

4 December 2023

PCS calls for urgent meeting with DWP over staffing crisis

PCS officials have written to DWP bosses, urgently requesting a meeting to discuss the department's staffing crisis which is severely impacting workers' mental health and vital services.

The letter, addressed to Mel Stride, secretary of state for work and pensions, and Peter Schofield, Department of Work and Pensions (DWP) permanent secretary, alerts them to the findings of a survey of PCS members working at DWP. Members' responses tell of chronic under-staffing across all arms of DWP. A dossier detailing the responses will be handed in by a PCS delegation at DWP HQ Caxton House in London tomorrow, and we are urging Stride and Schofield to be there to receive it.

On top of shortages, new work at DWP announced in the spring budget requires a further 30,000 staff. To meet this, the letter notes, PCS was assured that DWP would be recruiting around 5,000 new staff per quarter. However, in the seven months since, headcount has not increased by more than 1,000 extra staff.

Retention of staff is a huge issue owing to low pay and low morale. 25,000 staff are on less than the Real Living Wage and higher-paid staff see real-terms pay cuts as wages fail to rise with inflation. Members often report that morale is at rock bottom owing to excessive workloads, jobcentres being understaffed by 25%, vulnerable clients being deliberately failed, and the recent demand for 60% office attendance - all are significant factors.

The letter also explains that PCS is now consulting branches on industrial action.

There is a DWP members' meeting on [Wednesday 6 December at 6pm on Zoom](#).

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