



# Cut Workload - Not Jobs

**As the cuts bite and management becomes more aggressive, issues of workload and workplace stress are becoming worse and worse for all sorts of public sector workers.**

Across social care the picture is one of more money spent on bureaucracy, creating funding shortfalls, staff shortages and high sickness rates, leading increased workload and pressure, longer hours and people taking more work home. A toxic combination of cuts to services as the level of need rises due to welfare cuts and increasing poverty is producing the problem.

In March 2014, according to figures from Unison research showed that among social workers, an average caseload was 22. Some were wildly over this, as high as 70 or 80. Social work assistants often have even higher caseloads. Workers are covering for staff shortages due to unfilled vacancies or people being off sick long-term. Cases are allocated without discussion or adequate knowledge. Social workers rarely have breaks – they eat at their desks.

Nine out of ten local government workers are struggling with stress – with three quarters of workers feeling unable to work to the best of their ability as a result of stress. 70% say it affects their personal lives.

It would be possible to cite page after page of facts – but what should we do about it?



**\*Equip activists and branches to fight back against management bullying and pressure.**

**\* Popularise clear demands about creating more jobs, about adequate staffing ratios (eg 4:1 in nursing) and about cutting out unnecessary bureaucracy and paperwork – the only bit of public service that is growing!**

**\* Raise workers' confidence by getting serious in the fight over pay.**

**\* We need to get serious about fighting the cuts. If the union spends the next five years doing what we did after 2010 – at best ignoring and at worst demobilising and stifling struggles – things are going to get worse and worse. We need an industrial strategy against cuts.**

**\* We also need a political strategy, including using our position in the Labour Party to change its pro-cuts agenda; and putting pressure on Labour councillors not to implement them (which is actually Unison policy but has been ignored).**

## After The Election - Regroup & Fightback!

**Over the five years of the coalition government, the labour movement failed to mount any consistent fight against it. Had it done so, and had it forced the Labour Party to respond to that fight, we might be looking at a different result**

There has been working-class resistance, of course. Some local industrial battles have won gains, such as the 3 Cosas campaign at the University of London, and inspiring social struggles such as those of the Focus E15 mothers have emerged and won victories. But these have been the exceptions, not the rule.

The first step to regrouping and rebuilding, then, is to make our movement fight. No more token one-day strikes, launched too late to make a difference and then unilaterally suspended. No more "mañana militancy", promising the next battle will be fought full tilt, but surrendering on today's.

The Labour Party is in political crisis. That is a tumult into which organised labour and the socialist left must intervene and assert ourselves. Abandoning the terrain to the Blairites, without even attempting to shape the outcome of that crisis, would be disastrous. An anti austerity candidacy like Jeremy Corbyn's is important to having that fight. The labour movement should demand union sponsored MPs ensure he is on the ballot.

Faced with a genuine campaign of combative union self-assertion, within and against the Labour Party, the Blairites may move to sever (or reform out of existence) the link with the unions sooner than the 2019 deadline for the implementations of the recommendations of the Collins Review.

Forcing a break on the momentum of such a fight would be vastly preferable to unions hiving off, one by one, in demoralisation and despair.

The project of the 2010-2015 coalition government to use the economic crisis that began in 2007 to screw down social costs for the ruling class, and to remake society along more rigidly neo-liberal, market-driven, and privatised lines. The Tories have had a clear, definitive plan.

To counter these attacks we need clear demands like:

- Expropriate the banks, tax the rich
- Repeal the anti-union laws;
- Public ownership of industry; genuine democratic social control, not bureaucratic nationalisation
- Living wages and living benefits
- A mass programme of social housing construction
- Free education; democratise schools, colleges, and universities
- Reverse cuts and privatisation in the NHS and other public services;
- End the scapegoating of migrants; resist right-wing pressure to leave the EU; open borders
- Democratic reform; abolish the monarchy and the House of Lords; for a democratic federal republic of England, Scotland, and Wales (loosely federated with a united Ireland),

**In the bleak aftermath of the election, in a moment when our movement is weak, disorganised, and misled, and at a time when the ideas of revolutionary-democratic socialism seem utterly marginal, that working-class fightback can seem very distant. But a fightback will occur. How successful it is depends on the extent to which socialists in the labour movement manage to affect the regroupment.**

**The attempt to do that begins now, with each of us recommitting to our basic task: to agitate, educate, and organise for socialism.**