

## **PUBLIC & COMMERCIAL SERVICES UNION**

**TO: NATIONAL EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE**

**FROM: General Secretary**

**DATE: 15 July 2024**

**SUBJECT: National Campaign**

### **ISSUE**

Next steps in the campaign.

### **TIMING**

For decision at the NEC meeting on 17/18 July 2024.

### **RECOMMENDATIONS**

1. That the trade dispute letter at [Annex A](#) be sent to the employer, incorporating any amendments to it that the NEC considers necessary.
2. That the NEC consider the balloting timetable and decide the way forward.
3. That the NEC consider whether the ballot be aggregated or disaggregated and decide the way forward.
4. That two further forums be held for senior lay reps, one for each dispute constituency, inviting Branch Chairs and Secretaries from each constituency.
5. That the NEC name the proposed date for the one-day strike; and then consult the 64 bargaining areas on their view of that proposal; and then consider the position further informed by that consultation.
6. That the NDC meet to determine the limited programme of paid targeted action, determining precisely what leverage should be exercised and over what timescale; and then consult the 64 bargaining areas on their view of that programme; and then consider the position further informed by that consultation.
7. That Groups and Branches are once again submit leverage proposals; and then meetings be convened involving NECLOs with those that have identified leverage.
8. That the academic report making the fiscal case for good pay be tabled as an item on the agenda for the next PCS Parliamentary Group meeting

9. That a range of communications be issued to groups, branches and members explaining the NEC's strategy.

## **COSTS**

Tbc

## **ACTION AND PRESENTATION TO MEMBERS**

See paper.

## **INTRODUCTION**

At its meeting on 10 July 2024, the NEC carried a number of recommendations following the debate on paper NEC.100.03.24. This paper provides an update on implementation of those decisions and makes some further recommendations on taking some those decisions further forward.

## **FURTHER TRADE DISPUTE**

During the debate on NEC.100.03.24, the NEC was asked to confront the dilemma created by the passage of Motion A315 at this year's Annual Delegate Conference. To recap, the conference motion potentially introduced new demands into the campaign; while simultaneously instructing the NEC to exercise the mandates in respect of the existing trade dispute.

That position being legally untenable, the NEC was faced with a decision on the way forward. Following a difficult debate, in my right of reply, I recommended what I believed was a coherent way of holding the national campaign together, while also recognising the changed circumstances flowing from the election of a new government. I recommended that:

- we recognise the decisions taken by conference were made before the announcement of the general election
- that the election of a new government has significantly changed the picture
- that:
  - analysis of the new administration's manifesto commitments should be undertaken;
  - bargaining objectives should be developed and tabled to the new administration;
  - a period of negotiation should be undertaken to secure those objectives

- a fresh trade dispute should be lodged based on fresh demands in the event that we do not make enough progress at the bargaining table

That position did not find favour with the majority of the NEC. Instead, an alternative proposal was carried, namely that:

- we seek to exercise the mandate in the existing trade dispute in areas where we passed the statutory threshold in the industrial action ballot
- we create a separate trade dispute in areas where we did not pass the threshold, incorporating the new demands contained in Motion A315

The NEC then went on to carry a motion on the national campaign which was passed on a majority vote.

Our task is therefore to craft a further trade dispute incorporating the demands of the trade dispute created earlier this year, the demands contained within Motion A315 and the provisions of the motion on the national campaign carried by the NEC on 10 July 2024.

### **FURTHER TRADE DISPUTE LETTER**

Annex A contains a draft trade dispute letter to the employer in respect of the further dispute. I **recommend** that the letter be sent to the employer, incorporating any amendments to it that the NEC considers necessary.

The trade dispute letter will be replicated to the 109 bargaining areas that did not get over the statutory threshold in the original ballot.

### **BALLOT**

Assuming the employer fails to meet our demands by 9 August 2024, we will then need to move to a statutory ballot.

The motion carried by the NEC on the national campaign at its meeting on 10 July 2024 indicated that we should prepare for a ballot in September 2024. The ballot earlier this year was held over an eight week timetable. Given that we are balloting areas that failed to get over the statutory threshold over that timescale, it is likely that they will require at least the same period in order to succeed.

If we were to ballot over an eight week period again, that would require the following timetable:

- Ballot opens 2 September 2024
- Ballot closes 28 October 2024

Realistically, that would mean any action beginning from 18 November 2024.

I **recommend** that the NEC consider these issues and decide the balloting timetable.

The NEC will need to decide whether the ballot is aggregated or disaggregated. As a matter of industrial logic, the ballot can be disaggregated where there is a unifying demand in the dispute that prevents the employer settling our terms in some areas, which they may do in an attempt to peel off sections of our membership from the dispute. Pensions is a unifying demand in the dispute that would enable disaggregation.

I **recommend** that the NEC consider whether the ballot be aggregated or disaggregated and decide the way forward.

### **SENIOR LAY REPS FORUM**

The NEC agreed that a Senior Lay Reps Forum would take place, before the NEC on 17 July 2024, where the strategy could be explained. The forum has been scheduled for 16 July 2024 at 6:30pm.

The NEC also agreed that the invitation to the forum would be extended to the Chairs and Secretaries of any branch in those areas which achieved the ballot threshold in May 2024. Invitations have been issued accordingly.

