

UK Local Government Strike 28 March - Over one million public service workers take action

Over one million of the United Kingdom's most essential public sector workers will go on strike on 28 March to protest at unfair and unjust cuts to local government pensions. EPSU affiliates UNISON, GMB, Amicus, NIPSA and T & G are involved in the action. The strike is planned because the UK Government refuses to give protection for existing members of their pension scheme.

EPSU General Secretary Carola Fischbach-Pyttel expressed her support for the action, stating that "across the EU there is growing evidence that Governments wish to cut public service pensions. The issue of public service pension is not only a question of making Governments keep their promises, it is also fundamentally right that public service workers are fully recognised for the positive contribution they make to society".

Members of nine of the country's biggest unions have overwhelmingly voted "YES" to strike action because the UK 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.

For more information: Susie Haywood, UNISON Press Office, 020 7388 1183 or 07738 352 209

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