

Strike action on May 10 puts the public sector pensions dispute back on track. Now let's organise to win!



All out on M10

The decision by UCU's National Executive to support national strike action on May 10 means that up to 470,000 public sector workers will strike on that day. Unite members in health and the Ministry of Defence, the PCS, NIPSA, RMT and UCU are all now committed to joint action. This means that public sector workers from three sectors' pension schemes will be taking action together.

Solidarity in the form of collections and twinning between branches on strike and those in unions not on strike will be crucial to the success of the M10 strike

This will be the biggest strike in defence of our pensions since November 30. Even the Police Federation is planning to send a delegation of 20,000 officers to the London demonstration in defence of pensions on that day.

Meanwhile the NUT is also planning more action this June and is in negotiations with its sister teaching unions. The call by Dave Prentis of Unison for the TUC to organise 'the biggest demonstration in our labour movement's history' against austerity in the autumn is also a sign that the movement against the Tory-led coalition's austerity policies has taken a significant step forward.

Failing austerity policies

Now that the economy has slipped back into another recession it is even more important that we hit back over the attacks on our pensions. The effects of austerity measures can be seen right across Europe – mass unemployment, rising poverty and misery.

This month TPS members have seen the first of three instalments of those effects, cutting our take home pay by £30-£40 through increased employee pension contributions.

We need a strategy to win

We all recognise that the joint one-day strikes have played an important part in raising the profile of our campaign to defend fair pensions for all. Many of us believe, however, that we have to escalate the campaign if we are to win. That is what we have been arguing for some time in the UCU. A series of one-day strikes over a course of a year, successful as they have been, will not by themselves stop the Government's plans.

Some members have started to question the validity of losing another day's pay by taking strike action if it is not part of a more extensive strike action programme.

In UCU, we are proud of the role our union has played in this campaign. We have wholeheartedly supported every strike day. Now we need a

strategy that can take advantage of the Government's weakness, and escalate action in conjunction with other public sector unions.

Escalation and coordination

We are engaged in **both** a series of *trade disputes* over the different pensions schemes, **and** a *political and industrial* campaign against the Government's austerity measures.

UCU should propose to all the rejectionist unions that on M10 we announce an extensive timetable of action for the summer and autumn.

The extent to which we will be successful in our trade dispute over TPS will depend in part on how well we harness the general public and trade union opposition to the Government's attacks on the welfare state.

That is why it is now important that together we develop a clear plan for future action. We therefore urge the members and the leaderships of all the rejectionist unions to commit themselves to develop urgently a programme of escalating rolling regional and national strike action.

This should include protests and demonstrations, starting now and continuing into the early autumn, which can bring about the necessary pressure to deliver the victory which is within our grasp.

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