

YMN

Young Members' Newsletter
Today's youth, fighting for tomorrow

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From the editor



It's been a busy couple of months for young members again, with the national pay ballot. Young

members participated in the ballot by voting, encouraging others to vote, leafleting, and using social media to say why they voted yes. I know you will all be disappointed that we didn't reach the government threshold for this to be a valid ballot but the campaign doesn't stop there – this edition contains an article from our NEC liaison officer Fran Heathcote on the next steps.

10 October was mental health day. This was a key issue covered at the recent young members' seminar (see report on the seminar) and young members were involved in activities on the day (see report).

The seminar was a great success with a diverse range of attendees. The seminar heard from other equality groups in our equality panel, and also from our associate and retired members groups (ARMs) – article in this newsletter.

Finally, I want to congratulate Sarah Spencer on her re-election as chair, Kris Rowe on his election as vice chair, and Graham Soulsby and Claire Keogh on their re-election as equality officers. We are also electing new convenors in regions and I look forward to working with them over the next year.

If you have any articles or photos on young members' issues, particularly during young workers' month in November, please send them to youngmembers@pcs.org.uk
Rhea James

Meet the officers



Sarah Spencer

"Hi, I'm Sarah Spencer and I am really privileged to be re-elected as national young members' chair. There is so much going on for young members – low pay, mental health, promotion and progression at work, bullying and harassment, and housing problems to name a few, that it is vitally important to have a vibrant young members' committee.

I'm looking forward to working with my fellow officers and the new convenors who are in the process of being elected in regions and nations over the coming year."

"Hi, my name is Kris Rowe and I've just been re-elected for what will be my first (and last) full term



Kris Rowe

as vice-chair of the national young members' committee. I've been a PCS rep for over 3 years now, originally in R&C Liverpool, I've now moved to Home Office Merseyside branch. I'm looking forward to the hard work that'll be needed as we continue our pay campaign into 2019 and doing my bit to ensure the national young members' network is as strong as possible when I'm too old next year."

We'll start by stating how hugely grateful we are to be elected again as the joint equality officers for your national young members' committee. As we job share the role, we are better placed to reach more members, but also to be more approachable for members to reach out to.

We are both based in Newcastle upon Tyne, Claire with the DWP and Graham with the Cabinet Office.

We have both also held other positions on the committee in the past, so we also have good experience of working locally with members in our region, as well as nationally.

This year's recent young members' seminar was a huge equality success; compared to 2017, the attendees included a much more diverse and representative mix of young people.

This is no small achievement; under-representation of equality groups has always been a difficult challenge, particularly among young members.

The diverse mix of people meant there was a diverse mix of discussion; a number of topics



Claire Keogh

and issues were raised for the first time in quite a while and this has fuelled the enthusiasm of members returning to their own branches.

In the past year we've worked closely with different regions, particularly Scotland, to develop equality events and training.

If you want any additional support in your region, have a question, or simply need some advice (or a chat), please don't hesitate to get in touch.

Upcoming equality events for your calendars include: PCS Proud AGM on 10/11/2018 in Leeds, Stand Up To Racism Conference on 20/10/2018 in London.

Claire Keogh and Graham Soulsby



Graham Soulsby



Young members' seminar 2018

The annual young member's seminar was held in Milton Keynes on the 15 and 16 of September and what a memorable weekend it was.

From meeting a variety of people who all share the same ultimate goal to the workshops and activities put on for everyone, this was an experience to remember. I attended as a first time delegate this year and will 100% be back next year.

While there were many speakers over the course of the weekend, the one that really seemed to hit home with all of us was Helen O'Connor, who was speaking about mental health. The openness and willingness from everyone to engage in conversation about



what is still a taboo subject was fantastic to see and hear. In our groups we came up with ideas on how to raise awareness and even created some conference

style motions which were later presented to the group with unanimous approval.

Before attending the seminar, I was honestly struggling, in

myself, to see how I could engage our young members, but after this weekend I am full of ideas. My confidence has grown, so much that I put my name forward for and am now the co-convenor for the Scottish young members network.

Becoming more involved in PCS and the young members' network has been an exciting and eye-opening experience. I would actively encourage everyone to get involved in any way you can.

I am super excited to see what the future holds for our union. After meeting just a small selection of our young members, I can see that it is most certainly looking bright.

Megan McQuade,
co-convenor in Scotland

Mental Health Awareness Day 2018

PCS representatives in Wearview House, Sunderland organised a stall to be setup within the canteen on mental health awareness day on the 10 October 2018.

The stall was set up at 10.30am to cover the breaks and lunch period until 1.30pm. The stall contained various fliers and leaflets from the charity 'Mind'. These had a lot of useful tips and information about

many different mental health conditions and how to help deal with them.

