



Public and
Commercial
Services Union

Members' Briefing REVENUE & CUSTOMS GROUP

To: **All Members**

cc: **Branch Secretaries, Group Executive Committee, Equality Chairs, VOAC** (for info)

Can this Briefing be circulated via HMRC IT systems: **NO**

Website: **YES**

Action to be taken: **For the attention of all members**

Date: **23 June 2022**

Ref: **R&C/MB/034/22**

NATIONAL CAMPAIGN FOR PAY, JOBS AND PENSIONS

Why the RMT's fight is our fight

- ***RMT are striking for fair pay, jobs and conditions***
- ***Why our campaigns have so much in common***

The National Union of Rail, Maritime and Transport Workers (RMT) has embarked on a series of strikes to fight for fair pay, and to defend jobs and conditions. This briefing gives a few reasons why PCS members in HMRC and across our union, shouldn't just support the RMT's campaign, but prepare to join the fight.

Fair pay is not an unreasonable demand

Like PCS members, RMT members have endured years of real-term pay cuts. More than a decade of Tory rule has resulted in relentless Public Sector pay freezes and pay restraint. Yes, in HMRC our Pay and Contract Reform deal delivered significant increases in pay for the years between 2020 and 2022, but that hasn't made up for the massive devaluation of our pay since 2010; and the highest rate of inflation for more than 40 years has now eaten-up the gains made in our pay deal.

On the railways the government is preventing the employers from reaching a settlement, by blocking real negotiations from taking place. Grant Schapps, the Secretary of State for Transport, with typical government mendacity, says it's nothing to do with the Tory government and it's for the railway employers to settle the dispute. Imagine then, a world where a train company contract with the government has an entire section which makes it clear that **"the Operator's handling of...Industrial Action will be subject always to the Secretary of State's direction"**. (If you're particularly excited by such things, feel free to have a look at [Chapter 2.2, Section 5 of the government's contract with South Western Trains](#). I know. I should get out more.) You might also want to imagine in that same world, that [same Secretary of State already having form for sticking his oar into employer/union negotiations](#).

It's exactly the same in the Civil Service. Every April (give or take) [the government publishes its "Pay Remit Guidance" for departments](#). Not only is it instruction and not "guidance", it doesn't just put a limit on by how much departments like HMRC can increase their paybill, but it puts strict rules on the way departments calculate any paybill increase, to make it virtually impossible for them to maximise the money they have to spend on pay.

So members of both RMT and PCS are public service workers making a reasonable demand for fair pay, against the same hostile government, and the time has come to act.

Job security is not an unreasonable demand

Rail companies have made £500million profit last year, and yet they have the temerity to claim that more than 2,500 redundancies are necessary to keep the railways going, with many of those jobs being customer-facing and safety-related. Despite fatuous claims from the government and their stooges that redundancies will be voluntary, they've refused to give the RMT an assurance of "no compulsory redundancies".

The railways are vital to the economy. It's claimed that 3 days of strike action by RMT members will [cost the economy around £91million](#). Of course, by that measure the RMT will need to take more than three and a half months of strike action just to match the [£10billion of taxpayer's money that the government handed to their mates and cronies on unusable Personal Protective Equipment \(PPE\)](#), kit that's currently being [thrown on the bonfire by the government at a rate of 500 lorryloads every month](#). But that notwithstanding, if the rail workers deliver £91million worth to the economy every 3 days, surely they're worth keeping in employment (and at a decent wage).

Like the rail workers, PCS members deliver services far beyond the rates of pay they receive. For example, not so long ago, a [Parliamentary Question revealed that around £1.25million of Tax Yield was brought into the Exchequer for every member of staff employed in HMRC's Customer Compliance Group](#).

Like the RMT, PCS members are facing unnecessary job-losses; except in our case it's even worse. The Tories have announced 91,000 job cuts across the civil service, with [the threat of between just under 14,000 and over 27,000 jobs going in HMRC alone](#). The government knows there's no need for job-cuts in HMRC. It's no time at all since Ministers approved thousands of additional jobs in Customer Compliance and Customer Services, just to deal with the department's "Business as Usual" work.

Any government that didn't have a wild and irrational hatred of its own employees, might think that the more people it employed, the more money it could bring into the public purse, and the more Public Services it could deliver as a consequence. Sadly, the ultra-rich who bankroll the Tory government don't need the otherwise essential Public Services our members provide, given they can afford to jump the increasingly epic queue for decent healthcare, send their children to fee-paying schools at thousands of pounds per term, and are more likely to be found on a Private Jet than the 09:47 from Liverpool Lime Street to London Euston. In fact, most of them probably look at hundreds of people travelling together on Public Transport and think "I'm not going there. It's just Socialism with a buffet car".

So members of both RMT and PCS are Public Service workers making a reasonable demand to retain necessary jobs, against the same hostile government, and the time has come to act.

Decent conditions of service is not an unreasonable demand

The RMT are facing attacks on their pensions, and on other key working conditions. The government's lapdogs are claiming that if they accept significant worsening of current terms and conditions, it "could" be used to fund future pay awards.

In PCS our members have already seen multiple government attacks on our pensions, and our redundancy scheme is once again under threat, at the same time as the government is attacking the better part of 100,000 civil service jobs.

Like the RMT, we have demonstrated in the past that we are prepared to negotiate changes to, and modernisation of, working practices. However, with the threat of job-cuts, along with the attacks on pensions and our redundancy scheme, it's obvious that this is a government more interested in lining the pockets of its paymasters than it is in looking after its own workers.

So members of both RMT and PCS are Public Service workers making a reasonable demand to defend key conditions of service, against the same hostile government, and the time has come to act.

Joining the fight

At this year's national conference, PCS branches voted overwhelmingly to build for a ballot of industrial action this Autumn. As well as the action already being taken by the RMT, the largest Teachers' union, [the National Education Union, have made it clear they will consult their members on possible industrial action](#). National Health Service workers could also be balloted for action. Frankly, such is the government's contempt for anyone working in Public Service, [they've even managed to drive the Barristers into taking industrial action](#) over the cuts in Legal Aid.

Stand-by for action!

It's vital that PCS members begin to prepare now, for the ballot in September. Despite the government's love of the word "modernisation", under the Tory anti-Union laws, we're not allowed to ballot members for industrial action electronically, we have to send out ballot papers through the post. It's vital then, that the address where we send your ballot papers is up-to-date. You can update your details securely online by registering for [PCS Digital](#) or by contacting your local PCS rep, and asking them to enter your details securely on the PCS Organising App.

Additionally, we can't distribute material related to industrial action using HMRC systems, so if you haven't already done so, let PCS have your personal/non-work email address and your mobile phone number. We'll only use it to keep you informed about PCS matters, like the campaign for jobs, pay and pensions.

Critically though, if you're not already a member, then you do need to...

...Join PCS

[You can join your recognised Trade Union on-line](#). It only takes a few minutes, and you can be part of the organisation fighting to defend your job, and for your pay and pensions.

The RMT are fighting for the livelihoods of their members, and PCS are making the essential preparations for the action we too will need to take to defend the livelihoods of ours.

The RMT's fight is our fight. Solidarity.

MARTIN KELSEY
Group Secretary

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