

TURN THE HEAT ON THE B SSES NOT THE BUSDRIVERS!




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Every year, the private bus operators in London are caught out unprepared in summer and winter for both hot weather and freezing conditions. But drivers are left to pay the price along with passengers.

This summer, the heatwave is the longest since 1976 – 42 years ago. It is no exaggeration to say that drivers and the public are being out at risk, with drivers being in the frame.

While most drivers are experiencing over 35°C in the cab, some have themselves recorded a scorching 46°C! This is totally unacceptable. While there is no legal maximum working temperature, the TUC has called for a limit of 30°C (27°C for those doing strenuous work) and say that “if the temperature is slightly below that, employers should still attempt to reduce temperatures if they get above 24°C and workers feel uncomfortable... (but) it is usually accepted that people work best at a temperature between 16°C and 24°C.”

We need air-con in all buses. TfL say that it is a requirement that a/c be fitted in all vehicles made after 2012 – but how many have been built since then? We can't wait! We suspect that the

employers haven't carried out risk assessments, fearing the outcome. If this is the case, the union should report them to the HSE.

The starting point is establishing safe maximum and minimum working temperatures. Otherwise, managers will threaten drivers with disciplinary action. We have to fight this together not as individuals. And, because of our collective strength, no drivers have been disciplined for taking time off the job to recover from excessive heat.

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However, the threat remains. We demand immediate measures to alleviate the situation that drivers face and prepare members to take industrial action if nothing happens or if any drivers are threatened with disciplinary action. We have to give drivers confidence. Just with a couple of drivers being interviewed on TV this week has shone a spotlight on this situation.

This situation is yet another reminder to drivers that fractured private ownership of buses across London, where the only motive is profit at the expense of everything else can't deliver for drivers in terms of safety as well as wages, terms & conditions.

This is made worse by TfL's budget cuts that will see the annual operating grant to TfL, currently nearly £700 million, reduced to nil by 2020. If we

don't fight, this will be taken out of our pay packets.

We call on Labour London Mayor Sadiq Khan to join with busworkers and their unions in fighting the budget cuts and build a mass campaign of defiance against the Tories. If he refused to implement these cuts, it would put huge pressure on this weak Tory Government.

We also call on Jeremy Corbyn to pledge to re-nationalise London buses into one integrated transport network in the capital as part of a national nationalised system.

Virtually every month, transport workers on the buses and trains around the UK are taking strike action over pay & conditions and jobs. Imagine the power that transport workers in London could deliver if we co-ordinate across TfL.

Socialist Party drivers play a prominent role in United Left London buses and we encourage

busdrivers to get involved.

What we want:

- Thermometers in every cab as well as hygrometer due to the humidity
- Safe maximum and minimum working temperatures
- Air-conditioning in every bus
- Free drinking water and staff facilities available at end of route
- More breaks and drivers to have the right to stop work when too hot to drive safely
- Stop TfL budget cuts
- Re-nationalise London buses – for a publicly-owned integrated transport network

Workers unity to defeat the racist far-right FLA

Busworkers were furious to learn that a Muslim female driver was blockaded by 'Free Tommy Robinson' supporters on the recent far-right Football Lads Alliance protest in London. Later that day, RMT members were attacked, including assistant general secretary Steve Hedley. These

incidents show the true racist and anti-union character of the FLA. They try to portray themselves as anti-Establishment but their racist division only benefits the Tories and the bosses.

Therefore, it's vital that the unions are at the centre of building mass opposition to them on a fighting, anti-austerity basis. Unite were prominent on the counter-protest and there was a delegation of London busdrivers – representing one of the most diverse workforces, who have showed over the last few years what can be achieved when workers are united.



NSSN TUC Congress Rally Sunday September 9 in Manchester

In the year of the 150th anniversary of the TUC, the National Shop Stewards Network (NSSN) will again be organising a rally before the start of TUC Congress. It will be from 1pm on Sunday September 9th in the Manchester Mechanics Institute/Conference Centre, Princess Street, M1 6DD. More details will follow.

Leaders from fighting unions will be speaking alongside rank & file union reps and activists, including those who have been taking action. Unite recently affiliated to the NSSN to become the 10th national union to officially support the NSSN. There will be transport from London.

