

Strike Ballot FAQs

PCS issued pay demands to employers on 19 February for 2024/25 with a deadline of 5 March. Unfortunately, no response was received and now the NEC has decided to proceed with a ballot for strike action.

The ballot covers nearly 150,000 PCS members at 171 employers covering most of the civil service and related areas. [Look at the full list of employers included in the ballot.](#)

We have provided answers to the most commonly asked questions below, however if there is anything else you would like to see on this list please email editor@pcs.org.uk

[We have a range of materials to promote the ballot for branches to order.](#)

What are PCS's demands for 2024/24?

PCS has made a series of demands to 171 employers covering more than 150,000 PCS members. These demands include:

- a cost-of-living rise, with an inflation-proofed increase plus pay restoration,
- pay equality across departments,
- a living wage of £15 per hour,
- London weighting provision of a minimum £5,000 per year,
- 35 days annual leave minimum,
- a significant shortening of the working week with no loss of pay.

What has been the employers' response?

We submitted our pay claims on 19 February and gave the employers until 5 March to respond. The employers did not respond so the PCS national executive committee has proceeded to a statutory ballot for strike action to support our claim.

Why can't I vote online in this ballot?

The law places restrictions on trade unions when trying to organise strike action. This includes requiring that ballots for strike action are postal ballots.

You will receive a ballot to your registered ballot address, which you should complete promptly and return in the pre-paid envelope.

[Why is PCS proceeding to strike action?](#)

Following the employers' refusal to meet our demands, PCS conducted a comprehensive consultation with members and branches. That consultation showed strong support for proceeding to strike action.

96% of respondents said they supported the pay demands, 82% were prepared to strike to achieve them and 66% supported a strike levy to fund paid targeted action.

[Why should I vote yes for strike action?](#)

Last year, the action taken by you and thousands of PCS members forced the government to more than double its initial pay offer and pay a cost of living payment of £1,500.

A strong return in the ballot will increase pressure on the government to make a suitable offer by indicating that PCS members are prepared to engage in similar action this year.

[What is pay restoration?](#)

Restoration is an important part of what we're asking for. Restoration means that, in addition to an inflation-proof pay rise, we want some redress for everything that has come before. Our members continue to face declining living standards as a result of pay restraint.

PCS has commissioned academic research which concludes that UK civil service wages have dramatically eroded in real terms due to persistent below-inflation pay rises.

The erosion of pay varies by grade. Many PCS members are now paid below the National Living Wage and have to receive a pay rise in April to bring them up to that level.

Restoration will also likely need to take place over a longer period of time than just one year.

[Why don't we all have the same contracts, pay and terms and conditions across the civil service?](#)

National pay bargaining – one rate of pay for the civil service at each grade – has been a longstanding aim of PCS. When the UK government moved to delegated pay bargaining, it wasn't an accident: it was the intention to break up the ability for us to have one rate of pay. We are constantly exploring the possibility of legal challenges as there are people in different departments doing broadly similar work who are receiving very different rates of pay. But we can't rely entirely on the courts. That is why we regularly raise and press for pay coherence in our discussions with the Cabinet Office.

To put it simply, pay coherence is the idea that we have less delegation and more merging together of different pay rates and grades - and, where one rate does not exist, that there is an ability to see progression in a reasonable length of time, no matter what grade you are at. The coherence argument is all about national pay and getting rid of the bureaucracy where more than 200 sets of negotiations take place every single year.

[What should I do when I have voted?](#)

When you have posted your completed ballot paper, tell us that you have voted by logging in to your [PCS Digital](#) account and hitting the 'update ballot status' button, or let your rep at work know that you have voted.

[How can I get a replacement ballot paper?](#)

If you haven't received your ballot paper, you can [request a replacement via](#) PCS Digital before **noon on Sunday 28 April**.

If you have received your ballot paper but have lost it, or it has been damaged, you can also [request a replacement via](#) PCS Digital.

Please allow 12 working days for your new ballot paper to arrive.

If you request a replacement but then find the original, it doesn't matter which you use and your vote will only count once.