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**14 November 2011**

**On November 2<sup>nd</sup> the Government made a statement on public sector pensions.**

## **WHY YOU STILL NEED TO STRIKE.**

The government statement is not a firm offer and only relates to the new pension scheme the government wants to introduce. You are still being expected to pay more, work longer and get less for your present pension scheme. While the government has reduced the contribution increases for many workers, they are combining this with a slower build up of your pension benefits and have not moved an inch from taking £900 million out of your pension scheme. The plans to raise your retirement age to 66, 67 then 68 still remain.

### **What is the government actually offering for the new scheme?**

The accrual rate – the amount of money put into your pension each year – will remain the same as it is at present, 1/60<sup>th</sup> of your salary, so the government is offering to give back what they have already threatened to take away.

The offer suggests that anyone within 10 years of retiring will be unaffected by changes to the pension scheme. This offer only extends to protection from the rise of the retirement age. It is possible others workers' pensions may suffer in order to pay for this 'improved' offer.

As before, contributions for all pension scheme members earning over £15,000 a year will increase by an average of half as much again as you currently pay.

Part time workers will not be exempt from this increase in contributions if their *full time* equivalent salary is greater than £15,000. The lower paid will pay less than the average but many middle and higher paid will pay more.

The government is sticking with its plan to make the new scheme a career average scheme. Members who expect steady career progression are likely to receive a lower pension. Members with flatter career paths are likely to benefit from this, but this will depend on how past earnings are linked to inflation rates.

Pension received in the new scheme will be indexed to a lower measure of inflation equivalent to a 15% loss in pension benefit. Some improvement!

Members not in the pension scheme may be wondering why they should participate in the strike. You would be acting to retain the choice of joining the scheme, protecting yourself from further attacks on your pay and conditions and sending a clear message to the government that we do not accept 'we are all in this together' but are suffering unequally from the effects of their cuts. UNISON welcomes any movement from the government and will continue to negotiate on your behalf, but until it has a clear offer we need to keep up the pressure and proceed with plans for strike action on 30 November.

**ENDS**