# London bus strike called off as union accepts new pay offer amid long-standing disputes



A large-scale bus strike planned to disrupt about 60 routes across north-west and south-west London over the weekend has been mostly called off after a significant development in the ongoing dispute between bus workers and their employers. The Unite union, which represents drivers, engineers, and controllers involved in the dispute, confirmed that the majority of London United employees have accepted a new pay offer, leading to the cancellation of their planned strike action scheduled for Friday 12 to Sunday 14 September.

The dispute primarily centres on pay and working conditions, with workers employed by London United and London Transit challenging current arrangements. Unite’s announcement marks a significant step toward resolving tensions that echo a longer history of pay inequality and industrial disputes within London’s bus services.

Historically, London’s bus industry has faced persistent challenges regarding pay disparities. Back in 2014, drivers represented by Unite protested against wide salary variations among the capital’s multiple bus operators. At that time, pay ranged from £17,000 to £25,000 despite drivers performing similar roles. The fragmented nature of agreements across the 17 different bus companies operating in London created an uneven and often contentious landscape. Unite had called for the creation of a collective negotiating forum to standardise pay and improve conditions across the sector.

That same year, a series of strikes underscored the difficulties in reaching consensus. For example, in early 2014, workers at Tower Transit staged a 24-hour strike over pay and conditions affecting 13 routes in east and central London. The union framed the strike as a last resort, while employers deemed the demands excessive. Transport for London (TfL), which oversees bus operations though does not directly employ drivers, consistently urged negotiations to minimise disruption.

Later in 2014, further votes demonstrated overwhelming support for industrial action against the patchwork of 18 bus companies, as Unite sought a single agreement to address pay inequities. Strikes and threatened walkouts remained a recurring feature of industrial relations within London’s bus sector. For instance, in 2017, controllers employed by TfL itself planned a 24-hour strike over pay, part of a broader campaign for fairer wages, although this was met with offers for further talks and revised proposals from management.

More recently, strike actions have seen mixed levels of disruption. In 2015, a strike by drivers protesting pay discrepancies resulted in nearly half of the bus routes continuing to operate, with calls from Unite to overhaul the confusing and inconsistent pay system. TfL, meanwhile, characterised many strikes as unnecessary and pushed for talks with individual companies as a route to resolution, hoping to bypass broader collective disputes.

The recent decision by London United employees to accept a pay offer and cancel their planned strike is the latest chapter in a complex industrial saga. While it will undoubtedly relieve pressure on London’s bus users in the short term, longstanding issues around pay parity and working conditions remain central to the relationship between bus workers, their employers, and TfL. The outcome for employees of London Transit, who have yet to accept an offer, remains to be seen, highlighting the ongoing nature of negotiations in this vital public service sector.

### 📌 Reference Map:

* Paragraph 1 – [[1]](https://www.bbc.com/news/articles/c708qwer1wko?at_medium=RSS&at_campaign=rss)
* Paragraph 2 – [[1]](https://www.bbc.com/news/articles/c708qwer1wko?at_medium=RSS&at_campaign=rss)
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* Paragraph 6 – [[6]](https://www.bbc.com/news/uk-england-london-31139088), [[7]](https://www.bbc.com/news/uk-england-london-31409831)
* Paragraph 7 – [[1]](https://www.bbc.com/news/articles/c708qwer1wko?at_medium=RSS&at_campaign=rss), [[4]](https://www.bbc.com/news/uk-england-london-30534072)

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## Bibliography

1. <https://www.bbc.com/news/articles/c708qwer1wko?at_medium=RSS&at_campaign=rss> - Please view link - unable to able to access data
2. <https://www.bbc.com/news/uk-england-london-29893689> - In September 2014, London bus drivers, represented by the Unite union, protested against significant pay disparities among the capital's bus companies. Drivers' salaries varied from £17,000 to £25,000, despite performing similar duties. The dispute arose from 17 bus companies operating in London, each with different agreements with Transport for London (TfL). Unite called for a collective negotiating forum to address these inequalities, highlighting the lack of a unified pay structure for bus drivers in the city.
3. <https://www.bbc.com/news/uk-england-london-30612808> - In 2014, bus drivers employed by Tower Transit in London initiated a 24-hour strike over pay and conditions. The action affected 13 routes in east and central London, leading to moderate disruption. The Unite union stated that the strike was a last resort due to unresolved issues, while Tower Transit described the union's demands as unreasonable. Transport for London (TfL) urged both parties to resolve the dispute promptly to minimise passenger inconvenience.
4. <https://www.bbc.com/news/uk-england-london-30534072> - In late 2014, London bus drivers voted overwhelmingly in favour of strike action over pay disparities. The Unite union reported that 85% of its members supported industrial action against London's 18 bus companies, which had individual pay deals with Transport for London (TfL). The union sought to establish a single agreement to address the significant salary differences, with potential strikes planned for the first two weeks of January 2015 if negotiations failed.
5. <https://www.bbc.com/news/uk-england-london-41321945> - In September 2017, hundreds of London bus controllers employed by Transport for London (TfL) planned a 24-hour strike over pay. The Unite union announced the action as part of a long-running campaign for a 'decent' pay rise. TfL stated that it had made a revised offer to staff and was open to further talks to resolve the dispute and minimise disruption to bus services.
6. <https://www.bbc.com/news/uk-england-london-31139088> - In February 2015, a strike by London bus drivers protesting pay differences concluded after 47% of routes remained operational. The Unite union criticised the existing pay system as chaotic and called for changes to address large pay disparities among London's 18 bus companies. Transport for London (TfL) described the strike as unnecessary and urged the union to engage in discussions to resolve the issues.
7. <https://www.bbc.com/news/uk-england-london-31409831> - In February 2015, two planned strikes by London bus drivers were postponed. The Unite union sought to establish a forum with all bus companies to discuss ending pay disparities and improving working conditions. Transport for London (TfL) continued to urge the union and bus companies to meet individually to resolve the issues, with the threat of strikes resuming if no progress was made.