



Ref: NW/BS/35/15

To: All Branch Secretaries in the North West

cc: North West Regional Committee for information

15 July 2015

Dear Colleague

Solidarity messages required: Universal credit staff to strike for two days over oppressive working conditions

I am writing to let you know that Universal Credit staff in Bolton along with their colleagues in Glasgow will strike for two days next week (Monday and Tuesday 20/21 July) over increasingly oppressive working conditions.

As we all know the government's flagship social security programme has been dogged by delays and allegations of money squandered on IT. Our members have complained about a lack of resources, an oppressive management culture, inadequate training, hard to reach targets and staff shortages.

Almost 1,500 workers at the two centres in Bolton and Glasgow, where more than half of all universal credit staff are employed, will take part strike in the two day action. PCS represents around 80% of staff at the centres that process claims to universal credit and take enquiries from claimants by telephone and online. The dispute is over the imposition of new conditions, including predetermined start and finish times and severe restrictions on flexible working.

It should also be noted that 40% of our members who administer universal will also be entitled to claim it.

In a recent ballot, 84% voted for strikes and 90% voted for other forms of industrial action on a 56% turnout. The two-day strike will be followed by industrial action short of a strike until mid-August.

Pickets lines will be in place at Elizabeth House, 21 Back Spring Gardens Bolton BL1 1SJ from 7.00am until 10.00am on both days. PCS branches are asked to show solidarity by visiting the pickets at some point and messages of support can be sent to Pete Entwistle at peteenty@sky.com

Yours sincerely,

MARTIN CAVANAGH
NW Regional Chair

PAULA WOOD
NW Regional Secretary