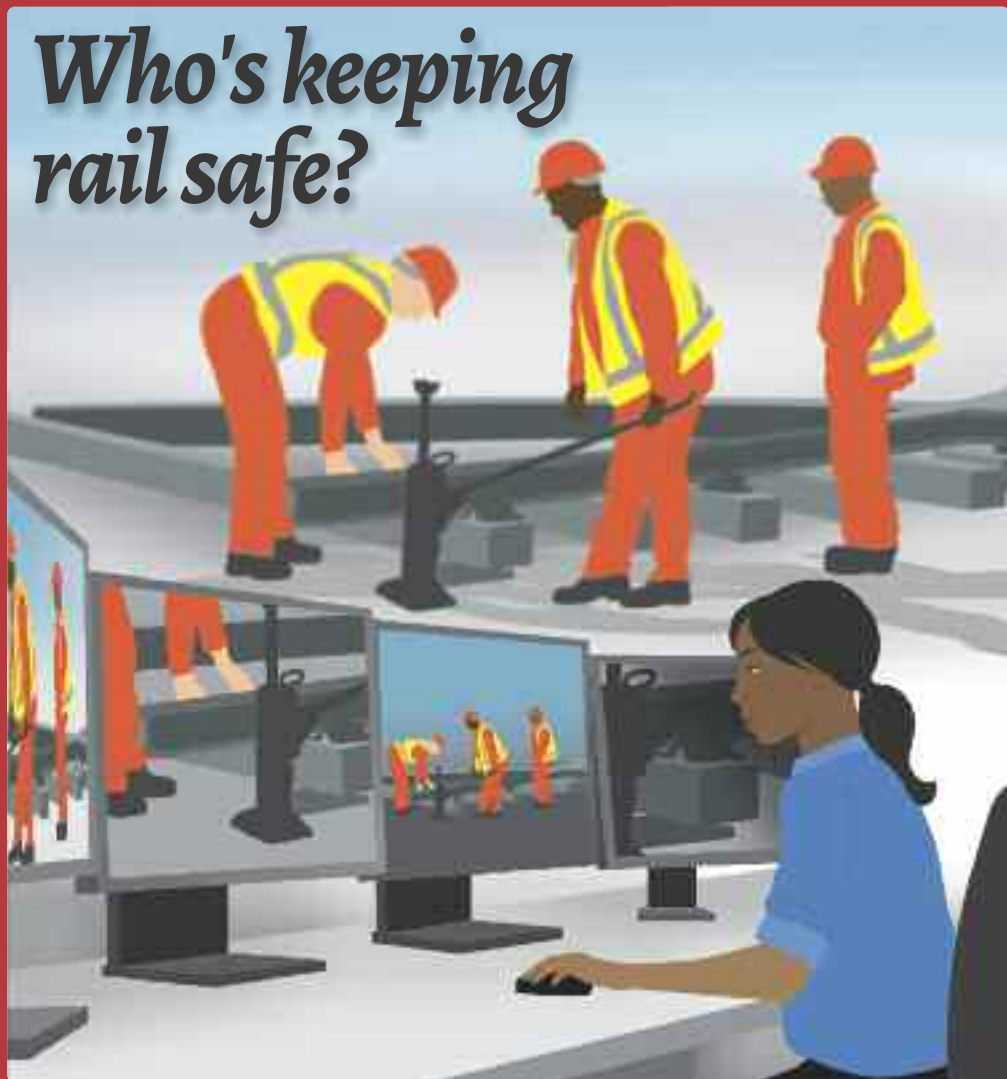


# tssa journal

spring 2016

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- 12 Is Network Rail being privatised?
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## Who's keeping rail safe?





Transport Salaried Staffs' Association

General Secretary: Manuel Cortes

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## Planning & Delivery of Safe Work (PDSW)

A TSSA TEAM OF FOUR REPS is currently reviewing PDSW. The team's remit is to identify the principal issues and problems arising from its implementation in the East Midlands, and then work with Network Rail to develop acceptable solutions to those issues and problems.

Following the pause in implementation, a number of options for going forward are being developed, including reverting to the existing Safe System of Works Packs but with improvements.

