

25 September 2023

Educating and inspiring the next generation of activists

Simmeron Katbamna, newly elected chair of the national young members' committee (NYMC), reflects on a year of activism and how young members are building PCS - in their networks and their workplaces.

The 2023 Young Members' Seminar was a special one for me - it marked one year of my active involvement in PCS. A year before that I was a disengaged member, still fairly new to PCS and my job in the civil service, and sympathetic to the notion of a trade union but with little understanding beyond being a member in case things go pear-shaped at work.

It was because of my experiences at the seminar that I realised trade unions are the true vehicle for change, and the way to fight injustices both inside and outside the workplace. I realised the union isn't something separate from me, that I go to if I have a problem at work; the union IS me. It's all of us who stand together as a collective and demand better.

And that's exactly what young members have been doing this year - mobilising to smash ballot thresholds, going on strike for the very first time, and asking not what the union can do for us, but what we can do for the union (and by that I mean what we can do for each other, and for our fellow workers).

This is a true testament to the importance of the young members' seminar and what it seeks to achieve. Educating and inspiring the next generation of reps and activists has never been so critical, particularly in the face of such dire economic circumstances and political turbulence.

We may only be at the start of our working lives and trade union journeys, but I hope attendees at the seminar this year have come away with the same resolve that I did - knowing that together we have the power to create the future we deserve.