



[John Moloney](#)

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Bringing solidarity to Ukraine

PCS Assistant General Secretary John Moloney reports on a PCS solidarity delegation to Ukraine which he led, to meet trade unionists, visit workplaces and help deliver aid.

At the 2023 annual conference, a motion was passed which mandated the union to send a delegation to Ukraine. That delegation, comprised of Bev Laidlaw (NEC member), Chris Ford (Ukraine solidarity campaign) and John Moloney, (assistant general secretary) has now visited Ukraine (Sunday, 11 November to Friday 17).

The delegation set itself the goals: of delivering the first batch of medical aid to the Free Trade Union of Medical Workers; meet as many trade unions as possible, in particular meet our sister union, the State Employees Union; visit a hospital to see how the health service was coping with the war, meet Ukrainians who had been displaced by the war; to be the physical manifestation of our international solidarity and to see if there were any further practical things we could do with the trade union movement in Ukraine.

We delivered three bags worth of syringes, bandages and dressings to the health union, all these being in very short supply in Ukraine.

We meet 9 unions to discuss the industrial relations and political environment in the country and we did meet the State Employees Union.

We visited a children's hospital in Kyiv which is facing closure, as despite the war, the government is pressing ahead with reducing the capacity of the health service and is looking to privatise that service if it can. In the hospital, where staff are members of Free Trade Union of Medical Workers, they've recently been given an ultimatum of either cutting their wages or cutting staff.

We visited the village of Moschun, which at one time was the front line as the Russian army moved on towards Kyiv. There we talked to a villager, who with his young daughter hid in a cellar for 2 days as Russian small arms fire raked their house, which was ultimately destroyed by a rocket.

The villager, along with other locals are now building temporary accommodation for the displaced. These structures are rudimentary, but they are well insulated, cheap and available.

We visited Horenka, saw further destroyed buildings and talked to locals who live in a modular village. During the winter, condensation forms on all the walls and it is a constant battle to keep the rooms dry but compared to what many others have, the residents are grateful, though they know the winter ahead is going to be very tough indeed.

We then went on to Bucha, which had been occupied by the Russian army. When they retreated, 458 bodies were found in the town, including 9 children and at least 20 bodies were just left on the streets.

Every trade unionist, and in fact everybody we talked to, expressed their gratitude to the union for sending the delegation, our presence being a sign to them that the world had not forgotten Ukraine.

In terms of further practical help, the union can help the self builders of Moschun collect children's toys for the hospital (they only have two jigsaw puzzles) and for children in Horenka and ensure that all the medical aid is delivered.