

# STATIONS AND REVENUE CONTROL FUNCTIONAL COUNCIL (SFC) RMT REPS REPORT – 2020



Your SFC reps have worked this year to support RMT reps, activists, and members across LU stations in organising to defend and extend our rights.

This report gives a summary of some of the key issues over which your SFC reps have negotiated with the company this year, the workplace campaigns we have supported, and other aspects of our work.

We have produced this report in the interests of ensuring we are accountable to the members and branches that elected us.

## Issues covered include:

- Revised pandemic rosters
- Supporting vulnerable workers
- SRT deployment
- Withdrawal of cash acceptance
- Night Tube
- TfL/LU funding
- Supporting outsourced workers
- Communication and propaganda

...and more.

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## What is the “Stations and Revenue Control Functional Council”?

### *Warning: jargon ahead!*

For the purposes of collective bargaining, LU organises all work into “functions”. A “Functional Council”, made up of elected union reps and representatives of the company, meets to conduct negotiations on behalf of the workers in that function. This is also referred to as “Level Two” of the “machinery of negotiation”, with “Level One” being the local committees attended by workplace IR reps.

All operational stations and revenue grades (CSA, CSS, CSM, and RCI) are part of the stations and revenue control function, and are represented on the Functional Council by six RMT representatives and four TSSA representatives, all of whom are released full time.

RMT SFC reps are elected for a three-year term. Consecutive terms are prohibited, and RMT SFC reps must return to their substantive workplace role for at least a year before being able to stand for re-election. This prevents the development of an out-of-touch layer of permanent full-time reps who've forgotten what it's like to work on stations.

**Your RMT representatives on SFC for 2020 were:**

- Paul Schindler (Morden & Oval branch, 2018-2020 term; **Staff Side Secretary**) – *liaison for all RCI reps and Central Line West branch*
- Daniel Randall (Bakerloo branch, 2018-2020 term) – *liaison for Bakerloo branch and Neasden branch*
- Glen Hart (Morden & Oval branch, 2019-2021 term) – *liaison for Central Line East and Jubilee South branch*
- Norman Thomson (Finsbury Park branch, 2020-2022 term) – *liaison for Finsbury Park branch and Hammersmith & City branch*
- Mac McKenna (Morden & Oval branch, 2020-2022 term) – *liaison for Morden & Oval branch and Camden No. 3 branch*
- Marie Harrington (Piccadilly & District West branch, 2020-2021 term, filling casual vacancy following the election of Jared Wood to the RMT NEC) – *liaison for Piccadilly & District West branch and East Ham branch*

Alongside the Industrial Relations “Machinery of Negotiation and Consultation”, there is a parallel Health and Safety “machinery”, with Tier One workplace Health and Safety reps attending local meetings, with a Tier Two Health and Safety Council attended by four RMT reps and three TSSA reps.

### **The Covid-19 pandemic**

Issues associated with the Covid-19 pandemic have understandably dominated our work this year. The pandemic has posed fundamental questions about how our society is organised and reminded us that it is workers – including public transport workers like ourselves – who make society move. Whilst senior bosses can work from home, frontline workers, including LU station staff, put themselves in danger in order to keep essential services running.

We should bear this in mind when managers or the government claim cuts and attacks on our terms and conditions are an inevitable consequence of the economic crisis the pandemic has caused. We should not accept the argument that frontline workers must pay the cost of the crisis.

Along with reps in all other functions, RMT SFC reps responded to the outbreak of the Covid-19 pandemic by raising demands for improved workplace safety and additional protections for vulnerable staff. We have coordinated with others in the union, especially our Regional Organiser John Leach, whose support and assistance in escalating issues was often vital, our NEC member Jared Wood, and other Level Two reps across other functions. The Staff Side Secretaries of each Functional and Health and Safety Council met weekly throughout the pandemic. This coordination was also vital to focusing RMT’s intervention into LU Company Council, the cross-functional negotiating body.

