

Branch Briefing BB-42-26

To: Branch Chairs, Secretaries and Workplace Representatives

24 June 2026

Civil Service Pensions Administration Crisis Update

This briefing provides branches with an update on:

- the latest meeting between PCS, other unions, and the Cabinet Office regarding the ongoing **Civil Service Pensions administration crisis**; and
- the **General Secretary's meeting with Cabinet Office Minister Satvir Kaur**.

It summarises key concerns raised by PCS, recent developments in the handling of pension cases, changes in management arrangements, media coverage, and the current operational position.

1. Overview

PCS continues to press the Cabinet Office and Capita over the serious and ongoing failures in the administration of the Civil Service Pension Scheme. The crisis remains marked by:

- unacceptable delays in processing pension cases;
- poor communication and weak accountability in relation to escalated cases;
- emerging evidence of a wider backlog than previously understood; and
- signs that the Cabinet Office may already be attempting to dilute the significance of the Minister's June deadline.

At the same time, PCS has intensified public and political pressure through national media coverage and direct engagement with Ministers.

2. Case Escalation: Ongoing Failures in Handling Overdue Cases

For some time, PCS and other unions have been raising particularly delayed and unacceptable pension cases for escalation through Capita. These cases were referred precisely because they had already gone well beyond reasonable processing times.

However, throughout much of this period, unions have repeatedly reported that these escalated cases appear to have **disappeared into the system**, with little or no feedback being provided on progress or outcomes.

At the latest meeting, the Cabinet Office informed PCS that **Capita was still considering how such escalated cases should be handled**. The Cabinet Office indicated that Capita's current proposal was that unions should simply **"bring us your top three cases."**

PCS made clear that this proposal is entirely unacceptable and inappropriate. We stated that:

- unions should not be expected to triage among already unacceptable cases;

- these are cases that were only brought forward because they were already seriously overdue;
- Capita must provide updates on the progress of the cases already escalated; and
- a robust system must be put in place to ensure unions are kept properly informed on all future cases referred to Capita for urgent attention.

PCS's position is that accountability cannot be reduced to a limited "top three" approach where systemic backlog and service failure remain unresolved.

3. Changes in Management Structure

The Cabinet Office confirmed that there will be changes in senior leadership relevant to the pensions administration crisis.

- **Richard Vianello**, the new **Pensions Director**, is expected to take up post as planned in **July**.
- At the same time, **Jane Harbottle** will assume responsibility as lead for the **Shared Services/Pensions Group** at the Cabinet Office.

PCS will monitor closely whether these leadership changes lead to any meaningful improvement in performance, transparency, and responsiveness.

4. PCS in the Media

Following PCS's reporting of statements made by the Cabinet Office during the **12 June** meeting - specifically, that the Cabinet Office did **not expect Capita to meet the 30 June deadline** for restoring contractual service levels - the union has received **extensive media coverage**.

The Cabinet Office also confirmed on 12 June that, as a consequence of Capita's ongoing failure, it would **not be standing down the approximately 160 civil servants** currently being used to help bail out the company's operations.

Since then, PCS has secured substantial media attention, including:

- a national television interview with the **General Secretary**;
- **radio** coverage;
- significant reporting in the **printed media**; and
- support for case study interviews involving **affected members and family members**.

This coverage has helped bring wider public attention to the extent of the pension administration crisis and the impact it is having on members and their families.

5. Cabinet Office Reaction to Media Coverage

At the **19 June** meeting, the Cabinet Office told PCS that it was unhappy that the union had gone to the media with the Cabinet Office's expectation that Capita would fail to meet the Minister's deadline.

PCS responded firmly that these pensions meetings are not private conversations. They are formal meetings with the Pension Scheme Manager, where unions are seeking to hold that scheme manager to account on behalf of members.

PCS made clear that the union has every right to report on matters of serious public concern, particularly where pension administration failures are affecting thousands of civil servants and pensioners.

6. Concern Over “Rewriting History” on the Ministerial Deadline

PCS also raised serious concerns about how the Cabinet Office had responded to media enquiries.

Following a journalist’s enquiry, the Cabinet Office reportedly stated that:

“The Minister for the Cabinet Office had set a deadline of the end of June for significant progress to have been made”.

