

PCS Fylde News

Issue 21



HSE to be half the watchdog it used to be

The UK's health and safety watchdog is not the regulator, enforcer or guide it used to be – and things could be about to get a lot worse, the TUC has warned.

The union body was commenting after the Health and Safety Executive's new business plan revealed swinging cuts to the watchdog's government funding over the next three years. It follows earlier cuts and a dramatic decline in workplace safety inspections and enforcement.

A new HSE strategy document says we must "act together" but includes no new targets, concrete plans or regulatory proposals. "The HSE's Business Plan for 2016/17 gives some insight into why," notes TUC head of safety Hugh Robertson. "In 2009/10, before the coalition government came to power, the HSE received £231 million from the government. In 2019/20 it will receive £123 million. A reduction of 46 per cent in ten years."

HSE's already dramatically curtailed government funding will drop by more than 12 per cent over the next three years, according to the business plan.

Taxpayer funding is forecast to fall from £140.9m in 2016/17 to £123.4m in 2019/20.

Robertson says the document has a relatively good section on enforcement, "but there is nothing about how they are going to achieve it with the current number of inspectors, and the almost complete lack of any inspections in the local authority sector." He adds: "On regulation, the paper is clear. There are no proposals for any new regulations in the areas responsible for 70 per cent of work-related sickness absence (stress and MSDs [musculoskeletal disorders]), or on anything else for that matter. Instead they simply want to simplify regulations such as the chemicals regulations, harbours, and gas safety." Robertson says there is "no doubt" the cuts in the HSE budget are already having an effect, with the decades long downward trend in work-related fatalities and ill-health stalled and in some instances reversed. "If no-one is going to enforce the law then the law becomes useless," he says. "However, given the 46 per cent cut in the budget, it is wrong to put the blame on the HSE. The deregulatory agenda comes from the government." The TUC safety specialist concludes: "The less the HSE can do, the less enforcement, the more employers will be able to get away with breaking the law, and breaking their workers."

**CSCS
Special**

TUC

Public & Commercial Services Union
Fylde Central Benefits & Services Branch

Notice of the Branch Mandating Meeting

Date: Wednesday 18th May 2016

Time: 15.00 pm

Venue: B120E Warbreck House
or the Warbreck House Canteen



The meeting is to mandate the Branch Delegates to
PCS DWP Group and National Conferences.

A Farewell to Charles

For those who were at the AGM, you may remember that Charles Hancock (who is the Branch Vice Chair from Peel Park) leaves the DWP in May 2016 (although his last day in the Office is in April).

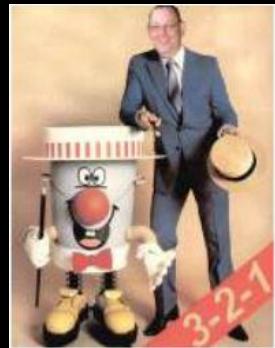
Charles has been a stalwart of the Branch for many years, highly involved in members' issues in particularly at Norcross and latterly at Peel Park. Charles has been involved at Corporate Centre level in terms of the PCS sub -committee, Health and Safety and Industrial Relations.

Charles highlights include all the support that he gave the members with the majority of DWP Norcross closure, including giving evidence at the Employment Tribunal.

Charles was a massive team player and could always be relied on.

On a lighter note; this also means the end of Charles' Game show quizzes, so I doubt that we will ever see Charles as "Bully" again, or in 3-2-1.

Duncan



To the right is a classic picture of Mick simply so he didn't feel left out.



CIVIL SERVICE COMPENSATION SCHEME

Summary

- The Government is proposing further cuts in the Civil Service Compensation Scheme (CSCS).
- Talks with the Cabinet Office are taking place.
- The national executive committee has agreed a campaign plan to oppose the Government's proposed cuts.
- A meeting of the senior lay reps forum will be held to discuss the possibility of campaigning action should negotiations not produce an acceptable outcome.
- Members meetings are being held to build support for the campaign.
- ADC 2016 in May 2016 will debate the next steps.

Background

In 2010, the coalition government slashed the redundancy provisions for Civil Servants.

This was in the teeth of fierce opposition from PCS – we mobilised members in a campaign of opposition to the changes which included three days of strike action and a legal challenge that, while initially successful, was overturned by fresh legislation.

