

7 December 2023

# **NEC meets to discuss progress and future of campaign**

Talks with the Cabinet Office have been positive but are unlikely to be enough to end our dispute and we are putting in place plans to get members ready for a ballot in the new year.

At previous meetings, the national executive committee (NEC) agreed to take stock of progress on the national talks with the Cabinet Office, to commission research work on pay and to put in place the necessary organising steps to get ready for a further statutory ballot for strike action.

We met with the Cabinet Office throughout October and November to discuss pay, how the pay remit is distributed and particularly the impact of low pay and the problem of many staff earning below the National Living Wage.

At the meetings we said that we would like to see the introduction of national collective bargaining on pay and terms and conditions across the civil service, and that greater coherence, on the best terms available, is desirable in the interests of equality and fairness.

The discussions were positive and constructive and there appears to be a desire on the employer's side to make progress for the first time in many years. The Cabinet Office has commissioned further work on the issues that we raised, and further talks will be arranged, probably in January 2024.

It is highly unlikely however that the talks will produce enough gains on pay for 2024 to meet our demands, and the NEC therefore decided that we should prepare for a national statutory industrial action ballot in 2024.

We have commissioned a report from Dr Mark Williams, a quantitative researcher from Queen Mary University of London, on trends in civil service pay compared to inflation and the rest of the public and the private. The report is expected to be completed by 22 January 2024 and the evidence will be used in our talks with the Cabinet Office and in our campaigning.

Our campaign was successful in forcing the government to drop its manifesto commitments to cut our members' redundancy terms by 33% and the issue of pensions is due to be determined by the Court of Appeal in February 2024.

The national disputes committee (NDC) will therefore meet to consider options, including the nature of the dispute, and which areas would be included in a ballot.

We will also consult with reps and members likely to be covered by a national ballot on the key issues of pay and their willingness to take action. Further organising work will be undertaken with branches to prepare for the statutory industrial action ballot in 2024 which is likely to be necessary".