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## From the editor



The end of October marks the start of the new committee.

Congratulations to all of those who have been elected on to the PCS national young members' committee and into their regional committees.

Young Workers' Month is drawing close as November is soon upon us. Keep an eye out for activities being arranged in your region.

With the pay campaign there are lots of us coming together to fight for a decent pay rise and for the government to 'Scrap the cap' – make sure you try out the [Pay Calculator](#) to see how much your earnings have decreased over the past 7 years in comparison with inflation.

Make sure you also submit your votes to the [consultative ballot](#) for government to scrap the cap.

There's been lots happening within the network over the past few months. One of our members won the TUC Youth award, and the seminar had a fantastic turnout. We also have articles on the PCS womens' seminar and an article on domestic abuse.

**Rhea James**

# Vote YES

As I write this article, the PCS consultative ballot on pay enters its second week (the ballot runs from 9 October – 6 November). Members across all the nations and regions of the UK have been holding meetings, briefings and leafleting on pay and the ballot encouraging everyone to use their vote to show the chancellor our strength of feeling before the budget and, equally as important, to show the government we have the strength to meet their statutory ballot thresholds.

Pay is of course an important issue for all PCS members, after nearly a decade of pay restraint and freezes members have seen their pay shrink upwards of 14% in real terms. This unprecedented period of pay restraint means that a vast majority of young members will have never had a pay increase.

Added to that the sky rocketing cost of rent and inflation hitting a 5 year record of 3% it's easy to see that the issue of pay, especially for young people, has never been more important.

This year a record proportion of 20-30 year olds still live with their parents, (with some estimates as high as 43%) and as inflation increases and pay stagnates more and more young people are running in to debt, including those with large student debts.

A report published this week has revealed that 1 in 5 young people are using loans and credit cards just to be able to afford essentials, culminating in a 34% increase in the number of people



## Vote by 6 November, and encourage your colleagues to vote as well

under 30 turning to debt support charities, in the last 12 months alone.

The attitude of this government towards young people over the last 7 years has been nothing short of contempt, and I am proud to be a member of a union that has been unceasing in its

opposition to them, with PCS moving motions at the YTUC opposing the further age divisions of the minimum wage, campaigning on housing and fair apprenticeships and finally this pay ballot.

So I urge everyone that hasn't already done it. Pick up a pen, pick up your phone or your laptop and spend the next two minutes voting Yes. Yes to our ballot and let's scrap the cap. Vote by 6 November, and encourage your colleagues to vote as well.



## Chair's brief



The PCS national pay ballot has now opened, and it is important that every member votes, as well as encouraging others to do the same. We need to show this government that we deserve more than we are currently being paid. We need to vote YES. The ballot closes on 6 November so make sure you use your vote.

The national young members' seminar took place in September and was a brilliant success, with loads of new faces who will hopefully go on to become active within their branches, regions and with the young members' network. I am delighted to have been elected chair again, and would like to say a huge congratulations to Laura Bee who has been re-elected as vice chair, and our new equality officers Claire Keogh and Graham Soulsby. I would also like to welcome our incoming convenors to the committee and give a massive thanks to Steven Warwick, who has left the committee after several active years. He has put in so much work to the network, and we will all miss him.

November is young workers' month, and every young member should make an effort to hold something in their workplaces or regions, to try and recruit new members, and help existing members get more involved in the network.

Please get in touch if you need any assistance or if you want to get more involved at: [youngmembers@pcs.org.uk](mailto:youngmembers@pcs.org.uk)

**Sarah Spencer**

# Introducing our new officers

## Sarah Spencer - Chair

Hi, I'm Sarah Spencer and I am really pleased to have been elected again as chair of the national young members' committee. I am also branch secretary at PCS DWP Dundee branch and am the youngest member of the DWP Group Executive Committee (GEC) and have young members as part of my responsibilities in the GEC.

I am very excited about the coming year with young members playing a really good part in PCS on all issues – pay, apprentices and job cuts, to name a few. I am also looking forward to working with the newly-elected convenors in each of the regions.

