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# Scottish Executive Committee Annual Report 2024

# Foreword

This is the first annual report since the special Scottish conference on 2 November 2023 that established the new Scottish constitution to enable future Scottish policy conferences and Executive Committee elections.

We are pleased to say that the Scottish Executive Committee (SEC) has been meeting every three months in line with the new constitution. It has been a productive year as you will see from the report, but we are all still getting to grips with our new executive powers as we transition from the old regional committee to a new nation committee.

Our powers are wide-ranging and it's worth reminding ourselves what they are going forward and as we head to our first policy making conference in 2025. The SEC will

- Coordinate the union's response to decisions made by the Scottish Parliament and Scottish Government between annual policy conferences and oversee the implementation of the decisions of those conferences.
- Assist and advise on policy matters, which although reserved to the UK Government, have a distinct and direct impact on members who live and work in Scotland, unless making such policy would infringe upon the ability of existing groups or sectors to develop independent industrial strategy or have industrial implications for such members.
- Coordinate the PCS approach in Scotland to Scottish Parliamentary elections, including holding workplace meetings, hustings and developing an independent campaigning strategy which furthers the demands of all members living and working in Scotland.
- Work with other unions, groups and bodies to promote the interests of members who live and work in Scotland at all levels of government where appropriate.
- Coordinate the PCS approach in Scotland for dealing with the STUC, including organising the elections of delegates to STUC congress, developing motions for STUC congress, alongside any other relevant union structures and promoting the maximum participation of branches and members in the activities of the STUC and their local trades councils, receiving regular reports from the National Officer, as and when required.
- Work with and coordinate between all relevant union structures, from both devolved and non-devolved groups and/or sectors, to deliver on campaign objectives.
- Coordinate the PCS approach in Scotland for working with the communities in which our members live and work, anti-racist and other bodies and institutions, including those organisations to which PCS is affiliated.

Although we have had no motions to process yet, we are looking forward to next year when we can really get to work on making a difference on behalf of our members in Scotland.

**Liz McGachey**
Co-convener

**John Jamieson**
Co-convener

## Meetings

The SEC has met in line with the constitution. Meetings were held in March 2024, June 2024 and September 2024. The SEC has taken some time to transition from the former Scotland committee to an executive body which is taking some decisions that would previously have been referred to the National Executive Committee (NEC).

## SEC members

The SEC election results were declared on 2 February 2024. The officers and the standing orders committee (SOC) were elected unopposed.

## Co convenors

Liz McGachey, Department for Work and Pensions (DWP)
John Jamieson, Registers of Scotland (RoS)

## Vice convenors

Lynsey Jane Morgan, Scottish Government (SG)
Sharon McLean, Ministry of Justice (MoJ)

## SEC members

Stewart Christie, Scottish Government (SG)
Ruth Horsfall, Social Security Scotland (SSS)
Charlie Liddell, Department for Work and Pensions (DWP)
Kevin McCafferty, Department for Work and Pensions (DWP)
Sean Fegan, Registers of Scotland (RoS)
Ruth Cunningham, Social Security Scotland (SSS)
Holly Davie, Scottish Government (SG)
Claire Bywalec, Social Security Scotland (SSS)
Dean Black, Social Security Scotland (SSS)
Liam Davenport, Crown Office and Procurator Fiscal Service (COPFS)
Vijay Menezes-Jackson, Department for Work and Pensions (DWP)
Chris Goulart McNerney, Office of Gas an Electricity Markets (OFGEM)

There were 14 places to fill for the committee but following the application of employers' reservations only 12 places were filled which left two vacancies. The committee agreed to run with these vacancies this year.

## Standing Orders Committee (SOC)

The following were elected:
Calum Walker, DWP
David McNeely, HMRC
Keith Brockie, SG

## Scottish Policy Making conference

This will be held on 28 February in Glasgow.
Briefings covering elections and motions have already been issued. Given that there was a gap between the first conference which established the constitution and the first policy making conference it was agreed that we would hold an autumn engagement conference as a precursor to the main conference.

