

SocialistAppeal

STRIKE TOGETHER!

AGAINST THE PUBLIC SECTOR PAY GAP

OVER 100,000 Members of the Public and Commercial Services Union (PCS) are on strike together with up to half a million other public sector workers including teachers and lecturers. We are all protesting at the government's policy to cap public sector pay below inflation which has resulted in cuts to living standards across the civil service.

We public sector workers are sending a clear signal to the government in the run up to the local elections that real pay cuts are unacceptable, and that we will continue to fight against them. This united action helps demonstrate that workers are willing to stand together against a government intent on paying for its tax cuts to the rich by attacking the living stan-

dards of low paid public sector workers. We are not responsible for the rising price of petrol, food and fuel and we don't see why we should have our living standards cut.

Teachers

Today's action by members of the National Union of Teachers will be the first national strike over pay for 21 years. It follows a lengthy campaign where the NUT has repeatedly drawn attention to the frustration of teachers about the effects of below-inflation pay increases on their living standards, recruitment, retention and morale; and the future structure of the education service. An immediate ballot is now needed in the NUT to follow on from the 75% vote in favour of today's action.

Civil servants

The civil servants in ten departments, including driving examiners, immigration staff, job-centre and benefits staff are all in dispute over below inflation pay offers. The pay offer only gives cost of living increases averaging 2% or less with 40% of staff in the DWP receiving 0% rise this year. Pay in the civil service is among the lowest in the public sector with starting salaries just above the minimum wage and with a quarter of staff earning less than £16,000. With inflation currently at 3.8%, staff are angry at the government imposed pay caps that are resulting in pay freezes and pay cuts in real terms. The aim of the government is to keep future pay restricted to the CPI (consumer Price index) rather than the RPI

(Retail Price Index) which more accurately reflects the real cost of living.

NHS workers

This year workers in the Health service have again been offered a below inflation pay offer of 2.75% following on their below inflation 1.9% pay last year. Today's strike will be the biggest demonstration against the government pay restraint in recent history and will see public sector workers standing shoulder to shoulder against an unjust pay restraint policy.

The union leadership in all public sector trade unions should be organising to link up this fight.

Now is the time for all public sector workers to strike together!

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Socialist Appeal Stands for:

✎ **For a socialist programme to solve the problems of working people.** Labour must break with big business and Tory economic policies.

✎ **A national minimum wage of at least two-thirds of the average wage.** £8.00 an hour as a step toward this goal, with no exemptions.

✎ **Full employment!** No redundancies. The right to a job or decent benefits. For a 32 hour week without loss of pay. No compulsory overtime. For voluntary retirement at 55 with a decent full pension for all.

✎ **No more sell offs.** Reverse the Tories privatisation scandal. Renationalise all the privatised industries and utilities under democratic workers control and management. No compensation for the fat cats, only those in genuine need.

✎ **The repeal of all Tory anti-union laws.** Full employment rights for all from day one. For the right to strike, the right to union representation and collective bargaining.

Election of all trade union officials with the right of recall. No official to receive more than the wage of a skilled worker.

✎ **Action to protect our environment.** Only public ownership of the land, and major industries, petro-chemical enterprises, food companies, energy and transport, can form the basis of a genuine socialist approach to the environment.

✎ **A fully funded and fully comprehensive education system under local democratic control.** Keep big business out of our schools and colleges. Free access for all to further and higher education. Scrap tuition fees. No to student loans. For a liv-

ing grant for all over 16 in education or training.

✎ **The outlawing of all forms of discrimination.** Equal pay for equal work. Invest in quality childcare facilities available to all. Scrap all racist immigration and asylum controls. Abolish the Criminal Justice Act.

✎ **The reversal of the Tories' cuts in the health service.** Abolish private health care. For a National Health Service, free to all at the point of need, based on the nationalisation of the big drug companies that squeeze their profits out of the health of working people.

✎ **Trade unions must reclaim the Labour Party!** Fight for Party democracy and socialist policies. For workers' MPs on workers' wages.

✎ **The abolition of the monarchy and the House of Lords.** Full economic powers for the Scottish Parliament and the Welsh Assembly, enabling them to introduce socialist measures in the interests of working people.

✎ **No to sectarianism.** For a Socialist United Ireland linked by a voluntary federation to a Socialist Britain.

✎ **Break with the anarchy of the capitalist free market.** Labour to immediately take over the "commanding heights of the economy." Nationalise the big monopolies, banks and financial institutions that dominate our lives. Compensation to be paid only on the basis of need. All nationalised enterprises to be run under workers control and management and integrated through a democratic socialist plan of production.

✎ **Socialist internationalism.** No to the bosses European

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