generation—who faced harsh conditions yet helped build the public services we rely on.

"Without migrants, Britain would not have the public sector it has today including the NHS and other services," she said.

Progress since the Second World War was real, with more MPs from diverse backgrounds and minority leaders in national politics, but she warned that the gains are uneven and fragile.

Chris Hamblen offered a historical portrait of Black

seafarers from the past, foregrounding stories of skill, bravery and contribution that were too often left out of narratives.

Black workers have been central to maritime life for centuries—shaping ports, shipyards and trade—and that acknowledging this past strengthens our resolve to fight for justice.

Harj Singh reflected on the role models who opened doors and the resilience required to keep them open. He underlined that racism can be systemic and must be challenged at every level, from policy to practice to culture. ■

STENA VISITS

RMT representatives made several visits to members working on the Irish Sea between Belfast and Liverpool to discuss various health and safety and industrial matters.



RMT national secretary Darren and Stena Line Convenor Mick Hobson with Belfast Stena port industrial representatives Alex Thompson and Peter Bacon following a meeting with management.



Stena Line Convenor Michael Hobson with seafarers onboard the Stena Estrid following the overnight crossing from Liverpool to Belfast.



Stena Embla shipboard representative Emma Purcell who it was good to catch up with as we travelled back from meetings in Belfast to Liverpool.



Darren Procter with Evan Sayers Port Health and Safety representative at Stena Line of Belfast Shipping branch doing a fantastic job in making the workplace safer.

CALLING RETIRED ACTIVISTS!

This year's annual retired activist conference takes place in Manchester, April 30

The 2026 RMT retired activist conference will take place at the Mechanics Centre, Manchester, on Thursday April 30, 2026.

This annual event is a vital opportunity for retired members to come together, share experiences and shape the union's campaigns on issues that matter most to older people.

It is also an opportunity to send a motion to the union's annual general meeting. Last year's conference highlighted the growing challenges facing retired members, including the removal of the winter fuel

payment to ongoing threats to social care and the NHS.

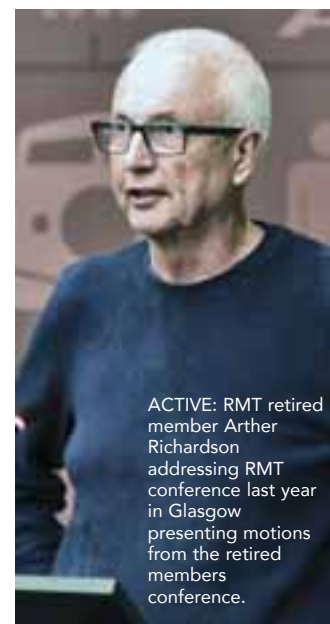
Delegates also passed powerful resolutions calling for fairer personal tax allowances, and improved travel concessions for retired railway workers. The conference also reaffirmed support for campaigns such as Women Against State Pension Inequality (WASPI) and the fight for a National Care Service for the Elderly.

Guest speakers, including RMT president George Welch, praised the efforts of retired activists in defending pensioners' rights and

influencing national policy. The event also provided updates on progress on campaigns such as securing legal benefits for retired members and campaigning for public ownership of bus services.

Reflecting on last year's discussions, conference vice chair Tony Donaghey reminded delegates: "All the issues raised in our motions highlight the need for older people to organise and stand up for their rights.

"We are facing further austerity cuts, and it's vital that we are ready to defend against these attacks".



ACTIVE: RMT retired member Arther Richardson addressing RMT conference last year in Glasgow presenting motions from the retired members conference.

Join us in Manchester!

For more details on registration and travel arrangements, please contact your Retired Activist Branch (see below) or contact the conference secretary, Paul Norris, at p.norris@rmt.org.uk or 020 7529 8806

