

# PMA News

For PCS members in **professional and managerial grades**

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## From the chair



Welcome to the autumn edition of our journal. With pressure growing on government to break the

public sector pay cap, the PCS consultative ballot result has been eagerly awaited. The lack of a fair pay rise for years means that the rate for the job of PMA members has been unfairly suppressed, and in turn this devalues the skills of professionals and managers in the public sector. This was just one of the issues that PMA members visiting our stall at Civil Service Live events in the summer raised with us. It was great to see so many members at our stall, where a number of new members were signed up on the spot, and assistant general secretary Chris Baugh addressed Q&A sessions.

A recent report by the Institute for Government **Professionalising Whitehall** called for clear funding for specialist areas including finance and project management. The report's authors, Julian McRae and Dr Jen Gold, say that developing specialist skills is vital for government to negotiate the complex challenges ahead, and for PCS this includes better access to training, and better investment in pay and reward.

On the subject of access to training, PCS has recently signed an agreement with the Fire Brigades Union allowing members access to their distance learning courses. For more information visit our [web site](http://www.pcs.org.uk)

**Paula Brown, PCS national vice president**

# Public sector pay cap overwhelmingly rejected

PCS members have voted 99% to reject the public sector pay cap with nearly 80% prepared to take part in industrial action. This sends a powerful message to the government, that we expect them to heed in the budget. We expect the government to now negotiate pay properly with PCS for the first time since national pay bargaining was ended in the early nineties. There needs to be a recognition of how the pay freeze and cap have cut the real pay of our members who have fallen further and further behind the private sector and many other parts of the public sector. If the government is serious about ending the pay gap it will need to provide the funding for inflation-proof increases and to avoid any rises paid for by further job cuts and worse terms and conditions.

This is a decisive moment and the large majority against the pay cap and for industrial action gives PCS greater leverage in talks with the government. It also helps build up support of public sector unions for the co-ordinated action that will be needed if the government ignore the views of PCS members, public sector workers and the wider public.

The turnout, a fraction short of 50%, is our best ever. We can build on the impressive turnout, to ensure we achieve the legal



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threshold in a statutory ballot, should we need to have one. Our national executive will decide what happens next. PCS continues to raise this through the TUC and in discussions with other unions.

By any definition this is a very weak government and with members' support, PCS can reverse the decline in pay suffered over many years and re-establish the right to bargain

with the government and Treasury on behalf of all our members in civil service related areas. Ending the pay cap and securing extra funding we can press for inflation proof increases and catch up ground lost over the years. We can press for reinstatement of progression rights, tackle low pay, harmonise pay across departments and agencies in line with the best arrangements and end the discredited link between pay and performance and ensure all pay arrangements are equality proofed.

We continue to lead the call for an end to the pay cap and decent pay for all our members and public sector workers. Please check out our website and PCS communications to ensure all members play their part in the [campaign](http://www.pcs.org.uk).



# Civil Service Compensation Scheme

As a result of the PCS legal challenge, the High Court declared the government's changes to the Civil Service Compensation Scheme (CSCS) were unlawful. The government was found to not "consult with a view to reaching agreement" by demanding that unions sign up to a series of detrimental changes that on average cut the redundancy payments by a third.

PCS rejected these attempts to close down consultation and the legal judgement has exposed the Cabinet Office and Tory ministers' attempt to railroad changes to make it cheaper and quicker to cut civil service jobs. It has also put thousands of pounds more in the pockets of staff who left under the 2016 terms.

Following the legal judgement the government has re-launched a consultation exercise. PCS members voted by over 90% in opposition to the cuts in redundancy payments. The government has failed to make a case for changing the 2010 terms which we were told were "fair for civil servants and fair for other taxpayers". The government did not receive the



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clear mandate it expected from the general election and is reliant on the political support of the DUP, who previously opposed changes to the CSCS. The budget will tell us whether

the government intend ploughing ahead with civil service job cuts and office closures, despite the chief executive of HMRC, John Thompson, telling the Public Accounts Committee of MPs these are "not credible".

We have tried to ensure all civil service unions adopt a common approach based on defending the 2010 terms and rejecting the 2016 terms. Alongside the Prison Officers Association, Unite and GMB, PCS was not prepared to accept Cabinet Office attempts to involve a series of breakaway organisations set up to weaken the established unions' ability to represent their members.

