



[Michelle Graham](#)

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PCS education: Providing life-changing opportunities

Michelle, one of our trade union education tutors, blogs about PCS's education programme, which she says is "one of the best trade union education programmes out there,"

Casting my mind back to when I first became a trade union rep for the GMB, I remember feeling out of my depth and daunted at all I would need to learn. The first day on my reps' course is still etched in my memory. As I sat there surrounded by what I believed to be far more experienced activists, I felt like a complete imposter!

Trade union education changed all of that, and I'm not alone in my experience. In our roles as trade union educators and course co-ordinators, us tutors often look back at how far we have come thanks to the opportunities available to us as reps, and I dare say it has been with similar thoughts in mind that the fantastic PCS Academy team has created what I believe to be one of the best trade union education programmes out there.

It gets better than that though....

Within PCS, educational opportunities are not only for reps, but also for members, which is nothing short of fabulous. The range of subjects available is hugely different from what was on offer years ago, which demonstrates a truly forward-thinking union.

PCS listens to members' concerns, to what affects people in today's working environment, and turns that into tailored courses, many of which are accredited,

meaning reps and members are gaining nationally recognised qualifications, whilst at the same time learning how to improve working lives for themselves and their colleagues.

If PCS *didn't* do it...

Let's imagine this education wasn't there. What would workplaces look like? How many people would be suffering the effects of bullying and harassment? How might members' mental health be without the mental health training? How might neurodiverse workers be left at a disadvantage without improved workplace policies?

But don't just take my word for it – here are some examples of how PCS's training programme has helped reps:

Denise Norrie-Carrington of DWP Tyneside & Northumbria branch attended the PCS Sexual Harassment course and said: "It was well worth attending. The course alerts you to sources of information, provides you with support to understand an employer's legal responsibilities, and reminds us that all employees have a right to be valued and treated fairly. The session was a safe place to speak openly and to talk about our own organisation's policy and procedures, and make sure they are adhering to best practice."

Abubukar Khan, from the Home Office Yorkshire, attended the 'Introduction to Equality' course. Immediately after the course, Abubukar was able to successfully secure reasonable adjustments for a member who had previously experienced less favourable treatment.

To find out more about the PCS Academy, visit our [courses web page](#).