London & Anglia Retired Activist Branch	Ray Knight	LArretiredmembers@rmt.org.uk
London Midland Retired Activist Branch	Tony Donaghey	tonydonaghey60@btinternet.com
London Transport Retired Activist Branch	Les Harvey	leslieharvey@gmail.com
Manchester & Northwest Retired Activist Branch	Noel McDonnell	noelmac42@gmail.com
Midlands Retired Activist Branch	Colin Haycock	colin.haycock@gmail.com
Northwest & North Wales Retired Activist Branch	Gordon Jones c/o	
Andy Warnock-Smith	a.warnocksmith@ntlworld.com	
Scotland Retired Activist Branch	Gerry McCann	scotlandretiredmembers@rmt.org.uk
Southeast Retired Activist Branch	John Collins	jacey1955@hotmail.com
Southwest & South Wales Retired Activist Branch	Kevin Williams	wwwretiredmembers@rmt.org.uk
Wessex Retired Activist Branch	David Rowland	dave-rowland@msn.com

The upcoming conference will continue to focus on protecting pensions and benefits from austerity measures, improving accessibility and travel concessions and organising

This is your chance to have your voice heard and help shape the union's strategy for the year ahead. ■

GERRY GABLE: ANTI-FASCIST AND FRIEND TO RMT

The anti-fascist movement has lost one of its most dedicated fighters. Gerry Gable, the long-standing publisher and editor of Searchlight magazine and a lifelong trade unionist, has passed away at the age of 88.

For RMT members, Gerry was a vital ally in the struggle to keep our workplaces free from the poison of fascism. His commitment was forged in the post-war streets of East London, where he recognised that fascism is a direct physical threat to minorities and the labour movement.

Gerry was a constant presence alongside our union at the Battle of Cable Street commemorations and a visitor

to our offices at Unity House. He maintained a close relationship with our former general secretary, the late Bob Crow, and our union has been a long-term supporter of Searchlight.

His work with the militant 62 Group and Searchlight pioneered an "intelligence-led" approach to anti-fascism. He knew that to defeat the enemies of our movement, we had to expose their funders and confront them wherever they reared their heads – from the workplace to the ballot box.

He never shied away from the "sharp end" of activism, maintaining a firm belief that anti-fascism is a core pillar of

trade union duty. He believed that a divided labour movement is a defeated one and spent sixty years ensuring fascism could not find a foothold in our ranks.

RMT general secretary Eddie Dempsey said that Gerry was a giant of the anti-fascist struggle and a dedicated friend to the union.

"He understood that fighting the fascists is an essential part of the work of any real trade union. He was at the sharp end for sixty years, and the labour movement is stronger and safer because of him."

The best tribute we can pay to Gerry is to ensure the poison he fought for six



ANTI-FASCIST: Gerry Gable at the 80th Battle of Cable Street Commemoration pic David Hoffman

decades never finds a home in our workplaces or our movement.

Gerry Gable, 1937 – 2026 ■

COLOMBIA NEEDS SUPPORT

Justice for Colombia outlines the need for solidarity

In the spring Colombians will go to the polls. They face a choice between a progressive government coalition or a return to the neoliberal and militaristic politics of the past.

It is a key moment, and one in which Colombian unions and civil society need our support against a powerful international alliance of far-right forces.

Most trade unionists know that Colombia was and remains a very dangerous place for labour organising. For decades, the country was torn by internal armed conflict that right-wing political elites, working alongside the army and paramilitaries, used to legitimise the state's targeting of social activists and trade unionists.

There has been widespread civil resistance to privatisation and public spending cuts that massively increased inequality. More than seven thousand railway workers lost their jobs when the country dismantled its rail network. Violence and repression helped make Colombia one of the world's most unequal countries.

After years of struggle for peace by Colombian unions and social movement, in 2016 the Colombian government signed a peace agreement with the country's largest guerrilla insurgency, the FARC.

The agreement provided a roadmap for dealing with the structural causes of conflict, while the end of fighting showed that the guerrillas weren't the cause of all Colombia's ills. Then Covid exposed the failings of Colombia's economic and healthcare systems, as the absence of state support increased poverty levels and hammered home the idea that Colombia needed change.

In 2022, the people elected



SOLIDARITY: The Pazcifico Human Rights Centre protects those under threat including displaced families, activists falsely labelled insurgents, and protesters unjustly imprisoned during the 2021 wave of protests sparked by inequality, state violence, and a proposed tax reform that grew into a broader demand for justice and dignity. Through JFC they get financial support from Irish trade union FORSA.

President Gustavo Petro on the promise to start building a fairer society. His campaign was supported by social movements, trade unions and conflict-affected communities. Given a mandate to implement transformative policies sorely needed in Colombia, the Petro government embarked on reducing inequality through social and economic reforms.

