



PCS INDEPENDENT LEFT

For a fighting, democratic union

ADC Bulletin 2024

Tuesday PM

The National Campaign—what next?

We are grateful to all who voted for change and worked to deliver votes, and we congratulate those bargaining units (BU) who secured legal strike mandates.

Nevertheless, sober analysis must register the failure to reach the (anti-union) legal requirement of a 50% turnout in all but one of the ten largest BUs balloted, and that the great majority of members are currently unable to strike in support of our demands.

What next?

The new NEC leadership can not guarantee to put right what has been wrong with the repeated mishandling of the ballots and mismanagement of pay issues.

Nevertheless, they must try to do so because the need to apply effective leverage remains key. That will have to involve reballotting where it makes sense in terms of strategic importance and the ability to meet the threshold.

The incoming NEC should urgently convene a meeting of

representatives from the BUs that have mandates to discuss next steps, to explore the appetite for cross-BU strike action and to agree a plan of action supported by the levy. Similarly, it must also convene meetings to discuss the plans for winning the re-ballots, including the support that national PCS will provide to hard-pressed rank-and-file reps.

They must engage and work with representatives rather than issuing them orders from on high and blaming them (which is the position of LU in leadership) for failing to meet the thresholds.

Accounting for the LU leadership's strategy:

- Dumped the 22/23 fight for a 10% consolidated pay rise
- Declared the 23/24 civil service pay remit was a 'significant concession' after denouncing it for being below inflation

(cont. overleaf)



Who are the IL?

The PCS Independent Left is a long-standing organisation of reps and activists from a diverse selection of employers, regions, and grades. We take a lead in our workplaces to instil the principles of competent, grassroots organising and open and democratic representation. We are not just around at election time but carry out the work of representing, organising, agitating and negotiating on behalf of members all year.

We encourage you to vote for our candidates, but we also want to engage more activists and members. If you're interested, please contact or join us through the QR code or details below.



Independent Left events at Conference

TUESDAY Club Caucus

(IL Social) 8pm, The Cricketers, 15 Black Lion St. Donations accepted on the door. DJ included.

WEDNESDAY Coalition for Change Rally

6pm, The Old Ship Hotel, 32-38 Kings Rd. Join reps from the newly elected NEC to discuss the way forward for PCS and the national campaign.



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Putting pressure on Labour

Motion A12 is an example of the proactive approach our Union should be adopting. It notes the Labour Party's promise of new rights for workers and trade unions, recognises the importance those rights could have for PCS members if applied meaningfully, and it instructs the NEC to engage with the Labour leadership in the difficult task of seeking strong commitment to radically improving the position of trade unions and workers within the civil service.

In Motion A13 however, the NEC does not seek instruction to engage on those rights to the benefit of our members; and essentially declares that PCS

members don't have any stake in whether Labour or the Tories win the next election, a view we doubt is shared by most trade unionists despite Starmer's reactionary politics. Politics we should engage with in Labour urgently, to oppose in place of PCS policy.

It is unfortunate that this hasn't happened earlier, but conference should issue that instruction. It is welcome that General Secretaries of other trade unions, such as Matt Wrack of FBU and Sharon Graham of Unite, have been seeking to keep Starmer to his published commitments to worker and trade union rights, against his natural inclination to dump them.

Members vote for different direction (cont. from front page)

- Agreed, without any equality assessment, that the totally inadequate £1,500 lump sum should be paid pro rata, to the detriment of (overwhelmingly female) part-time members
- Boosted the Tories' promise of national talks in exchange for 'peace in our times' – allowing our mandates to lapse, leaving us without leverage
- Did not commence talks until October 2023, failed to extract a single concession and passively presided over below inflation 2023/24 "awards" in one BU after another
- Lost the bulk of the membership gained during the dispute: PCS shed 5,000 net members in the last months of 2023, declining to 189,399 members, representing a historically low civil service density
- Rejected the IL NEC proposal to delay the ballot to allow for preparation, instead lurching with little notice into a ballot after 9 months of silence, after failing to render us ballot-ready, but when NEC elections were looming
- Put together a claim that despite record inflation did not increase the £15p/h underpin for the lowest paid and did not include opposition to the mounting ministerial attacks on flexible working, a key issue for many members



Time for change

The 2024 National Executive Committee (NEC) elections have resulted in sweeping gains for the Coalition for Change, including the Independent Left. The Change candidates took 3 of the 4 Vice President posts and 16 of the 30 ordinary NEC member posts; overturning over twenty years of a Left Unity majority.

While the Change candidates fought on a principled, positive programme focused on the critical problems facing members, Left Unity (LU) boastfully contested the elections on the basis of its "proud history in delivering for members", when the value of civil service pay has been in steep decline for sixteen years, tens of thousands of us are on the

minimum wage, and our industrial power is increasingly undermined by historically low membership density.

Nevertheless, LU still retain considerable obstructive power and, given their highly factional culture, they will no doubt seek to use it. These election results should be seen as part of a project to build the PCS we all need and deserve: a union that gives us the help we require first time; that informs and consults us during key negotiations; better supports lay representatives; prioritises mass recruitment; fights to win; and provides us honest assessments rather than self-justifying spin.

Join us in debating how we might build the PCS we need.