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TUC leader sends solidarity to British Museum strikers ahead of picket line visit

Paul Nowak is to join Mark Serwotka in Great Russell Street tomorrow morning

TUC general secretary Paul Nowak has sent a solidarity message to PCS strikers at the British Museum ahead of a visit to tomorrow's picket line alongside the union's general secretary Mark Serwotka.

Around 100 PCS members belonging to the Museum's visitor services and security teams today began a seven-day strike over pay, pensions, redundancy terms and job security.

The strike is part of the union's escalating national campaign involving 100,000 members in 123 government departments.

Members at the DWP, DVLA and the Animal and Plant Health Agency are also on strike this week. They will be joined by Border Force officials in Dover, Calais, Coquelles and Dunkirk on Friday.

PCS general secretary Mark Serwotka said: "Our hard-working members are sorry they're taking this action during half term because their working life is dedicated to sharing information with people, especially young people learning about the exhibits and artefacts in the British Museum.

"That they *are* taking this action shows how strongly they feel taken for granted by the government. The Prime Minister has the power to end this strike tomorrow, but he's nowhere to be seen."

TUC general secretary Paul Nowak said: "Nobody takes the decision to strike lightly. But the Conservative government is pushing workers like these museum staff into a corner by refusing to engage in serious pay negotiations.

"We all want these pay disputes to be quickly resolved. And that can happen if the Chancellor and Prime Minister do the right thing and come to the negotiating table with credible pay offers.

"Until then, unions will hold firm, because we know that decent pay rises are possible – it comes down to political choices. And we know that the wider economy needs this pay boost too, so that we can boost spending and keep businesses out of recession."