Scottish Devolved Conference

The organising for this event was led by an SEC working group and quite a lot of effort went into it but unfortunately there was not enough interest to make it viable and it had to be cancelled.

## National campaign

The committee was active during the national campaign and the ballot which ran from 18 March until 13 May and our priorities were dominated by the national campaign.

Scotland's personal contact statistics are in a healthy position and have increased since the conclusion of the last statutory ballot. Personal email addresses held have increased by 1.5%, with 90.2% of all members having a personal email address listed with PCS (23,540.) Personal mobile numbers have increased at a similar rate (1%), with 78.3% (20,443) of members in Scotland having registered a personal mobile number. Just slightly over 58% of PCS members in Scotland have registered with a PCS Digital account, and branches are encouraged to include PCS Digital sign up into their organising plans and personal comms work with members.

Strike schools were held across all regions and nations in PCS for reps, activists and engaged members who are involved in work to get the vote out in their workplaces. These sessions covered the law around industrial action ballots, talking to members about the levy, barriers to organising and ballot work and how to overcome them, structured organising conversations and branch ballot checklists.

The strike schools for Scotland and Northern Ireland were held on 19 March, with two sessions running from 12:30-1:30pm and 6–7pm. All activists in the ballot were sent an email about the strike schools and members were encouraged to sign up, particularly members who have never been involved in ballot work previously. Turnout at peak was approximately 19 members.

Branches were encouraged to make use of CallHub during the ballot to drive turnout and ensure that PCS can breach the 50% threshold.

Drop-in sessions on CallHub and use of the organisnig hub were held periodically throughout the ballot period both nationally and on a regional/nation basis.

Throughout the course of the ballot period the PCS parliamentary group continued to support the union's campaigning efforts. Chris Stephens MP used his contribution during a debate on food poverty to highlight low pay within the DWP, noting statistics gathered by a PCS survey, he said:

"The Minister may be aware that food bank usage among staff at the Department for Work and Pensions increased from 8% of those surveyed by the Public and Commercial Services Union in 2022 to 11% in 2023. Perhaps she could explain why so many staff working for the Department for Work and Pensions are only paid the national minimum wage?"

An Early Day Motion was launched in late April which had the support of 34 cross party MPs.

## Industrial action

SEC members are committed to supporting all our members who undertake industrial action and have been supporting picket lines in the G4S dispute in the DWP and the OCS FCDO dispute in East Kilbride.

## STUC

The STUC congress took place in Dundee from 15 – 17 April. PCS was involved in six debates.

We moved the composite motion on Palestine and Cat Boyd in her general council capacity chaired the special session where we were joined on Zoom by the Palestine ambassador to the UK, Husam Zomlot, and Shaher Saed, general secretary of the PGFTU. It was a great honour for PCS, and national president, Martin Cavanagh, who opened the debate, which received high praise from all quarters of the movement.

We moved motions on the 4-day week and the use of contingent workers in the Scottish devolved sector.

G4S strike at Atlantic Quay



East Kilbride HMRC strike

We were also involved in debates on protecting the right to strike, securing fair and equal pay and opposing racism.

PCS speakers were involved in several fringe meetings throughout congress and delegates were able to participate in a range of activities throughout the event.

Cat Boyd was also successfully re-elected to the STUC General Council.

The STUC General Council continues to engage with Scotland's First Minister, a key opportunity for affiliates to engage with the government. Addressing public finances, the First Minister reiterated the tired and familiar stance of limited funding, claiming "there is no money." However, PCS contends that the Scottish Government has options to prioritise public service funding, which will become central in Scottish sector campaigns.

The STUC has submitted a counter-report on the Scottish economy, challenging government claims, and raised concerns about revisions to Fair Work guidance. Trade unions observe that diluted language now enables some employers to bypass Fair Work commitments, a setback given the government's goal of establishing Scotland as a "Fair Work First Nation" by next year.

