



PCS Broad Left Network

VOTE YES/YES TO STOP SPREAD OF COVID AT DVLA!

COVID cases at DVLA continue to rise with over 800 reported since September last year. This amounts to almost 1 in 7 of the total workforce so far. This shows that the problem at DVLA is real and we can expect things to get worse as winter approaches.

The vaccination programme has dramatically reduced hospital admissions and deaths but not prevented them entirely. Admissions and deaths will increase as the infection rate in society climbs.

A repeat of the horrendous outbreak of December last year must be prevented at all costs, so now is not the time to bring more staff back into the workplace. Yet that is exactly what DVLA has been doing and intends to pursue in the weeks to come.

The advice from the Welsh Government is to work from home if possible. It is obviously possible for staff who have previously been working from home to continue to do so, yet they are being made to come back to the workplace. This is irresponsible and makes no sense.

The Dispute Can and Must be Won

PCS has been in dispute with DVLA since February. Targeted industrial action has been taking place between April and the end of August. On two occasions now there appeared to be a prospect of a settlement but ministers intervened to prevent it.

There is no option but to fight on and in fact to escalate the action. It is therefore vital that DVLA members vote YES for strike action and YES for action short of a strike in the statutory ballot commencing

on 12th October and ending on 10th November.

This dispute can be won with a strong lead from the top. DVLA members have shown great resilience and determination so far. Members have already voted for industrial action in one statutory ballot and two consultative ballots. Members have endorsed proposals for industrial action in every zoom meeting when called on to do so. Most importantly, members have responded in large numbers to every call for industrial action.

These efforts must be made to count by winning concessions from management and to do that a YES/YES vote is needed again. With the strike mandate renewed, the collective strength of the 3,500 members at DVLA must be mobilised to win the dispute.

Not Alone

Colleagues in the Driving Standards Agency (DVSA) have voted for industrial action over plans to increase the number of tests driving examiners are required to perform each day. They voted 92% in favour of industrial action on a 79% turn – out. Having two DfT agencies in dispute at the same time would put enormous pressure on DfT, especially if PCS co-ordinates the industrial action in DVSA and DVLA.

Some members have understandably been dismayed by the hostile press coverage, blaming them for the shortage of HGV drivers etc. This sort of nonsense is to be expected from institutions owned by the billionaire press barons who have been in dispute with their own workers in the past. They speak with the voice of employers who will always be hostile to workers taking action to defend themselves.

Members should take heart from the countless messages of support and financial donations from across the trade union movement. It is other workers organised in their unions who are and will continue to be your allies.

Broad Left Network

The Broad Left Network is the Socialist Group inside PCS and our immediate concerns are the employment and workplace issues that face members, particularly health and safety at this time.

We have consistently supported the action of members at DVLA throughout the dispute and urged the leadership of PCS to escalate the action to put maximum pressure on management and ministers.

We say:-

- All work needs to be delivered safely by members working from home to eliminate risk. The only exceptions should be where there is a genuine need for work to be done in the workplace or it is the safest place for the member to work. These exceptions should only be with union agreement
- Special leave with pay for all those who cannot work from home and are not key workers.
- All sick leave related to Covid-19 to be written off including conditions related to long-covid
- Additional compensation for extra expenses incurred through working at home eg fuel bills.
- S44 of the Employment Protection Rights Act 1996 to be used collectively to prevent management forcing people back into the workplace
- Mobilise full union support to members at DVLA

For a YES/YES vote in the ballot commencing on 12th October. Escalate the action to include all DVLA members.

Get involved in the Broad Left Network:
pcsblnetwork@gmail.com
pcsbln.wordpress.com