



National pay dispute: Guidance on the national overtime ban

Members have voted by a majority in support of national strike action and national action short of a strike. The first form of action short of a strike will be an overtime ban.

The overtime ban immediately follows the initial national one-day strike to avoid the employer getting people to do extra work to catch up after the strike which would undermine the effect of the strike.

The overtime ban will have an effect because, as jobs have been cut in many areas and demand for services has risen, management rely on overtime to get the work done. So it will help build pressure on the employer to achieve a settlement on our demands for pay rises that keep up with the cost of living and for fair pay progression.

The overtime ban is part of the wider industrial action strategy that members have voted in support of. Unless there is a positive response from the government to our demands, it will coincide with a series of weeks of campaigning by members working in different sectors such as education, defence, finance, health and welfare and law and justice. This will include strike action and it's clear that members elsewhere shouldn't work overtime when their colleagues are on strike.

The guiding principle is this: overtime is usually voluntary and we are asking all members not to do any voluntary overtime from 11 November 2008 until further notice. If there is any compulsory or conditioned overtime which is counted as contractual pensionable pay in your area, then you would still do that. If unsure, please seek advice.

If Saturday or Sunday working is classed as voluntary overtime, rather than part of the normal shift rota, then members should not do it. Likewise, if members work part time then additional days should not be worked if that work would be undertaken on a voluntary basis.

Employers know that low paid workers will be pressured into taking on extra work as overtime as we are paid wages that mean we are struggling with the cost of living. Working overtime is likely to mask staffing deficiencies and help the planned reduction in staffing levels – to the detriment of members and the public alike. PCS believes that the continued use of overtime, quite simply, indicates that the job cuts are not justified.

The overtime ban is lawful industrial action because we balloted members on taking this action. If the employer makes any threats to deduct pay or take other punitive action as a result of the overtime ban, please contact the Protect Public Services Unit immediately for advice. PCS will resist any such threats.

If you have any further queries please contact your group or regional office or the Protect Public Service Unit at PCS HQ on 020 7801 2771 or ppsu@pcs.org.uk.