# London’s transport chaos exposes government and union failures amid devastating strike



London’s transport network is in collapse, revealing the utter failure of the current government and the cosy unions that have brought chaos to our capital. A week-long strike by London Underground workers, orchestrated by the militant RMT union, has left the Tube practically paralyzed. This industrial action, which began on 7 September 2025 and extends into Thursday, exposes the stark reality: decades of neglect and appeasement have left London unprepared to handle the demands of its own workforce, while ordinary commuters are paying the price.

The dispute, rooted in grievances over pay, shift patterns, and fatigue, is driven not by genuine concern for safety or sustainability but by union-driven demands that threaten the city’s economy and public order. The RMT’s demands for a reduction to a 35-hour workweek, citing alleged health risks from demanding shift rotations, are disconnected from the realities of running a modern city. Transport for London’s mealy-mouthed offer of a 3.4% pay rise, coupled with their stubborn refusal to address working hours, underscores their role in perpetuating this crisis. Their continued resistance only demonstrates their inability—or unwillingness—to prioritize Londoners over union interests.

As a consequence, essential services are grinding to a halt, forcing Londoners to scramble for alternatives. Electric bikes are experiencing our of control spikes—Lime and Forest seeing 58% to 300% increases in usage—while river transport tries but fails to fill the gap left by the Tube. Casualty of this chaos are businesses and cultural institutions: footfall is down by 16.5% in central London, with major events postponed and shops deserted as workers and shoppers stay home, casualties of a government and unions that have abdicated their responsibility to keep London moving.

Economically, the impact is devastating. Conservative estimates peg the immediate cost at around £230 million, with further damage to retail, hospitality, and services. Traffic congestion data further highlights the chaos: many workers forced to work from home, further crippling the city’s productivity. The disruption spills over into healthcare; hospital appointments are being delayed as staff and patients face impossible commutes. The Royal Free and other trusts are urging patients to re-schedule and find alternative routes, exposing a health system already overwhelmed by the government’s failure to invest in proper infrastructure.

Sadiq Khan’s feeble condemnation of the strikes as “detrimental” misses the bigger picture. London’s entire functioning is threatened—not just by union greed but by a political leadership that’s failed at every turn. With hospitals stretched thin and children unable to get to school, the social fabric of our city is fraying. Khan’s hand-wringing only emphasizes how out of touch he is with the realities on the ground; as usual, he offers little more than empty words while Londoners suffer.

This strike isn’t just a protest; it’s a symptom of a broken system built on virtue-signaling and union appeasement. Meanwhile, the government and Transport for London continue to spin and obfuscate, unwilling to confront the militant union overlords or to step in with decisive action. Instead of addressing root issues, they capitulate to demands that threaten to bring London to its knees—costing jobs, harming families, and driving our city backward. This crisis starkly reveals the failure of leadership at every level—an inconvenient truth that voters must acknowledge.

As London teeters on the brink, it’s clear that the current approach is unsustainable. The city needs robust leadership and a serious commitment to reform—not more spin and union appeasement. Only then can we hope to restore order, protect jobs, and keep our capital functioning in the face of this ongoing chaos.

Source: [Noah Wire Services](https://www.noahwire.com)

