

# Uniting to fight back against government attacks

PCS conference delegates gathered in Brighton amid the ‘perfect storm’ of cuts to jobs, living standards and conditions – and resolved to ballot members for action this autumn, so that together we can win justice for all of us

Trade unions are now the bulwark against this cruel government and a vehicle for social justice, said general secretary Mark Serwotka as conference opened.

Presenting the union’s annual report, Mark said that since delegates had last met, the union had achieved significant wins for its members.

We are now facing a ‘perfect storm’ of cuts to jobs, living standards and conditions, and must unite to fight back against government attacks, he said, adding: “Our movement, if we get it right, is the vehicle for change.”

PCS members’ reward for maintaining frontline services

throughout the Covid pandemic was a “huge cost-of-living crisis, cuts to redundancy rights and a third being told they are no longer required”, he told delegates.

Mark highlighted recent notable successes, including supporting Home Office staff in opposing a policy to push back refugee boats in the English Channel, halting plans to force DVSA driving examiners to conduct eight tests a day, and successful industrial action in the private sector including in BEIS, Royal Parks, Atos and Fujitsu.

The months ahead will require even more resolve in preparing for a ballot on potential strike action,



he said. Later that day, delegates backed a motion calling for a national public sector ballot starting in September (see below).

## ‘COLLECTIVE POWER’

In her opening speech, PCS national president Fran Heathcote said the union is well placed to fight back against the issues facing members due to the UK’s “nasty right-wing” government.

While our consultative ballot on pay hadn’t met the “undemocratic” 50% turnout rule, the 45% achieved was a “brilliant platform” from which to launch a statutory ballot for industrial action, she said.

She said the DVLA dispute was a prime example of PCS prioritising members’ health and safety during the Covid crisis. Delegates applauded when she praised their effort and determination. She also paid tribute to the “impressive” members in the private sector.

PCS had also shown unstinting solidarity with refugees, and would tackle the government’s Rwanda plans with the same determination, said Fran.

“We have a nasty right-wing government led by a man... who’s now exposed as a lying, dangerous, reckless, war-mongering, elitist politician. But we shouldn’t feel powerless... We have the collective power to do so much.”

## BALLOT FOR ACTION

In response to the government’s treatment of our members, delegates agreed that PCS would immediately begin working towards launching a national ballot for industrial action in September over pay, pensions and redundancy terms.

Members’ difficulties around plummeting pay and the spiralling cost of living are compounded by the ongoing pensions robbery. The government also intends to launch a fresh assault on the civil service compensation scheme; just as it plans to cut 91,000 jobs.

Mark Serwotka said the union would be talking to all branches and groups for their views. Efforts will be intensified to win over the 55% of members that didn’t vote in the consultative ballot.

## FIGHT JOB CUTS

Delegates also unanimously voted to include possible strike action in a campaign to fight plans to cut 91,000 civil service jobs.

Debating an emergency motion, the NEC’s Martin Cavanagh said the government intended to “destroy the livelihoods of 91,000

workers... without consultation”.

The service – already struggling due to Covid and Brexit – needs greater resources, not fewer, and investment in areas like tax collection and infrastructure to create well-paid jobs, he said.

PCS has demanded full consultation, vowing to fight compulsory redundancies and moves to privatise/outsourc jobs.

## FRIENDS IN PARLIAMENT

The chair of our parliamentary group (see p3) told members that industrial action works, and inspires others to stand up and say, ‘enough is enough’.

SNP MP Chris Stephens said the government had little to offer workers on the cost-of-living crisis: “The state is under attack from this government. We will not let them win.” He thanked all civil servants, PCS members and activists for “keeping these islands’ economic wheels turning”.

He said the plan to cut 91,000 civil servants was “galling”, adding that PCS members have many friends in parliament “who will continue to fight your corner”.

## WHY WE NEED TO BALLOT FOR ACTION



“Our members keep asking when we are going to do something and when are we going to take action. Some of our members are Universal Credit recipients themselves. From our consultative ballot results, we need just another 7% to get to the 50% threshold, and it’s doable. (CF)  
“I think our members have had enough. Everything is going up. We live in a rural area, so most members have to drive, and it’s so expensive.” (CM)

CATHERINE FALVEY AND CAROLINE MASTERS, DWP



“I love working for the civil service and I have 40 or 50 more years left in me, but I’m really worried about my future. We are facing the toughest of times and we must come together as a union.”

