

Travellers primed for disruption as latest wave of strikes begins

Strike action could bring chaos to millions of people on Christmas Eve, as walkouts hit rail services and [Border Force](#) action enters a second day.

With one day to go until Christmas, travellers were being issued with warnings of delays, congestion and disruption.

[Fears](#) of disorder at UK airports and long queues at passport control largely failed to materialise on Friday to the relief of travellers, as military personnel stepped in to replace the Border Force workers who will strike every day for the rest of the year, except December 27.

Millions of travellers taking to the roads on Saturday will be hoping for a similarly stress-free journey, but it comes amid concerns that strikes by Rail, Maritime and Transport union (RMT) workers could lead to the knock-on effect of severe congestion on major roads.

A walkout by thousands of [RMT](#) members at Network Rail means trains will stop running early, and some routes will have no services all day.

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It comes as unions signalled that there was no end in sight to strike action, with the Government refusing to budge as it grapples with disputes on pay and working conditions across an array of sectors.

Public and Commercial Services (PCS) union general secretary Mark Serwotka predicted there would be a “huge escalation” in industrial action in January across the civil service unless ministers enter into negotiations.

Despite the lack of chaos in airports, he insisted that the strike action “had worked” as he claimed that travellers were simply being “waved through” and passports were not being properly checked.

Prime Minister [Rishi Sunak](#) said he was “sad and disappointed” about the disruption, but argued that the Government had acted “fairly and reasonably” on public pay.

Meanwhile, postal deliveries and driving lessons are set to continue to be disrupted by strikes in the days before Christmas.

Royal Mail, National Highways and Driver and Vehicle Standards Agency (DVSA) employees all took action on Friday, with strikes continuing into Saturday as RMT staff, Abellio London bus workers and Environment Agency workers launch separate waves of action.

This follows two days of strikes by NHS staff, with thousands of nurses walking out on Tuesday and ambulance workers joining picket lines on Wednesday.

[Travellers](#) considering taking the train on Christmas Eve have been told to only use rail services “if absolutely necessary”.

Network Rail said trains will stop running at around 3pm on Christmas Eve.

The early closure means the last departures on some long-distance routes will be before 1pm.

Examples of last train times include 10.45am for Leeds to London, 11am for London to Edinburgh and 12.48pm for London to Manchester.

The AA is predicting that nearly 17 million cars will be on UK roads on Saturday, with the worst congestion expected around the middle of the day.