

15 January 2024

DWP staffing crisis meeting hears the pain of understaffing

All areas of the DWP are understaffed and the jobcentre network is particularly hard hit, a PCS members' meeting heard last week.

More than 250 members participated in the call and heard PCS DWP Group President, Martin Cavanagh address the meeting and update everyone in attendance by thanking them for the incredible response we got to our call for members to tell us how the staffing crisis was impacting on them.

[Read our dossier](#) detailing the near collapse of benefit services and deliberate neglect of the most marginalised in society.

Martin outlined the reasons why we are having a staffing campaign:

1. There is a staffing crisis in DWP
2. All areas of the department are understaffed by at least 10%
3. The jobcentre network is feeling the pain of the staffing crisis most and by the DWP's own admission is at least 20% understaffed
4. This has resulted in members being overworked and very stressed
5. Members are unable to offer the service required to claimants.

Martin also said that the DWP was not treating the situation seriously. The secretary of state Mel Stride and permanent secretary for work and pensions

Peter Schofield had refused to meet PCS and offered us a date to meet the strategic resourcing team on 19 February.

Falling well short

Although the DWP is recruiting new staff they are falling well short of their target of 5,000 per quarter and have only managed to increase staffing by a little over 1,000 since March 2023.

Martin said that PCS had met with members of the PCS Parliamentary Group and the parliamentary work and pensions select committee, and they had offered support to our campaign.

Many contributions were made by members explaining how the crisis was causing problems for them and their colleagues in their workplaces.

Martin emphasised the point that recruiting new members and making PCS stronger was key to us winning the campaign. Members should share the [online joining form](#) with colleagues who are not already members.

Finally, Martin said that the group executive committee was asking branches to urgently hold members' meetings to talk about the crisis and ask for a GEC speaker, and would support any submissions for industrial action from branches where it was clear that members supported taking action.