

Unions, social media and young workers - evidence from the UK

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DOI:

[10.1111/ntwe.12154](https://doi.org/10.1111/ntwe.12154)

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Document Version

Peer reviewed version

Citation for published version (Harvard):

Hodder, A & Houghton, D 2019, 'Unions, social media and young workers - evidence from the UK', *New Technology, Work and Employment*. <https://doi.org/10.1111/ntwe.12154>

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Table 1: Twitter account details for the period 2014-16.

Union	Twitter Handle	Joined Twitter	Followers (June)			Following (June)			Tweets 2014-15	Mean Tweets per month 2014-15 (a)	Tweets 2015-16	Mean Tweets per month 2015-16 (b)	Difference in mean tweets per month (b-a)	Total Tweets 2014-2016	Total account tweets - June 2016	Sample (of all Tweets from the account) %
			2014	2015	2016	2014	2015	2016								
GMB	@GMBYoungMembers	Jan-11	1,580	2,256	2,807	1,470	1,992	2,094	236	19.67	701	58.42	38.75	937	1,430	65.52
PCS	@PCSYMN	Jan-11	1,051	1,250	1,385	453	450	503	177	14.75	194	16.17	1.42	371	1,423	26.07
Unite	@Young_Unite	Jan-14	448	880	1217	271	452	502	246	20.50	250	20.83	0.33	496	596	83.22
									659		1,145			1,804	3,449	

Table 2: *Original* tweets and *retweets* for each union, per year

Tweet Type	GMB (2014-15)		GMB (2015-16)		PCS (2014-15)		PCS (2015-16)		Unite (2014-15)		Unite (2015-16)	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
Original	68	28.81	244	34.81	128	72.32	57	29.38	98	39.84	47	18.80
Retweet	168	71.19	457	65.19	49	27.68	137	70.62	148	60.16	203	81.20
Total	236	100.00	701	100.00	177	100.00	194	100.00	246	100.00	250	100.00

Table 3: Coded tweet categories for each union, per year

	<i>GMB</i>				<i>PCS</i>				<i>Unite</i>			
	<i>2014-15</i>		<i>2015-16</i>		<i>2014-15</i>		<i>2015-16</i>		<i>2014-15</i>		<i>2015-16</i>	
<i>Category</i>	<i>n</i>	<i>%</i>	<i>n</i>	<i>%</i>	<i>n</i>	<i>%</i>	<i>n</i>	<i>%</i>	<i>n</i>	<i>%</i>	<i>n</i>	<i>%</i>
Recruitment	3	1.27	8	1.14	0	0.00	7	3.61	3	1.22	3	1.20
Campaigning	13	5.51	164	23.40	43	24.29	34	17.53	26	10.57	102	40.80
External Campaigning	57	24.15	131	18.69	18	10.17	36	18.56	38	15.45	37	14.80
Strike Building	5	2.12	2	0.29	31	17.51	4	2.06	3	1.22	0	0.00
Strike Action	2	0.85	2	0.29	6	3.39	2	1.03	0	0.00	0	0.00
Solidarity	3	1.27	46	6.56	16	9.04	12	6.19	12	4.88	16	6.40
Engagement	14	5.93	41	5.85	6	3.39	9	4.64	4	1.63	5	2.00
News	48	20.34	121	17.26	27	15.25	31	15.98	52	21.14	32	12.80
Other	46	19.49	65	9.27	6	3.39	2	1.03	15	6.10	8	3.20
Democracy	0	0.00	31	4.42	0	0.00	8	4.12	0	0.00	15	6.00
Youth Forum/Conference	45	19.07	90	12.84	24	13.56	49	25.26	93	37.80	32	12.80
Total	236	100.00	701	100.00	177	100.00	194	100.00	246	100.00	250	100.00

