

# Revenue & customs briefing

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## 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**

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### **PAY 2020**

#### **Treasury thanks civil servants with real-terms pay cut**

- **Treasury ignore PCS representations by announcing below-inflation pay remit**
  - **HMRC announce submission of 'pay and contract reform' business case**
    - **PCS committed to opposing cuts in working conditions**

#### **Treasury 'Pay Remit' published**

You will have seen by now, yesterday's announcement from the Treasury and the Cabinet Office, that despite the tremendous work done by PCS members to support the country through the Covid-19 crisis, our reward is to be punished with yet another below-inflation pay rise. In effect, this means yet another real-terms pay cut for workers who have been praised in Parliament for being the linchpin holding the country's economy together.

In our national pay claim for 2020, we called on the government to address years of pay restraint by allowing for an immediate 10% across-the-board increase. Given that the Covid-19 pandemic has led to delays in national pay discussions, we made a number of [interim demands](#); which included a call for a suspension of the delegated pay process and an immediate above inflation pay increase for all staff, implemented across the civil service from the centre.

Many PCS members have been classified as key workers and have gone above and beyond call of duty. Despite this, ministers have decided to cap any pay rise between 1.5 and 2.5% – still less than the real inflation figure – RPI – which is currently running at 2.6%.

Our General Secretary, Mark Serwotka, has described the fact that the reward for civil servants helping to keep the country running during the crisis, is to be another pay cut, as *"an outrageous swindle"*; adding *"It shows the hypocrisy of ministers who on the one hand, applaud and praise public sector workers but do not think they are worthy of a genuine pay rise."*

The union's National Executive Committee (NEC) is meeting later this week to agree the next steps in the PCS national campaign for fair pay and pensions across the civil service.

#### **Pay and 'Contract Reform' in HMRC**

Hot on the heels of last Monday's announcement, a message from the Chief People Officer appeared on the HMRC intranet pages, confirming that their pay business case was due to be put before the Treasury and the Cabinet Office on 19 May.

So far, PCS have not been given any details of what is contained in this business case. We have however, consistently raised our concerns around what we see as a pay system that is broken, with many

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members at or hovering just above, the minimum level of pay allowed by law. We have made clear to HMRC that there needs to be proper investment in our pay system, well in excess the paltry amounts set out by the Treasury remit. We have also consistently reminded HMRC that the policies of our union's group and national conferences, make it clear that we will oppose any offer that is linked to detrimental cuts in our terms and conditions.

### **Working conditions threatened?**

This year, in the Valuation Office Agency, we have already seen the imposition of a multi-year pay offer, which includes significant cuts in a number of long-standing terms and conditions.

Last year, we consulted members across the wider HMRC, and more than 10,000 PCS members attended meetings to show your support for the demand for a fair pay deal – one that doesn't come at the cost of detrimental changes to working conditions.

PCS is committed to campaigning for national pay bargaining, with one set of pay and conditions negotiations covering the whole civil service. The fact that during the Covid-19 crisis, the government has orchestrated the work done by the various departments (including directing new HMRC workstreams, like the *Job Retention Scheme* and the *Self-employment Income Support Scheme*), shows that in reality the civil service has just one employer. Despite that, the Cabinet Office remains committed to countless separate sets of pay talks, leading to huge disparities between the various departments and agencies; and the obvious strategy of 'divide and conquer'.

Our position on pay remains unchanged. As well as a single set of national talks, we believe that after over a decade of freezes and sub-inflation rises, which in real terms have meant a pay cut of around 20%, PCS members should not be asked to pay for their own pay rise, by selling-off working conditions. HMRC need to find new money to fix the pay system, without detrimentally impacting upon the working lives of our members.

PCS will keep all members regularly informed of any developments on the union's campaign for fair pay; including reporting back, following the NEC meeting taking place later this week.

In the meantime the best way that any member of staff in HMRC can help PCS to achieve a decent pay rise, is to make sure you are a member of your union and to get involved. If you are not already a member then [you should join us today](#); if you are already a member, then please ensure that your contact details are up to date so that you continue to receive regular updates and information on the campaign.

### **Get involved!**

Remember: HMRC are restrictive about what circulars can be distributed using the department's email system, so make sure that you stay in touch with your union.

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.

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