But those who hold power and wealth don't like to relinquish it without a fight. Petro's government has faced intense opposition in the political institutions and media. The lack of a congressional majority has impeded the administration's efforts to pass education, healthcare and labour rights reforms. But still real wages have grown, rural poverty is falling and child malnutrition is

down by a third.

Yet despite important steps forward, Colombia remains haunted by violence. Killings have fallen but social activists are still under attack: last year at least ten trade unionists, including transport workers, have been killed. The Petro government has far exceeded its predecessors in improving protection for targeted groups, but far-right paramilitaries and other armed groups still attack community activists and former FARC guerrillas in the peace process.

This means that Justice for Colombia's campaign work – on behalf of the British and Irish trade union movements that fully fund it – is as important today as ever. JFC has long lobbied internationally for diplomatic support for peacebuilding, an end to anti-union repression

and justice for victims of state and paramilitary violence.

Today, we finally have a progressive government in Colombia that supports that agenda. But much still needs to be done.

At this critical moment for Colombia, we need your support to help Colombian unions organise workers and push for pro-worker legal reforms, to advance community peace initiatives and to lobby for effective implementation of the 2016 peace agreement. Colombians are striving to turn the promises contained in the peace agreement into reality. At this crucial time, you can affiliate your branch to JFC and play your part in Colombia's road to peace. ■

For more information on JFC's work and to affiliate your branch, visit www.justiceforcolombia.org

LEGAL

LEGAL VICTORIES ON THE ROAD

RMT fights for members from day one of membership

An RMT member has received over £7,500 in compensation after a terrifying motorway accident left her injured and unable to work for two months.

The incident happened early one morning as the member was driving to work along the motorway. Traffic ahead had slowed, hazard lights flashing — and then disaster struck. A large piece of metal debris, which had fallen from a heavy goods vehicle (HGV), smashed into her car, causing significant damage to her car and many others.

The HGV responsible failed to stop and was never

identified, leaving a trail of destruction across all four lanes of the busy motorway. The member's vehicle had to be towed away, and she was left with injuries to her neck, shoulders and lower back, along with anxiety, nightmares, and flashbacks.

Unable to work for two months, she turned to RMT's legal partners, Thompsons Solicitors, who pursued her case under the Motor Insurers Bureau Untraced Drivers Agreement — a special provision for victims of hit-and-run or untraced drivers. Thanks to determined legal action, a

just settlement was secured.

HEAD ON COLLISION

An RMT member has secured over £3,400 in compensation after a frightening head-on collision caused by a driver who admitted that he fell asleep at the wheel.

The accident happened in the early hours as the member was driving home after a night shift. Without warning, a car travelling in the opposite direction veered onto the wrong side of the road, crashing directly into him. Emergency services rushed to the scene, where the other

driver confessed to police and paramedics that he had dozed off behind the wheel.

The impact left the member's vehicle heavily damaged and caused multiple injuries to his neck, chest, knee, hips, back, and face. He also experienced shock and sleep disruption, forcing him to take two weeks off work and suffer lost income during his recovery.

Thompsons Solicitors, the union's legal partners, pursued a claim for personal injury and financial loss. While the other driver's insurer accepted blame, they refused to offer fair

LEGAL SUPPORT FOR RMT MEMBERS AT EMPLOYMENT TRIBUNALS

If you are experiencing difficulties in the workplace and need advice regarding a potential employment tribunal claim contact the union.

In the first instance, ensure that you contact your local RMT Representatives or Regional Organiser. Then complete an L2 – Request for Legal Assistance (available on-line) and send it to your Regional Office with all supporting documentation.

RMT's legal department deals with virtually all cases from assessment to the case's conclusion at a tribunal for members across England and Wales. The legal department has also submitted claims to Employment Appeal Tribunals.

The in-house legal department is now firmly established and employs four solicitors and continues to advise and support

members in their work-related criminal cases in the Magistrates Court.

This often involves defending members against false allegations made by the public of assault, false allegations of theft and alleged driving offences. Furthermore, it continues to offer tailored advice and support for bus and taxi drivers, in respect of their licensing issues, licensing appeals before the Magistrates Court, driving offences, and in respect of appearances before Traffic Commissioners.

