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## **Government respects the right of Unite the Union to hold its day of action**

The Government respects the right of Unite the Union to hold a day of action and demonstration next Wednesday, the 16th January.

The Government has issued instructions, in the normal way, to heads of departments to facilitate the organisation of the event.

The Chief Minister and Minister for Industrial Relations said: "I have already said that the issue of agency workers is being dealt with, as well as the introduction of new T-Levels. I sincerely believe that there is very little between the Government's position and the position of Unite the Union. I look forward to continuing the constructive engagement with the leadership of Unite and reaching an agreed position in respect of these very few matters in issue. A huge amount of progress has been made on trade union issues since my election in December 2011. We inherited the situation of individuals employed via agencies from the former GSD administration, and although we have failed to deal with it until now, we are now going to do so. In fact, we spent less on supply workers than then GSD! The public sector and the civil service has grown in our time in office, the latter by 20%, despite the GSD constantly attacking us for that growth. Additionally, we are about to publish Bills for pensions in the private sector and trade union recognition. So there is a lot we have achieved together and - working positively and constructively together - we will also, no doubt, be able to satisfactorily resolve the matters which Unite is peacefully demonstrating about on Wednesday.

Finally, I should add, that as a Socialist and as a member of Unite myself for the past twenty years, I fully support the right of working people to demonstrate. I would take a very dim view, and would consider it a disciplinary matter, if anyone in any organisation I lead or that provides services to the Government were threatening any worker who wishes to exercise his or her right to peacefully demonstrate as a union member."