

## **Pay concessions FAQs**

We have received questions from members on the new pay offer from the government. Answers to the most commonly asked questions are below. This page will be updated as we receive more information and continue our negotiations with the Cabinet Office.

### **Why has the government made the concessions?**

This has been achieved by you and your colleagues implementing our industrial action strategy. We have had hundreds of days of sustained, targeted strike action, and three days of all member unpaid action. Members have contributed to the levy and raised money. The disruption to the employer's operation caused by the targeted strike action has shifted their position in negotiations. Until this point, the government's position has been that 2022/23 pay is a closed matter, but you have forced them to reopen it, and to make other concessions including halting plans to cut the civil service compensation scheme.

### **What about the national claim for a 10% pay rise?**

The concessions do not meet our full claim, but they do put serious money in members' pockets and bring parity of treatment with other public sector workers, as well as halting cuts to the CSCS. On top of a 2 - 3% rise for 2022/23 that has already been paid in the vast majority of cases, £1500 is worth 6.6% for members on the national minimum wage of £22,757 and 6% for members earning £25,000. In addition, members will receive between 4.5 - 5% for 2023/24.

This is a significant achievement. It is the first time in our union's history that members taking national action in the UK civil service and related areas have forced a government to make concessions on pay at national level resulting in considerable extra money for members.

### **Why is the £1500 non-consolidated?**

We tried to persuade the employer to consolidate the £1500 but they said that the government was not prepared to do this, primarily because they wanted an approach which is consistent with other areas of the public sector.

### **Will the £1500 be paid pro rata for part-time staff or a flat rate for all?**

There is a strong case for the £1500 to be paid as a flat rate to all including part-timers as it is intended for cost of living pressures and is not linked to salaries. The Cabinet Office has said that pay is a delegated matter and that it is down to individual departments, agencies, non-departmental public bodies, and arm's-length bodies to determine whether or not it is paid pro rata. We are raising the issue centrally with the Cabinet Office and will provide further information when we have it. Our negotiators at delegated level will be pressing to maximise the available monies for all staff.

### **Is the £1500 subject to tax?**

The £1500 is subject to tax and National Insurance in the normal way.

### **Is the £1500 payable to new starters? Can people who have left employment get the £1500 if it was for the cost of living last year?**

The guidance issued by the Cabinet Office states: "For civil servants to be eligible for this payment, they need to have been in post both on 31 March 2023 and still in post on the date of payment." We will be raising these issues with the Cabinet Office and will post more information after that.

### **Why aren't Scottish and Welsh members getting the £1500?**

Pay is a devolved matter and members working in the Scottish and Welsh Government Sectors are not therefore covered by the offer. Members in Scotland were recently balloted on a pay offer of their own and overwhelmingly accepted it. The terms of that offer were at least as good as the terms on offer from the Westminster Government. For members in Wales, we are currently in negotiations with the Welsh Government and we are pressing them to at least match the offer of the Westminster Government.

### **Will people claiming UC have their UC reduced?**

Universal Credit is a benefits matter and entitlement to it is based on individual circumstances. It is not possible to negotiate a collective agreement which tailors to everybody's individual needs. The job of the union is to try to improve members' pay regardless of individual circumstances. That said, we will be pressing the employer at delegated level to allow members to opt for the payment on a monthly basis rather than in the form of a lump sum. This may alleviate some of the difficulties for members on Universal Credit.

**I am transferring/have transferred between civil service departments.  
Will I still get the £1500?**

Departments have agreed that staff who were employed by a civil service department on 31 March 2023 will receive the payment if they transfer to another government department by the qualifying date of the new department, in line with the criteria set out by the department they transfer to.

The "receiving" department will pay the transferring member of staff, when it's been confirmed that they have not already been paid by the "sending" department.

**Who is covered by the extra 0.5% for the "lowest paid"?**

The Cabinet Office guidance states: "This year, departments have flexibility to make awards up to an additional 0.5% to be targeted at lower pay bands." Our expectation is therefore that any additional 0.5% awards will be targeted at the lowest pay bands upwards. The extent of the coverage by pay band will depend on affordability.

**What about the civil service compensation scheme?**

The government has been forced to commit to not making any changes to the civil service redundancy pay before 2025. They have therefore been forced to back off from their proposed 33% cuts to the scheme and the timescale takes the matter beyond the next general election, when any new administration will need to consider their approach afresh.

**What about pensions?**

There is ongoing litigation in relation to pensions. The High Court ruled that the government's approach was lawful but PCS, alongside other trade unions, is appealing the decision. We have been granted permission by the Court of Appeal to have our case heard. We will continue to press in negotiations for pensions justice while also seeking redress through the courts. Our legal advice is that we have strong case.

**What would happen if members reject the deal?**

If we were to continue the dispute in order to win the full claim, there would need to be a substantial escalation in industrial action. To date, we have won important concessions and put money in members' pockets, and we have won parity of treatment with other public sector workers. To go further and breach the

government public pay policy solely for civil servants would require a major escalation of strike action in what would necessarily be a long campaign. At the same time, no other civil service unions would be in dispute. There are now far fewer public sector unions in dispute over pay than previously. We would also need to win re-ballots in the two largest groups in the union.

The decision to make is whether the potential benefits from continuing the dispute in these circumstances are outweighed by the success of the campaign so far, not only in the short term with money in members' pockets, but in strengthening the union as an effective fighting force to win again next year and in future years. We have more members, and more will join as a result of the success of the campaign. We have more reps and have seen new younger people coming forward to be the future layer of activists. Most of all perhaps, members' confidence will be increased; the lesson to learn is that taking action with the right strategy can force concessions from the government and that will stand us in good stead as we move forward next year and in future years.

### **Will there be a ballot on the deal?**

A meeting will take place with the Cabinet Office in early July in order to take stock of progress and ensure that all bargaining areas have committed to paying the £1,500 without conditions. Then the NEC will meet and consider whether we have made enough progress to settle the dispute, or whether we can take significantly more industrial action to try to get more out of the government. The NEC will make a decision on the ballot at that point.