

# PCS MEMBERS' BULLETIN



## • BUILD OUR FIGHTBACK ON PAY

# VOTE YES TO SCRAP THE PUBLIC SECTOR PAY CAP

The PCS union consultative ballot on pay begins on 9th October and runs until 6th November. All union members will have a chance to show their outrage with the government for years of pay freezes, below-inflation pay offers, stalled pay progression and huge cuts to jobs and public services. Chancellor Philip Hammond is

due to announce his budget on November 22nd. The calamitous performance of the Tories in the 2017 General Election – where a majority of voters voted for parties pledging to end the public sector pay cap – has put huge pressure on the Westminster government. A big YES vote in the PCS ballot increases that pressure still further.

### National Shop Stewards Network (NSSN) Solidarity Forum:

'Scrap the public sector pay cap!'  
12noon-4pm, Saturday  
October 21st Birmingham  
and Midland Institute, 9  
Margaret St, Birmingham  
B3 3BS

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The Socialist Party is part of the Trade Unionist and Socialist Coalition: [tusc.org.uk](http://tusc.org.uk)

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**A minimum pay rise of 5% for all is required.** Unions must rally around the demand for 5%. PCS General Secretary Mark Serwotka spoke at the recent TUC Conference to call on unions to back a 5% pay rise. Now is the time for action. The Prison Officers Association and the University and Colleges Union have both decided to ballot. We have seen a summer of strikes, many of them by low-paid workers fighting for a pay rise.

The struggle of the Birmingham bin workers and the Glasgow janitors show the strength of feeling across huge swathes of local government workers. In Glasgow, the janitors have been victorious and concluded their 18 month dispute, Dave Prentis, General Secretary of Unison, which represents NHS staff and local government workers, also spoke at the TUC to support 5% for public sector workers. Union leaders like Prentis have called for demonstrations and to ballot for action as a last resort.

Rightly, PCS have said yes to joining demonstrations – but PCS will be balloting in addition and calls on other unions to do the same. The TUC has called a national lobby of Parliament on October 17th, which has now been joined with a demonstration starting at 5.30pm opposite Downing Street.

If the TUC called a national Saturday demonstration on pay, it could be massive and would build confidence for co-ordinated strikes across the public sector. In 2016, the Tories imposed additional barriers to stop workers taking legal strike action. In order for any ballot to be valid, 50% of all union members have to vote.

If PCS were to successfully win more than 50% in a consultative ballot, it would prove to the government that we could win a statutory ballot and that we are prepared to take strike action to fight their pay cap. It would also put other union leaders under pressure to join the campaign and to rebuild the coordinated campaign that could decisively defeat austerity.

**Tory divide and rule tactics will not work** The total cost of an inflation equivalent pay rise for the public

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sector would be £4bn – a pittance against the hundreds of billions in taxes that have been avoided or gone uncollected as a result of staffing cuts in Revenue and Customs and loopholes and corporation tax cuts by the government.

Instead of talking about how best to end pay austerity, the government has attempted to divide public sector workers into deserving and undeserving – announcing small pay

rises above the 1% cap for police and prison officers, while attempting to keep the rest within the 1% cap.

The Socialist Party joins the PCS in calling for the scrapping of the cap for all. Politicians and the media have also tried to pit private sector and public sector workers against each other. We call for an immediate rise in the minimum wage to £10 per hour and for union rights to be extended to hugely exploited sectors like retail, sales and care work.

A public sector victory on pay would pull millions of unorganised workers into the unions, to fight back. Pay disparity exists within the civil service – between different departments, and with some staff on grade maximums and other staff on minimums.

In the Department for Work and Pensions, the biggest civil service department, the cap has been breached for some staff – but many staff still face pay cuts. Workers must be united in the face of attempts to divide us: a big turnout a YES vote in the PCS ballot is a clear statement that we will not be manipulated by Tories or our employers.

## You can help build the campaign

Lunch time demonstrations by PCS members across the public sector are planned for 29th September – get involved by speaking to your PCS rep. The fight to scrap the pay cap for public sector workers goes hand in hand with the struggle against the full force of Tory austerity such as job losses, office closures and cuts to services.

# JOIN US!

If you agree, we need you to join  
the Socialist Party and help build the  
fight for a socialist world!