

Network Rail makes offer to rail workers but union calls it a 'real-terms pay cut'

Network Rail has made a new offer to workers following three days of strike action last month, but it does not appear to have been welcomed by the Rail, Maritime and Transport Workers' union (RMT).

RMT general secretary Mick Lynch said in a message to members on Tuesday: "It amounts to a real-terms pay cut for members over the next two years and would cut a third of all frontline maintenance roles and half of all scheduled maintenance work."

He added that there was also a "wholesale expectation of unsocial hours and lower pay across the board".

"Network Rail has offered high level managers a huge hike in salary in return for very modest flexibility compared to what you and your colleagues have been offered," he told members.

"All companies involved in this dispute need to understand that key railway workers have lost thousands of pounds in earnings due to a pay freeze in recent years – and rightly, you refuse to be short-changed again.

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"Settlements reached with London Underground and recently Merseyrail are also well in excess of what you have been offered here.

"We will not hesitate to call further strike action and co-ordinate this with other trade unions if the industry continues to fob us off with unacceptable offers."

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According to Network Rail, the two-year deal includes:

- Over 5% rise for all RMT members and more for those paid under £30,000
- A 4% rise on basic pay would be paid in year one, backdated to January, with 2.2% in year two and a further 2% if modernisation reform milestones are met

- 75% discounted travel for employees and family from January 2023
- Some £650 for each worker as a cash “bonus”
- A further £250 lump sum for those paid under £24,000
- A guarantee of no compulsory redundancies for the two years

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A Network Rail spokesperson said: “Today we have put a new pay offer on the table for our RMT colleagues which will be worth over 5%, conditional on achieving savings through modernising reforms.

“There’s also money on the table for a fair and affordable deal for next year too.

“While money is extremely tight because of the railway’s financial troubles following the pandemic, we can afford to make this offer if our people accept change and compromise, which will fund it.”

Talks between the RMT and train operators are continuing this evening, while the RMT Executive Committee will meet on Wednesday to discuss the offer.