



## Hundreds of London Overground and Tube jobs to be axed



Job cuts: Tube workers are facing the axe

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**MATTHEW BEARD AND DICK MURRAY**

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Hundreds of Tube and London Overground staff are to lose their jobs as transport chiefs seek to cut costs after their Government grant was slashed by 12.5 per cent.

The Standard understands that Tube bosses want to reduce the number of staff at Underground stations as automation of ticket sales increases.

At the weekend, London Overground said 130 conductors' jobs will be cut, leading to an annual saving of £5 million. The RMT Tube and rail union today said it would ballot members for industrial action unless Transport for London reversed the decision.

Tube bosses said they want to press ahead with a technology-led reduction in station staff numbers but declined to say how many jobs would be cut.

Mike Brown, London Underground's managing director, said the cuts mirror the trend of supermarkets towards self-service checkouts and said the plans were being discussed before Chancellor George Osborne cut £222 million in last month's Spending Review.

Use of ticket counters has fallen by 65 per cent since the launch of the Oyster card 10 years ago and this trend is expected to continue with the delayed introduction of contactless "wave and pay cards" this year. London Underground has shed 2,300 staff over the last three years, 800 from Tube stations. Bosses want station staff to spend more time with passengers and plan to issue more tablet computers so they can roam the station rather than work at desks.

Every Tube station has at least one member of LU staff during train operating hours and there are no plans to change this.

Some new developments, such as King's Cross and Canary Wharf, have large ticket offices and bosses said there would be

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no reduction in personnel because they served as "gateway" stations for visitors.

TfL said 130 conductors on the Clapham Junction to Stratford line were no longer needed because advances in drivers' radio technology made their roles redundant.

It said conductors were now limited to opening and closing doors and their wages could not be justified for such a restricted role.

But RMT general secretary Bob Crow said: "We can expect many more of these attacks on jobs and safety as TfL slash hundreds of millions from their budget at the Government's behest. They will be met with the fiercest possible resistance from the RMT."

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