The team will also be working with TSSA reps and members employed by some of the contractors affected by PDSW. Towards the end of the review, the team will meet with all TSSA reps in Network Rail in order to present the outcomes from the review, and to discuss TSSA's position going forward from there.

Please contact David Lyons for further information: phone: 07799 337024, email: david.lyons@networkrail.co.uk



**Extra:** For all TSSA Health, safety and well-being updates: <http://bit.ly/TSSAHSW>



## Welcome to the new look compact TSSA Journal.

The main theme of this edition is safety.

We have highlighted current developments in the industry that affect working people. In all of these areas, TSSA is arguing that safety should be of paramount importance. We have learned the lesson from the past and want to protect staff and passengers in the future.

Its elections coming up again in May. The General Secretary has drawn attention to this in his article on page 4 and we've pulled out some of the key positions on transport from the main candidates for London Mayor.

TSSA has an increased focus on recruitment. If we want to properly represent our members and win on the issues that matter to them; we need more members and more reps active in the workplace. TSSA's **Time To Grow** strategy sets out the pathway for us to build power in the workplace. The first stage is recruitment, this issue has a pull out centerfold poster for everyone to put up in their workplace giving **10 reasons to join TSSA**. We've also included some protips for using **MyTSSA** on page 5 under President, Mick Carney's piece on this year's annual conference.

We want this issue of the Journal to work interactively. Look out for this phone symbol and follow the short weblinks to news and articles on the website that relate to the piece you are reading.



Through the rest of the year please keep yourself in touch by logging on to the TSSA website and following the TSSA page on Facebook [fb.com/TSSAunion](https://www.facebook.com/TSSAunion) and Twitter [@TSSAunion](https://twitter.com/TSSAunion)

I look forward to seeing your feedback.

Kerry Abel, editor

**BETTER QUALITY SIG  
WOULD BE BETTER IF  
YOU CAN**

# From the General Secretary...



Britain and Ireland go to the polls this year. In the Republic, a general election has been called. We have Mayoral and Assembly elections in London, Wales and Northern Ireland whilst Scottish voters elect a new Parliament. In addition, there are contests for Police and Crime Commissioners across England and Wales, council elections in England and a number of English cities will be electing their mayors.

Our union is campaigning hard to ensure that those elected govern in your interests. This means seeking commitments against further privatisation of public transport and where they have the power to do so, returning them to public ownership.

Of course, not all of you work on public transport and many other policies also affect each and every one of you. That is why our union is pursuing a progressive agenda which puts you first. We want to see an end to austerity which is causing so much harm – an economy which works for you rather than the 1% whose untold wealth has more than doubled since the economic crisis broke!

The contests where our members can have the biggest direct impact on their livelihoods are being held in London. The Mayor is the boss for those of you who work for both Transport for London and the Underground and indirectly,

for those working for the Overground, TfL Rail and London buses. The London Assembly holds the Mayor to account. We are extremely proud to be supporting Sadiq Khan – the son of a bus driver versus a Tory billionaire, as well as the Labour Assembly candidates across the city. If elected, I have no doubt that Sadiq will create a fairer London, help end its housing crisis and put in place transport policies which benefit our members.

**He gets my vote – I hope he gets yours too!**



**To get involved** in TSSA's political campaigning in London, Bristol, Ireland, Scotland, Wales or local elections across the UK please contact Political Officer Sam Tarry at: [tarrys@tssa.org.uk](mailto:tarrys@tssa.org.uk)

## TSSA supported the TUC's #heartunions week

by holding workplace meetings and watching TUC General Secretary Frances O'Grady and comedian Eddie Izzard's broadcast on the Trade Union Bill.



**Extra:** For more information on the Trade Union Bill: [bit.ly/TSSATUBill](http://bit.ly/TSSATUBill)

**Extra:** To watch the broadcast go to [heartunions.org](http://heartunions.org)



ABOVE: TSSA GS Manuel Cortes stands in solidarity with the Junior Doctors' Strike at his local hospital, Whipps Cross

Kerry, 2 more lines to cut, please...



back to one of their key roles – supporting the reps in the workplace.