FAISAL FAHIM, 26, HMRC



“Everyone’s penny-pinching. I’ve got two small children who are at the forefront of my mind. It’s something that everyone’s worried about, particularly with the announcement of the job cuts. I support the vote to strike. It’s the only way to move forward to make a difference.”

AMY MANCHIP, HMRC

## CALLING ALL MEMBERS...

Update your ballot address and contact details with PCS!



See p13 for more.



**“I’m my parents’ carer and the sole provider in my household. So this crisis affects me greatly. Where I live, I see people having to choose between heating and eating. The task at hand is to really yell about the pay campaign and mobilise members. I will 100% be getting involved in building for our ballot.”**

SHAM MURAD, 27,

OFFICE OF THE PUBLIC GUARDIAN



**“We have got members asking us for food bank details. This is the reality of the cost-of-living crisis. They can’t even buy a hot meal in the canteen now because those prices have gone up too. Our members are going to be up for this ballot more than ever. They know PCS will support them because we did it during our dispute, and no one was left out of pocket.”**

SARAH EVANS, DVLA BRANCH CHAIR



**“The cost-of living crisis means the constant stress and worry of how people will manage without the help they need. In our branch, we want to combine staffing, pay, jobs, the lot, into our campaign. If now is not the time, when is?”**

LEON HERSNIP, DWP



**“We’ve had to return to the office 80% of the time and members can’t afford to travel in. There’s now a real worry over the 91,000 job cuts. We are at a turning point now with all these issues. There’s an opportunity to amplify the union’s point of view.”**

FEIDHELM DOOLIN, DFE

**LONG COVID AS  
‘INDUSTRIAL DISEASE’**

PCS will campaign alongside the TUC to ensure that Long Covid, when contracted in the workplace, is recognised as an industrial disease.

Delegates also agreed that PCS would actively campaign to publicise and challenge the ineptitude of the government on its handling of the pandemic.

Moving motion A20 for R&C Wales, Sean said listening to the government and the media gives the impression the pandemic is over, while “the Tories invite us to raise a glass to a job well done”.

It is important that members complete accident forms and that these are investigated so PCS safety reps have records that demonstrate how the workplace is unsafe.

**PROTOCOLS ON LONG COVID**

In a separate debate, PCS agreed to pursue urgent talks with the Cabinet Office and the devolved administrations to put in place protocols so people affected with Long Covid are treated fairly.

We will press for the exclusion of all Long Covid absences from absence management triggers and for full pay to be paid for all Long Covid-related absences.

In addition, employers should fund free Covid-19 testing kits for staff on request.



Proposing the motion, Mark, from DWP Tyneside and Northumbria branch, said: “Support for Long Covid sufferers is patchy, at best, and it’s not being taken seriously in many cases.”

The NEC was also instructed to campaign to have Long Covid designated as a disability under the Equality Act 2010.

**LONG-TERM SICK PAY FOR ALL**

It was also agreed that all PCS members should have a right to at least six months’ full sick pay and six months’ half pay, with extensions, to support Long Covid and other long-term illnesses.

The motion highlighted concerns that current civil service paid sick leave policies fall short of the reasonable support that employees should have a right to expect from their employer.

Many employees across government departments are subject to inequitable sick pay conditions.

Amy from R&C Wales branch proposed the motion and said: “We need to look for recognition of the impact Long Covid has on staff.”

Seconding, John from DWP North East and Mid Wales branch said: “Staff who have to earn their sick pay year on year are treated as second-class colleagues.”

**OFFICE HEALTH & SAFETY**

Stronger health and safety laws, more legal powers for reps, and the right to digitally disconnect from work are needed to protect workers being forced back into the office after the Covid crisis.

The NEC will campaign with the TUC for measures that also include more funding and statutory powers for the HSE, rights to full sick pay from day one and more powers for unions.

**PROTECT HOME-WORKERS**

New strategies to reach, and protect, home workers should be developed, the union agreed.

