



[Mark Serwotka](#)

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The government should do something to tackle in-work poverty

Turning away as a government policy of dealing with striking union members who are suffering through the cost-of-living crisis is unsustainable, says PCS General Secretary Mark Serwotka.

As thousands of PCS members strike over pay, pensions and jobs, the government will have to shift its position. If they can shift their position on wind turbines or building houses because some Tory backbenchers are not happy, they really should shift their position on something which affects everyone, which is in-work poverty in this country.

We are ready and willing to enter meaningful talks with the government, but we want our strikes to be effective. Because the more pressure we put on the government the more chance there is that they will have to see reason and do something about the cost-of-living crisis that we are trying to get out of.

They keep saying we can't afford it; they know that all they need to do at this point is to make money available to alleviate this crisis to get into meaningful talks. Because they are refusing to engage with us, I think that the action now is going to escalate and there will be more people across the union movement voting to strike in the new year. And I think it is inevitable that as more and more unions take that decision that we will work together far more closely to ensure that we are cooperating and coordinating our action.

Currently, there are hundreds of thousands of teachers voting for action, there are fire-fighters and many other unions balloting, as well as over 20 unions who have already done that. It can't be that every jobcentre worker, paramedic, nurse

or Border Force officer is wrong. It is the government that is wrong to think that it can ignore poverty and they need to do something about it.

The government needs to change course because what it is doing is disastrous for millions of people. The government lacks direction and if its answer is a knee-jerk make it harder to go on strike, I think they are making another catastrophic mistake.

The answer must be to ask why dedicated public sector workers, from postal workers to paramedics to jobcentre workers, are voting to strike in unprecedented numbers. It is because they and their families are desperate. The government knows it but chooses at the moment to turn the other way.

I think as this action builds, turning the other way will become unsustainable for the government. They are going to have to do something about it. Why not do that now? And try to avert the strikes.