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PCS responds to protect members following far-right targeting Home Office locations

Group secretary Mike Jones reflects on the recent spate of far-right riots.

In late July and early August we saw disturbing scenes of protests and riots.

The disturbance followed the news that a 17-year-old male had stabbed several young girls in Southport, and misinformation about his identity was spread. First, that the perpetrator was an asylum seeker or refugee who had come to the UK on a boat. This was discredited and information emerged that the individual was British born. But the circulation of disinformation, including a fake, Arab-sounding name, led many to argue it must have been a Muslim male.

Racists used the horrific events in Southport to mask their prejudice, with slogans such as “protect our children”.

PCS immediately condemned the acts of racism and violence. As protest targets including Home Office staff and buildings circulated on social media we contacted the Home Office and other employers covered by the PCS Home Office group to demand measures be put in place to protect members. While some employers such as the GLAA immediately introduced robust measures to reassure and protect staff, others were slower to react. In the end all employers put procedures in place and messages went out to staff. However, as the protests have now died down, we will use this time to work with employers to ensure there is a better response should this occur again.

While PCS was quick to react to the racist protests and many PCS members took part in counter protests, we recognise that some members who would not regard themselves as racist did show some sympathies to the protestors and rioters.

Education is key to developing a trade union response to the far-right threat in our communities and workplaces and PCS held an hour-long anti-racism and anti-fascism webinar on 15 August. [You can watch a recording of the webinar on](#)

[YouTube.](#)

Our [Racism & Intolerance: Changing Attitudes in the Workplace course](#) on **18 October** is now open for registration. This one-day workshop can help build confidence in challenging far-right ideas and tackling difficult conversations and will give you practical campaigning tips.