# From the President...



Mick Carney writes about TSSA Conference and the branch restructuring that took place in November 2015.

The previous structure left many members in branches that were failing. Many didn't meet or hand in returns. It was a structure that was serving the few and not the many. So we took the, at times unpopular, decision to take the bull by the horn and close a number of branches. The new structure is already proving to be much more robust, with more branch meetings taking place. More needs to be done but we have begun the process. A vibrant branch structure is an important part of our democracy especially in the current climate. Our finances have been turned around, to the point where the General Secretary has already promised we will

not be asking conference for a subscription increase this year. But we need to address our falling membership numbers.

This is why the **Time to Grow** strategy was launched at Conference 2015. Training our members and, reps to have simple conversations that encourage a colleague to join. To challenge some of the barriers people feel towards union membership. Walkden House have put together some excellent recruiting material (see the pull out poster in the centre).

Reps and branches are absolutely key in this. Reps doing the training and branches getting



**Extra:** Visit the website for information and video tutorials to help you get the most out of MyTSSA: [bit.ly/MyTSSAhowto](http://bit.ly/MyTSSAhowto)

## 5 reasons why you should use MyTSSA

**MyTSSA** is a function on the TSSA website that makes it easy for members to access a range of membership and administrative details. It is particularly useful for officers of branches, divisions and self-organised groups as it allows them to organise and communicate with members.

- 1** It is incredibly **simple to use**. You can even login with your Facebook account. There are instructional videos and written guidance on how to use it and it is clearly laid out with navigable menus.
- 2** Access and updates are **instant**. Instead of having to make a phone call to our hard-working membership team you can update all your personal and job details yourself. You can also view your subscription payment summary and, if you declare an interest in a self-organised group, you can receive updates from them.
- 3** It is the ideal **tool for organising** branches and other groups. Officers can add content to the group page, engage with members, advertise the next meeting (with a map of the venue automatically included) and upload any documents (such as branch standing orders).
- 4** It saves on paper. Instead of having paper files and drawers full of information, officers can simply log in, complete their admin and view their list of members here. All the information is also easily **downloadable**.
- 5** It can be **accessed from anywhere** with an Internet connection. When you are on the beach in the Bahamas and you suddenly realise that you haven't updated your job details then just switch on your smartphone and do it whilst sipping on a Piña Colada.

# Labour will make Britain's railways *the envy of the world*

**The new leader of the Labour Party, Jeremy Corbyn writes for the TSSA Journal about his vision for the rail industry.**



**I**t's no secret that I'm a rail enthusiast, and it gives me great pleasure to write for one of great railway trade unions that has been affiliated to the party I lead since 1910. I would like to thank the TSSA for the support they have given me – for helping build the dramatic political movement that has rejuvenated our party since the summer. I would also like to thank those TSSA members that stood for Parliament last summer, and the active TSSA councillors dotted across the country, and those TSSA members standing for election this year too from Holyrood in Scotland to Swindon Council in Wiltshire.

TSSA's members and officers have been working closely alongside my team to ensure

we have a railway policy that puts passengers and transport workers first – and doesn't prioritise shareholder profit and short term political meddling over long term, thought out and realistic strategies for running our railways in public hands; a true peoples railway that can once again be the envy of the world.

I know that there are great challenges across the industry; from the Rail Delivery Group openly lobbying with a pro-privatisation message (ably brought to task by Shadow Transport Minister Lilian Greenwood); the potential of further ticket office closures across GWR from South London to the South Coast; huge cuts to the British Transport Police Budget that could impact

TSSA members in BTP; the ongoing difficulties and underperformance of the Scot Rail Alliance, and, most crucially, the impending report by Nicola Shaw into the future make-up, or break-up, of Network Rail.

I want to be clear – I have a different vision for our countries railways and transport networks, built around the idea that privatisation should not be the default option, that fragmentation is crippling the potential of the railways, and that proper integration, long term investment in both staff and infrastructure over longer periods of time, are the best basis for a forward looking and innovative industry.

