

DEFEND THE CIVIL SERVICE COMPENSATION SCHEME

The reaction of PCS members to the Government's proposals for changes to the civil service compensation scheme (CSCS) has been overwhelming. Tens of thousands of you attended union meetings expressing your complete opposition to the proposed cuts and thousands of you have protested to the Cabinet Office.

The changes would leave many PCS members significantly worse off in the event of voluntary or compulsory redundancy.

In the media the changes have been presented as a reform to end fat cat pay-offs for senior managers. In reality, the proposals threaten to strip the majority of low paid civil servants of their current entitlements to compensation in the event of redundancy, whether compulsory or voluntary.

The changes are clearly designed to help make job cuts on the cheap at a time when we know the political parties are all talking about massive public spending cuts after the next general election.

The proposals have been unanimously rejected by the union's national executive committee. The union has met Government Ministers in order to make clear our objections and seek new proposals.

We are now waiting to talk to officials in order to find an acceptable outcome. A huge union-wide series of meetings involving over 33,000 members has confirmed that members clearly support the union's campaign and would be prepared to consider industrial action as a last resort if negotiations and legal action do not produce the result we need.

Furious response to Cabinet Office

After it published its proposals to change the CSCS, the Cabinet Office carried out a formal consultation which ended on October 5th. 18,000 comments were received, the overwhelming majority of which clearly opposed the proposed cuts to the scheme. This was a marvellous response which communicated effectively the depth of feeling on the issue to the employer. Shortly afterwards, we met government Ministers and they agreed to tell their officials to return to talks with the unions.

Biggest ever membership consultation

Over 33,000 of you came to 1,000 workplace meetings organised by the union, making this the largest such exercise the union has carried out. The overwhelming majority made it very clear that you supported the union's objectives to protect members' existing entitlements. A very large majority said that industrial action should be considered if legal action and negotiations do not produce the result we need. PCS reps report that they have not seen such strength of feeling for many years.

What the government's proposals would mean for you

The CSCS is the redundancy and early retirement payment scheme for the civil service and non departmental public bodies. If your employer is in the Principal Civil Service Pension Scheme (PCSPS), you are covered by the CSCS.

The government plans to change the present CSCS terms and replace them with new terms which will see the vast majority of members receiving less compensation for their years of service if they are made redundant.

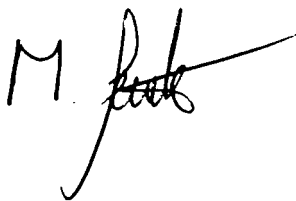
- For someone aged 41 who earns £24,000 and has 20 years service, their current entitlement if made compulsorily redundant would be £72,000. Under the changes it would be £48,000, a loss of one third.
- For someone aged 51 who earns £24,000 and has 20 years service their current entitlement service if made compulsorily redundant is for an enhanced lump sum of £24,000, an additional lump sum of £12,000 and an immediate payment of enhanced pension of £8,000 a year. Under the changes their new entitlement would be just £48,000 and an unenhanced pension and lump sum paid only when they reached age 60.

Legal action

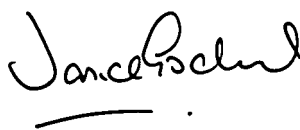
We have begun the process of challenging the Cabinet Office proposals in the courts by issuing preliminary letters to the employer in conjunction with the other civil service unions. Other preparatory work has been carried out should it become necessary to go to court.

Campaigning

A special meeting of the national executive committee was held on November 13. It was agreed that we should continue to make representations to Ministers and hold discussions with the employer with the aim of finding an acceptable agreement. At the same time, we are calling on members to take part in a major campaign with local MPs to oppose the government's proposals which need to be approved by Parliament. We will work hard to ensure that talks reach an acceptable outcome. But we must also prepare for legal and industrial action should it become necessary.



Mark Serwotka
General secretary



Janice Godrich
President

What you can do

- Write to your MP and attend his or her surgery making clear you oppose the government's proposals, and asking MPs to oppose them in Parliament
- Recruit your colleagues to the union.
- If you are not a PCS member join and get active! The more members we have, the more successful we will be in defending our terms and conditions. **If the CSCS proposals are implemented we will be giving the government and future governments the green light to make job cuts.**

For further information about our campaign and why you should get involved please visit www.pcs.org.uk/cscs