

Second day of new year strike action on railways as Scots return to work

ScotRail services will be severely disrupted on Wednesday as railway workers walk out in a second day of strike action this week.

[Network Rail](#) workers across Scotland walked out yesterday as part of an ongoing dispute over pay and conditions.

Signal workers, guards, customer service and station workers are among those who downed tools on Tuesday and will do so again on Wednesday, Thursday, Saturday and Sunday of this week.

While the dispute itself does not involve ScotRail staff, industrial action will have a major impact on the operators ability to run services.

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Many of those striking are employed in safety-critical roles.

Twelve routes across the Central belt and [Fife](#) will operate on a reduced timetable and only between 7.30am and 6.30pm.

David Simpson, ScotRail service delivery director, said: "It's really disappointing to see more widespread disruption across the whole Great Britain rail network as a result of the dispute between Network Rail and the [RMT](#) at a time when we need to be encouraging more people back to the railway.

"For ScotRail, it's going to mean that we won't be able to operate the vast majority of our services between January 3 and 7, which we know will be really frustrating for our customers.

"We're advising customers to seek alternative means of transport and to only travel if they really need to on the days of strike action.

"Customers should check their entire journey in advance to make sure their train is running."

The routes and frequency of service in operation on the four strike days are:

Edinburgh Waverley – Glasgow Queen Street via Falkirk High: two trains per hour
Edinburgh Waverley – Helensburgh Central: two trains per hour
Glasgow Central – Hamilton/Larkhall: two trains per hour
Glasgow Central – Lanark: two trains per hour
Edinburgh Waverley – Glasgow Central via Shotts: one train per hour
Edinburgh Waverley – Cowdenbeath: two trains per hour
Edinburgh Waverley – Tweedbank: two trains per hour
Edinburgh Waverley – North Berwick: one train per hour
Edinburgh Waverley – Larbert: one train per hour
Glasgow Queen Street – Larbert: one train per hour
Glasgow Queen Street – Falkirk Grahamston: one train per hour
Milngavie – Springburn: two trains per hour

Services between Scotland and England on Avanti West Coast are also disrupted due to a landslip at Carstairs.

The line will be closed until Friday January 6 the operator has said.

On Wednesday, the RMT's Scottish organiser, Gordon Martin, said changes to maintenance routines were a sticking point.

He told the BBC's Good Morning Scotland programme: "If you cut a maintenance regime in half in a huge engineering site, which is basically what the railway is, you really run the risk of putting trains down embankments and killing people.

"We're not accepting that."

RMT general secretary Mick Lynch accused the UK [Government](#) of blocking a pay deal and has called for a settlement members can vote for.

RMT members are also campaigning against plans to close ticket offices, cut jobs and move the industry to widespread driver-only operation.

Mr Lynch said industrial action could continue until May unless a reasonable offer was made, he told the PA news agency from a picket line at Euston Station in London.

"We want to get the railway back to normal. We want good industrial relations and we want the services to run the way they should be running," he said.

"The companies can't run them on non-strike days, never mind when we're out.

"So we need to change the equation and get a settlement to the dispute as quickly as possible, and that will mean the public can rely on the railway and get the services they need."

[Work](#) and pensions secretary Mel Stride told the BBC on Wednesday the UK Government will come forward with further details on anti-strikes legislation.

He said: "I think we do have to question whether we've got the balance right between the rights of workers to strike and the inconvenience and sometimes danger that can pose to the public.

"So I think it's quite right that the Government has come forward and already introduced some legislation, and we will come forward with further details."

A Department for Transport spokesman said: "Passengers have rightly had enough of rail strikes and want the disruption to end.

"The Government has demonstrated it is being reasonable and stands ready to facilitate a resolution to rail disputes. It's time the unions came to the table and played their part as well.

"Inflation-matching pay increases for all public sector workers would cost everyone more in the long-term – worsening debt, fuelling inflation and costing every household an extra £1,000.

"Unions should step back from this strike action so we can start 2023 by ending this damaging dispute."

Liam Sumpter, route director for Network Rail Scotland, said: "We understand the impact this strike will have and we are working hard to keep as many passengers as possible moving during the next phase of RMT industrial action.

"We remain committed to working with the RMT to find a solution to this dispute, but we also need to agree a deal that is fair on the taxpayers who fund our railway."