

26 April 2024

# From your President

Lorna Merry, on why posting back your ballot paper is the way to win our National Campaign on fair pay, pensions and job security.

2024 looks set to be a year when the decisions made at the ballot box will have huge consequences for us as citizens and civil servants. With a general election due, and a change of government looking likely, HMRC is in the spotlight as a key government department that, like so much around us, doesn't work as well as it used to. An incoming government will have a huge to-do list, but to deliver any of its programme, it will need civil servants, and particularly civil servants in HMRC to deliver for them. That means investing in HMRC and its staff, so we are doing the job that we want to do, supporting our customers, tackling non-compliance, and filling the public purse.

## **Effect of staff cuts on the UK's economy.**

The Institute for Chartered Accountants (England and Wales) recently wrote to every political party making the case for investment, identifying that HMRC's current performance levels are unacceptable and act as a barrier to growth and productivity. Any government that comes into power will have to invest in HMRC to give it the means to take our country forward and that means investment to give us the staff we need, and the money to fix a broken pay system that makes recruitment and retention so difficult.

## **National minimum wage uplifts**

25 years ago, a new government introduced a legally enforceable minimum wage set at £3.60 an hour which, at that time, was at the bottom of the AA pay range. The civil service back then was not a minimum wage employer.

This year, we persuaded HMRC to honour its commitment to use the pre-PaCR method of calculation and uplift the AA and AO spot rate, but that took pressure at group and national level and the leverage that PCS's national campaign and national talks gave us. Tens of thousands of civil servants get the legal minimum wage but, as our academic research shows, every grade has seen real terms pay cuts, as government has failed to fund the pay increases it sets in law, leaving

departments with less than inflation remits to cover national minimum wage, progression and cost of living rises.

Civil service pay is broken, and we have a live ballot in support of demands to fix it. A strong yes vote and turnout will tell this government and the next that we are serious about securing our demands for:

- A cost-of-living rise for 2024 that matches inflation, plus
- pay equality across departments and
- action to restore the real terms value of our pay lost during years of pay restraint.

Voting gives you a voice, Use it!

**Lorna Merry** – Revenue & Customs Group President & NEC member