

Tram drivers considering strike action

Drivers and other staff including ticket assistants and controllers working for Edinburgh Trams are supportive of strike action following a ballot.

The issue centres on the lack of comfort breaks for drivers due to delays on the line, although The Edinburgh Reporter understands that additional facilities have been installed at Edinburgh Airport to save the staff around ten minutes walk into the building.

Unite general secretary Sharon Graham said members had “emphatically” backed strike action to “tackle head-on the unacceptable health and safety situation they face”.

She said: “They should not be in this situation because Edinburgh Trams should be implementing measures to ensure our members get their comfort breaks.

“We will back our tram membership all the way in the fight for decent workplace conditions.”

The union claims there is a shortfall of five to six minutes on tram routes between Edinburgh Airport and Newhaven, which means drivers are often forced to make up the time.

A spokesman for Edinburgh Trams commented: “While we are disappointed the union has embarked on a course of action that threatens disruption for customers, we are committed to the wellbeing of colleagues and are doing everything we can to

address their concerns.

“As part of this process, we are working closely with the Trams to Newhaven project team, The City of Edinburgh Council and colleagues to find a workable solution, including improving the effectiveness of road traffic signals that can have an impact on our timetable and turnaround times at the airport and Newhaven.”

It takes about two hours for one tram to make the return journey. A new timetable has added four minutes to each part of the route, and delays to a new system of signals have led to increased delays.

Unite claims that tram workers regularly go up to five hours without any refreshment or toilet breaks.

Lyn Turner, an industrial officer at the union, added: “Edinburgh’s tram workers are being forced into taking strike action.

“This is mismanagement plain and simple, and it is having unacceptable consequences for our members.

“Unite wants to resolve this through negotiation but we are running out of track before strike action takes place. If this happens, then Edinburgh Trams will be solely to blame for any disruption. Management has one more chance.”



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Picture Alan Simpson