The STUC continues to promote resistance to the ongoing genocide in Gaza, the terror in other parts of Palestine and the Israeli assault on Lebanon. The STUC has announced an event to assist affiliates in strengthening work on boycott, divestment and sanctions in November 2024.

Following on from work which began in August 2023, the STUC General Council decided to review its democratic processes and structures, aiming to address resource limitations and shift focus from "convening" to "campaigning." This review, the first in over two decades, includes consultations with affiliated unions, surveys of

congress delegates, and facilitated committee sessions. As resource constraints challenge STUC's goal of more active campaigning, they plan to sustain equalities structures and remain committed to comprehensive representation.

The review led to key recommendations including shifting the congress to a biennial schedule, with interim updates to keep affiliates, trades councils, and equality committees informed. Events will still bring affiliates together annually, and training on congress participation will be introduced to enhance representation. These changes reflect a consensus that STUC effectiveness, progress, and accountability don't depend solely on annual gatherings. Instead, enhanced communication and scheduled events will maintain cohesion and continue advancing the STUC's objectives. PCS responded to the consultation.

## PCS Parliamentary report

This year has seen a few changes with a further change in First Minister and Deputy First Minister and the SNP ending their power sharing deal with the Scottish Greens.

We hold regular meetings with Cabinet Secretaries and Ministers. The following meetings were held in 2024:

**1 February 2024** meeting with the Deputy First Minister Shona Robison to discuss pay and contingent workers

**28 May 2024** meeting with the First Minister and Deputy First Minister with the STUC and other affiliates to discuss the new Scottish Public Sector pay policy.

**27 June 2024** meeting with the Cabinet Secretary for Justice, Angela Constance MSP.

**30 July 2024** meeting with the First Minister to discuss public sector pay.

**28 August 2024** meeting with the Cabinet Secretary for Finance, Shona Robison MSP to discuss budget deficit.

**31 August 2024** meeting with the Minister for Higher and Further Education, Graeme Dey MSP.

At the time of writing we have planned meetings with the Cabinet Secretary for Finance (5 November) and the Cabinet Secretary for Education and Skills (13 November).

It should also be noted that PCS also forms part of the STUC delegations that meet with ministers.

The parliamentary group last met on 18 September 2024. Agenda items were as follows:

- Public sector finances/forthcoming Scottish budget
- Public sector pay policy/pay coherence/restoration

Scottish Parliament

- Shorter working week
- Justice sector report

Both our branches in SDS and SAAS are impacted by Scottish ministers' skills review and put in submissions to the ongoing Scottish Parliament consultation.

We also wrote to the Scottish Parliament Audit Committee about the GEOAmey situation in the justice sector and they have subsequently published their report which has been circulated to the justice sector branches.

We have had regular contact over the summer with Rhoda Grant MSP about the closure of the I visitor centres.

We are holding a parliamentary reception on 5 November to launch our justice sector report, which includes detailed findings about unpaid work, inadequate or misallocated resources, and risks to the delivery of justice.

Both the SNP and Labour trade union groups meet a couple of times a year and PCS attends these meetings as well.

## Scottish Sector report

We are really pleased that the new devolved sector group was established this year and the officers and committee were elected in October. This is a positive development and will be complimentary to the work of the Scottish Executive Committee. The long-standing Scottish Government group elected to remain separate from the new Scottish sector group for the time being, with a view to merging in future. The two groups will work closely together on matters of joint interest.

Most Scottish sector branches under the Scottish Government's pay policy (SGPP) are in a two-year pay deal (2023/24 and 2024/25).

It should also be noted that Scottish Ministers have published their latest Scottish public sector pay strategy with metrics for

the next three years and a heavy emphasis on unions looking to do further multiyear deals. Pay talks for 25/26 are due to start soon following the Scottish budget on 4 December 2024.

Under the two-year pay deal, the vast majority of employers committed to moving to a 35-hour week without loss of pay.

South of Scotland Enterprise (SOSE) and Accountant in Bankruptcy (AIB) are both engaged in the 4-day week pilot being run by Autonomy. Data from the pilots will be useful for the Scottish devolved sector group to plan the next stages of the shorter working week campaign.

