



Public and  
Commercial  
Services Union



What's New?

# Members' Briefing REVENUE & CUSTOMS GROUP

To: **All Members**

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

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

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## IT'S 'DÉJÀ VU' ALL OVER AGAIN

### Austerity is re-born, as government prepares yet more cuts

- **New Chancellor threatens "eye-watering" decisions to come**
  - **Cost-of-living crisis deepens**
  - **All departments expected to find (more) "efficiencies"**
- **Public Services to be made to pay for government incompetence**

In his opening salvo to the civil service, and public services in general, the new/current/latest\* (\*delete as applicable) Chancellor of the Exchequer, Jeremy Hunt, [threatened that "decisions of eye-watering difficulty"](#) lie ahead, and all that government departments will be asked to find "efficiencies" above and beyond those in the last Spending Review. We'd call it "Austerity 2", if it wasn't for the fact that "Austerity 1" never really went away.

#### Cost-of-living crisis deepens

Today's inflation figures, even using the lower 'Consumer Price Index', is back in double-figures at 10.1%; and there's still worse to come. The new Chancellor has already rowed-back on the (very briefly) promised 2-year guarantee of protection from the rapidly rising energy 'price-cap'. The latest announcement is that the government's guarantee is only good for six months, and according to energy market analysts, what this means is from next April, we could see bills rising to (as the new Chancellor might say) an "eye-watering" [£4,347 a year for a typical household](#), which is **a massive 74% more** than the energy price guarantee. As recently as March 2022, the cap was £1,277.

**What this means in simple terms is that in six months' time, if you're an AO outside London, even with only average energy use, about 20% of your annual salary will go on your energy bill alone.** That's before your rent or mortgage (which will be rocketing with the constantly increasing interest rates), and increasing transport costs (the government has said fares won't be increased by the 12.3% figure the normal mechanism allows, but what they are doing is they're ending the cap on regulated train fares next year, and they won't say how much those fares are going up by).

#### 'Here comes the new King...'

We might have a new Chancellor, but the latest message of "difficult decisions" and "efficiency savings" will end-up meaning what it always has: "pay restraint" and "job cuts". Basically, it's yet another case of "Here comes the new King; same as the old King".

Even the new/current/latest Prime Minister's promise of 'no cuts in Public Spending' has lasted about as long as a wine gum, as we now await the inevitable and repetitive call for PCS members to "deliver better value for money" and "do more with less", when the Chancellor delivers the rest of his 'Medium-term Fiscal Plan' on 31 October.

So, who will be expected to pay for the government's complete and utter economic incompetence, that's sent the Markets into a tailspin and pushed the cost to borrowing into the stratosphere? It will be already pressurised public servants, who will be told yet again there's a need to make savings, when the service has long-since been cut to the bone.

Still, look on the bright side: the new Chancellor is still committed to abolishing the cap on Bankers' bonuses.

### **Make sure you vote!**

Things are getting worse, not better. Across the public and private sectors, workers are coming together to say "enough is enough" and are either already well into their campaign of industrial action or are balloting for it.

The last practical date for posting your ballot paper is **last post on Thursday 3 November, if your return envelope is 2<sup>nd</sup> Class; and last post on Friday 4 November, if your return envelope is 1<sup>st</sup> Class.** (Replacement ballot papers were sent out with a 1<sup>st</sup> Class envelope), which is only 3-4 days from now. You need to post your vote **now**. When you've posted your vote, [you should tell us by clicking on this link](#).

The last practical date for posting your ballot paper is **Wednesday 2 November**, which is only a fortnight from now. Don't forget, we need to have **50%** of the membership participating in the ballot or the government will declare it invalid. (As opposed to, say, the **0.3%** of the UK electorate who were required to vote in the ballot to make Liz Truss the Prime Minister.)

### **Join PCS**

Clearly no-one but your union is going to stand up for your job, your pay and your pension. If you've read this briefing and you aren't yet a member of PCS, then [join today](#).

### **Get involved!**

Remember, HMRC applies restrictions on the content of union circulars distributed using the department's email system, so make sure that you stay in touch with your union. You can find your membership number in your latest email digest from PCS.

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. 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.

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