Some other smaller Civil Service Unions, including FDA and Prospect, agreed the detrimental changes in 2010. PCS stood firm and did not agree the changes.

At the time, the then Minister for the Cabinet Office, Francis Maude, trumpeted the deal with the other Unions and described it in glowing terms. To quote him directly, he said that "*I believe we now have a scheme which is fair, protects those who need the most support, addresses the inequities in the current system and is right for the long term.*"

Yet after only 5 years, the Government is seeking to make further cuts to redundancy pay which will affect every civil servant facing redundancy.

The Government is proposing to make huge cuts to departmental budgets over the next 4 years. Cutting redundancy pay is simply an attempt to make those cuts cheaper.

The Government's plans pay no regard to the hard work and loyalty shown by civil servants, who have, in the last five years, seen 86,000 jobs cut, a pay freeze and cap and cuts to pension provision.

Further attack on redundancy provision in the public sector

On 5 February 2016, the Treasury launched a "*Consultation on reforms to public sector exit payments*". This was swiftly followed by a

Cabinet Office launch on 8 February 2016 of a "*Consultation on reform of the Civil Service Compensation Scheme*".

The consultation documents represent a further attack on the terms and conditions of ordinary workers under the cloak of austerity.

Public Sector Schemes

The consultation on public sector exit schemes outlines the Treasury's objectives. It proposes:

- Setting a maximum tariff for calculating exit payments of three weeks' pay per year of service, with an option for employers to apply tariff rates below these limits
- Capping the maximum number of months' salary that can be used when calculating redundancy payments to 15 months, with an option for employers to distinguish between voluntary and compulsory redundancies by applying a lower limit
- Setting a maximum salary on which an exit payment can be based, highlighting the NHS scheme salary limit of £80,000.
- Tapering the amount of lump sum compensation an individual is entitled to receive as they get closer to their pension retirement age.

- Requiring employer-funded early access to pension to be limited or ended, through one or more of a range of measures that would considerably reduce such costs

The full consultation document is available on the Treasury website. The consultation closes on 3 May 2016.

Civil Service Compensation Scheme

The consultation on the Civil Service Compensation Scheme outlines the Cabinet Office's objectives. It proposes:

- Structural changes to reduce costs, including potentially changing how the amount is calculated or reducing the maximum payable
- Options for improving the use of flexible terms, including:
 - Potential removal of the requirement to make a voluntary redundancy offer before moving to compulsory redundancy
 - Potential reduction of the cap for voluntary exit to 18 months
 - Potential reduction of the cap for voluntary redundancy to 12 months

- Potential reduction of the cap for compulsory redundancy to 9 months
- Changes to employer funded early access to pension, including:
 - potential removal of the employer funded top up
 - potential increase of the minimum age to within five years of state pension age
- An absolute cap on compensation payments, in line with the Government's proposed legislative changes that will cap payments at £95,000, with the Public Sector Exit Schemes consultation suggesting a cap as low as £80,000

The full consultation document can be found on the Cabinet Office website. The consultation closes on 4 May 2016 and PCS will naturally be making a submission on behalf of members.

PCS call for co-ordinated action

As part of our opposition to the government's agenda, PCS has long argued that the best way to defend workers is a co-ordinated response across the Trade Union movement, including co-ordinated campaigning action.

We will continue to press for such action and, at the most recent meeting of the TUC Public

Sector Liaison Group, we have already called for a co-ordinated response to oppose this latest attack on the terms and conditions of public sector workers. Our General Secretary has also written to the General Secretary of the TUC calling for such a response.

Membership response to the consultation

PCS is encouraging members to respond to the consultation. We have issued guidance to members on what the proposed changes mean for them and what they might want to say in response in order to defend their terms and conditions.

It is vital that as many members as possible respond to the consultation to put maximum pressure on the Government to change course.

Negotiations with the Cabinet Office

PCS, alongside the other Civil Service Unions, are engaged in negotiations with the Cabinet Office. We have signaled our opposition to further attacks on our members' terms and conditions.

We have pressed the Cabinet Office for the evidence based rationale for the changes being proposed; and for a range of data to enable proper negotiations to take place.