Rising fares are making passengers hurt; and yet we cannot tell them that every penny their fares is re-invested in the railways. It should be. I see our railways not just as a cleaner, cheaper and more efficient way to transport people around our country, but as a key engine of driving economic growth, so that the burden of investment should be led by the Government and shared between all those that benefit from an enhanced rail system.

Privatisation has brought us the most expensive railways in Europe. The vast majority of investment in the railways is by the public sector, through Network Rail, and not by the Train Operating Companies themselves. It cannot be right, that in a country that once was renowned across the world for our rail expertise, and our engineers, planners and designers, that so many of our domestic commuter lines and intercity lines are owned by foreign governments.<sup>1</sup>

Workers spend 12% of their salary on train fares in France, 9% in Germany, and 6% in Spain and Italy. Since 2010, fares have increased by 27%, while UK workers have suffered six years of falling real wages as consumer inflation has persistently outpaced pay growth since 2008.

The Rebuilding Rail report,<sup>2</sup> published by Transport for Quality of Life, and supported by experts from TSSA, conservatively estimates that about £1.2bn is lost each year as a result of fragmentation and privatisation.<sup>3</sup> Under the plans we are developing I would see every single train operating company brought into public ownership as their franchises expire. This has the support of the majority of the British public, and as recently as East Coast DOR demonstrated, can work tremendously well. In the

meantime we want the Department for Transport to rip up the fare structure and put in place fares that make commuting affordable. I, and the Labour Party, will not stand by and let a re-run of the disastrous Rail Track misadventure take place. I know that thousands of TSSA members working in Network Rail, have huge experience, often spanning many years, and I want that knowledge and expertise to be used to shape Network rails future. The track record of East Coast when publicly run, and of Transport for London, demonstrates that the public sector can be as creative, innovative and far more efficient than the rest of the privatised rail industry.

I know that TSSA members are proud to work in the transport sector, but I believe that they, and the British public, deserve to enjoy a rail system that is the envy of the world; with trains designed and built here in the Britain, with lines run in public ownership, with fares re-invested in the railways future, and with innovative British companies – paying their taxes in this country, playing their role in an over-arching publicly run and fully integrated system of transport.



Extra: [bit.ly/railintl](http://bit.ly/railintl)  
<sup>2013</sup> [bit.ly/rebuildingrail](http://bit.ly/rebuildingrail)



## Lilian Greenwood

*Elected the Shadow Transport Minister in September, here are some facts that you might not know about her...*

- Labour MP for Nottingham South since 2010
- Born in Bolton and went to the same school as actress Maxine Peake and presenter Sara Cox
- Worked for two trade unions before being elected to Parliament
- Was the first woman to represent Nottingham in Parliament
- Said that she would press the Government on the electrification of the line to Nottingham and HS2' in her maiden speech in Parliament in 2010
- Speaks out for public ownership, using the publicly run East Coast, which returned £1 billion to the Treasury, as an example.
- Told Labour Party Conference she wants fares to drop and the efficiency gap found by McNulty to narrow
- Is in favour of High Speed 2 investment run 'under public ownership as a public service'
- Has called privatising Network Rail 'a disaster'.

# 10 reasons

## 1 HIGHER PAY

Year on year, TSSA wins pay rises for its members. Trained representatives negotiate with employers for the deals that only our members influence. Union members are 20% better off in the public sector and earn 7% more in the private sector compared to non-unionised workers, this particularly benefits younger workers who earn 33% more. Where the unions have more members, the deals are better.

## 2 SECURE JOBS

Union members are more likely to be in permanent and full-time jobs. TSSA reps challenge job cuts and campaigns when contracts are under threat. Trade union members are less likely to be sacked. TSSA negotiators have a significant role in reorganisations at work and are accountable to their members.

## 3 BETTER TERMS AND CONDITIONS

TSSA has recognition with 100 employers across Britain and Ireland. Because TSSA is actively negotiating and representing members, your employer is more likely to have maternity, parental and carer leave policies in place which are more generous than the statutory minimum, and can help to negotiate better policies at a local level. This is important when negotiating your pensions and future policies and procedures. Where TSSA is stronger so is it's ability to negotiate policies that prevent discrimination and enhance maternity leave pay and flexible working polices above statutory minimums.