We used a regularly-updated Google Document to collate our initial demands, and keep reps and activists up-to-date with our progress in pursuing them, as well as a “Coronavirus FAQs” document: <https://www.rmtlondoncalling.org.uk/cor-faq>

Later, we contributed to the collation of an LU-wide “Covid-19 Charter”, which pulled together the union’s main demands for improved workplace safety. This was circulated to all members and is available online here: <https://www.rmt.org.uk/about/health-and-safety/health-and-safety-circulars/london-underground-covid-19-charter120620/>

## **Revised rosters**

A key demand was for revised rosters and duty allocations, to maximise workplace distancing and allow as many staff as possible to remain at home. Although it was surreal, and in some ways felt counterintuitive, to be demanding fewer staff on stations, this was a necessary step to protect members' safety.

Following an agreement negotiated with our Tier Two (Health and Safety) counterparts that minimum numbers would be revised to Sunday levels, on 9 April we secured a formal agreement with LU, mandating all station areas to implement local revised rosters, drawn up in consultation with local union representatives:

*Now that the BNS has been revised to match service levels etc then it's crucial that reps meet with management to identify the exact number of staff required to maintain safe operation and from that enable either the compilation of a temporary roster or revised local arrangements. It is vital that this work starts as soon as possible and with the following conditions;*

*The stations BNS is not negotiable and there is no need to exceed the staffing levels identified unless by mutual agreement. It is anticipated that in most areas this process will allow us to identify a surplus of staff beyond basic operational requirements.*

*Once that surplus is identified then it will be reflected in new rosters/working arrangements to enable either shorter, or spare, shifts. Equal consideration will be given to part time and Night Tube staff.*

*This idea of the exercise is to enable consistently effective operations while also taking the pressure off stations grades by enabling meaningful work life balance during this difficult time. Every area must reach a locally agreed way forward and consider any impact on the cover group as a whole. Any disputes will be resolved at SFC. This agreement is temporary, subject to review, without prejudice, and will end with the Coronavirus crisis.*

This agreement was hard won, against the obstruction and resistance of several Area Managers. On two cover groups, Jubilee South and Jubilee East, management's refusal to implement this agreement led to a dispute situation and ballots being prepared. On both these areas, management eventually conceded an implemented a revised roster.

Following the agreement being reached, some AMs made repeated attempts to ignore or breach it, or impose unilateral returns to pre-pandemic working. We therefore negotiated an addendum to the agreement on 23 June:

*Following recent government updates, which introduced some relaxing of the initial government instructions, we have started to see some increased demand across the network. Based on the current and anticipated demand we do not expect to see a return to pre COVID demand for some time, but this remains under review.*

*In the interim and we anticipate there may be a need for local discussions to take place to ensure external factors are considered and incremental changes can be made locally to allow our staff to operate safely, whilst delivering the required service for our customers. To allow this we have agreed the following addendum to the interim BNS agreement made in April 2020.*

*Local Level One committees may meet within the normal machinery to review local arrangements and discuss potential revisions and amendments to respond to the changing situation; disagreements can*

*be escalated to Level Two in the normal way. However, while this agreement remains in place, there will be no unilaterally imposed return to full pre-pandemic working arrangements on any local area.*

*Further to this agreement, there will be no return to full pre-pandemic working arrangements on the Special Requirements Team until this agreement has been withdrawn as part of a network-wide return to pre-pandemic arrangements.*

*This agreement addendum is temporary, subject to review, without prejudice and will end when the April Interim BNS agreement is withdrawn in conjunction with the end of the pandemic and in line with government advice. The intent for this agreement is to ensure we continue to operate effectively, whilst ensuring we balance work life balance and continue to follow government advice.*

In November-December, SFC reps supported local reps on the Central City Group (St. Paul's/Chancery Lane Area) in a successful campaign to reinforce the agreement, following unilateral action by local management to reimpose full pre-pandemic rosters.

### ***Vulnerable staff***

Early on in the pandemic, LU implemented arrangements for staff in vulnerable categories to remain at home with pay; SFC reps took up numerous individual cases of staff in these categories who were nevertheless found themselves coming under pressure to attend work.

We supported members through LU's inadequate and patchy risk assessment programme, which saw staff with serious conditions being assessed as "green", and therefore fit to work, by LUOH, and some staff assessed as "red", who therefore should've remained at home, being pressured to come in on the basis of minor "adjustments" being made in the workplace.

Across TfL/LU, RMT raised demands for specific risk assessments for BAME staff, who were disproportionately impacted by the virus due to social factors such as the concentration of BAME workers in frontline, and therefore more exposed, roles. SFC reps were also central to mobilising within RMT to support Black Lives Matter protests.