The Cabinet Office has indicated that they are seeking to reach agreement in negotiations. When the Government attacked our members' redundancy entitlements in 2010, PCS refused

to sign up to the terms. A number of other Unions did agree the reduced terms. The words of Francis Maude, now clearly ring hollow and PCS's stance in defence of our members' terms and conditions has been fully vindicated.

PCS will engage in the negotiations on the new proposals with a view to securing the best possible outcome for members. However, we find it extremely difficult to envisage how we will reach an agreement, when the framework for discussions appears to be a further attack on our members' redundancy terms.

The Cabinet Office indicated that they are seeking to reach agreement in negotiations, but that if agreement cannot be reached they will look to introduce changes to the redundancy scheme through legislation.

PCS campaign against redundancy pay cuts

The National Executive Committee (NEC) has agreed a campaign plan to oppose the cuts. We will:

- Brief our Parliamentary Group, asking them to raise this issue through every political channel
- Lobby the Labour Party, Plaid Cymru and the SNP to ask them to oppose the changes

- Organise constituency based lobbying of MPs, linking the cuts in redundancy provision to the issue of office closures
- Lobby the devolved administrations to support our position
- Organise a petition against the government's proposals to cut civil service redundancy pay,
- Encourage members to respond to the consultation
- Publicise our position in members and branch briefings, emails to members, through the PCS website, and the union's journals.

Annual Delegate Conference

Our Annual Delegate Conference meets on 24-26 May 2016, shortly after the closure of the consultation. This will provide an opportunity for the union to take stock of progress made through negotiations and campaigning and to democratically determine the next steps in the campaign.

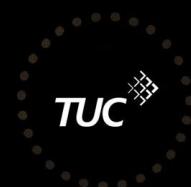


International Workers Memorial Day, 28 April 2016

International Workers Memorial Day is held on 28 April every year.

It is the day union members and campaigners remember those killed, maimed, injured and made ill by work and the day they renew a pledge to fight for the living, by raising safety concerns in the workplace and raising public awareness of the importance of health and safety.

It is 30 years since the event was first commemorated by unions in Canada, spreading quickly to the US and, in 1992, to the UK. Since then it has grown into the biggest health and safety event in the world, with workplace activities, training sessions, extra workplace inspections and media coverage marking the day across Europe, North and South America, Asia, Australasia and Africa. Health and safety should be a priority every day, in every workplace. But on 28 April unions and safety campaigners ensure the wider public, regulators and policy makers hear clearly that 'Strong laws, strong enforcement and strong unions' are the key to keeping workplaces safe and healthy year round, every year.



Quiz Results

Carry on Carl Quiz



What a carry on. Yah, yah, yah, Carl here, with the answers to my quiz about my comedy hero and his films. Here goes:

Answer 1: Sid James played Sid Boggs in 1971 film Carry on at your Convenience

Answer 2: Which three actors/ actresses appeared in more Carry On films than Sid James was

Kenneth Williams, Joan Sims and Charles Hawtry

Answer 3: Sid James' career before acting was a Hairdresser

Answer 4: Sid James appeared in 19 carry on films

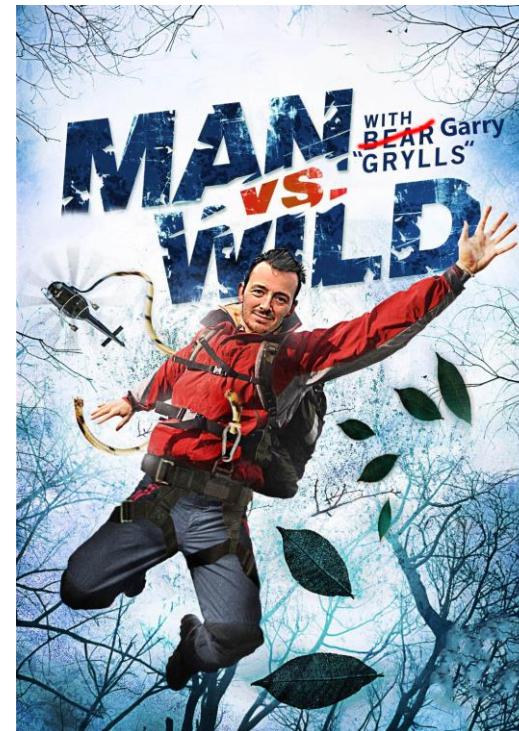
Answer 5: Sid James played Sid Abbott in the 1970s series "Bless this House"

Answer 6: Sid James last Carry On film was Carry On Dick

The winner was Lesley Tague from Warbreck who received an Easter Egg. Well Done!

