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Building workplace power and fighting to win

Newly elected NYMC vice chair Louis Radforth writes about encouraging all young members to get actively involved in building our union – so that we can win.

Organised workers in trade unions have a rich tradition of making gains. Without the action of workers decades ago we wouldn't have a weekend, sick pay, annual leave, and many other conditions we take for granted. The rights we have now weren't freely given – they were demanded by workers who had the conviction to fight for and win those demands. Workers have no higher power we can appeal to that will improve our lives, no political party that will represent our interests and no employer that will freely give us the value of our labour, we must organise and take what's ours for ourselves.

Our current fights have been about maintaining rights, maintaining our pay with inflation, and preventing job losses. However, young workers are ambitious, we won't be satisfied with merely upholding what we already have. We know we deserve more and we're willing to fight for it. That's why we're building our networks, we're taking up local, regional, and national positions and we're getting organised.

But it isn't our committees that give us power in the workplace - it's the members like you that empower our committees to enact our demands. Not every member has to stand for elected positions or be involved nationally, but every member must be willing to turn up. Every worker must recognise their worth. Every worker must be willing to fight for their demands.

So with young members' elections coming up, new committees forming and new workers to recruit, what are you going to do to ensure you and your fellow workers have power in the workplace?