Unfortunately, FDA and Prospect have chosen to negotiate alongside these bodies. Of more concern is that FDA and Prospect are not prepared to argue, alongside PCS, for the retention of the 2010 terms. Instead they have, via their websites, circulars and Civil Service World, publically called for the reinstatement of the 2016 terms which involves huge cuts in the value of redundancy payments. This negotiating stance effectively concedes significant and detrimental changes to the CSCS before the negotiations even re-start.

We continue to press the government to come clean about the costs of redundancies and the cuts they hope to make.

Until we are provided with this information it is impossible to assess the size of the cost envelope or conduct meaningful negotiations. While we will continue to negotiate with the aim of reaching an agreement, we will challenge unjustified cuts in redundancy payments and a programme of job cuts and office closures that is damaging to members' interests and the public services we provide.

## E-learning for PMA members

PCS has recently agreed a deal with learning provider e-Careers to provide a discounted online education offer. This will form an important part of the professional and managers association's life-long learning provision.

Over the coming months the e-Careers platform will be available via the PCS website, offering members significant discounts on a range of quality courses that can help you progress in your career, or simply widen your extra-curricular interests and knowledge.

PCS members registered with the PMA network will be

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eligible to access discounted courses in subject areas such as:

- Project management (PRINCE2, Agile, etc)
- Leadership and management (Cache, LEADr, etc)
- Accountancy and Book-keeping (Sage, ICB, etc)
- Languages (German, French, Russian, etc)
- I.T./Networking (RESILIA, Cisco, etc).

PCS has TUC Union Learning Fund (ULF) projects in England, Scotland and Wales. The projects will publicise the e-learning offer to all union learning reps in our branches so that they can signpost members toward relevant

courses.

It is a key priority of our ULF work to tackle inequality and disadvantage in the civil service, with the aim of developing a workforce more representative of the communities we serve and are part of.

Making learning more easily accessible and affordable to all members is an important element of our learning strategy.

Some of the other learning offers currently available to PMA members, including a 10% discount on post-graduate degrees from Birkbeck College, London, can be found [here](#)

# The menopause: advice for managing women experiencing it

In the first of a two-part article, PMA News offers advice to manager members who are managing women experiencing the menopause. This part provides some background information and considers risk assessment.

## A natural process

The menopause is a natural process that will affect every woman, more than half of our members, at some stage in her life. It marks the time when a woman's periods stop. It usually happens between the ages of 45 and 54 with the average for women in the UK being 52. One in 100 women experience the menopause before they are 40, some even in their teens or twenties.

Changes in oestrogen levels as a result of the menopause can lead to significant change in a woman's health and may also lead to psychological changes. This can affect how a woman does her work, her attendance and performance at work and her relationship with her line manager and her colleagues. Often this coincides with other significant life issues outside work, including lifestyle changes, health concerns and different or new caring responsibilities.

## Noticeable symptoms

Women make up more than half our workforce. About 1 in 3 women has either experienced or is currently going through the menopause. About 80% of women will experience noticeable symptoms and of these 45% will find their symptoms hard to deal with. Symptoms may occur for two to

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five years or longer. Many women report that workplace environments and practices make these symptoms worse.

Despite the fact that it is an occupational health issue, the word menopause is absent from the vast majority of workplace policies that manager members must apply. Information and training provided by the employer to its managers in terms of managing the menopause is scant to non-existent.

Because they may still be having regular periods when they first start to get these symptoms many women do not always realise that they are experiencing the menopause and may not understand that the menopause is causing their symptoms. This can be an additional barrier, not only to accessing support, but also to raising the matter with their manager.

## Multiple equality impacts

Trans people may also be



affected by menopausal symptoms because of the natural menopause process or treatments or surgeries. A variety of factors mean the experience of the menopause may be different for those among the non-binary, transgender or intersex communities. Experiences and perceptions of the menopause may also differ in relation to age, disability, race, religion, sexual orientation or marital/ civil partnership status.

## Risk assessments

As managers you have a legal responsibility to take into account the difficulties that women may encounter during the menopause and to remove the barriers they face. Legislation requires employers to ensure the health, safety and welfare of their workers and to undertake risk assessments. These should include any specific risks to menopausal women.

Risk assessments should consider the specific needs of menopausal women and ensure that the working environment does not worsen their symptoms.

## Gender specific hazards

Risk assessments should also reflect gender specific hazards for women of menopausal age. Working in fixed and restricted positions for long periods may cause health problems. Lack of exercise and a sedentary lifestyle is linked to increased risks of osteoporosis, cancer, diabetes and cardiovascular disease in older women. Working environments and shift patterns may prevent access to natural light which can affect the body's ability to absorb calcium and can also affect mood. Calcium is essential for health in later life and can help to prevent osteoporosis – a potentially life-threatening condition – by strengthening bones.