The In-house legal department continues to strive to deliver a first-class service to all of members. They are committed to provide a strong service to assist the union through the ever-changing legal landscape and their successes have grown yearly.

Your Free legal service covers:

- **Employment Law** – provided by the RMT Legal Department
- **Access to Personal Injury Lawyers** – where 100 per cent of compensation is kept by members.
- **Access to a basic will service.**
- **Access to special terms for conveyancing, probate, powers of attorney.**
- **Access to special terms for family law related matters.**

The contact number for the legal department is 020 7084 7260 or go on-line to rmt.org.uk/about/legal-services/

compensation. Thompsons were forced to begin court proceedings, standing firm on behalf of the member.

Just one week before the court date, the insurer finally backed down, making a reasonable offer that allowed the matter to settle.

CYCLING

An RMT member has received more than £8,800 in compensation after a reckless driver knocked him off his

bicycle during his morning commute.

The cyclist was heading to work when a vehicle dangerously undertook him at high speed, sending him crashing to the ground.

The injured rider turned to Thompsons Solicitors with RMT support. The driver's insurers admitted fault early, allowing lawyers to focus on building a strong case to secure full compensation.

The member sustained

injuries to his neck, shoulder, knee, and ankle, and also suffered significant psychological trauma. Once a keen cyclist, he was unable to get back on his bike for 18 months. To aid his recovery, Thompsons arranged funding for extensive physiotherapy and cognitive behavioural therapy.

Thanks to determined negotiations, the claim was settled out of court. This case was another reminder of the

vital protection trade union membership can provide, both on and off the job.

True to RMT's legal promise, these members also received 100 per cent of the compensation, with no deductions or legal fees.

This case is a powerful reminder of the importance of union-backed legal support in protecting workers' rights, even in the most unexpected of circumstances. ■

President's Column

FOR WORKERS' RIGHTS

The Employment Rights Act 2025 became law in December, and its passage represents one of the most significant advances for working people in a generation.

For RMT members across transport, logistics and associated industries, this Act is not an abstract piece of legislation but a practical step towards fairer, safer and more secure workplaces.

It is a hard-won victory, secured through years of campaigning by trade unions, workers and allies in Parliament — and it is one we must now defend with vigilance.

At its core, the Act strengthens protections that many employers had spent years attempting to dilute or bypass. It delivers clearer rights from day one of employment, stronger protections against unfair dismissal, enhanced safeguards for those trapped in insecure and precarious work, and improved enforcement mechanisms to ensure that rights exist not just on paper.

For too long, working people were told that so-called 'flexibility' had to come at the cost of security, dignity and

fairness. This Act decisively challenges that narrative and begins to rebalance the employment relationship in favour of working people.

RMT has consistently argued that decent work is the foundation of safe, reliable and productive industries. Whether on the railways, at sea, or across the wider transport infrastructure, our members know from lived experience that insecure, tired or fearful workers do not deliver safe services for passengers.

Stable employment, proper rest, fair treatment and respect at work are not optional extras — they are essential. By promoting greater security and fairness, the Employment Rights Act 2025 raises standards across our sectors and delivers tangible improvements for working people.

While this legislation strengthens the baseline of employment rights, it does not mark the end of our campaigning. RMT will continue to organise, negotiate and fight for the best possible pay, terms and conditions for our members in every sector we represent.

This legislation did not emerge without fierce

opposition. Many within industry actively sought to defeat, delay or water down its provisions with intense lobbying, exaggerated claims about costs and familiar warnings that stronger employment rights would somehow undermine competitiveness or investment.

In truth, good employers — those who already value their workforce, invest in skills and operate responsibly — will benefit from this Act.

It is right to place on record our appreciation for those MPs and members of the House of Lords who stood firm in support of the Act and understood that employment rights are not a burden on the economy but a cornerstone of a modern, productive and fair society.

Their willingness to listen to trade unions, to challenge vested interests and to resist scaremongering played a decisive role in securing this legislation.

However, legislation alone does not guarantee progress. The Employment Rights Act 2025 will only deliver its full promise if it is properly implemented, robustly enforced and actively defended.



