

Minutes of the PCS Assembly Cross-Party Group AGM held on Wednesday, 17th September 2014 in Conference Room 'D', Ty Hywel

Present: Julie Morgan AM (chair); Mick Antoniw AM; Mike Hedges AM; Bethan Jenkins AM; Alison Burrowes (PCS); Siân Wiblin (PCS); Darren Williams (PCS).

Apologies: Rhodri Glyn Thomas AM.

1. AGM business:

- election of chair & vice-chair: Julie Morgan was re-elected unopposed as chair and Rhodri Glyn Thomas as vice-chair.
- re-registration of Group with Table Office: the Group's details were re-entered on the registration form.
- Action: Julie's office to contact AMs from those parties not represented at the meeting, to ask them to sign the form, and then re-submit it to the Table Office.
- review of activities over past year and plans for 2014/15: the Group had held only one meeting over the previous twelve months – in December 2013, when the main issues discussed had related to job losses and office closures in HM Revenue & Customs. Group members had, however, supported PCS members on numerous other occasions, not least when they had taken industrial action. It was agreed that the aim should be to return to the previous practice of three meetings per year and that provisional dates should be agreed in advance, as far as possible, for the whole year. It was also agreed that PCS should aim to provide Group members with early notice of any industrial action or other campaign initiatives undertaken by its members.
- Action: PCS to circulate provisional dates a.s.a.p.
- AOB: none.

2. Updates on current issues:

- national dispute with UK government: PCS gave an update on the ongoing dispute with the UK government over a series of issues, including job cuts, pension cuts and privatisation. The main focus in recent months had been the Treasury's 1% pay cap, which was being applied throughout the civil service (including the devolved sector, which was nominally autonomous in this regard) and the wider public sector. PCS members had taken a day's strike action on 10th July, jointly with Unison, Unite and GMB members in local government and members of the FBU and NUT. The local government unions were due to take further action on 14th October and an announcement was expected soon as to whether PCS members would also be involved. The UK government was also promoting the withdrawal by Whitehall departments of the longstanding 'check-off' arrangements, whereby union membership subs were deducted directly from members' salaries. The Home Office had already announced the end of check-off and the union was therefore engaged in a major campaign to encourage all members to sign up to pay by direct debit. Fortunately, there was no threat to end check-off in the Welsh or Scottish devolved areas.
- pay dispute in National Museum Wales: PCS gave an update on the dispute, which had been prompted by changes to pay arrangements announced by management, which would involve cutting premium payments received by staff for working weekends and bank holidays and making these payments non-pensionable. Premium payments made up a significant proportion of the take-home pay of lower-

paid grades; more senior staff were far less affected by the changes. Some staff were paid less than the Living Wage and, while management was seeking to address this, it would be offset by the loss of premium payments. There had been no cost-of-living increase for several years; the unions had asked for negotiations on this to be uncoupled from the premium payments issue but this had not happened. A series of half-day strikes had been undertaken over three weekends in August. Management had delayed the imposition of the changes to premium payments, pending a front-of-house review. PCS had sought to speak directly to the Museum's trustees but had been refused.

Action: Group to write to the chair of trustees, urging them to meet with the unions; Group also to write to Ken Skates, the new deputy minister responsible for culture.

- pay dispute in National Library of Wales: PCS, Prospect and FDA members in the National Library had taken a day's strike action on 10th September in pursuit of their pay dispute. The majority of staff had not had a consolidated pay increase since 2009 and this year management have not even sought a remit to pay any increase at all. Bad feeling had also been created by the decision by the new Librarian to award a 10% pay increase (since withdrawn) to a member of the senior management team and to change unilaterally the established machinery for negotiation and consultation. Pay in the Library was now seen as uncompetitive, as reflected by the recent departure of 24 staff, 17 to take up better-paid jobs elsewhere.

Action: PCS to circulate detailed briefing paper to the Group; Group to write to Museum trustees, expressing concern about the situation.

- AOB: PCS gave an update on the campaign against privatisation of MoJ Shared Services, which employs 700 staff in Newport and 150 in Bootle. Despite well-supported strike action over the summer, the contract with the new provider, SSCL, was due to be signed very soon and the union was now concentrating on trying to secure some protection for staff wishing to remain in the civil service or take voluntary redundancy.

Action: Group to write to the Justice Secretary, Chris Grayling, supporting the union's position and expressing concern about the expected offshoring of Shared Service work.