

4 April 2024

National Campaign

Members will be aware that the NEC is balloting members for strike action as part of the national campaign. It is more important than ever that DWP members vote in this ballot and give PCS a mandate for action.

In 2022, PCS ran a statutory disaggregated ballot of members for action over pay, pensions and job security, and for the first time since the anti-trade union legislation was imposed, members in DWP beat the 50% threshold, giving members in our group a strike mandate. Unfortunately the legislation only allows mandates to be valid for six months, requiring re-ballots every six months to renew these mandates, and when we did this in 2023 we narrowly missed out on the 50% turnout in DWP.

At annual delegate conference 2023, a motion was passed to reballot in DWP as soon as possible, which we planned to do following conference, however the action that had already been taken (both targeted and national) had forced the government to make concessions which included more than doubling the pay remit, a one-off non-consolidated payment of £1500 due to the cost-of-living, and a guarantee of no changes to the CSCS during this government's term.

We therefore took the decision to consult with members before any further ballot, and held members' meetings throughout the country. The feedback received showed that there would be no guarantee of meeting the threshold yet again in DWP, and therefore, following a consultative ballot of members, we put a pause on any further action. A decision which was overwhelmingly endorsed by the membership.

This pause did not mean an end to the campaign. It allowed talks to happen at departmental and cabinet office level, and some members received higher pay increases than they had previously.

This was by no means everything we were demanding, and talks with the cabinet office, while more positive than before, showed they would not meet our demands. Therefore the NEC took the decision to ballot members again, in the same manner as the previous ballot. The ballot runs from 18 March 2024 to 13

May 2024, and by law must be a postal ballot. If anyone hasn't received a ballot paper, they can request a replacement paper via PCS Digital by 28 April 2024 (ask your local rep how to do this), and new members who join by 21 April 2024 can also take part.

Our demands are:

- a cost-of-living rise, with an inflation-proofed increase plus pay restoration
- pay equality across departments
- a living wage of £15 per hour
- London weighting provision of a minimum £5,000 per year
- 35 days annual leave minimum
- a significant shortening of the working week with no loss of pay.

Given that AA and AO staff are once again on the National Living Wage (having received an uplift this month), and the recent decision to restrict overtime, which many of our members rely on to pay their bills, members need to use their vote. Tell the employer that you are worth more.

If you have not voted, do so as soon as possible, and if you have, let your local rep know. You deserve a meaningful pay rise.