The sectoral pay claim is still to be finalised, but will pursue both pay restoration (based on RPI inflation) and pay coherence. Work is ongoing to establish monetary values for restoration and coherence on an employer by employer basis. This will be finalised prior to the December budget.

## Organising

Recruitment has seen a slight dip in membership since the last report. Scotland currently has 25,905 members across the devolved sector, Westminster departments and commercial sector.

There are currently 493 advocates on PCS Digital in Scotland, with a further 85 potential advocates listed. This means that Scotland possesses around 15.9% of the total advocates in the union, whilst making up roughly 13.7% of the union's overall membership.

Potential advocates should be of particular focus for branches. These are members who have expressed an interest in getting more involved with union activism and are recorded on PCS Digital. Reps can access the potential advocates report in the membership reports section of the organising hub, which list the details of any members in their own branches. A new messaging system has been introduced, whereby if the member is not known to the branch, reps can send the potential advocate a secure message via PCS Digital to arrange a meeting to complete an Induction. If branches are unsure how to do this, your assigned full time officer can help.


Many of these potential advocates will go on to become reps, and in some cases, are keen to become reps straight away rather than starting as an advocate, so each contact should be followed up as soon as possible while they are still enthusiastic to find out how they would like to contribute.

A staff in post (SIP) toolkit has been issued to all branches via a national branch briefing.

One of the priorities for the NEC has been to increase the accuracy of our density figures. The toolkit lays out the steps for branches to request SIP figures from the employer. It recognises that some employers may be less agreeable to providing them, so provides both informal and formal approaches that can be escalated depending on the responses received. Template letters, as well as a guide on how to update the workplace figures on PCS Digital are included.

Accurate density figures are absolutely crucial in building industrial strength, as it allows us to map out areas of strength and weakness and allocate resources to those areas where we need to increase membership.

As part of motion A87, which was passed at annual delegate conference 2024, branches are being consulted on their delegate entitlement, and whether changes to increase this further would increase participation and attendance at future ADCs.

Branches are asked to nominate one person to complete our survey once they have had the chance to discuss this. The full details of the consultation are in BB-066-24.

The results of the survey will be reported back to the NEC and inform future discussions on the best way to ensure that as many branches as possible are able to attend at ADC and participate in our union's democratic structures.

## Education and learning

The SEC received a detailed report on all education and learning activities across the country. It also took an active interest in the dispute around City of Glasgow College and the proposed closure of the trade union education centre.

Between April and September we ran 38 courses and 64 reps from branches across Scotland took part. No courses ran in July and August due to the summer break.

In May we ran trainee delegates training at ADC; 11 reps from Scotland attended this session.

We have had to postpone three courses due to industrial action with EIS FELA branch in Glasgow and Fife, this action was part of national action on pay.

In mid-May this year we received an update via the tutors at City of Glasgow College and subsequently TUC education in Scotland. The management at the TU education centre in Glasgow did not intend to renew the current partnership agreement, thus closing the centre at the end of June.

This meant potential redundancy for the centre's tutors and the loss of trade union education in Glasgow; the centre has been in Glasgow in one form or another for over 30 years. General secretary Fran Heathcote and National Officer Cat Boyd have both signed a letter of support that the local branch has sent to the First Minister. PCS Scotland also sent out emails to branches with strike days and picket locations along with and email address that branches could send solidarity messages.

Over the summer break the TUC and STUC were in discussions with the college management about keeping the centre open and we are pleased to report that the dispute has now been resolved. Courses are now back up and running through City of Glasgow College, with the partnership agreement in place

with the TUC for the rest of this current academic year. We have also worked with Fife College to deliver courses and will continue to do so for the academic year. Working with both colleges has allowed us to be more flexible about course delivery and has given our trade union education programme the ability to withstand short notice changes while still delivering the training reps and activists need.

We have been working all year with branches to implement and develop branch learning plans for the year ahead. Many branches carried out workplace surveys to identify and demonstrate demand.