However, PCS pointed out that this was **not what the Minister had originally said**. The actual requirement, as stated by the Cabinet Office Minister, was that Capita must:

“Restore service levels to standard, contractually required levels by the end of June”.

PCS emphasised that there is a **major difference** between:

- achieving “**standard, contractually required levels**”, and
- merely making “**significant progress.**”

The union therefore challenged the Cabinet Office response as an apparent attempt at “**rewriting history**” and lowering expectations in advance of the deadline.

This is an important issue because it suggests the Cabinet Office may be preparing to redefine failure as partial success, rather than holding Capita to the standard originally set.

7. Update on the Current Operational Position

The Cabinet Office provided unions with the following update on the current backlog and processing position.

Outstanding Quotes

The Cabinet Office stated that:

- **5,000 quotes** would be issued in the week ending **Sunday 21 June**;
- this would still leave a further **6,000 quotes** outstanding;
- of these remaining cases, **3,000** related to **partially retired staff**.

Older Quote Cases

The Cabinet Office also reported that there were still **750 quote cases dated before 2024**.

Of these:

- **300** related to staff who were **still working**;
- **450** involved staff who had **already retired**.

PCS asked whether any of these cases involved **deferred pensions**, but the Cabinet Office said it did **not have that level of detail** available.

Uncompleted Pension Revisions

Even though the contract is now almost **seven months old**, the Cabinet Office announced at the meeting that it had discovered **more than 18,000 pension revisions had not been completed by MyCSP**.

This is a significant revelation and indicates that the scale of the problem is broader than previously acknowledged.

Outstanding Complex Cases

The Cabinet Office further stated that:

- **1,500 of the most difficult cases** remain outstanding; but despite this
- claimed that **“new cases will be meeting the Service Level Agreement in July.”**

PCS believes these statements must be treated with extreme caution. When seen alongside the apparent attempt to soften the June deadline, they suggest that the Cabinet Office may already be preparing to redefine **“what success looks like”** rather than honestly acknowledging the extent of the ongoing failure.

8. PCS Assessment

PCS's overall assessment is that the administration crisis remains no nearer resolution.

Key concerns include:

- continuing lack of a credible process for escalated cases;
- inadequate reporting and transparency from Capita;
- a substantial backlog of pension quotes and revisions;
- a large number of complex cases still unresolved;
- uncertainty over the treatment of deferred pension cases; and
- evidence that the Cabinet Office may be lowering the bar against which Capita's performance is judged.

Taken together, these developments reinforce the union's longstanding concerns about outsourcing pension administration and the inability of the current arrangements to provide an acceptable service to members.

9. Ministerial Meeting: Satvir Kaur

On **Monday 22 June**, I met with **Satvir Kaur, Parliamentary Secretary for the Cabinet Office**.

The meeting was constructive. During the discussion, the case was again made for:

- **bringing the administration of the pension scheme back into the Civil Service**, rather than continuing with the current outsourced model; and
- ensuring that the seriousness of the June deadline is properly recognised and acted upon.

The Minister acknowledged the importance of the June deadline, and that not meeting the targets set would not be acceptable, **further discussions are expected in July**.

10. Next Steps

PCS will continue to:

- hold the Cabinet Office and Capita to account for failures in pension administration;
- demand meaningful updates on previously escalated cases;
- oppose any attempt to dilute the Minister's deadline or redefine contractual expectations;
- support members and families affected by delays and errors; and
- continue to press the case for the pension scheme administration to be brought back **in-house**.

Branches are encouraged to continue raising relevant cases and to report member experiences so that PCS can maintain pressure both publicly and in ongoing discussions with the Cabinet Office and Ministers.

Key Messages for Branches

- The pensions administration crisis is **ongoing** and remains critical.
- Capita has still not demonstrated that it can meet the required service standard.
- The Cabinet Office appears to be under pressure and may be attempting to **soften or reinterpret** the original June deadline.
- PCS has successfully raised the profile of the issue through **extensive media coverage** and ministerial engagement.
- The union continues to argue that pension administration should be **brought back into the Civil Service**.

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