I **recommend** that two further forums be held for senior lay reps, one for each dispute constituency, inviting Branch Chairs and Secretaries from each constituency. This will help clarify for activists which areas are pursuing which dispute and enable views to be expressed on the way forward.

### **INDUSTRIAL ACTION**

In the motion on the national campaign carried by the NEC on 10 July 2024, the NEC agreed that, should the new government fail to offer a meeting timeously, or should any response show an unwillingness to concretely discuss our members' concerns,

the minimum programme of industrial action would be called across all areas with a live mandate:

- A one-day strike action (to be discussed with senior lay reps)
- A limited programme of paid targeted action in those areas which have identified areas where sustained action would maximise disruption (also subject to urgent discussion with the relevant areas).

I **recommend** that the NEC name the proposed date for the one-day strike; and then consult the 64 bargaining areas on their view of that proposal; and then consider the position further informed by that consultation.

In paper NEC.100.03.24, the NEC received full details of the leverage submissions received to date and an outline potential leverage plan. I **recommend** that the NDC meet to determine the limited programme of paid targeted action, determining precisely what leverage should be exercised and over what timescale; and then consult the 64 bargaining areas on their view of that programme; and then consider the position further informed by that consultation.

In carrying the motion, the NEC also agreed that the NDC would consult with all groups and branches with leverage over the next period, involving NECLOs in the discussion, to see where we can sustainably disrupt the priorities of the new government with the aim of getting progress on the Treasury Pay Remit and on firm commitments to progress our demands on pay and bargaining, as we prepare for a national re-ballot, provisionally scheduled for September 2024.

There are 20 groups in the union and 472 Branches. A sensible way to deal with that scale of discussions in a manageable way for PCS staff and NECLOs is to ask all Groups and Branches to once again submit leverage proposals; and then convene specific meetings involving NECLOs with those that have identified leverage.

I **recommend** that the NEC agree to proceed in that manner.

## **DISCUSSIONS WITH LARGE EMPLOYER AREAS**

The NEC previously agreed that the NDC Secretary meet with Group Officers and Organisers in each of the largest employer areas to analyse the steps that were undertaken by reps and activists to maximise membership engagement during the

ballot period; and that the analysis is used to inform judgements on any potential re-ballots; alongside the appropriate industrial and political considerations at that stage.

Now that the NEC has agreed the distribution of the ballot data, those conversations will now begin.

### **STRENGTH AND WEAKNESSES**

The NEC previously agreed that a full analysis of our strengths and weaknesses be conducted in all areas where we failed to meet the statutory threshold; and that recommendations are brought to a future NEC to address this over the longer term.

Now that the NEC has agreed the distribution of the ballot data, those conversations will now begin.

### **LETTER TO THE PRIME MINISTER**

In accordance with the provisions of the motion on the national campaign carried by the NEC on 10 July 2024, I have written to the Prime Minister. A copy of the letter is contained at [Annex B](#).

Again, in accordance with the provisions of the motion, the letter has been copied to the Permanent Secretary to the Cabinet Office and all Permanent Secretaries; and has been published to PCS members via our website.

### **LETTER TO SISTER UNIONS**

In accordance with the provisions of the motion on the national campaign carried by the NEC on 10 July 2024, I am writing to all NTUC Unions asking them to meet to discuss any scope for any joint campaign actions on the subjects covered by Motion A315.

### **LETTER TO OTHER PUBLIC SECTOR UNIONS**

In accordance with the provisions of the motion on the national campaign carried by the NEC on 10 July 2024, I am writing to other public sector unions, other than FDA, that will be affected by the publication of recommendations from pay review bodies, following said publication, to identify scope for joint working across all affected unions on the question of pay.

## **BARGAINING OBJECTIVES**

In accordance with the recommendation carried by the NEC at its meeting on 10 July 2024, we are conducting an analysis of Labours stated commitments, considering how they might affect workers in our sphere of influence and drawing up a set of bargaining objectives related to them.

Once that has been done, I will write to the new Minister for the Cabinet Office seeking early negotiations on our bargaining objectives.

## **ACADEMIC RESEARCH**

In accordance with the recommendations carried at the NEC at its meeting on 10 July 2024, I am writing to the Minister for the Cabinet Office tabling the report from Giorgos Galanis, Queen Mary, University of London and Aggela Papadopoulou, SOAS, University of London, which makes the fiscal case for good pay in the civil service. I am also commissioning work on the pamphlet on the report for use as a campaigning tool.

## **POLITICAL CAMPAIGNING**

Given the new governments apparent intention to restrict its room for manoeuvre with self-imposed, artificial fiscal rules, it is important that we use our academic research to make the argument for an alternative approach on public sector pay amongst parliamentarians.

I **recommend** that the academic report be tabled as an item on the agenda for the next PCS Parliamentary Group meeting campaigning.

## **NATIONAL TALKS**

The employer has written to the NTUC seeking meeting dates for talks on the civil service pay remit guidance. The first meeting is scheduled to take place on 19 July 2024.

## **COMMUNICATIONS WITH GROUPS, BRANCHES AND MEMBERS**

As the NEC has decided to run two separate trade disputes with different demands, we will need to carefully explain the position to members and activists in each trade dispute. We will need to be clear with each constituency which demands we are asking them to take action to pursue, for both legal and industrial reasons.

I **recommend** that a range of communications be issued to groups, branches and members explaining the NEC's strategy.

**Fran Heathcote**  
**General Secretary**