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news for station and revenue staff - 23rd february 2009

£5 MINIMUM OYSTER TOP-UP: DO NOT CO-OPERATE WITH THIS TRIAL

London Underground is planning to run a trial of a new policy that customers will not be able to top up their Oyster card for less than £5 at the ticket office window. The trial is due to run at London Bridge, Liverpool Street, Bond Street, South Kensington and Earl's Court stations from Sunday 1 March.

RMT opposes this policy, and having explained our objections to the company, we hope that LUL will see sense, rethink this ill-advised policy and call off the trial. *If the company does not do so, we feel that we have no choice but to advise our members not to co-operate with it.*

We object to the £5 minimum because it:

- is a reduction in customer service;
- will lead to verbal abuse and even physical assault against staff;
- discriminates against poorer people at a time of economic recession and rising unemployment;
- has no positive benefits: if LUL wants shorter queues, it should open more ticket office windows;
- does not apply to outlets other than LUL ticket offices, so is aimed at driving custom away from ticket office windows;
- is therefore a preparation for closing ticket offices in future.

Moreover, LUL has not consulted properly about this policy. It has mothballed the Ticket Offices Working Group set up as part of the settlement of our dispute over casualisation last year. The company started organising the trial before the process of talks with your unions was completed. There has been no consultation with the local stations' union reps. LUL has not consulted passenger groups.

www.rmtplatform.org.uk/saveticketoffices



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When a customer comes to your window and asks to put £4 on his/her Oyster - perhaps because that is all s/he can afford, or all that s/he needs at the time - LUL is asking you to say 'No' and to send the customer away!

RMT believes that staff are under no obligation to participate in this trial, given:

- **staff's professional commitment to providing world-class customer service;**
- **the risk of abuse and assault arising from the policy;**
- **LUL's failure to carry out proper negotiation and consultation;**
- **our right not to collaborate in the future abolition of our own jobs.**

RMT advises our members not to co-operate with this trial. If a customer asks to you top up his/her Oyster card, for however small an amount, you should do as s/he asks.

LUL's guidance states that the £5 minimum will not apply "where the customer only has sufficient money to cover the journey they intend to make." We suggest that rather than ask intrusive questions, you assume that if a customer asks for less than £5 top-up, that is because that is all that s/he has.

We are not asking you to refuse to do your job, but to refuse LUL's demand that you refuse to sell customers the tickets they want!

Join

- Get an application form from your RMT rep
- Phone the union on **0800-376-3706**
- Join online at www.rmt.org.uk/join