

UNIONS TOGETHER FIGHTING TO



**JOINT UNION STRIKE TEAM
PRESS RELEASE**

EMBARGOED UNTIL 10.30AM WEDNESDAY 15 MARCH 2006

MASSIVE STRIKE DAY LOOMING OVER CUTS TO LOCAL GOVERNMENT PENSIONS

Over one million of the country's most essential public sector workers will go on strike on 28 March to protest at unfair and unjust cuts to local government pensions, the Joint Union Strike Team (JUST) announced today. The strike is planned because the Government refuses to give protection for existing members of their pension scheme.

Members of nine of the country's biggest unions have overwhelmingly voted "YES" to strike action because the Government and the Local Government Association refuse to pay out what they promised on the Local Government Pension Scheme (LGPS).*

The Government wants to get rid of the Rule of 85, with only limited protection for existing members. LGPS members will have to keep working until they are 65, even though they have been paying 6% of their salary into the pension scheme and planning for their retirement for years.

UNISON, the UK's biggest union, has the largest number of members affected. Chairing today's press conference, UNISON General Secretary Dave Prentis said:

"Over 80% of UNISON members voted in favour of this strike action to support LGPS members. By refusing to pay out on the LGPS, especially when they have given protection to every other government pension scheme, the Government has destroyed the retirement plans of tens of thousand of public sector workers.

"These essential public sector workers have had enough of being told they're to blame for rising council tax increases. LGPS pensions cost just 2.7 pence of the council tax pound, so don't be fooled into believing that these people are to blame.

"It is simply immoral that the employers' association doesn't come clean and admit that they have already spent the pension funds paid in good faith by LGPS members. This is a pensions con.

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“Civil servants, teachers, police, firefighters and the NHS have all been given protection for existing members of their pension schemes, so there is absolutely no rhyme or reason in singling out LGPS members for such unfair and unjust treatment.

“The Government must extend the same protection to existing LGPS members that it has given to all other public sector workers. To continue to refuse to do so is unfair, unjust and inexplicable.

“Three quarters of LGPS members are women, who did exactly what the government told them and started paying for their retirement out of their earnings – and now because of the financial mismanagement of their employers, the rules get changed and they have to work an extra five years.

“After a lifetime of dedicated service to their local communities, our members deserve the pensions they have already paid for.

“We have been negotiating for months over this issue, and it is still not too late for the Government and the employers’ association to sit down and talk sense.

“The latest figures from independent actuary Aon show small costs and huge savings for employers if protection for existing members is retained – and both the Government and LGA accept these findings.”

Ends

Notes to editors

- Eight unions released their ballot results this morning; Amicus announced last week that its members had voted 9 to 1 in favour of strike action

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