

# **Edinburgh Trams disappointed over Unite workers' plan to strike**

**Unite the union plans to take strike action saying it is due to the company backtracking on their deal on sick pay.**

**This claim is countered by Edinburgh Trams which says it is disappointing that the union plans to strike while the management team has continued to consult on the outstanding points in the 2022 wages negotiation.**

The Edinburgh Reporter understands that much has been agreed and already put in place. A pay increase of £2,300 for all staff has been paid – backdated to 1 April 2022. This equates to an 11% increase for the lowest paid members of staff.

In addition there is a 15% increase in Event Management payments, an increase in the maximum pension contribution from the company, meaning that the contribution goes up from 6% to 6.5%, an increase in death in service payments which go up from three times to four times basic salary, an additional day's holiday for any member of staff who has worked there for

more than ten years, and another additional day's holiday after 15 years service. Most importantly, the company has committed not to make any compulsory redundancies from 1 April 2022 for a period of three years.

There are other points still being discussed with Unite such as reducing a driver's working week towards 35 hours with a roster to be developed by Unite's Roster committee. The company is also in discussion over transition arrangements for those in their final year of service where they have been with the company for more than 10 years. This would mean that the drivers could work fewer hours in the final six months without losing pay.

Sick Pay is under review along with the union. It could be increased to six months full pay and then six months half pay for those with long term or critical illness. To make the process simpler to examine Critical Illness and Long-Term Sickness have been categorised separately. But the company understood that the negotiations were ongoing.

An Edinburgh Trams' spokesman commented: "We are sincerely disappointed that Unite has decided on this course of action, having previously accepted a generous pay increase and enhancements to terms and conditions that were overwhelmingly accepted by colleagues.

"As promised, we have been in further consultation regarding the additional points for review, and we have made progress in all areas. However, the Union is now demanding further improvements to sick pay that are simply unaffordable for the network as it continues its recovery from the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic.

"Despite these unrealistic demands, we will continue to talk to the Union and colleagues with a view to reaching an amicable agreement that will avoid unnecessary disruption for our customers."

We have asked Unite the union for comment but the strikes are planned for the period 17 to 27 November.



Tram St Andrew Square