

14 August 2024

ONS workers escalate industrial action

PCS members to refuse to work overtime

More than a thousand Public and Commercial Services (PCS) union members at the Office for National Statistics are to escalate their industrial action

The almost 1,200 ONS employees based in Newport in South Wales, Titchfield in Hampshire, London, Darlington, Manchester and Edinburgh have since May refused to follow a new instruction to spend at least 40% of their time in the office.

From August 27 they are also refusing to work overtime or so anything over and above what is contractually required – a move that puts at risk meeting the deadline of several time-sensitive ONS publications.

The well-supported action has, to this point, had little impact on the organisation as members show they can work very well from home.

Many of them already willingly spend more than 40% of their working time in the office. The action is to oppose mandatory attendance – a move that robs staff of the flexibility to manage childcare and other domestic responsibilities, as well as requiring them to take unnecessary commutes to the office.

PCS general secretary Fran Heathcote said: “ONS consistently relies on goodwill to remain functional but managers have themselves shown little goodwill by forcing staff back into the office.

“This new wave of industrial action will cause disruption in a way working from home has not.”

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