

## **BRIEFING FOR RMT MEMBERS: “RED TABARDS”**

### **What are the “Red Tabards”?**

They are a reversible vest, with orange hi-vi on one side and red, with “here to help”, on the other. LU is unilaterally imposing these items as a new item of uniform and is insisting all station staff wear them while in ticket halls and concourses from 10 February.

### **Has the union agreed to this?**

Absolutely not. Union reps on the Uniform Consultative Committee have consistently raised a number of objections to these items; the company claims to have taken some on board, but despite other objections remaining, it is ploughing ahead with imposing the items.

### **What are the union objections?**

We believe this is an unnecessary addition to our uniforms. The items are uncomfortable to wear, and with several different possible variations of hi-vi (“old” orange; white “Bronze Control” for CSMs; “new” orange side of red tabard; red side of red tabard...), there is the potential for confusion amongst passengers, the emergency services, and staff in any emergency situation.

Fundamentally we believe the imposition of the red tabards is a hypocritical and inadequate response by the company to a situation it has created itself. After cutting around 500 frontline stations jobs under “Fit for the Future” (following cutbacks under prior restructures such as OSP), a survey by the independent watchdog London TravelWatch showed that many passengers feel there simply aren’t enough station staff available to assist them. Our bosses chose to interpret this as a matter of “visibility” rather than numbers, claiming that the problem wasn’t that there are too few staff, but that the ones who are there can’t be seen (presumably they think we are somehow blending into the background?). They have responded not by reversing cuts and creating additional jobs on stations but by insisting that putting staff in bright red tabards to make us “more visible”. Perhaps neon signs above our heads are next? It might also be pointed out that there used to be fixed points on all stations where staff were permanently visible, and that passengers could visit not only for advice but also to purchase tickets. The company, it may be remembered, decided these were no longer necessary.

### **Should I wear one?**

As the company is insisting, despite union opposition, that these items are compulsory, your union is not advising individual members to refuse to wear the tabards if directly instructed to do so by a manager. We will of course represent and defend any individual member facing disciplinary sanction.

### **What is the union doing about it?**

Two RMT branches have already passed resolutions calling for an industrial response to the imposition of the tabards, including a possible ballot for industrial action to refuse to wear them. Local RMT reps will also be tabling items about the tabards at Level One (IR) and Tier One (Health and Safety) Committees, to restate union objections. We are obviously also exposing the woeful hypocrisy of this superficial, cosmetic response from LU to the impact of its own job cuts, and are continuing to fight for the reversal of cuts to station staffing.

**For more info, please speak to a local RMT rep.**