

DWP briefing



Department for Work & Pensions Group

To: Branch Secretaries, Additional Branch Contacts, Regional Secretaries, GEC
26 January 2017
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Office Closure Proposals Announcement

As we reported earlier today, at 10am after months of secrecy, DWP announced their plans for a largescale office closures programme across all parts of the department. While the vast majority of DWP offices will remain open, PCS has made clear to the department that we oppose closures that either disadvantage our members or worsen the service the department delivers to the public. The GEC has made clear that we will resist, and campaign against, any unnecessary closures. The proposals that DWP is announcing today are:

By March 2018 (Some of these have already been announced)

- 78 out of 714 Jobcentres to close with work and staff transferring to the nearest jobcentres
- A further 80 Jobcentres to be co-located with local authority premises
- 30 Back of House Operational closures. This is out of 150 back of house Operations sites that currently exist now, (eg CMG, sites, pensions centres, benefit processing sites and contact centres.
- Corporate centre hubs to be limited to six, with two current corporate centres sites closing.

Transitional Sites

A further 40 Back of House Operational sites have been labelled transitional sites which means their future is only secure for the next three years, or five years for six of the 40 sites.

Job Centres

Some of the jobcentre closures and co-locations involve the work and the staff moving to sites that are nearby and easy to get to, and a small number have no staff permanently based on the site. PCS does not expect these to be particularly contentious.

However there are 18 jobcentre closures that are outside the ministerial commitment (i.e. 2 to 3 miles distance or 20 minutes by public transport from the old site to the new site.) These are likely to cause serious difficulties for our customers who will have to face longer journeys to visit their jobcentre.

There are also some parts of the country that have been disproportionately affected by these jobcentre announcements.

Scotland

77 retentions, 15 closures, 4 co-locations

Wales

55 retentions, 3 closures, 4 co-locations

Central England

94 retentions, 6 closures, 14 co-locations, in addition to the 21 co-locations already live

London and Home Counties

77 retentions, 24 closures, 6 co-locations

North East

88 retentions, 10 closures, five co-locations

North West

73 retentions, 14 closures, 9 co-locations

Southern

94 retentions, 3 closures, 12 co-locations

Operational Back of House**Pensions Directorate**

No March 2018 closures.

4 transitional sites.

Cwmbran to re-locate to Cardiff.

CMG

Retain 6 CSACs (Hastings to move to new premises post 2018)

Operational staff in Longbenton to move to Tyne View Park

10 transitional sites

2 closures with no nearby sites (Cumnock and Bishop Auckland)

7 closures relocating to reasonably nearby sites

BSD

35 retentions, plus 47 retentions of small sites with under c.20 staff

15 transitional sites

8 closures to 'reasonably' nearby sites, including Wembley relocating to Watford

4 closures with no nearby sites (Poole, Barrow, Llanelli, Nottingham Annesley)

Universal Credit

24 retentions

Dundee to merge with HMRC Dundee circa 2021

Fraud and Compliance

5 retentions

Staff located in jobcentres will remain much as they are now but may be impacted by jobcentre closures and co-locations.

OED

2 NINO retentions

2 NINO closures to reasonably nearby sites

1 closure to reasonably nearby site yet to be acquisitioned (Glasgow)

Staff in other sites to be brigaded into new hub locations

Debt Management

8 retentions

2 transitional sites

2 closures to reasonably nearby sites

Withdrawing from Longbenton

Corporate Centre

The Corporate Centre (CC) is to be centralised into 6 hubs - Quarry House Leeds, Sheffield, Peel Park Blackpool, Caxton House London, Longbenton Newcastle, and Manchester (site yet to be acquired).

This means that the Corporate Centre will no longer have a presence in Birmingham Five Ways, Birchwood Warrington, Preston Holborn House, and Durham House. Of these it is proposed that Birchwood Warrington and Preston Holborn House will close by March 2018.

Staff in the Corporate Centre will be badged as either core corporate, corporate delivery or business partners. All staff badged as core corporate will be expected to work the majority of their time out of one of the above hubs from March 2018. This will inevitably cause serious difficulties for many members who are not currently located within travelling distance of any of the above hubs.

Sites with no announcements

There are 18 sites where DWP is unable to make an announcement as commercial negotiations have not yet concluded.

Proposals not final decisions

DWP has repeatedly stressed that what has been announced today are a set of proposals and that no final decisions have been made. They have assured PCS that, while their proposals fit in with their strategic objectives, they will listen to the feedback from staff in the sites that are proposed to close and that they will take account of the consultation with the unions that begins today.

Hotspots

There are 9 sites where it is clear there will be significant issues for members whose site is proposed to close by March 2018. These are Poole BSD, Barrow BSD, Annesley BSD, Llanelli BSD, Wembley BSD, Bishop Auckland CMG, Cumnock BSD, Holborn House CC and Birchwood CC. It is harder at this stage to gauge the impact on members of other proposed closures where at first sight the importing office is reasonably close to the exporting office. However this does not take into account where staff live which could be some distance from the importing office.

Despite only receiving notification late on Wednesday of these announcements, a GEC member was present at all of these 9 sites to support members today.

Redundancies

In some of these sites DWP recognise that redeployment is likely to be more difficult, though they will try to redeploy all staff where possible. However DWP has also acknowledged that there may be sites where exits are required, and potentially redundancies. PCS has pressed the department for a guarantee of no compulsory redundancies, but the department is not willing to give such a guarantee, however the department is committed to taking all practical and reasonable steps to avoid compulsory redundancies.

PCS Position

PCS is opposed to office closures unless they pose no issues for our members and no issues for our customers. Unfortunately many of these proposals will cause serious difficulties for many members and will impact seriously on customer service. In these cases we will oppose the closures and campaign to keep the sites open. PCS will provide full support to all branches and members in dealing with these announcements.

We will, where necessary, work to maximise redeployment options for members and will oppose any moves to make staff redundant.

Branches should use the campaign pack that was issued last summer to launch a campaign in their area if there are closures proposed in their branch.

The GEC will be considering all options in response to these announcements.

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