

1 May 2024

Support for Heathrow strikers at May Day rally

PCS General Secretary Fran Heathcote was joined by other speakers in sending a solidarity message to PCS strikers at Heathrow at the rally in Trafalgar Square.

In an impassioned speech Fran said to cheers: “I was on the picket line yesterday and the determination of our members there is absolute.

“So, let’s give those members on strike a cheer so loud that it can be heard all the way at Heathrow.

“And I’m sure that cheer could be heard in Whitehall too, where ministers cooked up this terrible (minimum service levels) legislation.

“I’ve no doubt that the coalition of resistance we have built has put immense pressure on employers.

“I’m immensely proud that PCS is at the forefront of the fight, but we cannot rest on our laurels.”

Jim Kelly, joint chair of the London May Day Organising Committee, also praised our strikers who are on the third day of their 4-day action in protest over roster changes which see them working longer and more inflexible shifts.

Historic concessions

Fran also highlighted how our members’ strike action last year drew “historic concessions from the government on pay.”

She told the crowd: “For the first time, the government increased the civil service pay remit, which covers the pay for our members in the civil service. And they not only increased it, they more than doubled it. So, when we fight back, we win.”

Acting for those without a voice

Fran said we have shown that we can win for those who don't have a voice.

"The work of PCS in tackling this government's appalling treatment of asylum seekers and refugees is something we are all incredibly proud of," she said.

"First, we took a stand against the despicable plans to turn back boats in the Channel. And thanks to industrial and legal pressure, the government ditched the policy.

"Then the government came back for another go, this time with the heartless and cruel Rwanda plan.

"Rather than opening our arms to the desperate and the vulnerable, this rotten government wants to kick them onto a one-way flight to a country 4,000 miles away. But again our members spoke up and we fought back."

She explained that in a fight fought alongside refugee and human rights groups that went all the way to the Supreme Court, the policy was eventually deemed unlawful.

"I couldn't be prouder to say that thanks to PCS, not a single flight containing a single asylum seeker has left for Rwanda," she said.

She also sent an unequivocal message over our ongoing support for Palestine.

"The message from everyone here today is unequivocal: for as long as injustice is inflicted upon the people of Palestine in Gaza and the West Bank, and until it is a free and independent nation we will continue marching, we will continue boycotting and we will continue protesting."