PCS BLN in DWP

FIGHT ON PAY, JOBS & OFFICE CLOSURES!

TREASURY PAY REMIT NOT GOOD ENOUGH

The cost-of-living crisis continues to massively impact our lives. We face a winter of soaring energy bills, which could be 53% higher than 2021/22. We have tens of thousands of members on or pennies away from the minimum wage. We face a programme of office closures and job losses.

Government's Civil Service pay remit is a paltry 3.5% - barely above the current rate of inflation. This does nothing to address low pay in DWP and across the civil service. We cannot afford to sit back and not challenge the government's attempts to keep our pay low. The Coalition for Change majority on the NEC has taken firm action and given the government a clear message by rejecting the pay remit. PCS must keep pressure on the new government that low pay for own workforce must be addressed.

PALTRY PAY REMIT = POOR DWP PAY OFFER

Management is negotiating within the confines of the Treasury pay remit, so whatever pay offer emerges from the DWP pay talks will fall massively short of our pay demands. 3.5% cannot achieve £18ph starting pay in the civil service, a 10% pay rise or any pay restoration to make up for the years pay has been held down. This is especially important for all our members in DWP with thousands of members on the minimum wage.

GOVERNMENT REMIT WILL WORSEN PAY AND CONDITIONS IN DWP

- ONLY **2%** of the pay remit is funded the rest needs to be found by departments from their existing budgets, which threatens jobs and offices
- The government expects starting pay in the civil service to be the minimum wage, which translates into our AA members being stuck on the minimum wage with no consolidated increase above this
- The flexibility in the Treasury pay remit to create 5% pay differentials between the lowest 3 grades is totally inadequate when members get 10% increase in pay on promotion and would overshoot the next spot rate.
- Not only is the minimum wage far too low a starting salary for civil servants, the government wants to further attack this by cutting the current calculation of working hours from 42 with paid lunch break to 37 hours with an unpaid lunch. This would dramatically cut pay of our lowest paid members by around £3,300 per year.
- The pay compression flexibility would only apply to national AA/AO differential in DWP as this is the only one below 5%.

- There is already a 5% differential between the AA and AO rates for Inner and Outer London so the remit's pay compression flexibility could contribute to eroding the London weighting for the AO members.
- The government sees no future for the AA grade. This is a threat to our AA members' jobs. They plan to make the AO grade the entry level grade, which the government wishes to see on the minimum wage. The driving down of wages and grades will impact on us all.

FIGHT FOR THE COST-OF-LIVING CAMPAIGN IN DWP

We carried clear policy at last year's group conference on fighting on pay which the DWP left unity led Group executive refused to implement. When the GEC eventually balloted after a long delay they did not ballot on our group demands - the ballot was restricted to the paltry pay remit last year and did not inspire support.

We do not need the same old annual pantomime from the DWP Left Unity group leadership of waiting for talks to conclude on a paltry pay remit that can go nowhere near addressing our pay issues in DWP, making a fanfare about rejecting the offer and then no real campaign to turn the rejection into action.

THIS YEAR IS DIFFERENT

Now we have elected a new NEC, the BLN supported Left Coalition majority, who are serious about running a national Cost of Living Campaign on pay, jobs, offices and conditions. We must keep full pressure on the Left Unity DWP Group Executive Committee to fully back this campaign. We must call out any attempts to opt out of this crucial battle as left unity has indicated they are not up for the fight and are doing all they can to sabotage a national cost of living campaign. This is unacceptable as it is totally in line with policies carried at our DWP Group Conference.

We demand that the DWP Group executive committee must make clear with DWP senior management that our pay demands are: -

- 10% pay increase with £18ph minimum wage
- Sliding scale wage structure to keep pay above the minimum wage
- Pay restoration
- Genuine pay progression to the rate for the job
- No attempts to sacrifice jobs for pay

Our demands will not be met within the government's paltry pay limit. We cannot afford to have our DWP so called leaders opt us out of this fight on the cost of living. We will be much stronger in sorting out the low pay and pay issues in DWP by mobilising for the fight alongside all our fellow members across the civil service to force the government to respond to our demands on low pay and underfunding of government departments.

If you want to know more about the NEC Cost of Living campaign, get your branch to invite an NEC speaker to talk to your reps and do members meetings.

Check out the latest articles from the Broad Left Network on our website