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Why PCS wants an end to outsourcing

From improving terms and conditions to ending indirect discrimination, we examine why PCS campaigns to bring outsourced jobs back into the public sector.

In its election manifesto, Labour made a commitment to insource facilities management services such as cleaning, catering and security within government departments and agencies, which would benefit thousands of PCS members.

Our recent [Activate special on insourcing](#) highlighted the organising taking place in ISS and G4S where members are demanding to be brought in-house while continuing to fight for improvements to their current contracts.

Better terms and conditions

Outsourcing has created a two-tier workforce. Outsourcers like G4S and ISS tend to drive down pay and conditions for the workforce, creating a gap between civil servants and outsourced facility management staff, who support the day to day running of the government buildings that they work in.

Those on outsourced contracts experience worse terms and conditions, including inferior health and safety protections and pay, sick-leave and holiday entitlements.

Better accountability

There is a lack of accountability of the processes and practices of the outsourcer firms: they don't answer directly to government ministers and are exempt from freedom of information requests.

Better equality at work

By insourcing contracts, we can help to make our workplaces fairer and more equal.

Outsourced workers on the facilities side are more likely to be women and from Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic (BAME) backgrounds and/or migrant workers, whereas office workers within the civil service are more likely to be white.

PCS believes this racial disparity is indirect discrimination and the only proper way to end that is to bring these outsourced staff in-house.

Better investment

Private companies delivering outsourced services want to make a profit. We don't believe that taxes should be going to shareholders - they should be reinvested in making our services better.

PCS member Mo said: "I believe the security department within DWP should be insourced to protect the rights of employees and guarantee contractual rights. But mainly, why should public funds be spent on a private firm for profit making?"

Better union recognition

Outsourced workers are often not covered by a trade union recognition agreement to allow them to bargain over their pay and terms and conditions.

Many outsourcer companies have hostile relationships with trade unions and refuse to recognise unions like PCS. Bringing services back into public ownership would strengthen our collective voice and our ability to negotiate better terms and conditions for facilities members.