

The Unite logo, featuring the word 'Unite' in white, slanted text on a red background.

# ACTION LERT



[www.unitetheunion.org](http://www.unitetheunion.org)

## UNITE LAY COMMITTEES REJECT GOVERNMENT IMPOSITIONS WHILE TALKS CONTINUE ON PENSIONS

The three National Committees representing Unite members in the public sector pension's dispute have all met in January and resoundingly rejected the government's imposition of changes that would see members working longer and paying more to get less.

Members of the unions Local Government, Health Service and MOD / Government Departments National Sector Committees voted to continue the fight for decent pensions for all and to oppose unwarranted and unacceptable attacks on public sector workers to pay for a crisis caused by irresponsible 'spivs' in the city.

### Unite 'stays in' representing your views!

While the false timetable and 'Heads of Agreement' document was not an acceptable way forward for Unite we are of course continuing to argue with both government and employers for alternatives through ongoing negotiations.

**"While the city prepares to pop the champagne corks on £4.5 billion in bonuses, decent hard working people face pay cuts, longer working, job insecurity and the slashing of local services"**

Despite what some are wrongly claiming, **Unite is not excluded from negotiations in any of the schemes** – we have taken a principled position on rejecting the government's attempts to undermine the schemes but this does not mean we have no voice or that our views and those of our members are not valid as discussions progress!

### How do we continue the fight inside the talks?

Since the government first announced its attack on the public sector Unite has been clear that destroying public services - alongside a devastating cuts programme costing some 1.5 million public and private sector jobs - is not only unnecessary, unwarranted and unacceptable but is economically insane!

During the deepest recession we have seen for generations it is vital that we keep money flowing around our economy, into our high streets and retail parks; supporting local employment, our manufacturing sector, transport companies and service providers. **We have to grow our way out of recession and to do that we need to keep money in the hands of those who spend it – YOU!**

The fantastic demonstrations held on 26 March and 30 November 2011 showed the strength of support amongst decent people across our nations and communities for an alternative. The strike action taken on 30 November was a clear message to government that our nations demand a change in direction. A demand supported by hundreds of thousands who joined demonstrations and rallies in towns and cities across the UK. The government however, continues on its course of destruction and the question now is what next?

*Keeping you up to date and informed  
Supporting our members **fighting back***

Unites **Executive Council** met in special session on 19 January and reconfirmed its absolute support for our members and their decision to reject the government's proposals. Your EC also unanimously pledged its continuing support for any future actions planned by the sectors. **Discussions will now take place within the sectors on what action is felt appropriate and the timetable for this, ensuring as best as we can, that our efforts are coordinated both within and outside of the union.**

It is clear to many that a more strategic approach to any further action is required and that a successful plan will need to bring together as many of the unions involved as possible. In this regard the situation is fast changing and the government's further announcements of a two year pay cap of 1% on top of the existing two year pay freeze for millions, brings a new dimension to these discussions. As a consequence of this imposition **the average public sector employee will be 16% worse off before any additional increases to pension contributions are applied!**

### **The final decision will be made by our members!**

As with other unions involved in these talks, discussions will now take place with our members as the talks continue. It is vital that we maintain the pressure on government to see sense and revise its proposals before negotiations conclude. Whatever transpires at the end of the process, we are very clear that any final offer will be put to our membership and it is only **our members affected by these changes that will decide whether any offer is good enough or not.**

**We are rightly proud of our lay member democracy!**

**“the decision to impose a new two year pay cap on public sector workers brings a new dimension to this dispute – we will not sit back and see workers pay cut by an average of 16%, pensions slashed and services decimated”**

### **Meanwhile the attack continues!**

Not satisfied with demolishing the welfare state and privatising national assets, the government is launching further attacks on paid facility time<sup>1</sup>, access to employment tribunals, health and safety regulation and wider employment rights. It is clear that this adds up to a concerted attack by the Tory's on your trade union organisation and our ability to collectively protect and advance the interests of working people<sup>2</sup>.

The deepening economic crisis, privatisation of our NHS, cuts to benefits for the vulnerable, failure to meet growing demands for social housing and devastation of our public services represent a serious threat to the social fabric of our nations we have nurtured over the past 60 years. **We have a duty to organise the broadest possible coalition of resistance to these attacks, to defend our members, our public institutions and to protect the vulnerable within our communities!**

Whatever challenges we face I am confident that we can face them together and united. I am also confident that if we do so as a labour movement, we can win.

In solidarity



**Len McCluskey**  
**General Secretary**

<sup>1</sup> See previous Unite Action Alert 'The facts about trade union facility time'

<sup>2</sup> See Unite Alternative Bulletin 'Fair trade union and employment rights'

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