

A strategy to win

CIVIL service workers are facing serious attacks by a ruthless government that plans:

- to cut more than 100,000 jobs throughout the civil service.
- to increase the pension retirement age from 60 to 65.
- to scrap the final pension scheme.
- to reduce the redundancy payment scheme.
- to end self certification for sick leave.

The civil service union PCS understands that the Chancellor and senior ministers are looking at the new sick arrangements being piloted in Tesco as a model for the civil service. Under the Tesco scheme workers are not paid for the first three days off sick. That is what we could face.

The national union responded to these threats with a series of demands, but, since the Government refused to concede, between 1-22 October PCS is balloting its members for a one-day strike on 5 November.

Civil servants must discuss and organise now to stop the planned attacks.

The Alliance for Workers' Liberty thinks:

Fight for national pay

PCS has mentioned pay among the "Ten Reasons" to go on strike. We think pay should be put centre-stage, alongside pensions and jobs, with a precise demand: that the Treasury set its "remit" high enough to allow pay and conditions to be levelled up across the civil service, eliminating the poverty rates in the current maze of 192 bargaining units.

Hit government finances

PCS should follow up 5 November with targeted and sustained strike action in areas where it will hit government finances, such as the Inland Revenue, Customs and Excise, and Driver Vehicle Licensing.

Action against closures

Offices have been targeted to be shut - 42 in the Department of Work and Pensions alone. The union should go to them and organise for sustained strike action there.

A national levy

The union should organise a national levy of all members to fund strike pay to those on sustained strikes.

A united fight on pensions

Teachers, civil servants and NHS workers face the same threat that the pension retirement age will be increased to 65 and that the final salary scheme will be scrapped, yet the major unions in those areas are pursuing separate campaigns.

Mark Serwotka, PCS general secretary, has been trying to get those unions to co-operate but the reply so far is... maybe, later.

Along with top-level talks the unions' ranks must talk to each other so that there is real pressure for a proper alliance on pensions.

PCS should be on strike on 5 November over pensions and job cuts. Our aim must be to ensure that the next time there is national action, other unions across the public sector are involved as well.

This bulletin is produced by PCS members in the Alliance for Workers' Liberty, an organisation fighting in the labour movement for a socialist alternative to both capitalism and Stalinism, based on common ownership and democracy.

For more information on the AWL, visit our website, www.workersliberty.org; email us at office@workersliberty.org or phone us at 020 7207 3997; or contact us to get a free sample copy of our paper *Solidarity*.

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