

25 April 2024

PCS hits back over ex-civil service head's pensions attack

PCS members shouldn't have to sacrifice their pensions to fund pay rises, says our general secretary Fran Heathcote, in response to former head of the civil service Lord O'Donnell's pronouncement that there should be "more pay, less pension".

The peer, who retired aged 59 in 2011, and reportedly has a pension in excess of £100,000 a year, said on X that [public sector pensions should be cut in favour of higher pay](#).

Civil service pensions are low relative to average civil service earnings, according to the [Civil Service Pensioners Alliance](#), the average civil service pension is **£9,874**.

Asked to comment on O'Donnell's online utterance at our latest [PCS live event](#) last night, Fran said: "It's very easy when you're long gone and retired to make those sorts of statements. But for the members affected, for the members who have suffered pay restraint for well over a decade now, it's really important, not just that we get fair pay, but that we get decent pensions, as well.

They are not an either or. In the case of pensions, we have paid into them and we are entitled to them, and the valuation of our pension scheme proved that if anything we have all paid too much and are due money back. So, the idea that we would give that up in order to fund a pay rise is laughable."

On funding a pay rise, Fran said: "The money is there and available to the government to give a cost-of-living increase to our members, but not just that, an element of restoration for what people have lost after over a decade of pay restraint.

I've no doubt there will be many Gus O'Donnells saying civil servants could have a bit more on their pay if they were prepared to sacrifice their pensions. But as a trade union that fights for our members, and believes in fairness and equality, we

don't think you should sacrifice one or the other, we think you are entitled to and deserve both, and we will fight for both."

Vote yes in the ballot

Members can back the fight for fair pay and pensions by voting in our [national strike ballot](#), which runs until **13 May**.

If you haven't received your ballot paper, you can [request a replacement via](#) PCS Digital before noon on Sunday (**28 April**).

When you've completed and posted your ballot paper, please log in to [PCS Digital](#) and tell us you've voted.

If you want to get more involved in your union, you can help to maximise turnout in the ballot by volunteering on [Super Saturday](#) and signing up to CallHub.