## Bibliography

1. <https://www.standard.co.uk/news/london/tube-strike-peace-talks-tfl-rmt-sadiq-khan-escapes-grilling-b1247243.html> - Please view link - unable to able to access data
2. <https://www.reuters.com/business/world-at-work/londons-tube-network-shuts-workers-begin-week-strikes-2025-09-08/> - On 8 September 2025, London's Tube network was brought to a near halt as workers began a week-long strike over pay and working conditions. The RMT trade union led the industrial action, causing significant travel disruptions for commuters and tourists. Almost no underground trains were expected to run from Monday to Thursday, and the Docklands Light Railway was also shut on Tuesday and Thursday. Many Londoners resorted to cycling or taking alternate routes to work. The strike centred on issues such as pay, shift patterns, fatigue, and a proposed reduction in the working week. The RMT argued that staff faced extreme fatigue due to current shift rotations, while Transport for London offered a 3.4% pay rise but noted the union insisted on reducing the standard 35-hour workweek. Despite the disruption, the Elizabeth Line and London Overground continued to run with minor delays. The strike's impact extended beyond daily commutes, prompting musicians like Coldplay and Post Malone to reschedule concerts in London. Efforts to resolve the dispute were ongoing.
3. <https://www.reuters.com/sustainability/sustainable-finance-reporting/london-commuters-turn-bikes-boats-tube-strike-enters-second-day-2025-09-09/> - As the London Tube strike entered its second day on 9 September 2025, commuters sought alternative transportation methods, turning to bikes, buses, and boats due to the near-total shutdown of the underground network, which was expected to persist until Friday. The increased demand significantly strained other transport modes: electric bike-sharing services such as Lime and Forest reported large spikes in usage—Lime saw a 58% increase in Monday morning trips, while Forest recorded a 300% rise on Tuesday morning. River transport services, like Uber Boat by Thames Clippers, also experienced heightened demand, adding extra routes to accommodate passengers. The strike, organized by the RMT union, was driven by disputes over pay, working hours, and shift patterns. Transport for London had proposed a 3.4% pay increase, but the union was pushing for fewer working hours. The disruption was expected to cost the London economy £230 million ($310 million) directly, with further indirect losses. Prime Minister Keir Starmer's government, elected in July with promises to resolve such labor actions, had called for a resolution.
4. <https://www.reuters.com/business/world-at-work/london-underground-workers-set-start-week-strike-action-2025-09-07/> - London Underground workers were set to begin a week of rolling strikes starting 7 September 2025, leading to significant disruptions across the city's transit network. Passengers were advised to complete their journeys by 6 p.m. on Sunday, as minimal Tube service was expected from Monday through Thursday due to staggered walkouts. In addition, the Docklands Light Railway (DLR), crucial for connecting financial hubs like Canary Wharf and the City of London, would be non-operational on Tuesday and Thursday. The RMT union attributed the strike to unresolved issues over pay, fatigue management, shift patterns, and a demand for a shorter working week. RMT General Secretary Eddie Dempsey emphasized the toll of extreme shift rotations on workers' health. Transport for London (TfL) stated that employees currently work around 35 hours per week and had been offered a 3.4% pay rise. While major disruption was expected, some services like the Elizabeth Line and rail overground would continue operating, though with likely overcrowding. The strike's impact extended beyond commuters, causing event disruptions. British rock band Coldplay and U.S. artist Post Malone had postponed concerts in London due to the travel chaos.
5. <https://www.the-independent.com/news/uk/nhs-patients-stephen-powis-northwick-park-hospital-london-underground-b2105557.html> - The NHS 'remains open', leading medics have said as the health service prepares for disruption caused by rail strikes. Patients have been urged to plan ahead for appointments. And hospitals have made arrangements to ensure staff will be on site, including setting up park-and-ride services and taxi-sharing facilities. The strikes could have a particular impact on hospitals in London, many of which have limited parking capacity for those considering driving to appointments as an alternative. While buses are still operating it is expected these will be busier than usual due to the strikes. Rail worker strikes on Tuesday, Thursday and Saturday are set to cause travel disruption across the country. Meanwhile strike action will also disrupt the London Underground on Tuesday. Many trusts have urged patients to get in touch if they cannot attend their appointment due to strikes. The Royal Free said in a statement: 'Our hospitals will be open as normal but please do let us know in advance if you are unable to attend your appointment.'
6. <https://www.england.nhs.uk/london/2023/07/12/nhs-london-warns-of-significant-disruption-over-10-days-as-industrial-action-continues/> - Consultants will continue to provide all emergency services but routine services will be affected. People who need care should still come forward to access the care they need in the usual way – only using 999 and A&E in life-threatening emergencies and using NHS 111 online and other services for non-urgent health needs. Pharmacies and GPs are unaffected by the strikes so patients can still get appointments and health advice. Dr Chris Streather, Medical Director for the NHS in London said: 'As we enter the eighth month of industrial action I’d like to thank everyone in the NHS in London for working so hard to limit the impact of strikes on patients. We have prepared extensively, but the combined impact of a five-day junior doctor strike, following by a 48-hour consultant strike means that we are expecting all services to be very busy. People with life-threatening conditions should always call 999 but we ask Londoners to contact NHS 111 and use their pharmacy and GP practice as a first point of call for care.' June’s industrial action by junior doctors lasted for 72 hours and saw more than 4,500 staff off each day and approximately 33,000 hospital appointments rescheduled across London. With the strike lasting five days this week we are expecting more appointments to be affected in the capital. However, it is important that Londoners still attend planned appointments unless advised otherwise.
7. <https://londondaily.com/strikes-take-toll-on-economy-as-widespread-disruption-forces-many-to-stay-at-home> - This figure includes £68m of direct costs linked to lost working days in the railway and education sectors, as well as the civil service. Economists said that absences among those who cannot work from home and rely on the train network to commute to their place of work will cost the economy an additional £26m. 'These figures (together £94m) represent a lower bound estimate, as they do not capture impacts such as parents taking time off work during school closures, reduced retail/hospitality footfall, among others. 'It will, however, mark the costliest day of action across the whole of the eight-month current strike period,' the CEBR said. About 85% of the 23,000 state schools in England and Wales are closed or partially closed today, with parents forced to stay at home as a result. Data submitted, by schools, to the Department for Education showed that 45.9% of all schools in England were estimated to be fully open. Of the rest, 44.7% were open but restricting attendance. High street businesses were also reeling from falling footfall. According to the data company Springboard, footfall across retail centres across London was down 16.5% compared to last week and down 9.2% in other cities across the UK. Diane Wehrle, Insights Director at Springboard, said: 'Once again the rail strikes occurring across the UK today are having a significantly adverse impact on footfall across retail destinations, but particularly in high streets, with the most severe impact being felt in large cities which comprise the largest working populations where many have chosen to work from home.' In a further sign of reduced economic activity, congestion on the roads fell significantly, with many parents staying at home instead of dropping their children to school or going to work. The sat nav company TomTom said that traffic at the 9am peak was down 43% in Liverpool and Bristol, compared to the same time last Wednesday. Traffic was down 40% in Cardiff, 31% in Sheffield, 27% in Manchester, 24% in London, 22% in Birmingham and 19% in Glasgow. On the London tube network, the number of entries and exits up until 10am this morning was down 23% on last week to 1.39 million, while bus usage was down 18% to 1.12 million journeys.