

UCU Cymru Newsletter

Government Attacks Teachers Pension Scheme (TPS)

The government is planning an unprecedented attack on Public Sector Pensions, including the Teachers Pension Scheme. This threatens to leave school teachers and university and college lecturers thousands of pounds worse off.

Possible changes include:

- Updating pensions in line with the Consumer Price Index instead of the present Retail Price Index. This will cut the value of our pensions by up to 15%!
- 3% increase in employee contributions despite a fall in our pension benefits.
- Pensions to be calculated on a career average rather than the present final salary calculation – a change designed to cut pensions for thousands of lecturers.

UCU Cymru President, Guy Stoate, stated:

“UCU believes these attacks are totally unnecessary and completely unacceptable. This is a naked attempt by this Con-Dem coalition to make public sector workers pay for a crisis caused by irresponsible and greedy bankers.

UCU will not stand by and allow the government to drive down the value of our members pensions. We need to fight these cuts now”

Whilst final details have yet to be finalised UCU is planning to ballot for strike action across the UK during February. It is hoped that we can co-ordinate action with other teaching unions. The NUT is already discussing a strike ballot in the near future.

It may be possible to co-ordinate the ballot with the pay ballot taking place in England in February. It is therefore vital that Welsh branches ensure that their membership lists are ready for the ballot. Branch Officers are urged to start membership checks so that we are ready for the ballot as soon as possible. As the law stands inaccurate membership lists can allow the courts to declare a ballot unlawful.

Teachers Pensions are Affordable

As even Lord Hutton's report makes clear the payment of pension benefits from unfunded public sector schemes such as TPS is actually scheduled to fall from a peak of 1.5% of GDP in 2011 to less than 1.1% over the next fifty years.

Like the majority of public sector pension schemes, agreed reforms were made to the TPS in January 2007 to make the cost of the scheme sustainable for the future.

This included increased contributions, a higher pension age for new entrants and agreement to limit future employers' contributions to 14%.

UCU, like other trade unions with members in TPS, are clear that any changes should only come about as a result of the valuation of the scheme and the agreement we have already entered into. We have written to the secretary of state that unless this is confirmed we will be balloting for action.

Members will receive ballot papers at their home addresses in separate envelopes. Further information to follow soon.

Keeping up the Pressure:

Rallies and demonstrations against public sector and education cuts are to be held in London and Manchester on Sat 29th Jan. UCU is supporting both events and is urging members to attend whichever is easier to get to.

Branches are urged to hold meetings as soon as possible to start campaigning for a YES vote in the ballot. Publicity and campaigning material will be going out to branches soon.

It is vital that branches and LA's send delegates to the SPECIAL COUNCIL MEETING being arranged to organise for YES vote in the ballot.

SPECIAL COUNCIL MEETING	
DATE:	Saturday, 15th January 2011
VENUE:	Churchills Hotel, Cardiff
TIME:	10.30 AM

UCU Cymru Congress:

Congress is to be held on Saturday 5th March in Cardiff. Branches are urged to submit motions as soon as possible and to elect delegates and observers. This year's key note speaker will be Education Minister Leighton Andrews. The closing date for delegate registration, motions and nominations is **15 January 2011**.