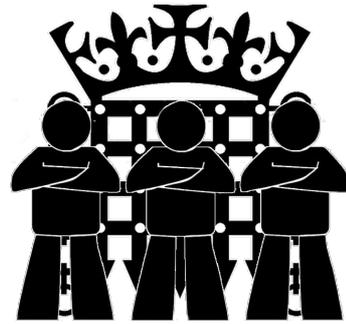


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RESIST THE CIVIL SERVICE REFORM PLAN

TERMS & CONDITIONS UNDER ATTACK • TIME FOR ALL CIVIL SERVANTS TO FIGHT BACK

A LEAKED LETTER from the Cabinet Office to the HR Directors of all Civil Service Departments has brought home the scope and scale of the government's attacks on workers terms and conditions. Plans include lengthening the working week, cutting leave entitlements and making cuts to a whole raft of employment benefits.

Plans to amend terms and conditions were first revealed with the publication of the Civil Service Reform Plan back in June. Back then, the government clearly outlined a plan for mass privatisation, worse conditions and faster sackings. However, what wasn't expected was the time-scale: terms and conditions are expected to be ready for the bonfire by 31 December 2012.

Documents attached to the letter reveal that the government's "benchmarks" include slashing annual leave by five days, removing or "re-branding" privilege leave, dramatically reducing occupational sick pay and even adding contractual "mobility" clauses that could force civil servants to move anywhere in the country and to any department as the government requires.

Though the letter insists that the civil service "continues to be a good employer," the intent is clear. By seeking to cut and roll back working conditions on the basis that they might not be available elsewhere, the government is clearly engaging a race to the bottom.

Anger

Already, the leak has provoked widespread anger from civil servants. Following the imposition of a pay freeze and being forced to work longer, pay more and get less for their pension - not to mention the threat of thousands of job cuts hanging over their heads - this is the final straw for many. Even non-union members and previously un-politicised workers are up in arms over this calculated attack.

The question now is whether that anger can be galvanised into the kind of action that will stop

these changes. For this to happen, there is a sense of urgency by which we must begin fighting back now.

Union response

PCS is so far the only civil service union to respond to the changes. They have vowed to "talk to other unions" and "raise the issue" in parliament, but little else. There is a strong chance that they will hold fire until 16th November – the deadline for departments to produce draft proposals – in the hope of negotiating.

However, the Cabinet Office has already set clear benchmarks on the reductions it expects. We know that significant reductions in our hard won terms and conditions are coming. There should be no negotiation on this.

A rank-and-file response

Rather than waiting for the changes to start falling into place, this attack must be resisted **now**. When the union calls action, we must be prepared to support it, but equally we should be prepared to take action even where it doesn't.

The Civil Service Rank & File Network has been established for that very purpose. We are calling for a campaign, starting immediately, with the aim of stopping these reforms in their tracks.

Our demands are simple:

- No increase in the working week;
- No reductions in leave entitlements, including parental and special leave;
- Scrap all plans to change terms and conditions to the detriment of staff;
- Reverse all such changes already implemented (e.g. HMRC's attendance management policy).

We call on all civil servants affected, whether in a union or not, to join our fight. An injury to one is an injury to all, and together we can resist these attacks on our working lives.

Read the leaked documents in full at:

<http://libcom.org/news/more-leaks-expose-depth-attack-civil-service-terms-conditions-16102012>

Civil Service Rank & File Network

Who We Are

The CSRF is a brand new initiative from civil servants determined to resist the numerous attacks being levelled at us by the government and our employers. We seek to establish a presence across the civil service that can unite workers to take action in defence of our own interests.

We operate inside and beyond the trade unions with the goal of pushing them into action where we can and taking it ourselves where we can't.

What We Stand For

Rank and file control

Decisions should be made collectively. This means they are made by mass meetings and workers on the job, not by officials in union offices. These mass meetings should ideally include all those in the workplace, regardless of union membership – including temporary, agency and outsourced staff. They should not, however, include those responsible for implementing the decisions we are fighting (usually senior management) or those hostile to our organising efforts (such as scabs).

Direct action

Direct action at work means tactics such as strikes, go-slows, working-to-rule, occupations and boycotts. We are opposed to the alternative which is 'partnership' with bosses and sham 'consultations'. Workers can only win serious concessions from management when direct industrial action is used or when bosses fear it might be.

Solidarity

Solidarity with other workers is the key to victory - workers should support each others' disputes regardless of any anti-strike laws. We need to approach other workers directly for their support, and where possible attempt to extend our struggles beyond all artificial boundaries. We seek to rebuild a culture where all workers know a picket line is not to be crossed.

Publicity

Victimisation, sacking and blacklisting are real risks for union activists, even from established unions such as PCS. The CSRF aims to have a presence in all workplaces. However as a rule of thumb, a rank-and-file workplace presence will not publicly announce itself until either organising efforts cannot be advanced without doing so, or members are confident they have the organisational strength and solidarity of their colleagues to resist attempts at victimisation.

WORKPLACE COMMITTEES

The CSRF is not a top-down endeavour, so its success depends on the willingness of all workers to take up the struggle and push the campaign forward. This is not an easy task, but the whole point of the network is to provide support for those who think something must be done.

The primary building block of the network is the workplace committee. Whilst one worker can make a difference by distributing bulletins and promoting campaigns, this is a lot of work for a single person and also leaves them open to victimisation.

We should therefore seek to build groups of militant workers prepared to organise direct action – 'workplace committees' – which would organise independently in the workplace. These committees would of necessity start of small, amongst friends and colleagues we know want to make a difference, but hopefully expand to encompass increasing numbers of civil servants who refuse to lay down and see their terms and conditions eroded.

The workplace committee's activity will involve organising workplace assemblies to make collective decisions on workplace issues. In this way do we seek to build collective direct action, organise independently of union structures and seek to build an organised rank-and-file presence on the shop floor.

Each workplace committee is autonomous, subject to the basic principles described on the left, and linked through the broader Rank-and-File Network. The Network should in turn aid the development of workplace committees and help in spreading information and disputes beyond individual workplace boundaries.

Want to be involved in the Civil Service Rank & File Network?

Whether you're an individual looking to get more active or you've established a workplace committee locally, you can count on the support of the wider CSRF Network.

Get in touch: CSRFnetwork@gmail.com

 Find us on
Facebook
fb.com/rankn.filecivilservant

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