Voices on the political right have already made clear their hostility to these reforms. Calls to repeal or roll back the Act are dressed up in familiar language about deregulation and 'cutting red tape', but the reality would be a return to insecurity, imbalance and exploitation at work.

RMT will not be complacent and has learned, time and again, that rights won can be rights lost if we fail to organise, mobilise and remain politically engaged.

This Employment Rights Act is a landmark achievement, but it is not the end of the journey. It provides a stronger foundation on which to build safer workplaces, better jobs and conditions.

As trade unionists, our task now is to ensure that the law is respected, that members know and exercise their rights, and that any attempt to undermine these gains is met with collective resistance.

George Welch

RMT YOUTH CAMPAIGN RECOGNISED

TUC communication awards commend RMT publications

RMT won two commendations at the annual Trade Union Congress communication awards for 2025 for its campaigning publications.

RMT's *Apprentice Charter* drawn up by the union's young members' committee was much admired by the judges as an "impressive recruitment programme targeting young transport workers.

"The booklet featured a modern, visually appealing layout with diverse imagery. "Highlights included clear information on apprenticeship charters and a dedicated

section for engaging young members, making the campaign both informative and highly effective," they said.

Judges also commended *RMT News* as a strong members' magazine with a wide range of content.

"It gives a solid sense of the union's identity with its visual portrayals of solidarity," judges agreed.

They also praised the variety of stories, "which keep members informed about campaign priorities and union wins nationwide".



PULLING FOR CHARITY

A large team of 48 persons pulled a four-tonne vehicle two miles junction to junction up the notorious greyhound hill out of Kendal, raising £4,000 for Sandgate school for disabled children.

Part of the team was made up of Network Rail workers from the Carnforth depot, Neil Broclebank,

Frankie Newel, Josh Rabbat and Kevin Kirby.

The next challenge on Saturday 13 June will be a large 90 strong team attempting to pull a 4 x 4 vehicle two miles from Sedbergh's football pitch in the Yorkshire Dales to the top of Winder Fell in the Howgill Fells.

ORGANISING IN WALES



RMT regional organiser Steve Skelly led an organising day for members at the union's Cardiff office.

BIRMINGHAM AWARD



RMT members Stephen Jackson receiving his 25 year badge from RMT regional organiser John Watson at recent Birmingham Engineering Branch meeting.



EAST KENT AWARDS

East Kent RMT branch held a presentation evening in recognition of members who were presented with long service awards by general secretary Eddie Dempsey.

A large amount of 10- and 25-year badges given out and the star of the show was Tony Gardener who received his 40-year award after work on railway for over 47 years.

Eddie gave a speech on the state of the union and held a question-and-answer session with members.

Members who received 10-year badges included Rachelle Brown, Andrew Carter, Kevin Collyer, Michael Jordan, Avi Lira, Jo McDonald, Neil Moody, Paul Read, Martin Spencer and Steve Vidal. 25-year badges were also award to Stuart Martin, Chris Secker, Mark Weston and Dave Ellis. ■



47 YEARS: Tony Gardener with branch chair Chrus Secker, RMT regional organiser John Parsons and Eddie Dempsey

WALSALL AWARDS

RMT Walsall branch held a special meeting to present two 40-year service awards to Paul Atkin, who works as a Shunter at Kingsbury Shunt Frame, and Adrian Gudgin based at Wolverhampton Steel Terminal.

Picture left to right: NEC member and assistant branch secretary Lee Williams, Midlands regional organiser John Watson, branch secretary Mark Newton, Paul Atkin, Adrian Gudgin and branch chair David Page. ■



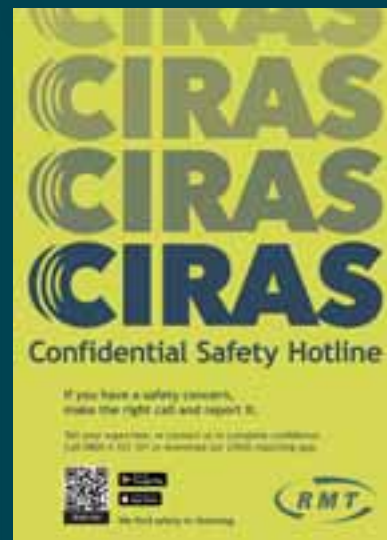
RAISE SAFETY CONCERNS SAFELY

Use the joint RMT and CIRAS posters to share how to raise concerns confidentially

