

# Fresh travel misery as train drivers stage second strike this week

Rail passengers are facing fresh travel chaos today as train drivers hold another strike leaving large parts of the country with no services all day.

Members of Aslef and the Rail, Maritime and Transport union (RMT) will walk out in a long-running dispute over pay and conditions.

Operators said there would be severe disruption, with trains that do run due to start later and finish much earlier than usual – typically between 7.30am and 6.30pm.

Saturday morning services are also expected to be affected.

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The rail industry has criticised the rejection of an offer which would give drivers an 8% pay rise over two years, taking average salaries up from nearly £60,000 a year, to almost £65,000.

Simon Weller, assistant general secretary of Aslef, said the dispute was going “backwards” because of the lack of progress in months of talks.

“I don’t know whether to point the finger of blame at the ineptitude of the Department for Transport or the Rail Delivery Group.

“We would struggle to recommend a deal of a 4% pay rise for last year and 4% this year if there were no conditions

attached, but we are being asked to give up collective bargaining and effectively agree to a no-strike deal.

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“Obviously it was going to be rejected – it was designed to fail.”

A spokesperson for the Rail Delivery Group said: “To minimise the impact of the Aslef action, we advise passengers to check before they travel, allow extra time and find out when their first and last train will depart.”

It will be the second strike by train drivers this week, after they took part in the huge day of industrial action on Wednesday.

Other professions who walked out included teachers, university staff, civil servants, bus drivers and security guards.

Around 1,900 members of Unite working as bus drivers for Abellio in London will complete a three-day strike on Friday in a separate dispute over pay.

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Meanwhile, train services between Scotland and England will be severely disrupted by the strike.

Cross-border services operated by CrossCountry, Transpennine Express and Avanti West Coast will not run on Friday.

LNER said it will run an amended service and Lumo, which run trains between Edinburgh and London, said it will aim to run as many services as possible.

No LNER trains will run any further north than Edinburgh, with trains between Edinburgh and London King’s Cross starting later and finishing earlier than usual.

ScotRail has reassured customers that all services would operate as normal this week.