

25 April 2023

PCS DWP survey shows desperate in-work poverty

One in five workers at the Department for Work and Pensions claim in-work benefits, a shock PCS poll has uncovered.

The survey of 35,568 members revealed **20%** of respondents were in receipt of benefits, including Universal Credit, to supplement their wages.

The figure is more than double the number of members who answered “Yes” to the same question in [September](#).

The survey also showed **7%** of respondents have foodbanks or a foodshare system at work, **12%** have a second or third job to boost their income and **11%** have used foodbanks in the 12 months (up from 8% last year).

PCS General Secretary Mark Serwotka said: “If ministers had a conscience, they would be ashamed to be paying their own workforce so little they have to claim the benefits they themselves administer.

“Ministers should be paying their staff a decent wage that keeps up with the rate of inflation, not leaving them to rely on foodbanks so they can eat.

“That so many foodbanks have been set up in government offices is a stain on ministers, who must take note of this survey and take action to address this unacceptable in-work poverty.

“If they fail to do that, they’ll be failing their own workforce, and it will be no surprise that our members vote ‘Yes’ in the re-ballot and strike action in the civil service escalates.”

Foodbanks and foodshares

The survey also revealed managers at one DWP office refused to allow staff to open a foodbank.

One DWP worker told PCS: “Staff in my workplace asked for a foodbank to help each other out, but the management team blocked it, saying it would make bad press if it got out.

“I think it makes even worse press that we were denied the chance to help our own colleagues.”

Another said: “We had to use foodbanks for the first time in my life this year because the cost-of-living crisis, especially the exorbitant rent crisis.”

A third said, simply: “I sleep hungry.”

For more information [read our 4-page survey summary](#).

Vote in the ballot

It is crucial we achieve a strong **yes vote** in [our industrial action reballot](#) to continue our programme of industrial action and show the government that you and your colleagues are determined not to back down.

The new postal ballot opened on **20 March and closes on 9 May**.

We need a strong **yes** vote in the ballot to continue our programme of industrial action and to show the government that PCS members are determined not to back down. [Read about the impact our targeted strike action](#) is having across the UK.