Various members approached the reps at the stall who discussed the options available for support as well as some of the well known facts about mental health. Reps discussed various topics around mental health including: Different mental health conditions, the effects they have on individuals



and how money can play a large part in mental health.

Leaflets and documents were handed out, and reps are constantly looking for ways to work constructively with managers in order to help support staff who have mental health conditions and to apply policy, procedures and law effectively.

Kevin Scott, Northern convenor

Chair's brief



Hello all. Lots going on again this month. We've just had the young members' seminar where over 30 young activists came together from

across the union to discuss how we recruit, organise and fight for young people in the civil service and beyond. I would just like to take this opportunity to thank everyone for re-electing me as the young members' chair. Kris Rowe (vice chair) and I are looking forward to working

with you and the new regional convenors this year. November is Young Workers' Month where branches will be organising activities in their workplaces and everyone should speak to their local rep about how they can get involved. Finally, we're coming up to branch annual

general meeting season – these meetings are vital to the running of our union and everyone should attend and better yet, get involved and stand to be a young members rep.

Sarah Spencer

National pay campaign

PCS young members will have been disappointed, as we all were that, despite achieving an overwhelming rejection of government's pay policy, in the recent statutory ballot, we did not beat the 50% threshold – the change to the law, imposed by the Tories that says that it is no longer enough to overwhelmingly reject what the government are doing on pay. If we want to take national action, we must make sure that over 50% of our members physically put a cross in the box, put their ballot paper in the envelope and post it in the letterbox. The slogan 'You ain't voted 'til it's posted' is a very real issue.

We fell short. Despite a resounding vote and a fantastic effort, that's the truth, and unless we can win a legal challenge to change the law and allow electronic voting, then we need to do even more in order to beat the Tory threshold and not allow apathy to rule.

You'll have heard the phrase 'Don't mourn, organise' and that is what we are up to right now. Looking at what we can do to achieve a different outcome in 2019. We know we need to challenge this government on its pay policy in 2019 if we want things to change – something brought home to us by the fact that in Scotland, under a Holyrood administration as opposed to a Westminster one, members are seeing better and much more generous offers for doing broadly similar work. We have examples of a husband and wife living in the same household in Scotland, seeing totally different pay offers for doing the same work, and that isn't fair and it cannot be right.

But this government isn't 'big' on fairness and so we know that it isn't enough to complain and in order to change things, that we need to organise and we need to campaign.

While we do not have a detailed breakdown of what was achieved by branch or



“ We need to now be thinking about a number of ‘pay advocates’ in every branch. People who work with us to talk to every member, in every workplace, about the importance of voting

workplace, we have gained a lot of intelligence through phonebanking:

- We know that a lot of members believed that they had voted online when they responded to an email about the ballot from PCS. In a statutory ballot, you **cannot** vote online.
- We also know that in some areas, workplace ballot addresses and centralised mail opening mean that some members reported not receiving a ballot paper, or receiving it late.
- We know that a lot of members didn't fully understand the impact of the changes to trade union legislation.
- And we know that where

there was an active rep, or number of reps, in a workplace, we achieved much more.

So what can we do?

PCS already has a policy of recruiting advocates – those active members who haven't necessarily volunteered to become reps (yet) but who are willing to do a bit more and get involved in some small way.

We need to now be thinking about a number of 'pay advocates' in every branch. A team of people who work with us to talk to every member, in every workplace, about the importance of voting and posting their ballot paper when the time comes.

If you have a branch of 20 jobcentres, for example, ask someone in each one to work with you and take responsibility for talking to those they sit with about the importance of posting their ballot paper.

If you work in a large tax office, ask someone on each floor, or in each team, to volunteer to work with you to promote the pay campaign and talk to their colleagues about the campaign.

The work to identify these people starts now. It isn't time

consuming work and they don't need facility time, just a desire to see a better deal on pay.

Branches should be identifying these members now. Think about your own membership and whether if you identified a little team of people, one per floor or per team, and kept in touch with them by text or social media, they would work with you to raise awareness and build a campaign amongst their colleagues. The overwhelming majority of members agreed that our pay isn't good enough, now let's work together to change it.

Like recruits like and the best person to engage with colleagues over pay in your workplace is you.

If you have a vocal colleague who often complains about pay, ask them to become a pay advocate, and if you think the title might put them off, ask them instead to help you talk to colleagues about the pay campaign. In most places, you'll get a volunteer and working together, we can set about making the change we need to win on pay and beat the threshold.

