

18 November 2024

Ballot launched over HMRC BPV rep dismissals

The statutory ballot for strike action of more than 200 members in employer services within PT Ops at HMRC Benton Park View, Newcastle was launched today in defence of 3 reps sacked at the branch.

To coincide with the launch of the ballot, there is also a meeting this evening of all members in scope for the ballot.

Members will be addressed by PCS General Secretary Fran Heathcote, PCS National President Martin Cavanagh, PCS Vice President and HMRC Group President Hector Wesley and Rachel Farmer, one of the sacked workers. Mary Glindon MP who has supported the reps from the start of the campaign and who launched early day motion 52 in parliament will also speak to members at the meeting.

Questions about fairness of the disciplinary process

From early in the investigations, with particular reference to two of the cases, PCS had concerns about their handling by HMRC. The group secretary wrote to HMRC senior management multiple times highlighting concerns; including that in one case, two witnesses doctored the message they had received, prior to submitting their evidence to the official investigation. The department declined to intervene in the matter.

We believe HMRC has deliberately taken a heavy-handed approach because they are PCS reps. One decision-maker admitted they could have imposed a lesser penalty but chose not to.

PCS calls for peaceful resolution rejected by HMRC

PCS has made it clear we were content to proceed with early conciliation in all 3 cases, however the department has refused. We know employment tribunals cannot always be relied upon to give workers justice however, which is why

we are also now balloting AAs and AOs in PT Ops, employer services at Benton Park View for strike action to send a strong message to the employer and demand they reinstate our reps.

Previous successful action

We believe the successful 2023 strike action in employer services at Benton Park View - demanding fair pay, pensions and jobs - is the real reason why these PCS representatives have been sacked. Local management has clearly decided to attack the branch, to try to make it harder for the union to organise action in the future.

Consequently, PCS is now balloting members in AA and AO grades at Benton Park View employer services and intends to move to action if HMRC does not re-employ the reps they have unfairly dismissed.