



East Kilbride Revenue and Customs Branch

UNITY IS STRENGTH

Branch Autumn General Meeting

Wednesday 15th November - 2:00pm

Agenda

1. Chair's welcome and opening remarks

Scott welcomed everyone and thanked members for attending. Here to discuss and update members on Group and National campaigns and give away some prizes.

Apologies from Janice, was attending a Conference in Birmingham and her flight has been delayed but sends her solidarity.

2. Group Update

John Davidson. Apologies for lack of preparation due to unforeseen circumstances and leave prior to today.

Three main points to cover today, main priorities for workers across public and private sector. Jobs, Brexit and Pay

Jobs - Civil Service, HMRC in particular being dominated by threat of office closures and Building Our Future programme, Looking at 90% of offices closing over next few years, replaced by 13 RC's and 5 Specialist sites.

Original announcement three years ago was that plan was finalised and would be going ahead as per announcement. Reality is programme hasn't mentioned once how recovery of tax will improve, how local economies will be impacted or positive vision of what HMRC will look like.

What we have seen is startling number of redundancies. When programme started, 90% of staff would be within RDT of RC and have a job for them in new Centre. In comparison, nowhere near this target and now trying to deny

this was stated. 90% isn't true statement, instead 10% is minimum redundancy target.

Chief Exec is claiming as time goes on we will meet this target but not on target now due to offices closing at current time. However this is not supported by any evidence and as BoF continues, PCS identifying likelihood of more redundancies being made across the Department.

Imperative that we continue to campaign on BoF in a positive manner. We have achieved changes in the programme already, with some offices being retained or extended due to work of PCS, including local campaigning by reps and members in branches across the country.

Ipswich, Welsh Language Centre, Leeds and additional space in Birmingham announced along with changes in East Kilbride where more staff will be based in East Kilbride for a longer period of time.

Branches have been making point on staff numbers for some time and management have accepted this, leading to recent announcement over changes in the Glasgow region. Current timetable is Plaza will close within 2 years with staff moving to Queensway House but for staff in QWH to judge whether this is manageable but currently this is the plan and we will continue to campaign for jobs to remain in East Kilbride permanently.

Brexit - Will touch on very quickly. In terms of impact on HMRC, very interesting given we're 4 months away from exiting EU and do not expect a 2nd referendum as this could set dangerous precedent.

Decision has been made in original vote. What Brexit will mean is huge amount of changes for HMRC. Contacts involved expect it will be a huge challenge not just in the coming months but beyond. HMRC working towards a 'No Deal' situation and expect this will be the final outcome, despite current press reports.

For some time HMRC have been trying to work with one arm behind their back and we have recently been approached by a senior management member asking for PCS assistance to help manage Brexit and movement of staff required to deal with it.

Current promise is there will be no job cuts and additional staff are required to handle the expected workload that will arise through Brexit but difficult for Dept to manage as cannot be seen to undermine the Government.

Members may wish to watch Question Time tonight which will be featuring PCS General Secretary, Mark Serwotka, which will allow our union to put forward PCS' position on the issue of Brexit.

Pay - Wrapped up in pay is other T&C's.

First time speaking to members following announcement of pay remit as was unable to take part in recent meetings.

Notes thanks to every member who took part in recent ballot, disappointing result due to anti TU laws but must reflect that outcome was still best result for PCS in history and we will be going back out to members in future and with lessons learned expects we will be able to achieve the right result and break the threshold with members support and participation during any ballot.

Issue will come back into sharp focus before any ballot. Currently in fortnightly discussions with HMRC, led by HR Director, which is looking at 2019 pay. Not referred to as Pay, but pay and contract reform negotiations.

Dept are clear that additional pay must include changes to T&C's for any proposals to be put to the Treasury for agreement. So far though no concrete proposals on what these changes will mean, view that many T&C's have already been cherry picked for little in return and little left to negotiate with.

Flexi, weeking working hours are two which may be looked at. PCS position is we already have criteria for making case without further detrimental changes given success of Dept over past decade in terms of tax gap and compliance yields.

Recent consultations from pay meetings on PCS pay claim showed feedback shows members feel amount of claim is too little given real terms cuts to pay in light of inflation. Expect an offer from HMRC next month as any offer that comes to PCS would need be put to members in order to consult in time for pay offer to be implemented on schedule.

Union has given firm commitment that decision will be by members through full consultation and not taken by any Committee, albeit GEC will make recommendation on any offer made.

3. Question and Answers

Q. Thought it was obvious when Thompson came to HMRC that out T&C's were always on the line. My concern is recent influx of new staff means balance will swing in favour of employer in any ballot.

A. Absolutely certain that Dept will crunch the numbers on staff to see what outcomes would be from any potential offer. Job of work for us to do in speaking to newer colleagues, not just in HMRC but across Civil Service where pay deals are being made that exceed those in HMRC e.g. Scottish Government.

Do share concerns but don't believe it is a done deal that this would come to pass.

Q. Would negotiations include for current year or for April 19 onwards.

A. For 2019 onwards as current year is over already.

Q. At last meeting was the ballot an official or indicative ballot? Vast majority of newer members are not traditionally members. We face public battle in terms of support but also issue in terms of ourselves given we have several hundred people who are not members and seeds of division have been sown and people are fearful of taking any action. Discussion on pay is last chance saloon for the union, defeat will finish us but victory on a 51/49 basis will still be a divided membership. Members don't believe we can achieve the £1200 and don't want the pain but want the gain and don't believe PCS have the ability to achieve the type of campaign we need.

A. Easy to think like that but I reject this. Trade union is only as strong as it's members and when it comes to challenging we don't need to look to other union's but other groups of PCS members.

MoJ recently had similar offer to what we expect from HMRC and over 70% of members voted with over 90% rejecting offer and this was led by grassroots members, not union hierarchy.

Also recently won in DWP over check off, a much bigger attack on union than anything PCS can be accused of and also we have had victory over CSCS which has seen members receiving thousands more under redundancy.

Accept it's never been harder to be a TU member in the public sector but cannot get better without members participation.

We will be fighting in and outside of negotiations but we will be asking members to stand up and play their part by speaking to colleagues and getting more people involved.

Scott - Training sessions planned for beginning of December in both Plaza and Queensway over an hour in lunchtimes to give members an opportunity to come together and consider what part we can all pay in the pay campaign when any move to ballot takes place.

Q. Many years' experience, husband does same job but I'll never get to his pay level or be able to retire at the same time which highlights unfairness of current pay situation.

A. Accept HMRC position is pathetic. Been here over 10 years and still barely off minimum of my pay grade. Pay meetings highlighted members want pay progression as one of our bargaining agenda items on pay.

Is there an option to include jobs as part of pay negotiations? Potential of RDT being looked at for example.

Q. Lot of new managers coming in who are enforcing rules on staff e.g. being logged in for shift start time, that have not been the case.

A. Has been raised previously if still happening then should be raised to local reps again,

4. Prize Draw

1 st prize	-	Ticket 97 (Fiona Petrie)
2 nd prize	-	Ticket 69 (Andy Nairn)
3 rd prize	-	Ticket 70 (Kerry Nairn)

5. Any other business

No other business raised.

Scott noted thanks to everyone for attending, if there are any issues you have not been able to raise then please contact a local rep. And best wishes for the holiday season.