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Activate: Contacting ‘follow up targets’ is key to getting your branch over the ballot line

Activists across the union are using a new PCS Digital function called ‘follow up targets’ to prioritise contacting members who’ve recently engaged with the union.

The new [PCS Digital](#) tab, "Follow up targets", shows those members who have told us they will vote and those that have requested a replacement ballot paper.

An effort should be made to concentrate first on contacting members who told us weeks ago they have requested a ballot paper or told us they would vote.

For Cheral Govind, a branch organiser in Ofgem in Scotland, the ‘follow up targets’ tab has been “extremely helpful” in driving up turnout in her branch. She used it to colour-code members into ‘really important to reach out to’ and ‘less important to reach out to’.

Alongside bulk branch reminder emails and CallHub, Bridget Corcoran and Saul Cahill from DWP Tyneside and Northumbria have also been using the tool to target members directly.

“As we get close to the deadline for members to post their ballots, we need to make sure they turn these intentions into action,” they note. “All reps know our members work difficult jobs with conflicting pressures and it’s easy for a trip to the post-box to slip their minds amidst all this.”

Persuade to post ballot

Also taking advantage of this tool, Charlie Liddle and his colleagues from DWP Glasgow have been busy following up with those who have already engaged with the union to “confirm that they have now voted or if not be persuaded to post their ballot paper without further delay”.

“While ultimately our aim should be to make contact with all our branch members, those who have already engaged with us by responding to earlier contact are more likely to respond positively to this further,” Charlie says.

Bridget and Saul believe that no method of contact should be ruled out. Personal email, work email, CallHub and peer-to-peer texts all have their own advantages and disadvantages. However, they insist that “reps and advocates have to use every method of contact at their disposal and sustain these efforts throughout the ballot period”.

Although relatively new to the position, Megan Stroudley, a branch organiser in the Defra Northern branch, has helped drive the estimated branch turnout to 64.85%. She has been busy recruiting new advocates – a group chat for advocates now has 23 members – to help with contacting members about the ballot.

She also created a spreadsheet to list all the members on PCS Digital and used this to divide 10 members each to branch reps, before asking reps to send back the details to her so she could update the spreadsheet alongside PCS Digital.

Another activist, Paul Humphreys, from the Department for Transport branch in Yorkshire and Humber, has also done outreach through a mix of social media, CallHub and email.

“When using CallHub, I am always amazed that I speak to members who say ‘yes of course I will post it, when I find it, it's here somewhere’,” Paul says. “A reminder call always ends up with a positive result, we want all kitchen tables and mantelpieces to be empty of PCS ballot papers.”