David of DWP Notts said that for employers, home workers were “out of sight, out of mind, as long as they’re doing their hours and productivity is maintained”.

“We need to protect and level up home workers,” he said.

NEC member Ian Pope said the union was pushing for the recording of working hours with eight different departments.

A framework is to be established by the NEC, including: workstation assessment; remote working allowances and support for staff moving to green energy; workplace hours for homeworking; and maintaining the right to disconnect.

**Leading resistance against border policy disaster**

PCS and its allies are once more leading the resistance to this government’s immoral and inhumane border policy disaster, human rights campaigner Shami Chakrabarti told conference.

Baroness Chakrabarti was full of praise for PCS’s “amazing work” in fighting plans to turn back refugee boats in the English Channel, and to deport asylum seekers to Rwanda (see p5).

“It is work not just on behalf of your members, but on behalf of all

decent law-abiding people in our nations, and especially in defence of the most desperate refugees.”

“I am so proud to stand with PCS, who have been protecting their members, including in the Home Office and Border Force, from both catastrophic job and resource cuts and the mental health and moral harms that come from being sent out to administer lawless and inhumane border policy – aimed more at securing cheap headlines than keeping

anyone safe or free.”

She praised public servants who do not come to work to be de-valued, bullied and scapegoated by ministers. The Labour peer said that PCS reminded her of “how trades unions can work in wider partnership and lead coalitions of action with grassroots campaigns at home and internationally”.



**UKRAINE SOLIDARITY**

On behalf of members, our delegates sent an unequivocal message of solidarity to the besieged people of Ukraine, following debates about the Russian invasion.

Moving a motion that called for campaigning for measures to hasten Russia's withdrawal, unrestricted access to the UK for Ukrainian refugees and for Ukraine's debts to be written off, assistant general secretary John Moloney said: "We support Ukraine's right to determine their war aims, their peace demands, and they alone should make that decision, not Western powers, not the USA, and not the UK."

Conference also unanimously voted to affiliate with the Ukrainian Solidarity Campaign and support trade unionists in the war-torn country.

Moving motion A37, Kulvinder from the Office of the Public Guardian said: "It's important that we reach out and build links with Ukraine trade unions."

**SOCIAL CARE**

PCS will back demands for a 15% pay rise for health and social care workers and campaign against the UK government's health and care bill.

Motion A46 noted that more than 40,000 people have died from Covid in care homes in an overwhelmingly privatised system that puts profit before safety. The Bill will make it even easier to award contracts to private health care providers.

**RIGHTS FOR CARERS**

PCS should negotiate and campaign for flexible working rights for carers, it was agreed. Under UK law, employers are required to make reasonable adjustments for disabled people – but not for those caring for them.

H Sheridan from HMRC Merseyside branch spoke about how difficult she found it when caring for an elderly relative and her daughter, who has special needs. "If it hadn't been for the support from my rep, I don't think I would have been able to cope. It's so important to ensure we have adequate protections for carers."

**SAFE ROUTES FOR REFUGEES**

PCS pledged to oppose nationalities and borders legislation and work with campaigners on safe routes for refugees to reach the UK.

**Recognising what our reps do for members**

As conference voted to support launching a national industrial action ballot this autumn – over pay, pensions, and the cost-of-living crisis – PCS awarded a number of outstanding activists for the work they do for members in their branches.



This includes notable efforts during our consultative pay ballot, in talking to members, making sure their contact details are up to date, and reminding them to vote. This kind of activity will become even more important over the summer, as we prepare to urge every single PCS member to have their say on taking action to win justice on our pay, pensions, jobs and redundancy rights.

The award winners were: Jasmine Lota, British Museum United; Tom Westgarth, DWP Tyneside and Northumbria; DVLA Swansea BEC.

The following were commended: Melvyn Hill, OCS in HMCTS; Ross Seymour, R&C Benton Park View; David Breton, R&C Cumbernauld; Frank Hemmes, Ofgem; Paul Humphreys, DFT Yorkshire and Humber; John Mapletoft, DWP Nottinghamshire; Design Museum branch; OCS reps in HMCTS; DWP Nottinghamshire branch; Revenue and Customs Cumbernauld branch.