## 4 FAIRNESS AT WORK

Workplaces with union recognition are 20% more likely to have an equal opportunities policy. Trained TSSA reps and organisers represent members in disciplinaries and grievances at work and can negotiate with employers to resolve issues such as bullying and collective grievances not covered by legislation.

## 5 MORE LIKELY TO GET EQUAL PAY

TSSA are actively pursuing fair pay across all workplaces through legal action and collective negotiating. TSSA has lodged 39 cases for equal pay at Network Rail and is currently negotiating a new fair and transparent pay scheme for managers. Unlike solicitors who take up equal pay cases for individuals and charge fees, unions negotiate principled pay schemes that involve all workers and use the collective strength of their members as leverage.

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sector  
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TSSA has  
recognition with

100

employers across  
Britain and  
Ireland

Please contact  
representatives



# to join TSSA

Union members are

0%

off in the public and earn 7% in the private compared to unionised workers

On average union members got

3.8

days more paid holiday than non-members

act your local representative

## 6 SAFER WORKPLACES

Our trained reps deliver representation and advice for members at discipline and grievance hearings. Our legal team has an excellent record for winning compensation for TSSA members. Over the last six years TSSA has achieved settlements totalling over £2 million for personal injury claims.

## 7 A SKILLED WORKFORCE

TSSA has Union Learning Reps (ULRs) on the ground negotiating with employers for increased training offered to everyone. Research shows that where a workplace has ULRs, employees are 15% more likely to report receiving training.

## 8 MORE HOLIDAY

TSSA has won increased annual leave and practicable shift arrangements for its members. On average union members got 3.8 days more paid holiday than non-members. This is even more significant for part time workers, who benefit on average by 5.5 days.

## 9 A POSITIVE INFLUENCE

TSSA stands with the majority of the British public who want to see public ownership of the railways because they should be accountable to the taxpayers not the shareholders. This would simplify the system for passengers, reduce costs and ticket prices, increase accountability and transparency so we can all have a less complicated ticketing system. TSSA's Better Rail campaign is run by activists and members to engage with passengers and community groups so that it can win the trust of those that use public transport and influence the politicians that make the decisions.

## 10 HAVING YOUR SAY

As a union we strive to empower members and workplace representatives to stand up for their entitlements and push for more. We give members a real say in who represents them and a voice in the campaign and policy decisions taken in their name. We have structures in place to ensure that members can influence union policy at every level and if those bodies don't represent everyone we have additional self-organised groups (SOGs) to represent women, black members, LGBT, disabled members and younger and older members. These groups all feed into TSSA's annual conference to debate and decide the direction and policies of the union.

# The London Mayoral Can



Sadiq Khan



Labour



Zac Goldsmith



Conservative

## WHAT'S THEIR POLICY ON TUBE FARES?

Pledging to freeze all TfL fares at 2016 prices for four years and has explained how this would work on ITV<sup>1</sup>.

Is on record as saying he won't freeze fares. "In terms of the cost of travel, I have been resisting pressure to freeze fares. It is not possible."<sup>2</sup>

## WHAT HAVE THEY SAID ABOUT CROSSRAIL?

Has said he wants to 'Secure a funding deal for Crossrail 2 and review the route to ensure that it helps deliver jobs, regeneration, social inclusion and housing.'

Goldsmith has said he supports Crossrail, but gave a confusing message aimed at his Richmond Park and North Kingston constituents "I think it could do serious damage [to Wimbledon]. TfL really need to get this right."<sup>4</sup>

## WHAT'S THEIR TRACK RECORD ON TRADE UNION RELATIONS?

Plans to set up the first City Hall team to promote workers' rights and union membership if he wins the mayoral race.<sup>7</sup>

Backing action to ban strikes by trade unions. Supports the Trade Union Bill, to make it harder for trade union members to go on strike.<sup>8</sup>

## FIND OUT MORE

[http://www.sadiq.london/my\\_vision\\_for\\_london](http://www.sadiq.london/my_vision_for_london)

<https://backzac2016.com/backtheplan>

Londoners will go to the polls on 5 May 2016, as the London Mayor has control over London Transport, and significant political influence, we researched their positions on these points and compared the parties that came in the top four in 2012.