In September 2020, in the context of the second wave, we raised demands for any member of staff in the vulnerable or extremely vulnerable categories, including those who had already been returned from furlough, to be placed on special paid leave. During the second national lockdown from 5 November 2020, we took up the cases of numerous individual members in the "Clinically Extremely Vulnerable" category who were being put under pressure to come to work.

### ***Additional workplace safety measures***

Working with our Tier Two counterparts, we raised demands for additional workplace safety measures, overseen and assess by Level One and Tier One reps. We demanded station staff work from behind glass, either in SCRs or GLAPs, wherever possible, and where this has not been possible we won an agreement for the implementation of "staff safe zones", created using tensa barriers or railings, to maximise distancing between staff and passengers.

### ***TfL/LU funding***

Following the Tories' abolition of TfL's central government grant in 2018, TfL/LU has been disproportionately reliant on income from fare revenue. When this understandably collapsed during the pandemic, with ridership falling to less than 5% of usual levels, TfL/LU was plunged into an acute financial crisis.

A funding bailout from the government was agreed in June 2020, with numerous strings, including a KPMG-led financial review. On 1 November, an additional funding bailout was agreed, to finance TfL until March 2021. Although the TfL Commissioner Andy Byford committed to making no changes to staffing levels, terms, and conditions for the period of the bailout, this commitment essentially kicks the can down the road. The settlement also included a commitment on TfL's part to being entirely self-funding by 2023, making renewed cuts very likely.

### ***Night Tube***

As Night Tube has been mothballed until March 2021, SFC reps sought guarantees in respect of Night Tube station workers' terms and conditions. We secured a commitment from the company that their conditions would be maintained, and any working outside of their usual hours would be on a strictly voluntary basis.

### ***Special Requirements Team (SRT)***

The cessation of almost all the events and projects the SRT would normally serve meant inevitable changes to their ways of working. In September 2020, management announced their intention to invoke a clause in the SRT framework which allows SRT staff to be used to cover long-term absences, e.g., sickness and maternity leave, on stations.

Management's initial intention was to move SRT staff off their existing rosters/RD patterns, which we believed would have had a detrimental impact on work/life balance. We proposed an alternative rostering mechanism that allowed SRT staff to retain their existing RDs. After a period of intense negotiation involving both SFC reps and the local reps for SRT, management backed down and, on 13 October, agreed to implement our proposal.

Further negotiations took place about the interpretation of the Framework and the parameters within which SRT staff could be deployed to cover other local absences, e.g. arising from short-notice self-isolation. An agreement was reached which ensured SRT deployment for such absences would be in emergency circumstances only, and would be on the basis of maintaining SRT links and RD patterns.

### ***Withdrawal of cash acceptance***

RMT supported the temporary withdrawal of cash acceptance as an infection control measure, but made clear to the company that we opposed any permanent withdrawal, as we felt this could threaten jobs and disproportionately disadvantage poorer passengers.

We fought for a mechanism for individual station areas where cash acceptance had been withdrawn to make a case for its reinstatement, and used this mechanism in areas where the withdrawal of cash acceptance had led to increases in instance of antisocial behaviour against our members.

While management have stated that they view the withdrawal of cash acceptance only as an "interim" measure, we remain concerned about their long-term intentions and will resist any attempts to make the withdrawal of cash acceptance permanent.

### ***Supporting outsourced workers***

SFC reps supported the organising of outsourced workers alongside whom our members work, most prominently cleaners. We added our voices to demands for ABM cleaners to receive full pay for sickness and self-isolation, an essential infection control measure affecting not only cleaners themselves but everyone they come into contact with. This agreement was reached in April 2020.

Outrageously, ABM unilaterally withdrew it in September 2020, and SFC reps and other stations reps and activists were again prominent in demanding its reinstatement. We raised the issue at Functional Council and secured a commitment from the chair of SFC that he would raise it with the relevant contract manager. Thanks to sustained RMT pressure, supplemented by pressure from supporters throughout the wider labour movement, the agreement was reinstated from 19 October.

SFC reps have also supported Interserve security guards and Sodexo canteen workers in organising against job cuts and restructures. In the latter campaign, led by our Regional Organiser with support from reps and activists across the region, a no-compulsory-redundancies guarantee was secured.

