

# Branch Briefing REVENUE & CUSTOMS GROUP

To: **All PCS Branch Secretaries**

cc: Branch Chairs, Branch Organisers, Group Executive Committee, Equality Chairs, VOAC

Can this Briefing be circulated via HMRC IT systems: **NO**

Website: **YES**

Action: **For the attention of all PCS representatives**

Date: **2 August 2022**

Ref: **R&C/BB/036/22**

## **NATIONAL CAMPAIGN UPDATE**

### **‘It’s good to talk’**

- *Talk to members*
- *Help them update their details*
- *Record the conversations and changes on the PCS Organising Hub*

Both of the candidates vying to be the new Prime Minister are falling over each other, trying to sound the toughest when it comes to attacks on Public Sector workers specifically, and trade unions generally. This week the Bookies’ Favourite, Liz Truss, announced that if she wins, [she’ll cut civil service pay and holidays](#). Her subsequent backpedalling won’t convince many of us.

We’re at a critical phase of our preparation for the national campaign ballot, which will determine whether or not we’re in a position to challenge the government’s attacks on civil service jobs, pay, pensions and our redundancy scheme.

The anti-union laws mean that any industrial action ballot has to be conducted by post; and if we don’t take all reasonable steps to make sure that everyone gets their ballot paper, then we increase the risk that we won’t reach the 50% turnout those same anti-union laws demand. On top of this, if the employer has the slightest chance of saying that we haven’t taken all reasonable steps to ensure everyone has a vote, there’s no doubt in our minds that even if we hit the 50% turnout and the vote for action is overwhelming, they’ll still look to challenge us in the courts to try to stop us from taking the action we need.

This briefing reminds you of the steps we need to take, to give ourselves the best chance of fighting the planned cuts in jobs, pay, terms and conditions.

### **It’s all in the detail**

It might sound obvious, but we need to make sure that we have the right address to send members their ballot papers. In a union of more than 184,000 members, it stands to reason that in their working lives, our members will have moved jobs and even moved house, any number of times.

PCS always encourages members to [register for PCS Digital](#) so they can make sure that their personal details are up to date. However, with so much at stake, we can’t sit back and hope those records are being maintained.

What we've learned following the recent indicative ballot, is that more than 500 members in HMRC definitely haven't updated their ballot address. On top of this, we know that more than 130 HMRC members originally registered their work address as their ballot address; and when you remember how many offices have closed and how many of those members will have relocated to a Regional Centre, this can only add to the problem.

Just firing-off an email asking members if they've moved house or job since they joined isn't going to cut the mustard. We need to talk to those members to make sure the details we hold for them are up-to-date; and to make sure that they know why we need those details.

The PCS Organising Hub is an essential part of this process. It records the fact that members have been spoken to (so they shouldn't get contacted and asked the same questions over and over again) and it's an easy way for reps to help members by updating their ballot address and contact details. If you haven't seen it already, [here's a simple guide to using the Organising Hub](#).

The Organising Hub is our only real sign that members have been spoken to. If branches don't record the conversations they're having with members, we have to assume that those conversations still need to take place; and this (as we've already said) is how we end up with some members being contacted repeatedly.

Needless to say, in order to use the Organising Hub to access members' information, you need to be registered on PCS systems as an activist in the branch and [registered on PCS Digital](#).

Remember: this work really needs to be done; and it needs to be done by the end of August. This is because the data needs to be collated by the balloting office, ready for the ballot to be launched in late-September.

### **Need a hand?**

During July, PCS Revenue and Customs Group issued two branch briefings (BB/030/22 and BB/031/22) impressing on everyone, the importance of developing a branch plan for delivering the vote in the forthcoming ballot.

If you think your branch needs a hand to develop and deliver on that plan, or any support registering for/using PCS Digital, you can contact the [PCS R&C Group Organiser](#) or the [PCS national organising team](#).

**CLAIRE KEENAN**  
Group Organiser

**MARTIN KELSEY**  
Group Secretary

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