Table 4: Number of youth specific tweets for each union, per year

	GMB				PCS				Unite			
	2014-15		2015-16		2014-15		2015-16		2014-15		2015-16	
Youth specific?	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%
Yes	111	47.03	291	41.51	54	30.51	86	44.33	172	69.92	81	32.40
No	125	52.97	410	58.49	123	69.49	108	55.67	74	30.08	169	67.60
Total	236	100.00	701	100.00	177	100.00	194	100.00	246	100.00	250	100.00

Table 5: Degree of engagement for year union, per year

		Likes (% of tweets with >5 Likes)	ReTweets (% of tweets with >5 ReTweets)	Tweet with Most Engagement
2014-15	GMB	6.78	10.59	We're outside parliament calling for an end to Revenge Evictions. Will you support us and #How4Housing
	PCS	1.69	9.04	If you don't know why the PCS are on strike or you're undecided, then here's 7 reasons why you should support today
	Unite	2.44	11.38	Walmart strikers win pay rise for 500,000 workers. Fantastic news, never doubt the power of a union. In solidarity. #WalmartStrikers
2015-16	GMB	23.36	42.21	Young people in Britain are being denied rights and opportunities at work. We are campaigning for a new #FairDeal! https://t.co/PjzAReUNlg=:https://twitter.com/GMBYoungMembers/status/702092554779684864/photo/1
	PCS	8.77	19.30	PCS young members on the March in London today! https://t.co/C8xV169yYt=:https://twitter.com/PCSYMN/status/721320729900380161/photo/1
	Unite	27.66	57.45	Due to our action today no worker was body searched!!! This is usually unpaid. Great response by the workers. #SportsDirectShame

Table 6: User mentions for each union youth section.

		Unique Users Mentioned	Number of Mentions	Top three users engaged
2014-15	GMB	45	87	@anonymiseduser, n=9; @anonymiseduser, n=8; @gmbyounglondon, n=7
	PCS	14	58	@pcs_union, n=31; @pcsymn, n=7; @boycottworkfare, n=6
	Unite	33	61	@decentwork4all, n=9; @anonymiseduser, n=6; @tucyoungworkers, n=5
2015-16	GMB	121	279	@younglabouruk, n=14; @gmbyounglondon, n=14; @gmbpolitics, n=12
	PCS	24	50	@pcs_union, n=12; @pcsymn, n=7; @pcsculturegroup, n=4
	Unite	19	30	@sportsdirectuk, n=9; @decentwork4all, n=3; @tucyoungworkers, n=2
2014-16*	GMB	148	366	@bmgyounglondon, n=21; @anonymiseduser, n=14; @younglabouruk, n=14
	PCS	34	108	@pcs_union, n=43; @pcsymn, n=14; @boycottworkfare, n=6
	Unite	44	91	@decentwork4all, n=12; @sportsdirectuk, n=9; @tucyoungworkers, n=7

*2014-16 data includes some user accounts mentioned in both individual years' data, resulting in duplicate accounts, thus total unique users mentioned is not the sum of 2014-15 and 2015-16 data

Table 7: Hashtags used by each union account, per year

	2014-15					2015-16				
	Total Hashtags Used	No. Unique Hashtags	Mean hashtags / tweet	Hashtags Used >10 times	No. times used	Total Hashtags Used	No. Unique Hashtags	Mean hashtags / tweet	Hashtags Used >10 times	No. times used
GMB	178	89	0.75	#GMB14	18	698	206	1.00	#gmb	61
				#youngGMB	11				#livingwage	47
				#YWM14	15				#10poundnow	38
PCS	147	35	0.83	#weallneedapayrise	45	231	105	1.19	#pcs	26
				#J10	15				#pcsyms15	24
				#PCS	14				#tucywc16	12
Unite	213	68	0.87	#Fightfor5	29	252	97	1.01	#sportsdirectshame	65
				#TUCYWC15	22				#yl16	11
				#uniteYMC15	25					
				#uniteYWM14	24					

Table 8: Unique user accounts mentioned as a proportion of original tweets.

	2014-15	2015-16	2014-16
GMB	0.66	0.50	0.47
PCS	0.11	0.42	0.18
Unite	0.34	0.40	0.30