## **Pre-pandemic campaigns**

### ***LU pay and conditions***

Following the expiry of the 2015-2019 settlement for pay and conditions across LU, RMT began campaigning for a new deal. SFC reps worked to ensure that demands in our pay claim associated with work/life balance, centrally the demand for a 32-hour week for all full-time staff, were foregrounded in our campaigning and propaganda, as members had made clear that work/life balance and shift-associated fatigue were key issues which needed addressing.

We produced a significant amount of stations-specific propaganda, including sample rosters showing what shift patterns might look like if our demands were met. SFC reps were also prominent amongst those calling for the union to launch an industrial action ballot, which was done in late February 2020. Unfortunately, the Covid-19 pandemic broke soon after, and the ballot was withdrawn. The union ultimately accepted the following offer from LU:

Year One – 2019-2020: RPI +0.2% (2.7%)

Year Two – 2020-2021: RPI +0.2%

Year Three – 2021-2022: RPI +0.2% (minimum increase 1%)

Year Four – 2022-2023: RPI +0.2% (minimum increase 2%)

As this was a “pay-only” settlement, it included no improvements on work/life balance issues and no reduction to the working week. SFC reps feel strongly that these issues must remain on the union’s agenda.

### ***“Justice for Station Staff” campaign***

Aware that there were numerous station-specific issues which need to be actively organised around, SFC reps, working with Level One reps, led the launch of a “Justice for Station Staff” campaign in January 2020. This campaign aimed to keep this issues prominent through and beyond the pay/conditions campaign, and to create additional pressure on LU management around these issues.

The demands of the campaign were:

- An end to lone working
- Increased staffing levels, including on Night Tube
- Fully staff the RCI grade
- A full safety audit across the job
- An end to two-tier workforces: equalise the CSA grade, scrap the planned RCO grade
- Parity with drivers on Boxing Day and NYE payments

Sadly, this campaign was essentially derailed by the outbreak of the pandemic. However, these demands remain important horizons for us which we must return to.

### ***The attack on the RCI grade***

In November 2019, LU formally announced plans to create a two-tier revenue workforce by creating a new “Revenue Control Officer” (RCO) grade, paid at current CSA1 pay rates. This was accompanied by a proposal for enforcement officers employed by TfL rather than LU to working alongside LU revenue staff. RMT has entirely opposed this plan, and in January/February 2020 balloted our RCI members for industrial action to oppose it. This ballot returned a 100% vote for action short of strikes, and a 92% vote for strikes, on a 75% turnout.

Discussions took place about the possibility of striking alongside TfL revenue workers, organised by Unite, who were striking on the last Friday of each month in a dispute over pay. These discussions, and negotiations about the issues involved in our revenue dispute, continued into March. Following the outbreak of the pandemic, the implementation of the RCO grade was placed on indefinite hold.

RMT reps have also challenged the deployment of “Transport Support Enforcement Officers” (TSEOs), employed by TfL rather than LU on inferior terms and conditions to LU RCIs, on LU stations. The company agreed a set of principles for TSEO deployment which made clear they should work on the unpaid side of the gateline only and would not carry out any work that would ordinarily be conducted by LU RCIs (i.e., revenue enforcement). Notwithstanding this agreement our position remains that enforcement work, and indeed all work, on LU stations should be carried out by directly-employed LU staff.

During the pandemic, RMT reps secured agreements around reduced shifts for RCIs, and a basis for returning RCIs from furlough that allowed them to work as safely as possible. RMT will continue to campaign to secure the long-term future of the RCI grade.

### ***Short staffing campaigns: defending gains from 2019***

From late 2018 and throughout 2019, RMT fought a number of campaigns across numerous local areas against short staffing, demanding increases to the staffing level. In two areas, Bakerloo South and District Centre, this led to industrial actions ballots. As the result of this campaigning, agreements to create additional jobs were reached on the following cover groups:

- Bakerloo South
- District Centre
- Northern Edgware

An additional CSA position was created at Oxford Circus (Bakerloo South) prior to the outbreak of the pandemic. However, on the other two cover groups, the agreed positions had not yet been created when the pandemic broke. Whilst accepting that, during the first wave of the pandemic when our primary aim was to minimise numbers in the workplace, the instatement of new jobs would not have been appropriate, we have continued to press management to ensure they do not use the pandemic as pretext for renegeing on the agreement to create new jobs.