Sian Berry



Green

Has pledged to have fewer zones and flat fares by 2025, and to pay once to get to your destination.

Has welcomed Crossrail as a way to make London City Airport irrelevant.<sup>5</sup>

Has written positively about trade unions generally.<sup>9</sup>

<http://www.sianberry.london/the-power-of-good-ideas/>



Caroline Pidgeon



Lib Dem

Half price fares for people travelling before 7.30am, as part of her plan for a part-time travelcard. She has proposed to do this at the expense of TfL staff nominee travel and withdrawing TfL financial support for the Garden Bridge<sup>3</sup>

Has said 'The Crossrail 2 project would relieve overcrowded existing lines. The scheme will also create jobs and regenerate areas.'<sup>6</sup>

Recognised the role of transport trade unions when she tweeted 'Unions & TfL need to get back round the negotiating table. Tube strikes are the last thing London needs' in January.

[http://www.londonlibdems.org.uk/caroline\\_pidgeon](http://www.londonlibdems.org.uk/caroline_pidgeon)

<sup>1</sup>[bit.ly/ITVMayordebate](http://bit.ly/ITVMayordebate)

<sup>2</sup>[bit.ly/ZGLocal](http://bit.ly/ZGLocal)

<sup>3</sup>[bit.ly/CPsums](http://bit.ly/CPsums)

<sup>4</sup>[bit.ly/ZGLocal](http://bit.ly/ZGLocal)

<sup>5</sup>[bit.ly/SBXRail](http://bit.ly/SBXRail)

<sup>6</sup>[bit.ly/CPXRail](http://bit.ly/CPXRail)

<sup>7</sup>[bit.ly/SKunions](http://bit.ly/SKunions)

<sup>8</sup>[bit.ly/ZGstrikeban](http://bit.ly/ZGstrikeban)

<sup>9</sup>[bit.ly/SBUnions](http://bit.ly/SBUnions)



**Extra:** If you want to get involved with TSSA's political campaigning please contact Sam Tarry [tarrys@tssa.org.uk](mailto:tarrys@tssa.org.uk)

# Another Network Rail attack?

TSSA's Policy Advisor, Rob Jenks looks at the implications of the Shaw Report.

Announced as a review of the future shape and financing of the state owned Network Rail, the Shaw Report's recommendations should be published by the time of the Spring Budget on 16th March 2016.

TSSA's concern is that any form of privatisation will impact on the safety of both workers and rail users, especially when the pursuit of ensuring a shareholder profit is allowed to become the priority.

It was Railtrack's neglect of maintaining its track to the appropriate standards – so that it could save money to pay a shareholder dividend<sup>1</sup> – that led to the Hatfield disaster in October 2000 (killing four people) and went on to expose a number of underlying rail related defects.

Britain's railways are regarded as the safest in Europe at present but it only takes one incident to change that and such incidents occur when the vigilance and priority is removed from safety.

Network Rail privatisation

<sup>1</sup>Six months after the Hatfield disaster, the company "reported an after-tax loss of £314m for the year to 31 March 2001 (Murray, 2001) in *Accounting for Producer Needs: The case of Britain's rail infrastructure* by Sean McCartney and John Stittle

will produce other consequences in a railway industry that is heavily fragmented and expensive to run, a point even supported by McNulty in his infamous report.

£400 million was saved when Maintenance was brought back in house by Network Rail in 2004.

## Could Network Rail be privatised again?

One option being considered by Shaw is privatising one – or all – of the company's devolved routes, causing further fragmentation and in the knowledge that the desire is to extract profits.

In terms of financing options, the government has already announced that in future the

Network Grant will be funnelled through the Train Operating Companies (TOCs), effectively putting them in exclusive control of the infrastructure.

Shaw is looking at options including the government underwriting Network Rail's significant debt to encourage private investment. But if they are prepared to do this, why can't they keep Network Rail in the public sector, especially as investors, looking for a return, will only be interested in the most attractive schemes, leaving the rest to the tax payer?

TSSA has responded to the Shaw scoping consultation making all of these points, pointing to the effect on staff, many of whom have endured regular reorganisations as the company changes its priorities.