Carl

Garry's Great Outdoors Quiz



Hi, Garry here, with the answers to my Al Fresco quiz. For all you outdoors types here are my answers:

Answer 1: Bear Grylls real first name is Edward

Answer 2: The highest mountain in England is Scafell Pike

Answer 3: White Spider is a book about climbing the North face of the Eiger

Answer 4: Mountains in Scotland with heights over 3000ft. are called a Munro

Answer 5: Blencathra is the mountain in the Lake District that is often called Saddleback

Answer 6: Al fresco comes from Italian

The winner who receives a mystery prize of an Easter Egg was Cathy Griffiths from Peel Park. Well done.

Garry

Katya's Film Quiz

Here are the answers to my quiz for all you film buffs:

Answer 1: Rod Steiger played Napoleon in the 1970 film Waterloo

Answer 2: My favourite film an animation, from 1982, a US film, the theme song is sung by Don McLean, was Flight of Dragons

Answer 3: Elf, one of the best Christmas films ever made, starred Will Ferrell

Answer 4: Michael J. Fox played Marty McFly in the classic movie "Back to the Future".

Answer 5: The first Indiana Jones film was released in 1981 was "Raiders of the Lost Ark"

Answer 6: The name of the 10 year old boy in "E.T. the Extra-Terrestrial" who befriended ET was Elliott

The winner received a mystery prize of an Easter Egg was Cathy Griffiths from Peel Park.

– a double winner!!

Doubly well done!

Katya



Safety laws could be at risk from Brexit

Years of uncertainty for workers and employers could be the result of a UK vote to leave the European Union, a top labour law expert has warned.

The independent legal opinion, commissioned by the TUC from Michael Ford QC of Old Square Chambers, identifies the dangers of Britain leaving the EU for working people and their rights at work. Among rights that would be most at risk of being diluted or scrapped after Brexit are health and safety protections, his report notes. "All the social rights in employment currently required by EU law would be potentially vulnerable", it says. It concludes the rights most at risk post-Brexit from a government with a deregulatory agenda include rights to properly-paid holidays, protections for agency workers, health and safety protections and protections from some forms of employer discrimination – such as compensation rates, and protections for pregnant workers and older workers.

In the opinion, Michael Ford QC further comments: "It is easy to contemplate a complete reversal of the gradual increase in social regulation protecting workers which has taken place since the 1960s".

TUC general secretary Frances O'Grady commented: "The biggest cheerleaders for Brexit think that your protections at work are just red tape to be binned. Bad bosses will be rubbing their hands with glee if Brexit gives them the chance to cut workers' hard-won protections."

Nudge theory isn't evidence-based or the best option

The 'nudge' theory embraced by the government in a bid to change the population's behaviour by stealth isn't evidence-based and isn't a satisfactory alternative to proper rights and properly enforced legislation, the TUC has warned.

The union body was responding to a leader in New Scientist magazine that noted: "Nudge is an example of what is possible when you apply science to policymaking," but cautioned "the well-intentioned politicians who want to use them

should always remember: never let nudge turn to shove."

In a response published in the magazine, TUC head of safety Hugh Robertson said the leader didn't recognise the inherent shortcomings of an approach championed by the government via its once in-house and now arms-length but 'in partnership with the Cabinet Office' Behavioural Insights Team. He noted the positive spin "perpetuates the idea that the work of the UK Behavioural Insights Team uses a solely 'evidence-based' approach. As you rightly point out, nudges are seen as a replacement for legislation. It would therefore be appropriate to compare the outcome of a 'nudge' with the likely outcome of regulation." Robertson said, however, that is not what the trials do. "The biggest nudge in the UK was the Responsibility Deal which attempted a voluntary approach to health issues around food, alcohol and the workplace by getting pledges from manufacturers, retailers and employers. These were viewed by most public health experts as totally ineffective. Instead, there have been calls for the government to introduce regulation such as compulsory labelling and minimum alcohol pricing. The deals have all now been abandoned by the government and a sugar tax has been announced."

