

1 July 2024

# Crucial time for national campaign

The latest on your union's campaign on pay, pensions, jobs, and working conditions.

The PCS national campaign has seen significant developments recently, including the results of our national industrial action ballot, and robust debates on the next steps for the campaign at our annual conference. The upcoming general election, announced while delegates were meeting at PCS conference in Brighton, could also affect the shape of our campaign. The next moves will be discussed in more detail at a meeting of the newly-elected national executive committee (NEC) in July, after the general election.

In the last few weeks:

## **Votes counted in PCS national campaign ballot**

Members voted in a UK-wide ballot on our campaign demands, which closed on 13 May. The vote was disaggregated, as agreed by the NEC, which means each employer area is counted as a separate unit and has the option to take action if those members reach the legally required 50% turnout threshold.

Across the whole vote, 83.7% of members voted to take strike action over the demands in our national campaign. But a significant number were denied the option to take action because their area didn't meet the government's anti-union 50% turnout requirement.

Of the 171 employers covered in the ballot we reached the threshold, and therefore won legal mandates for strike action, in 62 areas covering 19,160 members.

The areas that achieved mandates to strike include ones in which we have exercised leverage during the campaign so far such as Ofsted, HM Land Registry, British Library, DVLA and Defra

## **Conference passes motion to broaden campaign**

On 21 May, following an extensive debate, PCS conference delegates passed a motion calling on the NEC to broaden the union's national campaign. The motion included some demands that are already part of our campaign and some additional specific demands that are not currently part of our official trade dispute with the UK Government.

It also instructed the NEC to consider how to coordinate efforts in any re-ballots, and how the national campaign feeds into devolved and privatised areas, so those members "can be involved to the greatest extent feasible".

Additionally, delegates agreed the NEC should open a dispute with the government to "resist the assault on equality, diversity and inclusion in the civil service, begun on 13 May".

Until such time as any new trade dispute is agreed and lodged, the strike mandates of our 19,000+ members remain valid.

The NEC will continue engaging with employer areas that have live mandates and is encouraging members to submit proposals for using their leverage with targeted industrial action.

### **UK general election called for 4 July**

PCS has long lobbied shadow ministers over the outrageous treatment to which our members have been subjected under Tory rule, and called for a future Labour government to address those injustices.

Soon after the election was called we issued a list of specific demands for an incoming government and conference pledged that PCS would hold the Labour leader's feet to the fire if his party is elected.

The motion highlighted the commitments the Labour party had made on workers' rights and called for a "fundamental reset" to bring about more positive relations between PCS and civil service senior leadership, and the removal of obstacles to organising.

In a letter to Keir Starmer, PCS has called on Labour to go further on its pledges for workers, if elected, and urged him to set up a meeting between cabinet ministers and the union within the first weeks of a new government.