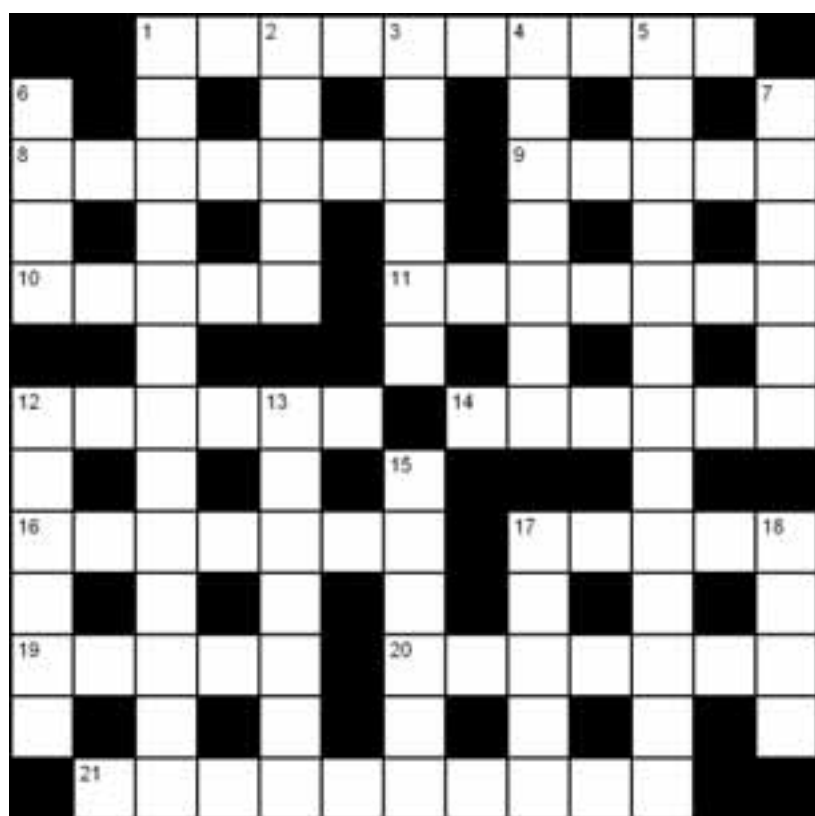
NEW POSTERS

Now available: order printed CIRAS posters and flyers with the RMT logo for free from the CIRAS online shop (above). Search online for CIRAS shop or go to www.willsonshop.com/collections/ciras. You'll find the RMT poster and flyer at the end of the page.

To order click on the RMT item, add it to your basket and select how many to order. In the basket, use the code CIRMT1 in the space for a CIRAS membership number. You'll then go to the checkout. The printed items will be posted to you completely free, no postage needed.



£100 PRIZE CROSSWORD



Last month's solution...



Send entries to Prize
Crossword, RMT, Unity House,
39 Chalton Street, London NW1
IJD by February 30, 2026 with
your name and address.

Last month's winner is Ben Greenwood, Orpington, Kent.

Please supply bank account details and sort code to receive your prize quickly.

ACROSS

- 1 Enthusiastic (10)
8 Area (7)
9 Coating (5)
10 Best (5)
11 Skilled worker (7)
12 Screech (6)
14 Large number (6)
16 Cereal (7)
17 Graceful (5)
19 Proclamation (5)
20 Dignify (7)
21 Form a union of states
(10)

DOWN

- 1 Be specific about (13)
2 Edible ray (5)
3 Emetic drug (6)
4 Nocturnal (7)
5 Communicable (13)
6 Stare (4)
7 Streaked (6)
12 Seal (6)
13 Preacher (7)
15 Mineral (6)
17 Veranda (5)
18 Open vessel (4)

WORKING FOR YOU



Use the QR code to join to get help at work and save money

RMT has developed a number of benefits to save members money. This includes negotiating access to savings and special offers from our approved partners.

COLLECTIVE BARGAINING

The union has a dedicated team of elected officers and local reps to serve your interests negotiating with employers on issues from pay, hours of work, pensions and working conditions. They are supported by a team of researchers to formulate pay claims to obtain the best negotiated terms for you.