The union safety expert concluded: "Nudge theory has its place, but to state that it is evidence-based is a stretch when, in the UK, its application is underpinned by an ideological assumption that regulation is inherently negative. The evidence is that regulation can be far more effective than behavioural interventions, as shown by a range of public safety and health laws, from seat-belt use to workplace smoking."

Effects of DWP Pay restraint are Stark. Real value of DWP EO pay reduced by £4518!

The Government has been determined to press ahead with its policy of pay restraint which has been in place officially since 2010 but in reality has been in place since 2007 (when there was a 3 year pay imposition). The DWP has a pay scale with a band maxima and minima; where the band maxima is normally considered to be rate of pay for that grade.

As well as pay restraint the rate of inflation has an effect on pay. The 2015 row in the table below shows what the EO band Maxima in 2007 now would be worth in real terms now in 2016 including the effects of prices rising and pay not keeping up:

Year	DWP Band Maxima	Pay Rise	Inflation	In year loss/
2007	£23,980.20	2.0%	4.4%	-£575.52
2008	£23,404.68	0%	4.4%	-£1,029.81
2009	£22,374.87	1%	-1.3%	£514.62
2010	£22,889.49	0%	5.1%	-£1,167.36
2011	£21,722.13	0%	5.1%	-£1,107.83
2012	£20,614.30	1%	3.1%	-£432.90
2013	£20,181.40	1%	3.1%	-£423.81
2014	£19,757.59	1%	2.5%	-£296.36
2015	£19,461.23	1%	1.0%	£0.00
Total	-	-	-	£4,518.97

As you can see this doesn't make impressive reading for anyone employed in DWP, anyone who is below the Maxima of the Pay scale will feel even more squeezed due to the lack of pay progression.

We all need a pay rise to compensate for the losses that we have suffered!

Jobs on the Fylde

The following table demonstrates the impact of the recruitment/ job losses in the Department for Work and Pensions for the period from 1st January to 31st March 2016.

	Norcross	Peel Park	Warbreck
Date			
1 st January 2016	163	1, 348	2, 549
31 st March 2016	163	1, 343	2, 545
Cut/ increase per site	0	5 (cut)	4 (cut)
Total number of job cuts	9		

Therefore, despite the recruitment of staff for the DLA reassessment work, overall the numbers of staff across the three sites actually fell slightly.



GARRY'S 007 QUIZ

Garry here, I have a license to kill, or should that be license to thrill?

People have said that I am a lot more like James Bond than Dr Who.

I am rarely shaken by events; let alone stirred.

Here are my 007 inspired questions.

Question 1

Who played James Bond in the 1969 film On Her Majesty's Secret Service? Was it?

- a) Roger Moore
- b) Sean Connery
- c) Timothy Dalton
- d) Daniel Craig
- e) George Lazenby

Question 2

What sort of "eye" was Pierce Brosnan's first Bond film? Was it?

- a) Blue
- b) Sore
- c) Closed
- d) Red
- e) Golden

Question 3

Which actor who played Bond was born in Wales? Was it?

- a) Sean Connery
- b) Roger Moore
- c) Timothy Dalton
- d) Pierce Brosnan
- e) Daniel Craig

Question 4

Who performed the theme song for the bond film "Live and Let Die"? Was it?

- a) Wings
- b) Yes
- c) Guns 'n' Roses
- d) Jethro Tull
- e) Genesis

Question 5

Which "Desmond" had a hit with the reggae song 007? Was it?

- a) Haynes
- b) Dekker
- c) Daniels
- d) Tutu
- e) Douglas

Question 6

What is the name of the 2015 Bond film, is it?

- a) Spectre
- b) Ghost
- c) Zombie
- d) Ghoul
- e) Warlock

Please send your answers together with your name and details to Duncan Griffiths Room A208R Warbreck House, (or e-mail Duncan Griffiths – details in the GAL) to arrive no later than Friday 29th April 2016.

The winner will receive a mystery prize. Please remember that only members of the Fylde Central Benefits and Services Branch, excluding Branch Executive Committee can enter the quiz.

GARRY - 007