pcs | Public and Commercial Services Union

Briefing

Branch Briefing BB-78-26
To: Branch Chairs, Secretaries and Workplace Representatives

2 November 2026

PCS Meets with Cabinet Office Recovery Team

Following Minister Sally Jameson's oral statement to Parliament (26 October) PCS met again with the Cabinet Office Recovery Team, on 27 and 30 October 2026. This briefing reports and comments on specific actions being taken by the Cabinet Office.

Cabinet Office Steering Group

A high-powered group of officials, drawn from across Whitehall, has been set up by Deputy Pensions Director, Jane Harbottle. The group will be overseeing a new recovery programme based on **five workstreams:**

1. **Complex Casework**

Focusing on the most challenging and long-standing cases, many of which have remained unresolved for extended periods. This is intended to address the backlog of cases requiring significant investigation or specialist intervention. Capita is required to deliver a detailed action plan specifically aimed at resolving complex cases. According to Capita the approach will be to address the root causes of ongoing delays and outstanding work as well as to resolve individual cases.

2. **Normal Process Casework**

Covering less complex cases and routine customer interactions. This includes standard queries, quotations and more straightforward pieces of casework requiring resolution.

3. **Other Casework**

To deal with the work such as transfers valuations and revisions which have been stockpiled for too long following by Capita. Cases will be categorised according to complexity and urgency.

4. **Projects**

Designed to ensure that major programmes and exercises are progressed alongside backlog recovery work to ensure that important work is not delayed by operational recovery. This will include the planned completion of the **McCloud Remedy** about which there will be a further Ministerial Statement.

5. **Technology**

To improve the systems and infrastructure that underpin service delivery and deal with Capita's failure to deliver system upgrades to support the required level of service.

Backlogs reveal the massive task

Ahead of our meeting on 30 October 2026, the Cabinet Office published Pensions Taskforce Update 19

The update showed that on 5 October there were around 150,000 cases outstanding; which means that even if there were no new cases coming in, the backlog would still amount to just short of two months' total average intake.

The report goes on to say that there are 1,200 fewer complex cases which are more than 3 months old, and within that there are 500 fewer over 6 months old. However, that still means there's a backlog of **20,600 complex cases** that are more than 3 months old; of which:

- **9,600 cases** are more than 6 months old, including
- **1,700 cases** that are older than a year.

Specific assurances

As has been the case in previous meetings, assurances were given by the Cabinet Office that affected members would receive improved communication and support; and that Capita has undertaken to:

- Write to every member whose case is designated as complex with the next month.
- Provide regular progress updates every two weeks, intended to keep members informed of developments and expected timescales.
- Allocate complex cases to a dedicated specialist team.
- Establish a specialist telephone helpline to provide members with a direct point of contact.
- Identify skills and capability gaps within Capita, followed by the development and implementation of a capability-building programme, to strengthen expertise and improve performance.

PCS Assessment

While the recovery plan does contain some welcome commitments around communication, dedicated resources and capability building, many of these assurances are remarkably similar to previous promises made by the company – the delivery of which has simply failed to materialise.

PCS will continue to work with the Scheme Management and to press for:

- Evidence of the establishment and monitoring of clear performance targets and delivery milestones.
- Clear reporting on backlog reduction, with regular, specific updates showing whether the recovery plan is delivering measurable improvements for members facing delays.
- Evidence that skills and resourcing issues are being dealt with.
- Assuring the quality and timeliness of member communications.
- A proper response from Capita to every member's case we escalate.

Based on the unions consistent work to protect scheme members, particularly since the announcement in 2024 that Capita had been given the administration contract, PCS believes that the only way to provide genuine assurance of future service is to bring pensions administration back in-house. Therefore, whilst we acknowledge the genuine efforts being made to bail Capita out in the short-term, we will continue to advocate more decisive action in the face of a catastrophic failure. The extent of the Cabinet Office intervention required at this point, and the cost to the taxpayer of providing it, is powerful evidence in support of our case.

Advice for members

- Complaints to Capita about non-receipt of quotes should be made via Contact Us
- The Internal Dispute Resolution (IDR) process is the route to compensation for distress and inconvenience see complaints procedure
- On reaching their last day of service retiring members can
- join PCS ARMs
- Ask your colleagues to contact their MP to demand the Synergy payroll and HR contract awarded to Capita is paused
- Email editor@pcs.org.uk with stories about the effect of all this on the lives of our members.

Fran Heathcote PCS General Secretary

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