



**We ALL  
deserve a  
pay rise**



# Talking to members during the ballot period

## A guide for branches

## Introduction

The purpose of this PCS Ballot guide is to give branches some ideas about how to get the message across to members about voting without falling foul of management constraints, and to offer some approaches to use when talking to members.

## Talking to members

The first thing to say is that every PCS member in every workplace must be spoken to and reminded to vote at least once during the ballot period. There is no getting round this – we have to make it happen. We will be phoning and emailing members reminding them to vote, but this can only supplement the crucial work of talking to members face to face at work. The best people to do this face-to-face work are our reps and activists who will know their members. Form a branch pay campaign subcommittee comprised of supportive members who you have asked to get involved even if they can only commit a few minutes or hours per week.

We will be asking members to tell us whether or not they have voted by clicking a button on the email or text we will send to them. Branches will then get lists of members who have not told us whether they have voted or not from the second week of the ballot. These members need chasing up and reminding of the importance of voting. Branches should split the workplaces up and get trusted members to check the vote off in their section/floor/business area. The role of the BEC is then to check in with each person and monitor where it's going well and where more help is necessary. Members who have voted need to tell us that they've voted so we don't bother them again.

## Member meetings

The best way to get the message across about why this pay ballot is so important and why every member must vote is by holding members meetings. At these meetings you can also ask members to help to get the vote out. Getting members together is the best way of generating enthusiasm and energy. Branches need to hold at least two all member meetings during the ballot, and non-members should be invited to attend, join the union (**by 13 July**) and vote in the ballot.

Most employers will not allow branches to hold

meetings on work premises, or time to attend meetings, if the meeting is specifically about the ballot or the prospect of industrial action.

However, it is always worth asking local management or HR whether a room can be made available to meet members to briefly remind members to vote and for members to be able to ask any questions.

Branches can get the word out about the meeting in a variety of ways:

- **Use your branch ballot committee** – every activist on the ballot committee gets the word out to their allotted members. “Don't forget the members' meeting. Wednesday, 5pm, after work”.
- **The traditional way** – hand out leaflets, and talk to members and non-members, giving details of the meeting as members go in to work.
- **Social media or branch websites** – ask your ballot committee members to promote the meeting on social media.
- **Invites** – where the branch has communications systems in place – such as WhatsApp – just send out a short reminder. To be safe, do not use your departmental IT systems. Some employers are going to take a hard line on this and we don't want to be relying on the employer's goodwill anyway.

## Car park meetings

Most employers will usually allow branches to hold car park meetings, after work or at lunch times. We know that some employers have recently clamped down on the use of car parks for members meetings, but if you can use the car park then do so. Where car park meetings can be arranged, usually by talking to local management, then these should be organised now. Ask the question. Ask the right person to get the right answer.

If permission is not given to hold car park meetings it is often on the basis that the car park itself is on private property or is part of the departmental premises. If this is the case management should be asked precisely where the private property ends and therefore where, on the immediate perimeter of the car park area, a meeting can be held.

The lazy answer from management is to say that you can't do something. Be persistent. Check the facts.

Ask the question. Put the onus back to the relevant management.

An alternative is of course to book a lunchtime meeting in a local church hall, library or similar community venue.

Also, please remember that we have to get over 50% of our members to vote. Many of those we most need to convince will not necessarily come to our meetings. So one purpose of a workplace meeting is to get those already committed to commit to speaking to colleagues who are not.

## Handing out materials – outside work

Every single member must be handed information about the ballot. You can do this by handing out leaflets as members come in to work. Get plenty of members helping with this, cover all entrances and make it fun. Aim to arrange mass leafleting sessions twice a week in every week of the ballot period.

Some managements will take a hard line on even handing out leaflets outside work, often saying that the land is private or departmental property immediately outside the entrance, or even that some staff have complained that they are somehow being intimidated, or that offices are occupied by multiple employers.

If the private property line is being used, ask where the property ceases to be private. Find out who owns the property. Tell them what you are doing and ask if you can hand out the materials on pre-arranged dates. Most property owners will respond to polite requests to hand out union literature to members.