Fran Heathcote, deputy president and NEC liaison officer to young members

PCS Young Members' Forum

Sandra Durkin, PCS ARMs national treasurer, presentation to PCS Young Members' Forum 2018

My first impression on arrival was an incredible buzz in the room. Delegates were learning about the democratic processes of the union by writing motions and delivering these from the rostrum – every member there took part enthusiastically.

I started with some practical information about ARMs – who is eligible to join, the benefits and our structure. ARMs members can be delegates to trade union councils and TUC pensioner networks. Some are lay tutors and mentors supporting members in the wider union. We took part in phone banking and leafleting during the consultative ballot on pay in 2017 and the recent ballot.

Our members also support wider campaigns such as anti-fracking and opposing hospital closures.

Young members can help by encouraging people who are retiring/being made redundant to join ARMs – more information [here](#) and we also have a Facebook group.

I then moved on to consider why we should build intergenerational links. For



Trade unions are based on a fundamental principle of solidarity and we need to work together for a better future

some time, we have witnessed subtle (and not so subtle) attempts to encourage young people to believe that the reason they can't afford to buy homes, have poorer pensions to look forward to among other things is because older people are hoarding wealth.

As trade unionists we have to challenge this – neither old nor young are responsible for the economic crisis and we should not fall for the 'divide and rule' tactics. Trade unions are based

on a fundamental principle of solidarity and we need to work together for a better future.

ARMs and young members' networks have speakers at each others annual forums and post articles in the respective journals to ensure we build our links.

I look forward to seeing many of you at annual delegate conference 2019. Thank you for allowing time to speak at your forum and I wish you all well for the future.

November marks Young Workers' Month

Get involved and organise an event to celebrate young workers month

Every year in November we celebrate young workers' month.

This year we're focusing on a number of important issues that affect young members including:

- Pay
- Mental health
- Harassment at work
- Organising and recruiting.

Young workers month is the prime opportunity for us to organise and get new young members involved. We're asking you to get involved, organise activities and get involved in your union. We have provided materials, including the leaflet contained in this newsletter, photo cards, and a poster.

We want young members to

We're asking you to get involved, organise activities and get involved in your union

write blogs, organise events, recruit their colleagues, and to get more involved in PCS.

- For further information please contact your regional young members convenor, branch youth officer, the national young members organiser Julie Young, equality@pcs.org.uk or your regional or group office.

LGBT+ issues

Over recent years, there have been many advances towards LGBT+ equality in the UK. In 2012 changes were made to the Criminal Justice Act 2003 in England, Wales and Northern Ireland to increase sentences for aggravation related to the victim being (or being presumed to be) transgender.

Scotland had already treated such incidents as hate crimes since 2009; hate crimes in relation to a person's sexual orientation had already been included in legislation since 2005 across the UK.

England, Scotland and Wales gained marriage equality in 2014 and the Republic of Ireland in 2015.

Despite the advances made, we are still a long way from having true equality. Statistics published for England and Wales by the Home Office show that there were 9,157 recorded hate crimes on the grounds of sexual orientation in 2016/17 (a 27% increase from 2015/16) and 1,248 recorded hate crimes on the grounds of being transgender (a 45% increase from 2015/16). These statistics, as worrying as they are, only scratch the surface. How many other instances are there where the victim is too scared to

report the crime or where crimes are not correctly recorded as hate crimes?

Despite most of the UK having marriage equality, in Northern Ireland same-sex marriage is still not legal. This is despite 68% of people in Northern Ireland supporting same-sex marriage (based on a 2015 poll carried out by Ipsos Mori) and a majority of Northern Ireland Assembly members voting in favour of same sex marriage. Marriage equality in Northern Ireland was actually blocked after the Democratic Unionist Party (DUP) essentially vetoed the motion by deploying a petition of concern that requires a cross community majority. This is the same DUP who now prop up Theresa May's government and help her drive her austerity agenda, decimating our public services and our local communities.

For the reasons above it's important that we as PCS members, as young members and as individuals continue the fight for equality. It's for these reasons that we have pride events, to continue the fight for equality for the LGBT+ community. PCS and PCS Proud, including young members, have had a strong presence at



Statistics published for England and Wales by the Home Office show that there were 9,157 recorded hate crimes on the grounds of sexual orientation

numerous pride events across the UK this year.

If you want to get more involved with LGBT+ issues within PCS then why not sign up to be a member of Proud or if you are a member go along to

the Proud AGM in Leeds on the 10 November? Proud is open to all LGBT+ members and allies.

Here are some key events which you could organise events for in your branches:

- Young Workers Month – November
- Intersex Solidarity Day – 8 November
- Transgender Awareness Week – Second week of November
- Transgender Day of Remembrance (TDoR) – 20 November
- World AIDS Day – 1 December.

George Richardson, North West convener.

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