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PCS members vote for new strike plan

Union to explore balloting members forced to cover for striking colleagues

Civil servants forced to cover for striking colleagues might themselves be balloted for strike action.

Under their current contracts, Public and Commercial Services (PCS) members working for HMRC's Surge and Rapid Response Team (SRTT) can be ordered to work in other government departments – a tactic used by management to undermine the union's strikes.

In recent strikes, SRTT teams have been deployed not only across HMRC but also in the Passport Office and Border Force.

Now delegates at the union's annual conference in Brighton have voted to seek an end to the practice, possibly balloting the SRTT members for strike action themselves.

PCS general secretary Mark Serwotka said: "Our SRTT members were initially hired to handle sudden work surges in various areas, but they're now being assigned to strike-breaking roles, often against their own will and conscience.

"Not only are they being used to undermine their own colleague's strikes, but they are not always trained to fulfil the specialised nature of the work they're being given.

"As we saw with soldiers are being trained to break the Border Force strike, the government seeks all ways to mitigate the impact of our members' strikes apart from the one way that would succeed – put money on the table.

"These strikes will not go away and if our SRTT members vote for action, it will add to ministers' headache by causing even more disruption across the civil service."

ends