Extra: Keeping rail travel safe means keeping Network Rail public – visit [bit.ly/NRinourhands](http://bit.ly/NRinourhands)

# London Underground

Lorraine Ward, TSSA Organising Director gives an update of the TSSA position.

Despite almost a year of procrastination on the part of London Underground, it now appears that a settlement to the 2015, yes 2015, pay negotiations could be on the horizon.

Our union still, however, remains in dispute with London Underground management over serious issues surrounding stations and in particular around work/life balance and passenger and industry safety.

## Why the delay?

Night tube, which Londoners were promised in September 2015 is still not resolved. Our members and their representatives have been valiant in their efforts to ensure that their safety concerns would not easily be swept under the carpet and it does appear that LU management have started to listen and act on some of those concerns.

*The following offer is being put to TSSA members with a recommendation from their reps for acceptance:*

- A 4 year pay offer with 1% year 1 and consolidated £500 in addition to **Night Tube launch payment** of £500 non-consolidated payment to all operational staff upon the successful launch of Night Tube
- **1 April 2018 RPI plus 0.25% or 1%, whichever is the greater**
- **£500 Launch payment** to all Station grades staff for the successful implementation of the new model

Central to all of the problems on London underground has been the noticeable absence of the London Mayor Boris Johnson who announced the Night Tube on a whim in 2013 to detract attention from the announcement of the closure of ticket offices across the network under the "Fit for Future Stations" scheme. It's a shocking

indictment on his term of office that when elected as Mayor of London in 2008 Boris promised Londoners that he would negotiate a no strike deal with the tube unions, yet here we are in the final few months of his eight year mayoralty and he has never once met with the elected leaders of those unions to discuss his plans for the underground.



**Extra:** The latest information is on the London Underground section of the TSSA website:  
<http://bit.ly/TSSALdnUn>



Kerry - can they re-design the ad to fit: 139mm W x 39mm H please?

# 100 years

## since the Easter Rising

Patrick McCusker, TSSA Organiser in Ireland explains its significance and a particular TSSA member's involvement.

**2016** marks the centenary of The Easter Rising. This uprising was one of the defining moments of the struggle for Irish independence which began on Easter Monday 1916 with the reading of the proclamation, Poblacht na h-Eireann by Pádraig Pearse.

The men and women of the 1916 Rising envisaged a new Ireland as a national democracy; an Ireland which, in the words of the Proclamation, "guarantees religious and civil liberty, equal rights and equal opportunities to all its citizens, and [which] declares its resolve to pursue the happiness and prosperity of the whole nation and all of its parts, cherishing all of the children of the nation equally."

Many trade unionists took part in the rising. At the foremost was the, the Irish Citizen Army (ICA). Formed initially as a



defence force for striking workers, under the leadership of James Connolly following the 1913 Dublin Lockout, it became something more.

It was in the ICA that the men and women of Irish labour would take their place in the ranks of the army of an Irish Republic that would be declared on Easter Monday, 1916.

One of the leaders of the rising was a railway clerk, Sean Heuston (pictured above). Each day thousands travel through the train station that bears his name in Dublin. Sean Heuston was born into a working-class family in Dublin's inner-city slums in 1891. In 1907 Sean began work for the Great Southern and Western Railway

Company as a goods clerk. Sean worked first in Limerick and later in Dublin. According to his immediate superior, who recommended his permanent appointment in 1908, Heuston was "strictly honest, strictly sober and of good habits generally".

On Easter Monday 1916, Captain Seán Heuston and 12 men of 'D' Company of the 1st Battalion of the Irish Volunteers were ordered to occupy the Mendicity Institute, an institution for the homeless of Dublin city. Heuston had been ordered to hold his position for a few hours but had held on for three days against 500 troops.

After surrender Heuston was caught with incriminating documents and his fate was sealed; he was executed by firing squad on 8 May 1916 aged just twenty-five. One of the youngest to be executed.