## Handing out materials – inside work

Most employers are taking a hard line on reps and members handing out pay ballot materials in work, including dropping leaflets on staff members' desks. As with all the other approaches, it is always worth asking local management where you can do this. Don't assume that you can't. Ask the question and ask why this is a problem. Make the reasons why you are being prevented from reminding members to vote known to members. Any petty or draconian actions by management will irritate many of our members and help to focus their minds on the ballot.

But assuming you cannot hand out ballot-specific materials in work then you may want to get a bit creative about how you explain to members that they need to vote and take part in the campaign. Members will know what you are talking about, and they will enjoy the joke (at management's expense).

We expect that most employers will struggle to find reasons to stop you handing out materials which don't mention the ballot. But, you need to ask the question about whether you can hand these materials out to staff and importantly you need to tell us if you are prevented from handing out these materials and what the reasons are for preventing you handing out these materials. Get a response in writing from the relevant management and send it to [organising@pcs.org.uk](mailto:organising@pcs.org.uk)

## PCS visibility in workplaces

Whether you are prevented from handing out ballot literature or not, all workplaces need to look and feel like UNION workplaces, especially during this ballot period. Make sure union noticeboards are updated, every member has a PCS lanyard, PCS coasters and pens are available and visible, every non-member has a PCS recruitment form. There is no restriction on handing any of these out.

In addition, members need to be talking about the union at work. You don't have to be explicit about the ballot but there needs to be a sense that when you go in to that workplace we know that this is a union workplace.

Every Branch should aim to round up a team to go and do this and speak to members whilst they do it.

## Responses from management

We want to know from branches any instance when you are prevented from carrying out any union activity. Email any information to [organising@pcs.org.uk](mailto:organising@pcs.org.uk)

Activists and members should act in ways which do not allow the employer to take punitive action, but where activists and members are prevented from carrying out any trade union activity during this ballot period we will support our reps and activists. This will include taking up issues with the Cabinet Office and with departments. We will also brief our parliamentary group about the kind of responses and

tactics the employers are using so that issues and case studies can be raised in parliament and through the media.

The CWU were the first union to ballot under the new rules, and they got a remarkable 72% turnout. Earlier

this year, UCU also broke the threshold (and both went on to success in their disputes). We need just over 50% to win. That is not only possible, but if we do the work, and communicate with every member, (but only if we do the work, and communicate with every member) it is almost certain that we will win.

## Key dates

Members should have received their ballot papers by **26 June**. If not received by then members should request a replacement ballot pack. Contact **balloting@pcs.org.uk** giving name, membership number and ballot address.

**Friday, 29 June** is pay day. Make sure there is activity in your branch. Use the day to ask members to vote and to tell us they have voted – **pcs.org.uk/IVOTED**

From **Saturday, 30 June** we will be running phonebanks – contacting all members who have yet to indicate that they have voted. We need reps and activists to volunteer to help phoning members.

Contact your regional or national PCS office.

**13 July** is the last date for non-member to have joined the union and still get a vote in the ballot.

**16 July** is the last date for members to request a replacement ballot paper. Members should contact **balloting@pcs.org.uk** giving name, membership number and ballot address.

Ballot papers need to be posted back by **Thursday, 19 July** to ensure they arrive on time.

Ballot ends **12 noon 23rd July**.

## Further information and support

Check the PCS website regularly for updates and available materials.

National ballot materials will be sent out to branches throughout the ballot period. Materials are sent to reps who are registered as 'PCS Distributors' irrespective of any other union position held. To update who receives materials contact the PCS membership department – **membership@pcs.org.uk** or call **020 7801 2670**.

National materials can be ordered at any time during the ballot. There is a ballot order form on the PCS website. Contact your local regional office for immediate assistance and materials

Material can also be ordered directly from the PCS print unit on **printu@pcs.org.uk**. Give details of your branch name and number, what materials you need and the name and address of where to send it.

From week two of the ballot branches will be able to download and automatically update a membership list for their branch showing which members have indicated they have voted, and therefore be able to focus attention on chasing up members who have yet to vote.

Members should register to say that have voted here: **pcs.org.uk/IVOTED**.

Branches can add members who say they have voted here: **pcs.org.uk/record-pay-ballot-vote**

For any queries or requests for full time staff support contact your regional office or the PCS national organising department on **organising@pcs.org.uk**

For details of your local PCS office check the PCS website here: **pcs.org.uk/about-pcs/contact-pcs/pcs-offices-around-the-uk**