

Informed



Strategic review

The NEC discussed the responses to the recent consultation on the union's Strategic Review of our structures and ways of working.

The Strategic Review was launched in the wake of the attack on the union carried out by the Tories who have tried, but failed, to undermine PCS's finances. We have been one of the foremost critics of the Tories' cuts and privatisation policies and they wanted to silence us. They removed the check off method of paying union subs and slashed PCS reps' time off to represent members and carry out trade union duties.

Following a hugely successful sign up to DD campaign, the union's finances are now stabilised. The national executive committee agreed to carry out a root and branch review of our structures and ways of working in order to adapt to changing circumstances. We have carried out a thorough examination of our union's work in organising, union democracy, campaigning, equality, bargaining, finance, and the devolved areas.

Branch briefings were issued, a series of regional briefing sessions were organised in the autumn, and a senior lay reps meeting was held. A detailed document was sent out across the union and a major consultation has now taken place. Each Group has been consulted and every Region, Devolved Nation, Equality Forum, and Branch invited to submit their views.

The NEC agreed to send a report to branches which identifies immediate actions and proposed actions over the medium term based on the hundreds of responses received to the consultation and on the work carried out by the NEC.

National campaign

Alongside the consultation exercise on the wider Strategic Review, the NEC has also carried out a consultation on what our national bargaining demands to the government should be. The NEC decided that further discussion with the union's Groups was required alongside the other issues being examined in the Strategic Review.

Our national campaign in support of our demands on jobs, pay, pensions and other employment issues has seen PCS members taking industrial action in recent years as we try to defend ourselves from the government's cuts.

At Group level we have scored some notable successes including the defeat of privatisation proposals in the Land Registry, defeat of privatisation proposals involving fine enforcement in the MoJ, progress on jobs in HM Passport Office, and progress on pay across key areas of the Home Office.

At branch or local level we have also seen successes, for example at HM Revenue & Customs in Dundee, the National Gallery, DVLA contact centres and DWP Universal Credit.

The NEC agreed that we should continue to call for joint action with other unions over public sector wide issues such as pay. The NEC also agreed to include our approach to the national campaign and industrial action in the discussion to take place with Groups taking account of the more hostile environment we are now in.

Political campaigning

Following last year's annual delegate conference decisions, and as part of the Strategic Review, we are assessing our political campaigning. We work hard to raise members' issues with the government and management. In addition, the NEC has agreed

that, following Jeremy Corbyn's election as Labour Party leader, we must act to build links with Labour's new shadow cabinet and raise PCS members' issues with the shadow secretary of state for each civil service department and related body. We are now setting up meetings to put our case.

The election of Jeremy Corbyn has changed the political debate across the UK. Mr Corbyn stands for an alternative to the cuts and privatisation consensus that has dominated British politics for so long and has indicated that he will support the rights of trade union members. The NEC will therefore be looking at all aspects of our political campaigning in the coming period including our relationship with the Labour Party. The Strategic Review consultation has shown that there is a range of opinion on this subject, often strongly held, and we will need to consult widely.

Performance management

Many members will have felt the unjust effects of the performance management procedures now being implemented across the civil service. In the Home Office our members have launched a petition to express their opposition to the forced ranking element of the performance management system in use there.

The NEC agreed that, alongside legal action where possible and pressing our opposition to performance management with management in the departments and centrally, the union's National Disputes Committee should consider organising a week of action across the board including the launch of a national petition.

Commercial sector

The NEC discussed plans for increasing organising activity in the commercial sector. The new flexible staffing structure adopted by the union has helped to make progress on some of the issues faced by our commercial sector members.

The NEC noted that there was a new threat of privatisation in the Victoria and Albert Museum in London and that campaigning activity would start.