Nuclear unions’ statement on pensions campaign

The Nuclear Decommissioning Authority (NDA) gave as its justification for launching a formal consultation on reform of the pensions of nuclear workers covered by statutory pension protection that:

“The Government’s aim is to make public sector pensions fair and to put them on an affordable and sustainable footing.”

It further stated that:

“...final salary pension schemes across the NDA estate are within the scope of public sector pension reform.”

These statements are misleading and deeply flawed.

The pension schemes concerned are not public sector pension schemes and were not within the scope of public sector pension reform. They were not included in the terms of reference of the Hutton review of public sector pensions and they were not covered by the Public Service Pensions Act 2013.

The scheme members affected by this consultation were previously removed from public sector pension schemes. At that time statutory protections against detrimental pension changes were granted to ensure the privatisation/contractorisation process was a success. These proposed reforms ride roughshod over those protections.

Pension costs across the NDA estate are falling and are projected to continue to fall over the long-term both in terms of the schemes subject to this consultation and overall. Pension provision is already on an “affordable and sustainable footing”.

The trade unions are united in their efforts to oppose these unnecessary and unjustified attacks on our members’ pensions. We resolve to oppose the imposition of any detrimental changes. In particular we resolve to:

- Respond robustly to the consultation.
- Correct the misrepresentation of the position by the NDA and the government.
- Campaign and oppose the proposals politically (including in the anticipated upcoming by-election in Copeland)
- Examine using the legal process to oppose the imposition of any detrimental changes.
- Each union will consider and develop plans for industrial action.