The government's anti-refugee legislation and policies were debated by delegates, including the Nationalities and Borders Act, the home secretary's Channel 'pushback' policy, and plans to deport asylum seekers from the UK to Rwanda.

Motion A47, moved by Pete from DWP Birmingham South, condemned the Channel pushback proposal as a brutal racist policy, that puts refugees' lives in jeopardy and risks physical and mental harm to PCS members.

Steve from DWP Edinburgh, Lothian and Borders branch moved motion A217 which condemned the government's Rwanda deportation plans.

"The immigration system in this country is brutal and racist but what the government wants to do now is particularly cruel," he said.

Mohammed Shafiq from DWP Greater Manchester branch said he was proud to be part of a movement that "doesn't stand on the sidelines".

"This is the fight of our lifetime but it's a fight we can win," he said.

**CLIMATE MOVEMENT**

The trade union movement is crucial to the development of a climate movement, delegates agreed, after debating the impact and aftermath of the COP26 summit in Glasgow (see p11).

Motion A41, moved by Mairtin from DWP Glasgow, criticised the government for greenwashing by promoting market mechanisms as the central plank to solve the climate emergency through emissions trading or carbon

offsetting or any other accountancy tricks.

There was praise for the "dynamic" COP26 Coalition, which mobilised around climate justice during the UN conference.

The motion said that confusion and disagreements need to be engaged with, such as the belief that moving away from a carbon-based economy means job losses.

**PCS SUBS REVIEW**

Conference voted to increase the maximum salary band for PCS subscriptions and review the banding mechanism.

Motion A33 said that the current banding maximum of £26,001 for subscriptions was too low and was therefore unfair on members in lower grades (see p5).

- Read more from our national conference. Find a link to the conference news pages, our Twitter feed (#PCSADC), and other reports and documents at [pcs.org.uk/conference](https://pcs.org.uk/conference)



**"I have to move because of a relationship ending and I am finding it really hard to get back on my feet financially.**

**There's a rent crisis in Sheffield. When you combine that with the rise in energy bills and other costs, it's too much. That's why we need a pay rise and the cost-of-living crisis needs to be addressed."**

NIKKY BOTTOMLEY, DWP



**"We have people administering the energy reforms who are on pre-payment meters themselves. There is a lot of talk about pay and cost-of-living issues in our office. We got just under 50% turnout in the consultative ballot; getting over the threshold is achievable."**

JOSH BURNS, 24, OFGEM



**"A lot of the narrative around the cost-of-living crisis gives me anxiety. I worry about who is supporting the more vulnerable. People in our branch have been feeling deflated about pay. But we are always up for the fight. Everyone who pays their subs should have a voice."**

LOUISE ROBINSON, HOME OFFICE



**"Travel, food and energy costs are big issues for our members. Some are using food banks, particularly low paid staff. It's shameful. It's about time we took the issues we're all experiencing and really bring that home to the management and the government."**

PAUL MEIKLEHAM,  
SCOTTISH GOVERNMENT

# Financial statement to members

The 2022 PCS Financial Report was published on the PCS website in April and is available for download (see below). The report was presented and endorsed by the union's annual conference, held in May. The financial breakdown summary provided here is best read with the full financial report; it includes detailed commentary on the union's financial position and an independent audit report.

The union's financial position strengthened in 2021. Membership and subscription income increased. Modest membership growth has been achieved over the past two years. In addition, there has been a reduction in PCS expenditure on a range of normal activities, linked to the impact of the Covid pandemic. Due to a combination of both factors, a healthy surplus was achieved in 2021, and reserves have been bolstered.

The NEC has agreed to maintain a financially cautious approach for 2022. This takes account of the prevailing economic climate and the UK

government's plan to reduce the size of the civil service by 91,000 posts.

## Income and Expenditure

The total income of the union for the period was £25.04m. This amount included payments of £22.94m in respect of membership income of the union. The union's total expenditure for the period was £21.79m. The general secretary's remuneration was: salary £100,415; pension contributions £15,688; employer's National Insurance contributions £12,596.

## Political Fund

In respect of the union's political fund, its total income was £171k and total expenditure was £66k.

