

Trade Union News Skipton & Ripon Labour Party

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Labour's new deal for working people

From day one, a Labour government will strengthen workers' rights and make Britain work for working for people. The Party says that the ambition to ensure a fair day's pay for a day's work is core to its values. Labour will strengthen the protections afforded to all workers by banning zero-hours contracts, ending fire and rehire, and scrapping qualifying periods for basic rights, which leave working people waiting up to two years for basic protections. This will include unfair dismissal, sick pay, and parental leave, giving working people under Labour rights at work from day one.

Restrictions on union activity are holding back living standards and the economy. Labour say they will update trade union legislation so it is fit for a modern economy and empower working people to collectively secure fair pay, terms and conditions. More detail at: <https://labour.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2022/10/New-Deal-for-Working-People-Green-Paper.pdf>

The programme was first outlined by Deputy Leader Angela Rayner MP at last September's TUC meeting in London.

However, seafarers still remain at risk of mass sacking despite these proposals the RMT fears, as unions marked the second anniversary of the P and O Ferries scandal. More at: <https://www.thecanary.co.uk/news/2024/03/18/po-scandal-what-happened-since/>

Meanwhile Labour has said it will keep its ban on zero-hours jobs and improvements to workers' rights after the party peer Peter Mandelson warned in an article in The Sunday Times (24 March) against "rushing" through these changes see: <https://www.thetimes.co.uk/article/labours-union-reforms-must-not-be-rushed-they-cant-betray-business-xl8676fx9>

Labour's chair Anneliese Dodds, said the party was committed to the package to "make work pay" and get more money into people's pockets, but that it would "continue to discuss" the plans with business and unions, see: <https://www.theguardian.com/politics/2024/mar/24/labour-stick-with-workers-rights-plans-despite-peter-mandelson-remarks>

NHS

Junior doctors in England have voted in favour of continuing strike action in their pay dispute. Some 98% of members of the **British Medical Association (BMA)**

who voted backed further walkouts on a turnout of 62%. There have been 10 walkouts so far by junior doctors since the first in March last year. The result announced on 20 March, means the union has a strike mandate for another six months. More at: <https://www.bma.org.uk/>

The **BMA** has rejected a pay offer for specialist, associate specialist, and specialty (SAS) doctors in England following a majority no vote in a referendum.

In the referendum of **BMA SAS members** held between 29 January and 28 February (reported in the March edition of TU News) 62.3% of respondents rejected the offer. The BMA's SAS Committee has now formally rejected the government's offer. The committee has said, however, that it is willing to continue talks. More at: <https://www.bmj.com/content/384/bmj.q543>

Last week junior doctors in Wales held their longest walkout to date in their pay dispute with the Welsh government. More than 3,000 **BMA** members took part in four days of industrial action, which started at 07:00 am on Monday 24 March and lasted until 07:00 on Friday 29 March.

The Welsh government said it did not have the funds to improve its 5% pay offer, which junior doctors rejected. The **BMA** said the situation was "extremely sad" but that it had been left with no choice, as doctors' pay had dropped by almost a third in 15 years.

Transport

ASLEF has announced a new programme of rolling strikes across the rail network in pursuit of a pay rise for drivers who have not had an increase in salary for five years. The action taken will be as follows:

Friday 5 April: Avanti West Coast, East Midlands Railway, West Midlands Trains, and CrossCountry

Saturday 6 April: Chiltern, GWR, LNER, Northern, and TransPennine

Monday 8 April: c2c, Greater Anglia, GTR Great Northern Thameslink, Southeastern, Southern/Gatwick Express, South Western Railway main line and depot drivers, and SWR Island Line

As well as strikes, **ASLEF** members will refuse to work rest days from **Thursday 4 to Saturday 6 April** and from **Monday 8 to Tuesday 9 April**, the union said.

The most recent pay deal put on the table was rejected in April 2023. The offer included 4% pay rises for two years in a row, on condition that drivers would accept industry-wide changes to training, and negotiate changes to work patterns at individual operators. It's worth recalling that the Consumer Prices Index (CPI) rose by 8.7% in the 12 months to April 2023, down from 10.1% in March.

No formal talks have been held since.

Mick Whelan, **ASLF general secretary**, said the union had called on the train companies and the government to "come to the table for meaningful talks" to negotiate a new pay deal for train drivers, whom he said had not had a salary increase since 2019.

"Our members voted overwhelmingly - yet again - for strike action. Those votes show a clear rejection by train drivers of the ridiculous offer put to us in April last year. We have given the government every opportunity to come to the table but it is now clear they do not want to resolve this dispute. They are happy for it to go on and on."

More at: <https://aslef.org.uk/publications/aslef-strike-action>

Meanwhile London tube train drivers who are members of **ASLEF**, will strike on **Monday 8 April and Saturday 4 May**.

