



REJECT THE PENSIONS 'DEAL'

stay united • fight until we win!

WHY YOU SHOULD REJECT THE PENSIONS DEAL THE FACTS FOR WORKERS ACROSS THE PUBLIC SECTOR:

- When LibDem government minister Danny Alexander put their pensions proposal to parliament on 20 December he said clearly that the government had achieved all its "savings goals" and would save tens of billions of pounds. **That money is being stolen from public sector workers' pensions.**
- There is no increase in the 'cost ceiling'. This means that even where there have been some small improvements for some workers 'accrual rates' (the rate per year at which pension benefits are built up) they are being paid for by cuts in the pensions of other workers in the same scheme.
- The 'offer' ties retirement age to state pension age. This means that anyone born on or after 6 April 1960 but before 6 April 1961 will retire at between 66 and 67 years old. People born after 6 April 1961 will not get to retire until they are 67 or older.
- Pensions will be linked to the CPI rather than the RPI inflation index. This will mean that over an average 20 year retirement pensions will be worth up to 20% less.
- The amount that workers will have to pay into their pensions will still increase for all public sector pension schemes, by an average of 3.2% of salary, phased in over 3 years. **This means that someone earning £25,000 will have to pay £800 a year more – effectively an immediate £800 per year pay cut!** In health the leadership of UNISON are claiming they have won a concession because those earning less than £26,000 will not have to pay more into their pensions for one year, however, even this puny concession is being paid for by higher paid public sector workers having to pay more.
- In local government the government have agreed to delay implementing these attacks by a year, until 2014, but only on the basis of the unions signing up now to misery a year down the line.
- This attack is not about the cost of the schemes, but about the government's attempts to make public sector workers pay for a crisis they didn't create!

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The strike on 30 November – involving 28 trade unions and up to two million workers – was the biggest single day of strike action in many decades. It terrified the government, with Cameron having to quickly retreat from his claim it was a “damp squib” and admit that it had been a “big strike”. It showed the power of public sector trade unions – united together – to bring the country to a halt.

Yet now Brendan Barber and the leadership of the TUC are proposing that we throw away our advantage and accept a rotten deal on pensions. This would be a huge mistake. It will mean all public sector workers having to work longer, pay more and get less pension. For the vast majority it will mean accepting a deal that is little or no better than what was on the table before 30 November. Only workers aged over 50 have been excluded from the brunt of the cuts in pensions, although some aspects such as the switch from RPI to CPI also effect the over 50s. In any case, this is not a new proposal and was rightly rejected by trade union leaders before, including Dave Prentis of UNISON.

Accepting a rotten deal on pensions will also give the government more confidence to accelerate their massive cuts programme. If they can get away with it the government intend to inflict a ‘decade of austerity’ on Britain. The cuts proposed are so brutal that even far-right Tory Norman Tebbit has said that he can’t stomach them all! It is essential that the trade union movement maintains a united front and steps up the struggle in defence of our pensions and against the cuts as a whole.

If we do not, then the ConDems will continue to drive down the living standards of the majority while bending over backwards for the richest 1%. Just look at how Goldman Sachs and other major corporations has been let off over £25 billion in tax over cosy dinners with the taxman, while working-class, and many middle-class people, are facing breath-taking cuts in living standards. Britain’s richest 10% are now an average of £100,000 a year better off than they were in 2005, while the majority have suffered an absolute fall income. This is set to get worse as rail fares rise by 9%, fuel prices continue to increase and wages fall.

In early January the executives of all the unions involved in the pensions struggle will meet to discuss whether to accept a deal. Trade unionists must inundate their leaders with emails, phone calls, petitions and lobbies demanding that they:

- Reject the ConDems’ pensions proposals
 - Set the date for the next day of co-ordinated strike action – in conjunction with other public sector unions - as early as possible in the New Year
 - Carry out no secret deals over the heads of the membership.
- We demand democratic control of the negotiations.

A circular graphic with a dark background. At the top, the words "Defend pensions" are written in a curved path on the left, and "Escalate action" is written in a curved path on the right. In the center, a black triangle points downwards with the words "Left Unity" written inside it. Below the triangle, the text "ORGANISING CONFERENCE" is written in large, bold, white capital letters. Underneath that, "Saturday 7th January" is written in a smaller white font, followed by "Friends Meeting House (opp. Euston Station, London)" and "11am – 4pm" in bold white text. At the bottom, the names and titles of the chair and speaker are listed in a smaller white font.

NAME DAY FOR NATIONAL STRIKE

The PCS Left Unity National Committee invites all activists from all unions to an organising conference on the 7th of January to debate how we can build the campaign to defend our pensions and fight the cuts and prevent any unacceptable “deal” that makes us work longer, pay more and get less.

This will be an organising conference, not just a debating forum. It is intended to arm activists with the issues so they can go back to their workplaces and into their unions in order to build a campaign that will secure justice on pensions.

THE BATTLE ISN'T OVER – KEEP THE UNITED FRONT!

The ConDem government are trying to con public sector workers that the pensions struggle is over. This is a lie. The leadership of the civil servants union, the PCS, has clearly rejected the deal. The leaders of the education unions NUT, NASUWT and UCU have not accepted it, along with the prison officers union, the POA, the civil servants unions FBD and Prospect, and NIPSA, the Northern Irish Public Sector Union. In health UNITE have not accepted the deal. In local government UNITE, UNISON and GMB have now withdrawn until the New Year following Eric Pickles letter.

It is clear that the leadership of UNISON are determined to end the pensions struggle and accept a rotten deal. However, under pressure the general secretary Dave Prentis has had to delay a decision until it has been discussed at the Service Group Executives that are meeting on 10 January. UNISON members will be lobbying the meeting.

Trade unionists across the public sector need to make sure that all the union leaders hear a deafening roar from their members – keep up the pensions fight! Set the date for the next co-ordinated strike!

Make sure that you, and all your workmates, sign the petition at http://www.ipetitions.com/petition/pensions_strike_january/