

28 November 2024

Parliamentary and Health Service Ombudsman members ballot for strike action

A ballot is under way for PCS members working at the PHSO who are in dispute over pay, hybrid working and proposals being piloted that could see extra responsibilities delegated to more junior staff without any extra pay.

More than 200 members working at the PHSO in Manchester and London are being balloted from **27 November to 22 January**.

The issue over pay follows PHSO's refusal to match the 5% pay increase set out in the Civil Service Pay Remit. While senior management at PHSO argue that existing contractual pay increments mean a minority of staff will receive more, a 3.4% across the board increase was imposed earlier this year.

Hybrid working

The other matters in dispute relate to PHSO's hybrid working model, which sees staff mandated to attend offices for 40% of the time, despite a recent report PHSO itself commissioned showing that the move to 60% flexible working since the lockdown periods had not affected productivity, collaboration or had any negative impact to the service provided.

The proposals around extra delegated responsibility, which are currently being piloted, would see case workers being required to sign off decisions that are currently only taken by staff two grades higher. While senior management claim no decision has been yet been made on the impact to salaries, its rationale for not being able to match the 5% in the Civil Service Pay remit is that to do so would be unaffordable.

PCS Industrial Officer, Jayne Craven said: "Pay at PHSO has fallen in real terms for more than a decade-and-a-half, yet senior management at PHSO refuse to address this. Instead, staff continue to be asked to shoulder the financial burden

of providing the important job of dealing with and resolving complaints about government services and the NHS.

“PCS has consistently maintained that it is open to discussion and resolving the matters in dispute, but to date no proposals have been offered by senior management to resolve the dispute.

“The employer still has time to resolve the dispute by listening to our members and addressing the issues in dispute.”

Can I vote if I join now?

The deadline for new joiners and additional members to receive a ballot paper is **noon on 1 January**, new/additional members will automatically be included and should not request a ballot paper or have one requested on their behalf.

Additional members include current members that have transferred into the relevant employer or members that had an invalid address and therefore were not included in the original data.

Not yet a PCS member? [Join online today](#).