

Following a discussion with a member recently, I was prompted to write this. Sorry it's a bit lengthy.

The current Pay Ballot is perhaps more important than some may realise. It will likely affect how our employer views the trade union in the future, and this impacts everyone. Even non-members.

When a member has an issue, they turn to a PCS rep for advice and support, and often that involves meeting with management to support the member and act on their behalf to make sure their workplace rights are honoured. Rights trade union members have fought for and won over many years.

Members depend on the strength of the union behind the rep to give weight to the rep's position, and ultimately the union when negotiating at national level on things like terms and conditions and pay.

Members and non-members alike benefit from this, as it is that strength that allows the union to negotiate successfully for the benefits we currently have, and the protection being part of the union gives from some of the actions and conditions we would otherwise suffer from.

If members don't engage with and support their union, particularly by taking part in this ballot, it undermines the strength the union has when negotiating. The employer will be encouraged if they believe the union doesn't have the power to do anything in support of claims on behalf of members now and in the future. This in turn affects non-members too, who benefit because of a strong workplace union.

This is the time when we should all look to engage in the first instance by taking part in the ballot. Non-members should look to join now and take part in the ballot to help ensure the union remains strong and can continue to make the workplace a better place for all.

The reason it is so important now, just to simply get involved and vote, is due to the changes this government has made to laws affecting trade unions. We need to meet a minimum 50% turn-out from members before they will even listen to the union, before our ballot is seen as valid. But it isn't enough to just meet the 50% threshold. We need to show that we fully support our union, and the more members who vote increases how strong our union is viewed by the employer and gives weight to our demand for a decent pay for all. A strong turn out now can save us having to take action later.

It isn't enough to think there are enough others taking part to win. We are all those others, and we need to stand together to show we support a strong union and we deserve and want a decent pay.

Don't lose your protection, stand up and be counted, support the union and vote now. Vote Yes!