## John Moloney

National Treasurer

## Jeff Evans

Director of Central Services

Access the Financial Report 2021 here:

[pcs.org.uk/news-events/news/pcs-2021-financial-report-online-now](https://pcs.org.uk/news-events/news/pcs-2021-financial-report-online-now)

## Statutory Statement

A member who is concerned that some irregularity may be occurring, or have occurred, in the conduct of the financial affairs of the union may take steps with a view to investigating further, obtaining clarification and, if necessary, securing regularisation of that conduct. The member may raise any such concern with such one or more of the following as it seems appropriate to raise it with: the officials of the union, the trustees of the property of the union,

the auditor or auditors of the union, the Certification Officer (who is an independent officer appointed by the Secretary of State) and the police. Where a member believes that the financial affairs of the union have been or are being conducted in breach of the law or in breach of the rules of the union and contemplates bringing civil proceedings against it the union or responsible officials or trustees, they should consider obtaining independent legal advice.

## Trade Union and Labour Relations (Consolidation) Act 1992 section 84A

PCS members who joined on or after 1 March 2018 and have chosen to opt in to contributing to the Union's political fund have the right to withdraw their decision to opt in by giving notice to the union (a withdrawal notice). The withdrawal notice can be given by: (a) delivering the notice (either personally

or by an authorised agent or by post) at the head office or a branch office of the union; (b) sending it by email to the following email address: [membership@pcs.org.uk](mailto:membership@pcs.org.uk); or (c) completing an electronic form provided by the union which sets out the notice and sending it to the union by electronic means with instructions to the union.

## Independent auditors' report to the members of the PCS Union

We have audited the financial statements of the Public and Commercial Services Union (the 'Union') for the year ended 31 December 2021 which comprise the total funds income and expenditure account, the general fund income and expenditure account, the statement of comprehensive income, the balance sheet, the statement of changes in funds and reserves, the cash flow statement and notes to the financial statements, including a summary of significant accounting policies. The financial reporting framework that has been applied in their preparation is applicable law and United Kingdom Accounting Standards, including

FRS 102 "The Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland" (United Kingdom Generally Accepted Accounting Practice).

In our opinion, the financial statements:

- give a true and fair view of the state of the Union's affairs as at 31 December 2021 and of its surplus for the year then ended;
- have been properly prepared in accordance with United Kingdom Generally Accepted Accounting Practice; and
- have been prepared in accordance with the requirements of the Trade Union and Labour Relations (Consolidation) Act 1992.

**BDO LLP, Chartered accountants & Registered auditors, Gatwick, United Kingdom**

**Date: 1 April 2022**

BDO LLP is a limited liability partnership registered in England and Wales (with registered number OC305127).

## Financial breakdown

### Summary income and expenditure for the year ended 31 December 2021

All figures: 000s

**Income £25,044**

Analysis:

Membership subscriptions	£22,936
Member contributions to fighting fund	£990
Investment Income	£24
Other Income	£1,094

**Expenditure £21,793**

Analysis:

Network administration	£14,127
Members representative costs	£735
Members communications	£1,699
Members benefits	£1,173
Affiliations and donations (TUC £526)	£767
Depreciation	£1,199
Transfer to campaign and disputes fund	£728
Transfer to fighting fund	£990
Political fund contributions	£171
Subscription collection costs	£156
Transfer from property fund	(£391)
Taxation	£439
Net operational surplus	£3,250

### FRS 102 actuarial adjustments

**on pension schemes £2,200**

Loss on revaluation of investment property (£583)

**Net surplus for year to general fund £4,867**

### Summary balance sheet for the year ended 31 December 2021

Fixed Assets	
Tangible fixed Assets	£23,623
Investments	£1,974
Current assets	
Debtors	£2,855
Cash	£8,558
Current liabilities	(£2,087)
Total assets less current liabilities	£34,924
Deferred taxation	(£1,386)
FRS 102 pension asset	£36,400
<b>Net Assets</b>	<b>£69,937</b>

Represented by:

General fund	£18,482
Property fund	£11,117
Campaign and disputes fund	£657
Political fund	£1,003
Fighting fund	£2,278
Pension reserve	£36,400

**Total funds & reserves £69,937**