This article will be continued in the next edition of PMA news. Part two will consider physical and psychological symptoms, together with adjustments that as managers you may be required to make in the workplace. It will also examine adjustments that may be required to conduct, attendance and performance policies to ensure women are not disadvantaged.

## RESOURCES

**Menopause matters:** [menopausematters.co.uk](http://menopausematters.co.uk)

**The British Menopause Society:** [thebms.org.uk](http://thebms.org.uk)

**NHS menopause pages:** [nhs.uk/Conditions/menopause/Pages/Symptoms.aspx](http://nhs.uk/Conditions/menopause/Pages/Symptoms.aspx)

**Women's Health concerns:** [womens-health-concern.org/help-and-advice/factsheets/focus-series/menopause](http://womens-health-concern.org/help-and-advice/factsheets/focus-series/menopause)

**Menopause Support UK:** [menopausesupport.co.uk](http://menopausesupport.co.uk)

**TUC guidance on the menopause:** [www.tuc.org.uk/sites/default/files/TUCmenopause0pdf](http://www.tuc.org.uk/sites/default/files/TUCmenopause0pdf)



# Embedding the PMA in how we organise

PMA News explores the steps being taken within the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) to further embed the PMA into everyday activities.

The majority of staff in the DWP are involved in delivery of public services. Grading reflects this. Indeed, about 86% of the DWP's staff are in grades AA–EO. You might think this would lead to a focus on these grades, but the DWP GEC has been considering how to get branches to see PMA activity as a routine part of their agenda.

If we are to improve support to PMA members, we need to understand who they are. As elsewhere, membership of the PMA itself is a fraction of its potential in DWP. The first step

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is therefore a mapping exercise, to enable branches to identify the PMA's target audience. In smaller service delivery sites this is more straightforward because of the smaller numbers, but in corporate and larger operational sites it will require some effort. It's an investment worth making with rewards in

terms of improved organisation and communications.

We need to think about how we best use existing structures. Branch organisers meet regularly with their regional counterparts, while regional organisers meet with the group organiser. To get PMA matters incorporated, the GEC has agreed that the PMA must be a standing agenda item. This should ensure that the PMA is being factored into organising plans, and progress monitored.

It's important to ensure we make good use of the tools available to promote the PMA and attract target grades. Whereas in DWP, PMA matters have traditionally been handled by the PMA advisory committee, responsibility for considering

how PMA training products developed nationally can best be used has been handed to the GEC's organising sub-committee. This helps integrate PMA learning and development into the group's wider training strategy.

Fully embedding PMA activities into the mainstream won't happen overnight. It takes time to build awareness and change attitudes. These steps taken in DWP are just the start of a process to improve organisation and levels of membership in higher grades to help us face the challenges that lay ahead. Further guidance building on the steps taken by the DWP to embed the PMA in how we organise will be issued shortly.

## PMA learning opportunities

The government has set the civil service a target of 30,000 apprenticeship starts from 2017 to 2020 (out of a total of 3 million across the whole economy). 1 April saw the introduction of a levy which deducts 0.5% of the annual pay bill at source from all UK employers with an annual pay bill over £3m to pay for apprentice training.

Unexpectedly, the number of new apprenticeships actually fell from April this year. This is largely because there has been something of a pause in apprentice recruitment while departments waited for the completion of a training provider procurement exercise. Employers did not want to bring apprentices in without some certainty on delivery of the mandatory 20% 'off-the-job' learning in place.

In September, the Crown



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Commercial Service announced the results of an OJEU 'framework' procurement, with 10 'large' and six 'medium' and 'small' providers selected to deliver apprentice training.

At the time of publication, the details of how departments will access the framework providers are still emerging. The PCS union learning projects will be exploring, alongside the PMA in the case of 'higher-level' apprenticeships, how we can work with some of these providers to access quality training for members.

Union learning reps will be the key to assisting our members to access appropriate quality training.

One provider that PCS has developed a productive relationship with, as part of the Wales Union Learning Fund project, is Call Of The Wild, a company that has now gone

into partnership with Lifetime (a firm on the new CS Framework) to also provide our members in England with training opportunities in business administration, customer service, and leadership and management.

We will update members on developments in upcoming editions of PMA News.

**PMA News** is the newsletter for PCS members in the PMA

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