

long as the dispute remains live. We will set a firm time limit of three months on the duration of the mandate.

Costing and funding

- *N/A.*

Political points to make

- **Ed Miliband can't stand up for people whose lives are disrupted by strikes because he needs the union bosses' money.** More than two thirds of all of Labour's donations under Ed Miliband have come from trade unions. Since Miliband became leader, Labour have received more than £35 million from the trade unions.⁶

Labour position: Michael Dugher: 'This is desperate stuff by a Conservative Party that has given up any pretence of standing up for working people.'⁷

Rebuttal: That is not the case. These changes will mean less disruption for people by stopping union bosses calling strikes without genuine support from their members. And the changes will mean unions have to engage more with their members, and work to get them interested. They won't be able to coast along, safe in the knowledge that if only 20 per cent of their members vote that's a mandate. Labour should back the changes – but they are too weak to stand up to their union paymasters.

Hostile Questions

Q: When are you going to introduce this?

Primary legislation will be introduced in the first session of next Parliament.

Q: Aren't most MPs illegitimate on this turnout and approval basis?

The two votes are completely different – MPs are elected from a range of candidates whereas a strike is a yes/no ballot. Strikes affect everyone, but only union members can vote; its right they should have decent turnouts. And for the core public services that people rely on, like schools and hospitals, it's right that there are added protections from disruption without clear support from members.

Q: You've already announced that votes for strike action will need to have a 50 per cent turnout – why are you going even further?

We think we need to go further to protect the most essential public services that people up and down the country rely on every day – and that's what these measures will do.

Q: Why 40%

As recommended by the CBI in September 2010, we believe a threshold of 40% strikes an appropriate balance between protecting hardworking people from unfair disruption by ensuring that any action is the result of a clear, positive decision by the workforce concerned and, and protecting people's right to strike. A threshold of 40% also mirrors the statutory union recognition rules⁸.

Q: Doesn't this just make it impossible for people to go on strike?

No it doesn't. We are committed to ensuring people have the right to strike but it is important that this is balanced with everyone else's right to get on with their everyday lives. It is not right that a small proportion of workers, in the furtherance of a dispute with their employer, can inconvenience many millions of families and disrupt their access to the essential public services on which they rely day in and day out. If the new thresholds had been in place, 27 significant strike ballots would still have been valid over the past five years, including the

⁶ Electoral Commission calculations Q4 2010 – Q3 2014.

⁷ Labour Press, 18 July 2014, [link](#).

⁸ Under which 40% of all eligible workers must take part in a vote and a majority of those vote yes for the Central Arbitration Committee to award recognition