I became involved in the young members' network around 4 years ago and have enjoyed seeing the many opportunities that involvement brings – such as you can get

involved in working at festivals, recruitment and organising opportunities, representing PCS at conferences and events both in the UK and in Europe, and by meeting other young members and networking and sharing ideas.

If you are interested in getting more involved, contact any of the young members' convenors listed on the last page.

## Laura Bee – vice chair

Hello, I'm Laura Bee and I've been re-elected as the vice chair of the national young members' committee.

I joined PCS in 2009 as a young member and became active as a rep in HMRC just over 4 years ago. I have been on secondment to PCS as an organising officer for the last few months.

The young members' network is valuable in driving forward



issues that young members face and we actively campaign to address issues such as pay, housing and apprentices.

I joined the network to help to challenge inequality and ensure that young members have a voice.

I am looking forward to working with all young members over the next year and to pass on my experience. I would encourage you all to get in touch with us with your ideas for campaigns and with any issues you are facing in the workplace.

## Our new equalities officers

There's no denying the previous equalities officer has left us some pretty big boots to fill, but since there's now two of us, I suppose that's only 1 boot each. We'd like to start by thanking the out-going officer, Steven Warwick, who worked tirelessly to represent everyone fairly for the previous 2 years; he has left a strong foundation for us to build on and has opened doors of opportunity. In the year ahead, we want to focus on building bridges between all of the equality networks, opening up an effortless chain of communication and joint working with the PCS young members' network. We want to represent everyone, regardless of department, location or equality strand. We'll help build a bigger, stronger network of young voices, reaching as many of you as possible.

The struggles we face now are as relentless as ever, the ongoing pay campaign, the



Graham Chismon and Claire Keogh holding our banner.

rights of apprentices and the office closure attacks to name just a few. This year at our annual seminar, we noticed that we didn't receive many applications from BME or disabled members. Our first goal is to work with these networks and ensure that any barriers stopping these members from applying are gone by next year. Everyone deserves

to be properly represented and we look forward to working for all equalities and all young members. You can reach us at any time: Claire Keogh – DWP Benton Park View: [keogh@dwp.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:keogh@dwp.gsi.gov.uk)  
Graham Chismon – DWP Northumbria and Tyneside: [graham.chismon@dwp.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:graham.chismon@dwp.gsi.gov.uk)

# National young members' seminar

Despite being involved in the DWP young members' committee for two years, this was my first time attending the national young members seminar. I find that we can often get too bogged down with what is happening in our own department and the seminar was a fantastic introduction to

meeting PCS young members from across the civil service to find out what they do and to also find out how PCS operates across the country in different departments.

The organisation of the event was second to none. The activities provided is a great way to introduce new and young

members to PCS. Some of the sessions included recruitment techniques, understanding the structures of PCS and campaigning strategies.

The external speakers were fantastic and I particularly enjoyed the session delivered by a rep from GMB regarding their campaign at the ASOS

distribution site in Barnsley.

I would recommend the event to any young member for next year and for them to use it as a springboard to get further involved in the young members Network and the wider PCS community.

**Craig Jackson**  
Scotland convenor

# National womens' seminar

I attended my first national women's seminar this past June which was held in Leeds. I was apprehensive but also excited.

It started off with the obligatory icebreaker then onto a workshop around fair work where we discussed how we could take a particular issue forward from our own workplaces and devise a realistic timetable of resolution. I found this incredibly useful as it gave an insight into other colleagues issues and also was really practical in showing how I could help resolve an issue in my workplace step by step. The next item was a brilliant panel discussion on intersectionality. I

had never heard of the term before but it is basically how an individual can face multiple threats of discrimination when their identities overlap a number of minority classes, such as race, gender, age, ethnicity, health and other characteristics. It was chaired by the head of political campaigns and equality for PCS. The panel members were made up of a human rights activist and founder of African Rainbow Family, a writer and TUC member, a National Diversity Ambassador for DWP and a anti-cuts activist and campaigner for DPAC Sheffield.

Each of these phenomenal women shared their personal

stories and also what impact intersectionality had on their lives.

Day 2 started with a activity and case study surrounding domestic violence. I found this extremely eye opening but useful as a new rep, I have had no experience dealing with any members surviving domestic violence.

