pcs Public and Commercial Services Union

Briefing

Branch Briefing BB-52-26
To: Branch Chairs, Secretaries and Workplace Representatives

24 August 2026

Civil Service Pensions Crisis Update

As we reach the end of August it is disappointing to report that progress towards an acceptable standard of administration is hard to detect. We do not have sight of Capita's latest recovery plan which we assume is still being critically assessed by consultants Grant Thornton. When Parliament returns PCS will be drawing attention to the promises made in the House of Commons at the end of June that Capita's performance would be strictly audited to provide assurance that normal service, having missed the June deadline, would have been restored by now.

The latest Scheme Managers Update (link) includes various promises of improvement but little evidence of delivery. Our take on these claims is summarised below.

PCS Campaign

Today I went to Downing Street with a delegation of PCS colleagues to hand in our petition with 15,000 signatures demanding that pension administration is brought back in-house and honour the government's commitment to deliver the greatest wave of insourcing in a generation.

Parliament returns on Tuesday 1st September and we will be following this up. We will brief our Parliamentary Group on the lack of progress and our take on Capita's performance which will include the views of our members employed by Capita who work on the Civil Service Pension Scheme contract. Further thanks are due to the PCS members contacting the union with personal stories which enable us to make clear the human cost of this catastrophic service failure which is doing real reputational damage to the civil service.

Scheme Management Update

1. Full details of the post-June Recovery Plan, being produced with the assistance of consultants Grant Thornton, are awaited. The unions have made clear our reasonable expectation that the plan will be subject to proper consultation.

2. We have repeatedly raised the issue of "aged cases", many of which had been stockpiled by MyCSP, are a cause of extreme distress and hardship, and have not been resolved despite the obvious urgency. The Scheme has belatedly secured assistance from experts in the Government Actuaries Department (GAD).

3. Some scheme members will start to see 2025/26 Annual Benefit Statement (ABS) information online from next week. The completion of ABS provision, promised for this month, will take place by mid-September.

4. Scheme Management has responded to the confusion caused by Capita's insistence on introducing identity verification, requiring the submission of certified documents, by agreeing to the use of credit referencing agencies. We await consultation on the process to be used and the timing of the change.

5. Management of the Civil Service Pension Scheme remains the responsibility of the new Office of the Prime Minister and Cabinet (OPMC). It will sit within the operational arm known as One Gov, under a second Permanent Secretary, Clive Maxwell. Richard Vianello is the Director of Pensions.

Meeting Capita

Managers from Capita attended a meeting with the unions on 21st September. Discussion focussed on the arrangements for escalating cases where there seems to be something preventing processing, beyond the known delays. This includes categories such as bereavement and ill health retirement, where Ministers gave assurances of priority which were not delivered, and also the "aged cases", where scheme members have been deprived of pension for many months or even years. PCS and our sister unions made clear our reasonable expectation that all such union escalations must result in a response from Capita. There being no argument made against this, we look forward to being better sighted on the resulting action taken.

How to complain

PCS advice when raising complaints via the Capita Contact Centre is not to rely on getting it your chest but to make sure your complaint is formally recorded for future reference. Scheme members should register for the member portal and use the Capita messaging facility. Alternatively scheme members can write to Civil Service Pension Scheme, PO Box 713, Darlington, DL1 9JZ.

The Pensions Ombudsman can direct the scheme manager or administrator to compensate for distress and inconvenience. Follow the complaints procedure which is the route to using the Independent Dispute Resolution process. In instances of extreme delay, which is the typical experience now, the issue of compensation for distress and inconvenience is bound to arise. It is important that complaints are followed up by submitting Form IDR1 to start the process. Remember that the Pension Ombudsman will only consider cases that have been taken up via the IDR process.

Action by Branches

Our retiring members refuse to shut up and accept this appalling service as the new normal. They have been brilliant and are the backbone of our campaign. We know the campaign will be needed for many months to come.

Branches should discuss how to make sure we ask every fully retiring colleague to join PCS ARMs. (Partial retirees remain full members of the union and may be due a subscription reduction).

Ask all members to:

- Demand insourcing and an end to the pensions crisis by completing our e-action.
- Ask your MP to demand the Synergy payroll and HR contract is paused

- Contact editor@pcs.org.uk where members have been forced to continue working

Fran Heathcote PCS General Secretary

www.pcs.org.uk @pcs union @PcsUnion