We have discussed several possible trigger points with management and, in the context of rising footfalls, have demanded the new jobs on District Centre (South Kensington Area) and Northern Edgware (Golders Green Area) now be created.

At the time of writing this report, the new jobs had yet to be created, although management have given numerous guarantees that they have no intention of renegeing on the agreement to create them.

**Communication, campaigning, and propaganda**

This year, SFC reps set up a “Station Reps Organising” WhatsApp group chat as a forum for sharing information and activity. We also liaised especially closely with reps who were shielding in order to ensure they and their members were supported. We held open meetings for Level One reps, and, as of December 2020, SFC reps are working with workplace activists to relaunch the Station Grades Committee.

We regularly produced material for reps and members. Below are thumbnail samples of some the newsletters and bulletins your SFC reps have produced throughout 2020. Links to access the documents online are given as footnotes.

*Justice for Station Staff campaign leaflet<sup>1</sup>*



*SFC News, March 2020<sup>2</sup>*

*SFC News, April 2020<sup>3</sup>*



*LU Stations Briefing, August 2020<sup>4</sup>*

*SFC News, November 2020*



Further leaflets and newsletters are available at <https://www.rmtlondoncalling.org.uk/platform>

- 1 <https://www.rmtlondoncalling.org.uk/content/justice-station-staff-campaign-leaflet>
- 2 [https://www.rmtlondoncalling.org.uk/files/sfc\\_news\\_march\\_20.pdf.pdf.pdf](https://www.rmtlondoncalling.org.uk/files/sfc_news_march_20.pdf.pdf.pdf)
- 3 [https://www.rmtlondoncalling.org.uk/files/sfc\\_news\\_april\\_20.pdf\\_2.pdf](https://www.rmtlondoncalling.org.uk/files/sfc_news_april_20.pdf_2.pdf)
- 4 [https://www.rmtlondoncalling.org.uk/files/rmt\\_lu\\_stations\\_briefing\\_-\\_august\\_2020.pdf](https://www.rmtlondoncalling.org.uk/files/rmt_lu_stations_briefing_-_august_2020.pdf)



**Looking forward to 2021**

The dates for next year's Functional Council meetings, and the deadline for referrals from Level One committees, are below. We encourage all reps to use the machinery as actively as possible. Any rep who wants additional support navigating this process, or advice on how to formulate a referral, should speak to an SFC rep.

<b>FUNCTIONAL COUNCIL MEETING DATE</b>	<b>DEADLINE FOR REFERRALS FROM LEVEL ONE</b>
Friday 23 April	Friday 9 April
Friday 25 June	Friday 11 June
Friday 17 September	Friday 3 September
Friday 26 November	Friday 12 November

If you are a Level One rep, please ensure you have notified your SFC reps of the dates of your prelim, Level One meeting, and feedback days for the coming year so we can best support you. Please also share your Level One minutes with your SFC reps.

Paul Schindler and Daniel Randall have now finished their terms of office and will be returning to their substantive positions (RCI and CSA respectively). Your SFC reps for 2020 will include:

- Glen Hart (Morden & Oval branch, 2019-2021 term) – 07809 471289
- Mac McKenna (Morden & Oval branch, 2020-2022 term) – 07801 071363
- Norman Thomson (Finsbury Park branch, 2020-2022 term) – 07853 288184
- Marie Harrington (Piccadilly & District West branch, 2020-2021 term) – 07814 740308

At the time of writing, the election of two new SFC reps for the 2021-2023 term was still ongoing. The candidates, of whom two will be elected, are:

- Eamonn Lynch (Jubilee South branch)
- Phil Rowan (Finsbury Park branch)
- Maria Evans (Neasden branch)

Once the election is concluded and the 2021 branch allocations for SFC reps are agreed, all Level One reps will be notified which SFC rep is responsible for supporting the reps in their branch area.

SFC reps are based on the 4<sup>th</sup> Floor at Griffith House, 280 Old Marylebone Road, NW1 5RJ, but frequently work from other locations, including from home, so are best contacted via email or phone. All SFC reps' email addresses can be found in the TfL directory.