CAMPAIGNING

The union has a political fund to run campaigns and provide a political voice to benefit members' interests in the workplace. RMT has a very active parliamentary group which raises issues of concern for members at Westminster, the Scottish Parliament and Welsh Assembly.

PERSONAL INJURIES

Personal injury claims cover if you suffer an accident in work or outside work. RMT underwrites settlements that would not be provided by no-win, no-fee companies. Call 08457 125 495.

INDUSTRIAL DISEASES

Members who have suffered an industrial disease will receive free legal support to make a claim. Such claims are underwritten by the union and members will not have any deduction from their settlement unlike claims run by no-win, no-fee companies. Call 08457 125 495

EMPLOYMENT TRIBUNALS

Should a member find themselves unfairly

dismissed, discriminated against or have any claim which has reasonable prospects of success at an Employment Tribunal, RMT will provide legal representation and pay the fee. Even if the union is advised that the claim is unlikely to succeed, members who make a claim are eligible to receive free legal advice.

ACCIDENT BENEFIT

Payable if you have an accident at work or on the way to or from work. Accident benefit is only payable if you have been off for three days or more. Accident must be reported to branch secretary within 26 weeks in order to qualify for accident benefit.

RETIREMENT BENEFIT

Payable to any member who retires over the age of 60 or aged 55 if retired through redundancy or resettlement. Ill health retirement is also payable; proof of this must be sent with application for retirement benefit.

TAX AND WILL PREPARATION

The union can provide a personal taxation service and will preparation service.

DEMOTION COMPENSATION

Payable to any member who is experiencing loss of wages through being permanently demoted or downgraded as a result of illness or injury.

Payment of £300 provided that member reports this to branch secretary within 12 weeks.

ORPHAN FUND

The beneficiaries of this fund would be any child of a member or spouse if the member dies in service or if a members' spouse dies and the member has responsibility of the children. Benefit is paid while a child is in full-time education up until the age of 22. Payment is made quarterly and the rate is £12.00 per week for children up to the age of 16, then £12.75 per week from 16 to 22.

RMT CREDIT UNION

Accessible savings and affordable loans from RMT's Credit union. www.rmt.org.uk/about/credit-union

ONLINE SHOPPING DISCOUNTS

Shop online with RMTrewards.com and earn cashback savings from hundreds of retailers, like B&Q, Argos and Tesco. It's free to join, plus you'll get a FREE £10 Welcome Bonus in your online account! (Terms and conditions apply) www.rmtrewards.com

FINES POOL

if you drive a company vehicle as part of your job you can join the RMT fines pool for £7 per year. The Fines Pool will reimburse members for any speeding fines, related court costs and lost time to attend a court hearing. www.rmt.org.uk/member-benefits/fines-pool

BEREAVEMENT BENEFIT

A Death Grant of £600 is payable to the nearest relative or legal representative if a member dies through any cause prior to retirement.

CASHBACK PREPAID CARD

Fancy cashback on your everyday shopping? Use your RMT Prepaid Plus Cashback card at over 50 partner retailers, including Sainsbury's, ASDA and Boots, and earn unlimited cashback! It's different to a credit or debit card - you can only spend what you load so there's less chance of getting carried away. www.rmtprepaid.com

FREE £5,000 ACCIDENTAL DEATH COVER

As a benefit of your RMT membership you can register for £5,000 Free Accidental Death Cover. Cover is for UK residents aged 18-69.12 months free cover.

Annually renewable and always FREE. This policy is underwritten by Stonebridge International Insurance Ltd. www.rmtprotect.com

HEALTH CASH PLAN

For a small monthly premium you can claim cash-back on dental, optical and therapy treatments. Visit www.bhsf.co.uk

EMPLOYMENT TRIBUNAL

Assistance for members with their potential employment tribunal claim offered through the RMT's In-house Legal Department.

ACTION AGAINST ASSAULTS

**RMT is campaigning to reduce the number of assaults
against workers and passengers on public transport**

Effective action from employers to protect workers

.....
Increased staffing levels

.....
No lone working

.....
Stronger legal protections for workers assaulted at work

.....
Increases - not cuts - to British Transport Police



Visit rmt.org.uk to join RMT or call
the helpline on freephone 0800 376 3706



rmt.org.uk