

12 July 2023

PCS to launch national ballot on next stage in our campaign

The NEC met today and discussed the next steps in our national campaign. The NEC received over 160 responses from branches to our consultation and based on that feedback agreed to run an online consultative ballot from 3 to 31 August.

The ballot will ask members in the civil service and related areas to endorse the strategy proposed by the National Executive Committee (NEC) for the next stage in our national campaign.

We have made significant progress as a result of the industrial action strategy that we have pursued.

Key points

£1,500 non-consolidated cost-of-living payment.

The government has conceded that the headline pay remit figure for 2023/24 will be 4.5% with an extra 0.5% for the lowest paid. This is more than double its originally intended figure of 2%. Early indications are that, in major departments of state, the employer is looking to do even better than the 5% for the lowest paid.

On redundancy pay through the Civil Service Compensation Scheme, the government has confirmed that it will not take any action or make any changes until 2025, in effect after the next general election. Members' strike action has successfully blocked the government's attempted 33% cut of the terms of the CSCS.

The government has given a commitment to further talks on greater coherence of pay within the civil service. This is a significant step on what has been a long-term aspiration for our union. It is the process by which we are most likely to make progress on our aspirations to end poverty pay and the inequities and discrimination that are inherent within the delegated pay system. Talks are expected to begin imminently.

The government gave a further commitment to more talks on strengthening redundancy avoidance measures.

On pensions, the government has refused to discuss our members' overpayments and other issues while the current legal action is ongoing. We have been given leave to appeal the High Court decision and our advice is that we have a good case. We can return to the issue at that point.

We would like to thank reps and members who delivered enormous levels of strike action in recent months, which have led to significant concessions from the UK Government. This is an historic advance for the union; the first time we have won concessions on pay centrally due to the effect of an industrial action campaign. It is a significant achievement and members and reps are to be applauded for their determination and commitment. Moreover, it is a resounding endorsement of our strategy of minimising the financial impact on members while maximising industrial impact on the employer, prioritising sustained targeted action which impacts the employers' operations in an effective way.

Nevertheless, we have clearly not yet won all of our demands. The concessions fall short of what we wanted in terms of our national campaign. Moreover, there are serious issues with the concessions made by the government. These issues have been clearly signalled by members who have engaged in the consultative meetings which have been held by branches. And that is why the NEC is clear that the campaign continues; and why we are now balloting members on our proposed strategy.

The ballot signals a new phase in our campaign for fair pay, pensions and jobs. Our first priority is to take targeted action in the small number of employers who have yet to agree to pay the £1,500 lump sum recommended by the government. Secondly, we will maximise the monies currently available to members in negotiations at departmental level and engage in talks at national level on pay to seek further progress. We can then be clear where we are in terms of progress in talks on pay for 2023/24.

The ballot, which was approved by the NEC today, recommends a temporary cessation of industrial action, except for the small number of areas yet to commit to paying the £1500, while we engage in departmental talks on pay for 2023/4.

We will also pause reballots in pursuit of our national demands. Delegated talks are ongoing and nationally they will begin imminently. Once the talks have taken

place the NEC will take a position based on the totality of where we have got to.

We will continue to campaign over the unequal payment of the lump sum, including pro-rating, which penalises part-time workers, many of whom are women. We will also continue to campaign on pensions, including taking legal action on overpayments.

An online consultative ballot asking members to endorse the next stage in our campaign will be held from 3 August to noon on 31 August for all members in employer areas within the dispute, and a postal ballot for those without personal email addresses. We will share information soon on the details of the ballot and how to vote.

It is critical that all members vote in this ballot. Not a member? Join PCS today, so you can have your say.