

# WHAT IS THE RMT DISPUTE WITH SWR ABOUT?

Since our franchise began, the National Union of Rail, Maritime and Transport Workers (RMT) has held a number of strikes involving its guard and driver members over the operation of new modern suburban trains that will be introduced from later next year, with full introduction from the December 2020 timetable change.

The RMT is concerned the introduction of these new Class 701 vehicles will reduce the need for guards on SWR trains.

However, this is simply not true.

What we want to discuss with the RMT is how we can best operate these trains to optimise the customer benefit, specifically how we can keep customers moving if a guard is not available.

The framework proposal we have offered would continue to see a guard rostered on all our services and allow us to keep customers moving. We want to discuss this with all applicable unions, and the proposal only applies to the new Class 701 rolling stock to be deployed on suburban services (including the Windsor lines) and which will replace our Class 455, 456, 458 & 707 fleets. The other rolling stock in our fleet – Class 158, 159, 442, 444 & 450 – will continue to require a guard at all times whilst in passenger service.

In our meetings with RMT we have been promising:

- Our plans mean **more guards**, not fewer – taking on more team members as we increase the number of services we operate
- A second person (guard) with safety critical competencies will continue to be rostered on every train
- We will implement new skills development for all customer-facing staff

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Here is the framework agreement we have proposed to the RMT, to guide constructive talks and so strike action isn't necessary:

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South Western Railway confirm that on the introduction of any new or other modified rolling stock, each passenger train shall operate with a 2nd person with safety critical competencies. Specific Safety Critical competencies shall be agreed by SWR and RMT.

The adjacent three points within this framework are set out on the basis that 'nothing is agreed until everything is agreed'.

This framework is designed to guide constructive discussions between now and the introduction of Class 701 rolling stock into passenger service. It is conditional on both sides agreeing to remain within this scope for discussions and there being continued suspension of industrial action for the duration of these discussions.

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All rolling stock train dispatch shall be subject to undertaking a safety risk assessment, on a station by station basis. This assessment will be completed with the involvement of company and trade union representatives utilising the agreed PTI assessment\* method already in place in the company, in addition to the utilisation of new technology within new or modified rolling stock.

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SWR and RMT will agree a disruption policy to ensure that passengers are kept moving during times of service disruption.

\* Each platform is assessed for any potential risks that may be present between the platform and the train. These include stepping distances and stepping heights as each type of train can be different.