We had a guest speaker Kelechi Chioba a volunteer for National Union of Students, Disabled Students Campaign and Black Students Campaign. Her personal story of overcoming tremendous abuse and discrimination was so shocking, yet powerful that it

moved most of the room to tears. Her message of perseverance and solidarity was so empowering and inspirational.

The seminar ended with building the union and how to recruit and retain members. After a jam-packed weekend, it gave the delegates a great big boost of enthusiasm to go back to our branches and really try to make a difference.

I couldn't recommend the seminar enough and urge all my female colleagues to apply next year. You'll be so glad that you did.

**Simone Shaw**  
Former Midlands convenor

# Domestic abuse

Many people have heard the term 'domestic abuse' or 'domestic violence'. The prevalent stereotype is that 'domestic abuse' (DA) refers to physical violence, such as punching or slapping; and that it typically occurs within a heterosexual marriage, with the man being the perpetrator. However, sadly, DA occurs within families from all racial backgrounds, all sexual orientations, and all sections of the community. It's important to recognise the pervasiveness

of DA across demographics, in order to raise awareness of the support which is available for victims.

Young people are some of the worst affected by DA. Most recent statistics show that:

- Girls and young women between the ages of 16 and 24 experience the highest rate of intimate partner violence — almost triple the national average.
- 57% of college students say it is difficult to identify and 58%

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say they don't know how to help someone who's experiencing it. This last statistic is particularly concerning; it suggests that nationally, we are failing to provide the support and resources needed for young people to be able to recognise danger or seek help when they need it. Domestic abuse charities – such as Women's Aid, Harbour, and Refuge, are campaigning to increase

awareness of all types of domestic abuse.

It is important to recognise that not all abuse is of a physical nature; emotional abuse is equally prevalent. Emotional and psychological abuse can include behaviours such as: stalking, limiting a victim's contact with friends and family, preventing access to finances, making threats, and using emotional blackmail. These tactics are usually used by

abusers to control the victim's behaviour and take away their personal freedoms. Even if the abuser never lays a hand on the victim, they may be controlling their day to day life through threats and fear, and this is equally abuse as physical violence.

If any young person were to suspect that themselves, or a friend, were in a situation of domestic abuse; they could contact any of the following

organisations for confidential advice and support:

- Refuge: [refuge.org.uk](http://refuge.org.uk)  
020 7395 7771
- The Change Project: [thechange-project.org](http://thechange-project.org)  
0845 3727701
- Victim Support: [victimsupport.org.uk](http://victimsupport.org.uk)  
08 08 16 89 111.

Always call 999 in an emergency.

**Angie Kirkham**  
Former DWP rep

## Young Workers' Month

As November looms the young members' national committee are all hidden in darkened rooms furiously finalising plans for **young workers' month**. This year a special focus will be on apprentices and pay. As stated in other articles, we are in middle of our pay ballot and we would urge all members to vote and vote 'YES' by 6 November.

We have had recent success in negotiating an Apprentice agreement with the Cabinet Office, ensuring some of the best protections and support for apprentices anywhere in the country. In addition, the PCS motion to the Youth TUC on apprentices was selected to go to the full TUC congress in September and was passed unanimously.

Each region and nation will be hosting its own series of socials and events throughout



November, from learning events and meetings to evening socials with live bands.

We are always looking for people to get involved, so keep an eye out for events in your area. Or better still if you would like to host an event contact your regional convenor listed below, or [youngmembers@pcs.org.uk](mailto:youngmembers@pcs.org.uk) if you don't have a convenor, and we'll help in any way we can.

PCS consistently leads the way on young member issues and I'm sure this year will be no different. So if you are 27 and under, and want to know what our Union is doing to support young workers, or think you might want to be more involved in our vibrant and growing network come along to one of our young workers' month events and find out more.

## TUC Youth Award

Congratulations to Steven Warwick, our previous young members' equality officer who has won the TUC youth award this year. Steven has organised and developed young workers in PCS by mentoring them and providing training and support. He also took an active lead in a living wage campaign in his own workplace – Natural England. Well done to Steven.



## Contacts National young members' committee

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