**Extra:** There is more information about the Railway Clerks Association and TSSA's history in Malcolm Wallace's *Single or Return* here: [bit.ly/SorRWW1](http://bit.ly/SorRWW1)

# Equal pay

With International Women's Day taking place on 8 March 2016 Toni Haynes, Employment Rights Solicitor at the TSSA's solicitors, Morrish Solicitors chose to look at what is still one of the main problems in the workplace for women – equal pay.

Despite the fact that sex discrimination in pay systems has been unlawful since 1975, a significant gender pay gap still exists.

In 1975 women earned just 77% of what men earned. That gap has reduced, but it still stands at 86%. The difference in pay is so renowned, that we even have an 'Equal Pay Day' which is the date on which women effectively work for free until the end of the year. Last year, that date was 9 November.

The problem is even worse amongst the top 2% of earners, with women earning 55% less than their male counterparts.

So what is the problem and is there an easy solution? The technical nature of equal pay claims and the general requirement for the employee to show that the employer's explanation for the difference in pay is due to sex discrimination makes it very difficult for most employees to succeed in a claim. But that assumes a claim will be brought to begin with.

We have a culture that does not like to discuss money and pay secrecy is a major

contributing factor to the pay gap. Most employees have no way of knowing if they are being paid equally. Employers are reluctant to give details of employees' earnings.

ET fees haven't helped. Tribunal statistics show that the number of equal pay claims presented has been dropping, from 28,801 in 2011/12 to just 9,617 in 2014/15. That they now have to pay £1,200 to pursue the claim to Tribunal no doubt deters many individuals. (Note: as members of the TSSA, the Union will pay these fees on your behalf – subject of course to some conditions.)

It is expected that regulations requiring gender pay gap reporting will soon be published, with the exact details still unknown, but basically it is expected that from 2018 employers with over 250 employees will be required to publish reports with gender pay gap information. Exactly what they will need to include in the report remains to be seen. Hopefully the reports will encourage employers to take



steps to redress the problem, but experience says that most employers are unwilling to voluntarily bring pay to an equal level because of the associated increases in the wage bill.

We have worked with the TSSA on numerous occasions to challenge pay inequality within the railways, but the only way the pay gap will be reduced is for employees to continue to challenge their employers.



**Extra:** To get involved in TSSA's self organised group for women Women In Focus, see more information on their page: [bit.ly/TSSAWiF](http://bit.ly/TSSAWiF)



**If you think you have an equal pay issue at work** contact the Helpdesk on: [helpdesk@tssa.org.uk](mailto:helpdesk@tssa.org.uk)

Stand up to racism, Islamophobia, anti-semitism and fascism

# Refugees welcome here

Stand Up To Racism's Sabby Dhalu writes about the biggest anti-racist mobilisation in 20 years for this year's UN Anti-Racism day on 19 March.

For the third year running *Stand Up To Racism* has called a national demonstration coinciding with UN Anti-Racism Day. The previous two events were a huge success with 10-15,000 attending the demonstrations. These were the biggest mobilisations against racism for two decades. Given the on-going refugee crisis and the high level of sympathy for refugees including the 100,000 Refugees Welcome Here demonstration in September 2015 that Jeremy Corbyn addressed on becoming Leader of the Labour Party, this year's slogan is: Refugees Welcome Here – Stand up to Racism, Islamophobia, anti-Semitism and Fascism.

As in previous years, this year's demonstration is a Europe-wide day of action. The message we are sending this year is that now more than ever



Geoff Dexter

we must mobilise against racism. Europe is facing the biggest migration of refugees since the Second World War. As Diane Abbott said during her address to the Unite Against Fascism conference: "It is not a refugee crisis, it is a crisis of western governments failing to recognise their moral and legal responsibilities. We should not allow our legal and moral responsibilities to refugees to be blurred by politicians

running scared of UKIP" So we must keep up the pressure on the government to take a fair proportion of refugees.

Since the election of the Conservative government in May 2015, we have seen an unrelenting racist offensive. We have seen speech after speech, policy after policy attacking refugees, Muslims and migrant workers. In order to implement austerity the government needs scapegoats. This is why we must oppose austerity and also the racism that goes hand in glove with it.



We urge TSSA members to join us on **Saturday 19 March**. Now more than ever we must mobilise against racism