

- **Undertaking a review in to the use of Minimum Service Levels so people can rely on core public services being there.** The right to strike is an important part of our employment rights. But many other European countries balance this right with the rights of other people to be able to access the public services that are essential to their daily lives. Hardworking taxpayers who have paid into the system all their lives deserve the peace of mind of knowing that vital services will be there when they need them. So we will review the use of Minimum Service Levels in countries like Spain and Italy to see if they would be effective here.
- **Ending the ban on using agency staff to cover for striking workers.** We will repeal legislation banning employers from hiring agency staff to cover for striking staff in these services – helping schools and hospitals to cover for striking staff³. This is an outdated anomaly as employers are allowed to hire supply workers directly - but are not allowed to use employment businesses which employ staff themselves. Headteachers have said that the main reason they are forced to close schools is because they do not have enough staff to cover on strike days. It is estimated that lifting this restriction could make around 10,000 extra supply workers available in schools.

Our achievements

- **We changed the law to ensure unions keep accurate membership records – so they can show they know who their members are, communicate with them and engage in the democratic process.** Unions now have to give annual independent assurance that they have effective measures in place to make sure their membership records are up to date.
- **We made town halls come clean on how much taxpayers' money they spend subsidising staff working on unions business – making sure that council taxpayers get good value for money and making local councils more transparent and accountable to local people.** Trade union activities should be paid for by union subscriptions, not bankrolled by the taxpayer. The new transparency code will force councils to publish full details of the total number of staff who are union officials and the numbers who spend at least half their working week on union business. An estimate of the total amount spent on subsidising union work will also be published as part of a new wave of town hall transparency.⁴
- **We have been saving taxpayers' money by ensuring that the number of full-time government trade union representatives has fallen to single figures.** The number of full-time union representatives in government departments has fallen from 200 in November 2011 to fewer than ten. By slashing the number of full-time taxpayer-funded union officials by over 90 per cent since the start of this government we have saved the taxpayer over £6 million.⁵

Conservative manifesto commitments already made

- **Introducing a 50 per cent turnout threshold for strike ballots – to make sure they have a real mandate.** It will mean less disruption for families and businesses from strikes where union leaders haven't even persuaded a majority of their members to vote.
- **Reforming picketing rules to protect workers who do want to go in to work.** Strikers have a legal right to strike peacefully. We will make the Code of Practice legally binding, and make illegal picketing a criminal offence. This will protect people who want to work, meaning less disruption for the public.
- **Ending rolling mandates so strikes can't be called based on ballots that were held years ago.** Currently, as long as initial action is taken within four weeks of a ballot, a strike mandate remains live for as

³ The Conduct of Employment Agencies and Employment Businesses Regulations 2003 (enacted under the Employment Agencies Act 1973), Regulation 7 (Restriction on providing work-seekers in industrial disputes)

⁴ *DCLG Press Release*, 6 November 2014, link

⁵ *Cabinet Office Press Release*, 29 September 2014, link