

14 August 2024

Cuts to jobcentre security staffing

G4S, the private contractor that provides security to jobcentres, has announced plans to cut the number of security guards.

PCS has written to the DWP permanent secretary to express serious concerns about plans by G4S to cut the number of security guards across the Jobcentre network. The letter asks the DWP to stop any planned reductions and to restore the number of security guards where they have already been removed.

We believe that it is scandalous that the DWP are allowing G4S to reduce security staffing at a time when there are increasing numbers of serious incidents in Jobcentres and public safety is being threatened by the rise of violent activity by the far-right.

DWP have allowed G4S to undertake “risk assessments” in sites where they are proposing that numbers of guards are reduced or removed, but have failed to consult with PCS health and safety representatives as is legally required.

PCS has consulted with members in Sudbury and Mildenhall in Suffolk where the security guards have been removed entirely. Members in these sites have been subjected to serious incidents in the past and feel very vulnerable as a result of the closure of local police stations, meaning that members can no longer rely on a swift intervention by the police. Following the consultation, members have indicated that they are prepared to take industrial action in support of their security guard colleagues facing redundancy and for their own safety.

PCS is hoping to meet with DWP officials to discuss the situation and find a solution that avoids the need to formally ballot members facing safety concerns. However, if a satisfactory outcome cannot be achieved, we will ballot members for industrial action.

If you work for DWP and are concerned about the levels of security guarding in your office please email dwp@pcs.org.uk outlining your concerns.

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