# Khan’s unconditional pay rise offer risks prolonging London Underground strikes amid unresolved worker grievances



Sir Sadiq Khan’s latest stunt—offering London Underground workers a 3.4 percent unconditional pay rise—exposes yet again how out of touch he is with the realities facing London’s transport users and taxpayers. Amid ongoing strike disruptions that have brought the capital to a near standstill, Khan chooses to throw money at the problem without securing any meaningful concessions or reforms to address the root causes of unrest. His “no conditions” offer—that TfL describes as the best possible use of limited funds—is a clear distraction from the underlying issues of worker fatigue, safety, and fair working hours. But in the eyes of those who rely on London’s transport system, it’s an empty gesture that will do little to prevent further strikes or restore confidence.

Conservative critics have rightly condemned Khan’s approach as reckless and shortsighted. The so-called pay rise is being dismissed as “handing out freebies” that fail to address the broader discontent simmering among workers. Union sources have highlighted that the key grievances go far beyond salary—demanding shorter, more manageable hours and better working conditions. Yet, Khan’s administration continues to dismiss these legitimate concerns, refusing to back policies like a 32-hour workweek that could actually improve safety, morale, and service quality. Instead, TfL’s stubborn refusal to meaningfully negotiate only fuels further industrial unrest, leaving Londoners to suffer the consequences.

The disruption caused by these strikes isn’t just inconvenient; it’s an economic blow that hits hospitality, business districts, and everyday commuters alike. With substantial losses to the city’s economy—estimated at hundreds of millions of pounds—the government’s inability to manage these disputes highlights a glaring failure of leadership. Meanwhile, alternative transportation options like cycling and riverboats experience unprecedented demand, exposing how fragile and unsupported London’s infrastructure has become thanks to years of underinvestment and mismanagement.

The ongoing conflict underscores a fundamental truth: simply throwing money at union demands without enforcing reforms or addressing core concerns leads nowhere. It’s time for strong leadership that puts the interests of Londoners first—not empty promises or appeasement policies that only encourage further strikes. The mayor’s latest move is a tactical move that appeases union leaders temporarily but does nothing to solve the underlying issues of worker burnout and operational inefficiency.

As London’s transport network continues to teeter under the weight of unresolved disputes, it’s clear that more decisive action is needed—action that prioritizes safety, efficiency, and accountability. There’s a real opportunity here to overhaul a system hamstrung by complacency and union-inflamed demands. Instead of kowtowing to union aspirations and placating special interests, leadership should focus on ensuring the safety and convenience of the public, not just short-term appeasement. Unfortunately, under Khan’s leadership, London remains colonies of industrial chaos, with taxpayers footing the bill for failed negotiations and closed stations. This is not the future London needs—it’s the wake-up call the city has ignored for too long.

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

## Bibliography

1. <https://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-15093913/Sir-Sadiq-Khan-gives-tube-drivers-plunged-London-chaos-3-4-pay-rise-doesnt-prevent-walkouts.html?ns_mchannel=rss&ns_campaign=1490&ito=1490> - 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 nearly halted as workers initiated a week-long strike over pay and working conditions. The RMT trade union led the action, causing significant disruptions for commuters and tourists, with minimal underground trains expected to run from Monday to Thursday. The dispute 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://apnews.com/article/6062013cf41162b04e5dcbe199c39270> - Starting Sunday, thousands of London Underground staff initiated a strike over pay and working conditions, significantly disrupting the city's subway system relied upon by millions daily. The Rail, Maritime and Transport Union stated that drivers, signalers, and maintenance workers would strike through Thursday. Transport for London (TfL) acknowledged that services were already heavily impacted, with minimal or no trains expected over the coming days. The dispute centered around the union's demand for a reduction in the working week from 35 to 32 hours, whereas TfL had offered only a 3.4% pay increase and claimed it could not meet the union's request. The union also highlighted that staff cuts of 2,000 since 2018 had burdened remaining employees with demanding shifts. No negotiations were currently underway, and the union urged Mayor Sadiq Khan to step in to help resolve the standoff.
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 Sunday, 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, was 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 worked 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.
5. <https://www.reuters.com/sustainability/sustainable-finance-reporting/london-commuters-turn-bikes-boats-tube-strike-enters-second-day-2025-09-09/> - As a London Tube strike entered its second day on Tuesday, 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.
6. <https://www.ft.com/content/9a619b27-c2a9-4bf2-9613-636f8be0165e> - Transport for London (TfL) issued a warning of major transport disruptions in London due to strikes by the RMT union over pay and working conditions. The strikes began on Sunday and were expected to cause limited Underground service that day, followed by "little to no service" from Monday through Thursday. Normal services were anticipated to resume by late Friday morning. This marked the first full-network Underground strike since March 2023. Additionally, Docklands Light Railway services were expected to be shut on Tuesday and Thursday, and First Bus strikes might disrupt bus routes in various areas between September 12 and 14. TfL had offered a 3.4% annual pay increase aligned with retail price inflation, but the RMT criticized management's reluctance to seriously engage in discussions on issues like fatigue, difficult shifts, and reducing the workweek. TfL’s COO Claire Mann urged the union to reconsider and hold a vote among members. Other services such as the Elizabeth Line, London Overground, and Croydon Tramlink were expected to operate normally, though crowding and minor disruptions were possible where they shared stations with the Underground. Mainline rail services were not expected to be affected.