London Bus Drivers Take to the Streets to Demand Decent Wages

Wednesday 10 September, 2014

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WHEN: Gather at 10:30am – rally at 12.15pm (Thursday 11 September)

WHERE: March from Bressenden Place via Victoria Street to rally point in Old Palace Yard, Westminster.

Hundreds of London's bus drivers, all members of the UK's largest union Unite, will take to the streets tomorrow (Thursday 11 September) to voice their concerns over the continual erosion of their terms and conditions and to demand a reinstatement of collective bargaining for all bus drivers across London.

The union's 25,000 bus driver members, from over a dozen bus companies in London (see notes) are demanding 'sector wide negotiations' between their union Unite and their employers, to close the massive disparity of up to 25 per cent, in their pay and terms and conditions.

Unite says that collective negotiations will bring greater job security. The current system has led to many bus drivers being paid up to 25 percent less despite doing the same job for the same employer. The pay some bus drivers receive can be as little as £17,000 depending on the company they work for.

London bus companies are required to compete to win routes put out to tender by Transport for London. The explosion in competition has led to an unprecedented squeeze on the pay, terms and conditions of all bus workers, as individual bus companies choose to bid low to maximise profits at the expense of these dedicated workers.

Unite general secretary Len McCluskey, who will be addressing the bus drivers at the rally tomorrow, said: “With decentralisation and the sell-off of routes, London's bus drivers' wages have taken a hit and vary drastically from company to company. It is madness - there ought to be a common, decent rate for the job.

“The drivers have had enough and demand these operators work with form Unite to bring some sense to this situation.

“Only a forum that brings employers and the workers to the table, through their union, is what will bring continued improvements to terms and conditions.”

Peter Kavanagh, London and Eastern regional secretary who will also speak at tomorrow rally, added: “London bus drivers keep this city on the move, delivering an ever improving and efficient service to around six million passengers every day. It is time we had a sensible arrangement for discussing pay and conditions to ensure all drivers are rewarded properly for their efforts.

“Currently, people driving the same buses, with the same training requirements and governed by the same regulations, are subject to the whims of twenty separate sets of negotiations, leading to more than twenty different rates of pay. We want, and we are determined to achieve, a sector wide bargaining arrangement for all of our 25,000 driver members.”

ENDS

For further information contact John Murphy on 07958 624501 or Ashraf Choudhury in the Unite Press Office on 020 3371 2061 or 07980 224761.

- Unite is Britain and Ireland's largest trade union with over 1.4 million members working across all sectors of the economy. The general secretary is Len McCluskey.

Notes to editors: The list of companies involved is not finite, as there are new companies coming into London buses on a regular basis. However, members involved in the action are from bus companies below:

Arriva (London North and London South)
• Stage coach (East London Bus Group, East London Bus Company and Selkent)
• Comfort Delgro (Metroline and Metroline West)
• Go Ahead (London Central, London General, Metrobus, Blue triangle, Dockland buses and

Northumberland Park)
• London United
• Sovereign buses
• Tower Transit
• Abellio
• Hackney community transport
(Any other company with TfL preferred bidder status)

Company Contact:

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