



LANCASHIRE UNISON CAMPAIGN TO PROTECT OUR PENSIONS

PSF DEAL GIVES POWER TO LOCAL GOVERNMENT'S ELBOW

UNISON has played a key role in an historic deal reached by the Public Services Forum on pensions for health workers, civil servants and teachers. The deal, concluded yesterday, guarantees lifetime protection of their existing pension benefits and current retirement age of 60.

The Public Service Forum discussions held with Alan Johnson, Secretary of State at the DTI, have been chaired by Dave Prentis. The deal provides real ammunition to our negotiators dealing with the Local Government Pension Scheme. UNISON's Heather Wakefield, lead negotiator for the

trade unions said:

"There can now be no excuse for the employers or Government to proceed with the ridiculous proposals put forward on 22 September. The Government continually argues for joined-up working across the public services. Now we want joined-up pensions".

The PSF package contains a framework of principles for individual scheme negotiations, which will start once consultation over the overall package has ended. These will end on March 2006. Principles which will assist LGPS

negotiations include:

- An 'open, evidence-based approach' to negotiations
- Scope for increasing take-up
- Robust costings of proposals
- 'Adequate time' for negotiations
- 'Initial discussions' to conclude by March 2006
- Scheme specific negotiations 'should take account of the special mental and physical demands of many public sector jobs'

It also details agreed key features of new schemes. They will be:

- Defined benefit schemes, linked to individuals' earnings
- Government to make 1% of payroll available to improve benefits in new schemes
- Equality proofing
- Encouragement of take up amongst part time and lower paid workers
- Freedom from central direction over the type of scheme

A reference age of 65 for new entrants after the implementation date, with provision in future schemes for people to pay more into the scheme to retire at 60

These principles have been endorsed by the Cabinet and therefore the Deputy Prime Minister, John Prescott.

The PSF deal is a fantastic achievement which now must be

applied to the Local Government Pension Scheme negotiations. If not we will have teachers able to retire at 60 but lower paid school support staff working on until they are 65. Fire fighters and police officers will be allowed to retire at 55 but our members working alongside them will have to work until they are 65. The same will apply in probation, higher and further education.

We say: ***“Enough is enough. Now give equal treatment to LGPS members”.***

Get campaigning now!

The unions are due to meet John Prescott in the Tripartite Committee on 2 November. The time between now and then is a crucial time for branches to mobilise our members behind our demand for justice and equal treatment for LGPS members.

The framework of principles for existing pension provision and new scheme negotiations for workers in the NHS, civil service

and teachers must be applied to local government pension scheme.

What can you do?

- An updated model letter for MP's, AM's and councillors can be downloaded from the Pensions web page.

Send it now!

- **Recruit non members!** Everyone needs the backing of UNISON to get justice for LGPS members

**Please circulate to non-members and encourage them to join.
For an application form contact the Branch Office on 01772 533072
or email at unison@unison.lancscc.gov.uk**