

26 April 2024

Branch organisers; the heart of the branch

Hear how your organisers are getting ballot ready, recruiting, and networking.

I'm **Matt Burton**, organiser at PCS R&C Croydon branch. My role involves getting the branch vote out during a ballot; essential, given the arbitrary 50% threshold needed. Members' voices, their vote, needs to be heard - the vote needs to be a resounding yes in the current ballot. The claim is fair and proportionate. Look at the recent PAC report; services have been declining for five years and show no signs of being reversed. This is solely due to five years of underinvestment in the department's key resource - people. Pay cuts each year have been resisted by activism, including successful strike action. And this must continue in the current ballot and this is why I'm organising once again in Croydon.

Last year, in Croydon, we managed to convert a 42% turnout into a 52% turnout during the rebalot and the unequivocal vote for strike action. We did this through leafletting, talking with members, by phone calls, by email. This involved many activists over many weeks. And the Croydon branch did it! So, we can do it again, we can win again because we are a trade union

Holly Allison (East Kilbride branch organiser) sets out just what goes into building your branches: I've been our branch organiser for just over a year now and I'm finally starting to feel confident in the role. I'm surrounded by some amazing reps in R&C EK who have supported me and helped morph me into the rep I am today. We've been busy in the branch lately. In late February we held a stall in support of LGBT+ history month and trying to recruit a branch officer for the role. We held four AGMs, two on Teams and two in the office canteen. Members who attended were entered into a free raffle to win £100.

On 7 March we held a stall in celebration of International Women's Day. Our branch women's officer, Liz Newlands, brought in cupcakes, a selfie frame and other goodies. We gave away over 90 notepads and had countless pictures and laughs with members.

On 26 March we held a recruitment stall, subtly hinting towards the ballot without breaking any rules. We are always actively recruiting, promoting PCS Digital and speaking to our members, keeping them posted on our branch Facebook page.

East Midlands (Nottingham) branch organiser **Rowena Cooke**, on what she has done to network in Nottingham Regional Centre, Unity Square:

Working as a branch organiser is hard work but very rewarding. You see the membership numbers go up and down but after putting in a lot of hard work into an event/stall it's worth all those extra hours. I really did enjoy making pom poms and painting small wooden Christmas tree decorations with my 7-year-old. She loved the fact she was helping PCS.

At R&C East Midlands we have increased our PCS presence as we have managed to secure a space at every event being run by management. We've had Christmas themed stalls, represented PCS at equality and diversity events plus we have been invited to welcome events for new recruits to HMRC. I recently negotiated having a space in our foyer each month to hold recruitment stalls. This is huge as we will be visible to everyone that walks into the building, benefitting not only our branch, but all PCS branches at Unity Square. This is a huge improvement on being hidden away in a room, which is what we used to have to do.

At Unity Square there are eight branches in R&C, Legal Aid, DofE, DVSA/DfT, CPS and Land Registry. We work together with recruitment and support each other to campaign, leaflet and we're all currently working together to get those ballot papers back.