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How my PCS rep helped me secure my promotion

Melanie was devastated at repeatedly having to walk away from promotions within DWP because managers couldn't offer her the work pattern she needed for health reasons. As part of our feature focusing on membership, she tells us how her PCS rep helped her.

"I applied for a job and was ecstatic that I was told that I had got a promotion and would be able to continue my alternative working pattern, which had been agreed by occupational health in another department. I completed a short period of full-time training but when I was due to start my new job on my agreed working pattern, I was told it would not be possible because it hadn't been agreed by the vacancy holder, despite HR approving it.

I contacted my rep, Steven, who was an excellent support from start to finish. I emailed him telling him I felt I needed some support. I then met with him, at a time that was convenient for me. I explained what had happened and provided him with a copy of the agreement to my working pattern and the emails between myself and senior management.

I told him this was causing me real stress and anxiety, which is something I needed to avoid as I already suffered with ongoing mental health issues. It had taken a lot of courage for me to leave a very supportive department I had been in for 18 years, to go to a department where I knew no one. I felt alone and was physically sobbing. He told me I was not alone and he, as well as any other rep within PCS, were there for me any time I needed to talk. Knowing I had some support, including in a meeting with our senior leader, made a massive difference to me.

Massive relief

Out of the blue my manager called me in with Steven and told me she had been informed to put my working pattern through to HR for 12 months as it had been accepted. Steven went one step further and advised me and my line manager to

contact HR complex team about my case to have my working pattern authorised for a longer period of time, so that I did not have to go through this every year. We did and it was authorised for **5 years**.

What a massive relief this was. I would never have got to this stage without Steven, in fact I was on a downward spiral with my mental health over this and I dread to think where this would have ended if he did not support me.

Suffering with mental health issues can make you suffer low self-esteem, and at this time I felt like a was a huge burden on the department. I felt like my name was being recognised by senior leaders for all the wrong reasons. Steven helped me overcome that, by pointing out I had worked within the civil service for 18 years without any issues, so this was clearly not the case. That one small sentence from him, made a massive difference to how I viewed myself and the situation.

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Having that piece of mind of PCS membership, knowing if I ever need any support or guidance going forward, is worth every single penny. If I did not have that support, I may not be in a position where I was still working to be able to pay those pennies, for that piece of mind.”

Melanie’s name has been changed.

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