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# Border Force bosses push out loyal workers

As Heathrow Border Force staff prepare to renew strikes, Public and Commercial Services (PCS) members explain how a new duty roster is forcing friends and colleagues out of work.

On 29 April, a new roster for Border Force staff at Heathrow airport came into force following a sham consultation. The roster destroyed long-standing contractual terms, reasonable adjustments and flexible working arrangements. This made it impossible for many with caring responsibilities or disabilities from working at passport control, and over 250 experienced staff were forced to look for new jobs.

The loss has mounted pressure on remaining staff dealing with security concerns. And the new roster means officers go for hours without breaks, there is over-staffing during quiet periods, workers are unable to get home late at night because of poor public transport, and managers give contradictory instructions on shift-swapping and holiday booking. Speaking of the practical implications, one says:

“This roster imposes inflexibility and insufficient rest periods. Staff are being given stress and anxiety and will have no work-life balance. For example, they expect staff to work five consecutive 10.5-hour shifts, all with 5am starts! That is unacceptable. The project is poorly conceived, poorly planned and poorly implemented. It’s a recipe for disaster.”

Heartbreakingly, another writes of their despair at the prospect of unemployment in the cost-of-living crisis:

“I've been with Border Force for many years, despite my chronic illness and being a single parent of a young child. Ahead of the new roster, I was advised to apply for a flexible working arrangement, which I did. I was then told to apply for other jobs instead. I've been made to feel guilty of being a single parent and the stress has made my medical condition worse. With the cost-of-living crisis, I just about

make it through the month and cannot afford private childcare. The whole process has been completely unprofessional and inhumane. It breaks my heart."

Over 600 PCS members carrying out immigration controls and passport checks voted a massive 90% in favour of striking. Despite sorrow and anger, the mood on the first picket line (29 April to 2 May) was upbeat. PCS members will continue to show their strength with staff back out on strike on the from 31 May to 2 June.