



Overtime not worth the cost

LU has announced it wants to force overtime onto the train grade. Whilst this will provide short term opportunities to some individuals it is a threat to jobs, pay, grade unity and work life balance.

The majority of RMT members understand that overtime is not a positive thing for the following reasons:

- **It's the wrong fight to have**

We must be focused as a grade on fighting for higher pay and fewer hours, for example the 4 day 32 hour week. The majority of drivers want to be earning enough money, not just to survive on, but to enjoy life for the hours we work now, not having to scramble around fighting one another for every hour of extra work we can find to make ends meet.

- **Greater flexibility means LU needs fewer of us**

In a depot of 100 drivers, if each worked one day overtime a month, that means they can run the service with 5% fewer of us. Across a grade of 3000 people, that could mean 150 jobs at risk. The more flexible we are, the more expendable we are. The more expendable, the less LU needs to do to secure our labour through things like decent pay, pensions and terms and conditions.

- **It threatens unity within the train grade**

What happens when we come to the end of the pay round and LU says "we won't offer you a wage increase

as there are now overtime opportunities"? What happens if we try to organise action to demand a pay rise and a sizeable minority think "I'm ok, I earn enough through overtime"? What happens when we vote for a strike but we have some colleagues offering to come in on overtime to keep things running?

We would end up with a base wage which loses value in real terms as we would have lost the unity needed to take action and defend more. Eventually OT becomes a necessity just to keep earnings level with what they were a few years previously.

- **It risks work life balance**

The RMT has a long held and clear demand for a 4 day 32 hour week. That demand is made to improve work life balance and reduce fatigue on the job. It would also improve both our mental and physical health, something that is a win for both the bosses and us drivers. But, it becomes a much harder argument to make if we have colleagues working extra hours above what we are already on through overtime.

It could also risk our frameworks too as it allows management to argue that we are clearly able to increase our workload or alter our shifts with minimal notice. It may be ok doing a 6 day week at 21, but how will it feel at 61 when long hours and increased flexibility become a necessity

rather than a choice, but the work is so much harder to do?

- **Fatigue is dangerous**

So many railway incidents are caused by fatigue. Working longer hours or an extra day a week is sure to lead to more accidents. We have long made the argument on health and safety grounds that drivers' rosters must follow very strict guidelines. What will the safety

risk be for all of us in the grade if we have over tired colleagues picking up work with short notice and working 6 day weeks, for example?

- **"But RMT allows overtime in other grades."**

The RMT doesn't 'allow' overtime for all the reasons given above. However, it is true that it is a reality in many grades across LU. The RMT's focus is on getting better pay for fewer hours for our members.

However, where OT is a reality, we do demand it is fairly distributed in line with agreements the union has with LU.

As a comparison, the RMT doesn't believe anybody should be disciplined for being genuinely sick and doesn't agree with the Attendance at Work procedure, but at the same time we still ensure that bosses are at least working within their own procedures when defending members facing sickness disciplinarys or other meetings.

