

We Need Fair Pay

The GEC's own motion instructs it to "smash the public sector pay freeze". Of course this is a fine aspiration but it will not be achieved by isolated one day strikes months apart. The GEC has to take the issue of pay seriously. Many members have not had a pay rise for years and we cannot afford to live on our wages as prices rise. It is not enough to just say we don't want performance pay and special bonuses, the GEC must obtain the necessary information to prove they are discriminatory and unlawful. This year we have to have serious industrial action to defend our terms and conditions and our jobs. The overriding issue which unites us all is pay. The GEC must follow its own instruction to itself and build quickly for industrial action. It is time to make clear that strike action is not just a last resort. It is a legitimate tactic for a trade union to adopt in defense of its members.

Equality – a Right not an Optional Extra

The GEC's record on equality is shameful. Branches and regions get no response when issues are raised. In the last year complaints of racism and disability discrimination in the Group have been ignored. Either the GEC is not informed of the problems reported by equality officers, it is incapable of challenging the employer, or it does not care. The equality section of this year's annual report consisted entirely of reports from equality committees and seminars. This is not enough. The GEC should be making equality a fundamental principle in all its dealings with the employer. Until the GEC is prepared to insist that the employer fulfills its legal responsibilities to conduct equality impact assessments and act on their findings, it is never going to achieve more than securing time off for political loyalists to attend talking shops.

The GEC should be equality proofing all policies and procedures itself and putting the time and money into taking forward test cases where the employer insists on procedures which may be unlawful. It is time for the union to set the agenda on equality, not as an afterthought but a fundamental demand.

Attendance Management - Discrimination in Action

The DWP has changed the attendance management procedures again and the GEC needs a strategy to deal with the changes. We should be coordinating cases, identifying trends and taking appropriate test cases to tribunals. Despite the Equality Act strengthening disabled members rights not to receive a warning, there is nothing in the new procedures to prevent this. Line managers now have the responsibility to determine whether members are disabled or not and the GEC should be supporting them in making fair and consistent decisions.

Organisation – What’s Going on?

It is worrying that a GEC with both an elected Organiser and a full time official had to delay industrial action in CCD, in part due to the state of its membership lists. If branches are unable to get the basics done on limited facility time, the GEC should ensure that this work is done.

As in every previous year, branches are complaining of the lack of support in personal cases. PCS expects far more from its lay reps than many other unions. Some GEC members are prepared to represent scabs but little time is being spent identifying key cases to take to tribunal. The GEC should use the union’s solicitors to help it plan strategies for the Group rather than to just respond to members’ individual problems. Our activists are volunteers. We are the key people without whom the union cannot function. There is no need for activists to be overworked and burnt out like some of the GEC, if proper support is given at Group level.

Stop the Secret Talks

The GEC has to stop the secret talks between unelected officials and management. It would be one thing if we were achieving great victories through the process, but we are achieving nothing and branches have no idea why not. Branch and regional officials are not told what is going on and even GEC members are unable to provide any information. We need to have a more honest relationship with members in the Group. The GEC should tell the employer we cannot be bound by absolute confidentiality. We are an independent trade union with elected officials and clear lines of responsibility. It is not for the employer to pick and chose which of us can receive information.

Join the Independent Left

To find out more see anyone handing out this circular, come to our national meeting on Wednesday at the Old Ship (turn left out of conference centre) or speak to us at our social.

Club Caucus

Thursday 19th May

The Globe
7pm till late

Tickets £5 from Independent Left members

Visit our website www.pcsindependentleft.co.uk