Our digital skills courses have been very popular, we have applied for a wide range of levels, with a clear change in what learners are interested in.

On the skills development front, British sign language has also been popular this year, after rolling it out two years ago. We have noticed that demand for the self-awareness courses have risen this year, with two mental health awareness courses, and one stress awareness and sleep management course.

We have picked up a couple of new courses this year. With an aging workforce, we have found useful, Developing Long Term Memory, of which we have run two courses, each lasting only a few hours, but they have been effective and had great feedback. We have run one Effective Communication Skills for one of our customer-based branches and they are wating to start a Managing Working Relationships course due to run in September.

We have been working with colleagues in England and Wales to build our ULR network, we have run a successful ULR forum this year with and array of short taster courses. We worked closely with our regional learning reps in HMRC to run a successful learning at work week using a small amount of the branch learning fund during May with 10 sessions running online for hundreds of PCS members to access.

Our Scottish union learning finance was allocated in full at the end of September 2024 and we were successful in our Fair Work bid which we will run November - December 2024.

## Anti-Fascist/Racism work

PCS continues to be involved in SUTR and Liz McGachey as co-convenor is an active member of the committee.

PCS has been present on the anti-racist and anti-fascist demonstrations across Scotland. This is a great show of strength from our activists who are standing up to the narratives as well as threats of activity from the far-right.

PCS was involved in the Resist Racism Demo on 18 March 2024 and the event on 7 September when the far right hoped to make a breakthrough in Glasgow and a huge counter protest was organised by SUTR and the STUC. PCS had SEC speakers at both events.

Some members of the SEC attended the London demonstration on 26 October.

PCS has also been involved in the weekly Erskine anti racism activity (Stop the Nazi Homeland Party) and gave a £200 donation to support this work earlier this year.

We also publicise and encourage members to attend the Justice for Sheku Bayou solidarity events. Committee members

PCS Rally against the far right, August 10

Liz McGachey and Cheral Govind have been speakers at some of these demonstrations.

PCS alongside other affiliated unions is currently mobilising for the STUC annual St Andrew's Day anti-racism march and rally on Saturday 30 November.

## STUC Equality conferences

The following STUC equality conferences took place over the course of the year: -

- Black workers
- LGBT+
- Women's
- Disabled
- Young members

The SEC has taken an active role in proposing and clearing motions to all these conferences. PCS had delegations at them all.

## PCS Equality networks

The SEC agreed at the start of the year that we must try and get our equality networks active again and committee members volunteered to help with this work. The following have taken place:

**PCS Proud Scotland**

We have been in contact with the secretary and chair of PCS Proud about potential plans for relaunching the Scottish part of the network.

We hope to organise an online meeting before the end of the year to bring together Proud activists – and those keen to get involved in the network. If you are interested in joining please contact Alex@pcs.org.uk

**PCS Scotland women's network**

Work started on re-launching this network with the first online meeting held on 18 September. Further meetings are planned and if you are interested in getting more information on this contact linsay@pcs.org.uk

**Black workers' network**

A number of members have expressed an interest and the first meeting was due to take place on 29 October 2024. If you are interested please contact wilma@pcs.org.uk

**PCS disabled members' network**

A number of members have expressed an interest and the first meeting was due to take place on 30 October 2024. If you are interested please contact wilma@pcs.org.uk

**PCS young members' network**

There was an online PCS young members' event on 28 August and a young members' social on 23 November. This allowed us the opportunity to keep young members engaged and starts to build the network. The current convener Laura Smith has also been elected to the STUC youth committee and will represent PCS at these meetings going forward.

If you are interested in joining the young members' network contact **Alex@pcs.org.uk**

## PCS national equality networks

The SEC is represented on all the national networks and members report back to the committee.

### Finally…..

Branches are reminded that the deadline for motions and SEC nominations is **Thursday 12 December**. All branches are encouraged to submit motions covering any topic within the remit of the SEC. This includes policy, political, social, and economic matters pertaining to Scotland.

## Notes

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