

FREE OUR UNIONS

BEAT THE COST OF LIVING CRISIS

OPPOSE THE MINIMUM SERVICE LEVELS BILL AND SCRAP ALL ANTI TRADE UNION LAWS

According to government figures public and private sector pay has fallen between 2009 and 2021. If you include the latest inflationary surge the extent of those falls has increased to the point that we are now facing the biggest drop in living standards since records began in 1956.

The current strike wave is an understandable working-class response to the cost-of-living crisis. In stark contrast to its proposals to lift the cap on bankers' bonuses which will boost the income of already extremely wealthy individuals the government has responded to the strike action in defence of our living standards by attempting to undermine them by adding new laws to those that have already created one of the most hostile environments for union organising in any democratic country in the world. —>



FoU campaigns for:

Complete and speedy repeal of all anti-union laws.

Strong legal rights for workers to join, recruit to and be represented by a union; strike/take industrial action by a process, at a time and for demands of their own choosing, including in solidarity with any other workers and for broader social and political goals; and picket freely.

Unions' right to decide their own policies, structures, rules and activities.

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<— In 2022 the government allowed employers to replace striking workers with agency staff which will reduce the efficacy of future strikes as will their plans in 2023 to introduce a new law that will require minimum levels of service during strikes.

The Strikes (Minimum Service Levels) Bill is currently receiving scrutiny in the House of Lords. The Tories want it through as quickly as possible: they rejigged the parliamentary agenda on 16 January, for example, to give time to it. On coming into force, it will apply to strikes even where the strike ballot or notice of the strike preceded the finalisation of the relevant minimum service levels.

The Bill gives the Secretary of State for Business the power to set minimum service levels (MSLs) which can then be enforced by employers during strikes in the health service, fire and rescue, education, transport, the nuclear industry and border security.

Employers facing a strike in industries where MSLs have been set may give the relevant union(s) a “work notice”, specifying who should work and what work should be done during the strike in order to meet the MSL.

A union which fails to take “reasonable steps” to ensure its members comply with a work notice can be taken to court for damages, i.e. losses incurred by non-compliance. Or it can face an injunction against any worker striking.

Workers who strike when they have been instructed to work under a work notice can be sacked. Under existing anti-union laws, a strike for their reinstatement would be unlawful.

Commenting on the bill the doctor’s union, the BMA, called on “... MPs to oppose the Strikes (Minimum Service Levels) Bill and to urge Government to ensure there is meaningful engagement with unions on pay, instead of heavy-handed tactics that put workers’ rights and jobs at risk.”

WHAT YOU CAN DO

- 1. Join A Union** <https://www.tuc.org.uk/join-a-union>
- 2. Sign The Petition** <https://petition.parliament.uk/petitions/627487>
- 3. Write to your MP** <https://www.writetothem.com/>