

5 April 2024

# PCS rep in Newcastle sacked by HMRC

Gordon Askew was sacked by HMRC on grounds of 'potential' computer misuse following strike action taken by the branch.

HMRC management at Benton Park View in Newcastle have sacked Gordon Askew, a member of the branch executive committee, on the grounds of 'potential' computer misuse.

PCS members at Benton Park View, alongside HMRC East Kilbride, took part in targeted strike action last year, as well as their members taking part in the three national days of strike action. Following the strike action, the department launched an investigation into two Newcastle-based representatives.

The charge against Gordon was a 'potential' breach of the department's IT policy; arising from a Microsoft Teams message sent to a number of PCS members, relating to strike action.

The department's decision maker claimed that Microsoft Teams had been used "without a legitimate business reason". A second rep is on a similar charge.

We understand the decision maker said that they had considered a lesser penalty, but had decided to sack the rep because he didn't appear to be sorry enough for what he had done. This was despite him having nearly thirty years of spotless service to the department.

PCS is discussing next steps with our Legal Department.

## Previous win for PCS

In 2017, the branch organiser was sacked for emailing the branch membership list from his work email account to his personal account, despite PCS arguing that a PCS rep emailing PCS material from work to home was not a matter for the department. In that case, **we were successful in securing the rep's reinstatement.**

## **Members' meeting**

PCS will hold a meeting for all members of the branch on 10 April at 12:30 to discuss our response to the sacking. Details of the meeting will be sent to members' personal email addresses.

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