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Tax the rich to build a social security system, PCS tells TUC

PCS has advocated taxing the rich and wealth to lift children out of poverty, allow pensioners to heat their homes and build a social security system that provides a decent standard for all.

Speaking to [motion 33 at TUC Congress](#) this morning (11), PCS Deputy President Bev Laidlaw also backed calls for a government taskforce that sets out a timeframe for introducing measures that address the injustices and flaws within the current welfare system.

She said: “PCS represents tens of thousands of members working in the DWP who administer Universal Credit. Thousands of those members also must claim Universal Credit to top-up their low pay in the DWP and that is a disgrace. So, our members know how the system works, and how it doesn’t work.”

She said we know that more conditionality and punitive sanctions do not work, create a single job or boost workers’ skills or morale.

“We need a system that supports people and gives them security. That isn’t the system we have today,” he said.

Bev told delegates that Labour had no mandate to cut Winter Fuel Payments. She said PCS supports Universal Winter Fuel Payments and believes that the government should be increasing taxes on the richest and corporations, not taking benefits away from hard pressed pensioners as energy bills shoot up this winter. Labour says the cut will save £1.4 billion which is only about 0.1% of government expenditure.

“Keeping Universal Credit at poverty levels is a political choice. Cutting the Winter Fuel Payment for pensioners is a political choice. Leaving children in poverty is a political choice,” she said. “And these are the wrong political choices,” she said.

“Let’s tax the rich, tax wealth. Lift children out of poverty, allow pensioners to heat their homes and build a social security system that provides a decent

standard for all,” she concluded.

Labour must end poverty

The motion, moved by Paddy Lillis from the Union of Shop, Distributive and Allied Workers, said that the Labour government’s approach to Universal Credit must make work pay, support people into decent jobs, end poverty, offer a proper safety net and promote equality.

He said that real-term poverty has risen in recent years and that social security reform needs to be key part of the government’s strategy.

“At the very least a welfare state should support people when they need it,” he said.

“Working people desperately need a break. We need to make sure that families do not keep on struggling.”

The motion called on the government to urgently convene a taskforce that sets out a timeframe for introducing measures that address the injustices and flaws within the current system. PCS believes such a taskforce must commit to oppose cuts to the winter fuel allowance and demand appropriate taxation of corporations and the super-rich, to fund social security improvements. PCS also demands that social security workers and their unions should be fully consulted on all changes to social security.

Jane Aitchison from Unite said that Universal Credit was social misery not social security.

“Universal Credit is malicious and it is cruel. It is complicated, mean and off-putting,” she said. “Universal Credit traps people in poverty.”

Lee Starr-Elliott from CWU said UC is a “minefield and a barrier”.

The motion, which was carried, called for the TUC to campaign for statutory provisions to ensure that any future changes to our social security system cannot be introduced without meaningful consultation with claimants and their representatives.

The motion also said that the taskforce must commit to:

- removing the 5-week wait and abolishing the 2-child limit
- reforming work allowances and taper rates to ensure that work pays
- addressing administrative flaws within the system

- ending the punitive system of sanctions
- enabling claimants to have their claim reviewed and adjusted by a DWP adviser rather than relying on computer systems.

Remember to check the PCS website, [X](#) and [Facebook](#) for updates and news from Congress.

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