

15 March 2024

Pay research shows a dramatic drop in Civil Service wages

A report commissioned by PCS demonstrates decades of decline, with civil service wages lower now than they were in 1975 when Harold Wilson was prime minister.

PCS commissioned Dr Mark Williams of Queen Mary University, London, to produce a report on trends in civil service pay from the 1970s to 2023.

The damning evidence in the report will be an important tool ahead of our [statutory ballot](#), which opens on Monday (18) and members are encouraged to share and discuss it with their colleagues.

[Download and read a detailed summary of the report.](#)

[PCS members can download and read the **full report** by logging in to PCS Digital.](#)

Some of the key findings are that the living standards of civil servants have dropped significantly since 1979. **Civil service wages were 5% above average in the 1970s and 1980s but are now 10% below average.**

The problem of low pay has been particularly acute since the onset of the austerity agenda, with our research showing that **pay has fallen an average of 1.5% per year since 2011.**

The research shows how PCS members have been in a lose-lose situation on pay. The real terms wage gains across the whole labour market were higher than those experienced in the civil service and **after the financial crash in 2008, the wage drop was more severe in the civil service than the rest of the labour market.**

Pay is a key element of our national campaign, and we are calling for a cost of living rise plus restoration. In order to maximise pressure on the government, we need every member to vote in our [statutory ballot](#) so we can beat the turnout thresholds.

PCS General Secretary Fran Heathcote said: "This research sets out in stark detail just how badly PCS members have been let down on pay. Successive governments should hang their heads in shame at the way they've treated their own workforce over the last 50 years.

"Our members are rightly angry about the state of pay in the civil service and they've shown that they aren't afraid to take strike action. The last time they did, we won unprecedented concessions from the government. We won't shy away from doing it again and this research will further strengthen our members' resolve.

"With the ballot opening imminent, the next few weeks will be absolutely pivotal. A strong result will be a vital first step towards putting an end to pay injustice in the civil service."