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CWU London & South East News

Where Has the Harmony Gone?

It feels like a long time since we've had genuine harmony in the workplace. More and more, management seem determined to impose their will rather than work collaboratively — using pressure, not partnership.

We're seeing it in performance management practices. We're seeing it in the rise of work-related stress and illness. And we're seeing it in the increasing use of bullying tactics by some managers.

One of the latest areas of concern is travel time at the start and end of the day. Managers are now pushing the idea that staff must arrive *onsite* for their start time. Let's be absolutely clear: **there is no agreement between the CWU and the employer** requiring this.

The current travel time arrangement exists solely to satisfy HMRC requirements — showing that the van you take home is not a taxable perk or company car. This relies on the fact that you:



- Don't travel to the same site every day.
- Aren't paid for that early-morning travel time.

If your manager tells you to give more time, they are not being

honest about the basis of the agreement.

As patches get larger and more demanding, no thought has been given to the growing burden this places on your time. And unless we push back, things will only get worse.

If you're on the TMNE2 contract, your working week is 37.5 hours. Any unpaid travel time or admin added to your day still counts toward the legal limit set by the **Working Time Directive**.

By law, you cannot be forced to work more than 48 hours per week, even if you have signed an opt-out — and remember, *you can cancel that opt-out at any time*. It's meant to give you flexibility to take on overtime if *you* want to — not to give your employer the power to schedule you beyond the legal limit.

Here's the reality: if you work five days a week, with 60 minutes of daily travel and 15 minutes of unpaid admin at the start and end of the day, your total working time jumps to 50 hours per week. That's above the legal limit, and scheduling it breaches UK employment law.

So check your hours. Know your rights. Don't be pressured into signing away your protections.

You still have a choice — and when we stand together, we are stronger.