Finn Brennan, ASLEF's full-time organiser on London Underground, explained: "ASLEF Tube train drivers will strike in April and May in a long-running dispute over London Underground's failure to give assurances that changes to our members' terms and conditions will not be imposed without agreement and that all existing agreements will be honoured. Despite a previous commitment to withdraw plans for massive changes to drivers' working conditions, London Underground management has established a full-time team of managers preparing to impose their plans. They want drivers to work longer shifts, spending up to 25% more time in the cab, and to remove all current working agreements in the name of "flexibility and efficiency". More at: <https://aslef.org.uk/publications/aslef-tube-train-drivers-london-strike-april-and-may>

RMT welcomes Transport for the North's call to terminate Avanti contract

The **RMT** has welcomed the news that the Board voted unanimously to write to the Secretary of State calling on him to terminate Avanti West Coast's contract and bring it into public ownership under the Operator of Last Resort.

With Avanti's performance consistently poor and deteriorating since December, Transport for the North, which brings together Northern Metro Mayors and council leaders, called for Transport Secretary Mark Harper to put an end to First Group's operation on the West Coast mainline.

RMT General Secretary Mick Lynch said: "We welcome Transport for the North's decision. This would be the right move for the North, for the country as a whole and for the workforce at Avanti. The government must now act."

More at: <https://www.rmt.org.uk/news/rmt-welcomes-transport-for-the-norths-call-to-terminate-avanti/>

RMT holds strike ballot on Scotrail over driver only operation

Scotrail workers are being balloted by the **RMT** for strike action over the introduction of Driver Only Operation (DOO) trains. Management at the Scottish government run train company have said Barrhead and East Kilbride routes can run services without a second member of staff at the discretion of the driver. Over a hundred conductors who will be affected by Scotrail's plans are being balloted. The ballot opened on 20 March and closes on 11 April.

Northumbria

Unite members at Arriva Northumbria, are to take weeks of strike action this spring in protest over their pay and conditions. Over 300 drivers and engineers voted overwhelmingly for strike action following the refusal of Arriva to improve a pay offer of just 4 per cent. Strikes begin for one week on **7 April** and a further week starting **21 April**. Arriva drivers are currently the lowest paid out of the three main operators in Tyne & Wear. The best-paid drivers earn less than those employed by Go North East and Stagecoach. More at:

<https://www.unitetheunion.org/news-events/news/2024/march/arriva-northumbria-workers-to-strike-over-pay-this-spring>

40th Anniversary of the Miners' Strike



Public meeting on **Wednesday 8 May 7.30pm-9.00pm, Kingswood Suite, Wakefield Town Hall, Wood Street, Wakefield WF1 2HQ.** Organised by **With Banners Held High.**

Speaker - former BBC Industrial Correspondent **Nicholas Jones** on *The Art of Class War* will treat the topic of the strike from an unusual perspective, looking at the work of newspaper cartoonists. Free admission. You can book places here: <https://www.eventbrite.com/e/the-art-of-class-war-the-miners-strike-as-seen-by-news-cartoonists-tickets-814196903857>

Nick Jones on Arthur Scargill 40 years on see:

<https://www.nicholasjones.org.uk/categories2/trade-union-reporting/402-arthur-scargill-challenges-lies-about-the-miners-strike-and-reflects-on-70-years-standing-by-his-commitment-to-trade-unionism>

Latest edition of MediaNorth at: <https://medianorth.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2024/03/MediaNorth.March2024WEB.pdf>

News from our regional TUC

Wide-ranging plans to resist Tory government attacks on unions were laid out at the annual conference of Yorkshire and the Humber region of the Trade Union Congress held on 16/17 March. TUC regional secretary Liz Blackshaw writes at:

<https://morningstaronline.co.uk/article/getting-set-struggles-ahead>

Other reports at: <https://morningstaronline.co.uk/article/delegates-back-call-for-a-united-resistance-to-government-anti-strike-laws>

<https://morningstaronline.co.uk/article/burgon-address-calls-workers-and-their-unions-learn-lessons-1984-5-miners-strike>

<https://morningstaronline.co.uk/article/privateer-railway-operators-face-industrial-resistance-if-they-use-msl-unions>

Education

More than 100 teachers at two £13,000-a-year private schools in north-east England have launched strike action against being fired and rehired with a worse pension scheme. Members of teaching unions the **NEU** and **NASUWT** at Dame Allan's Schools in Newcastle walked out on 19, 26 and 27 March. They will strike again on **16 – 18 April**.

NEU northern regional secretary Beth Farhat said: "Dame Allan Schools has no justification for its plan to fire and rehire teachers on worse terms, which will be a disaster for staff, for future recruitment and for pupils." More at: <https://morningstaronline.co.uk/article/teachers-at-two-private-schools-in-north-east-england-strike-against-fire-and-rehire-plans>

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