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Changing the world
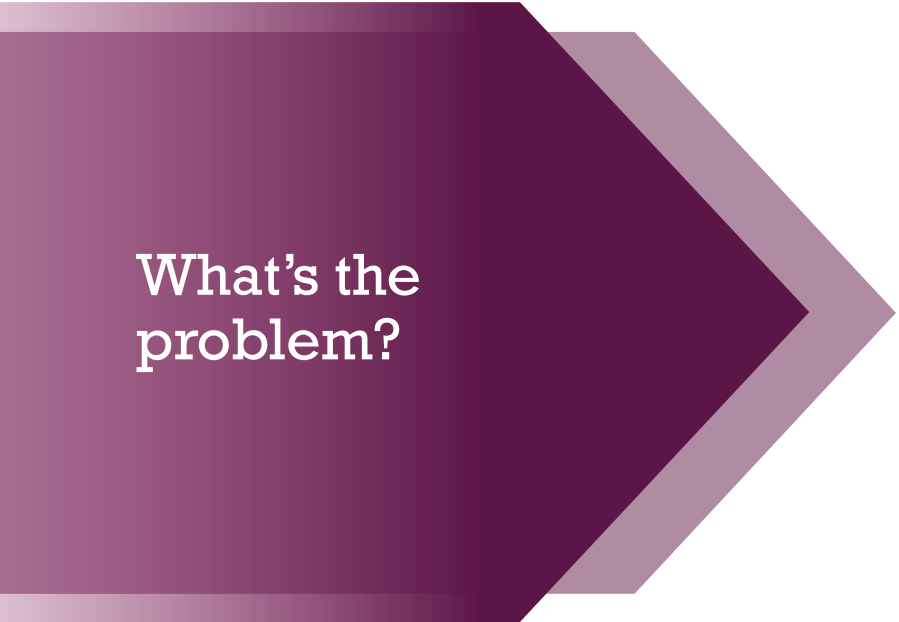of work for good

Cant join, wont join?

Lessons for organising young
workers from the TUC 'Reaching
Out' project

What we'll cover

- What's the problem?

- What has the project told us about young people, work and unions?

- What does this mean for unions and existing approaches to organising young workers?
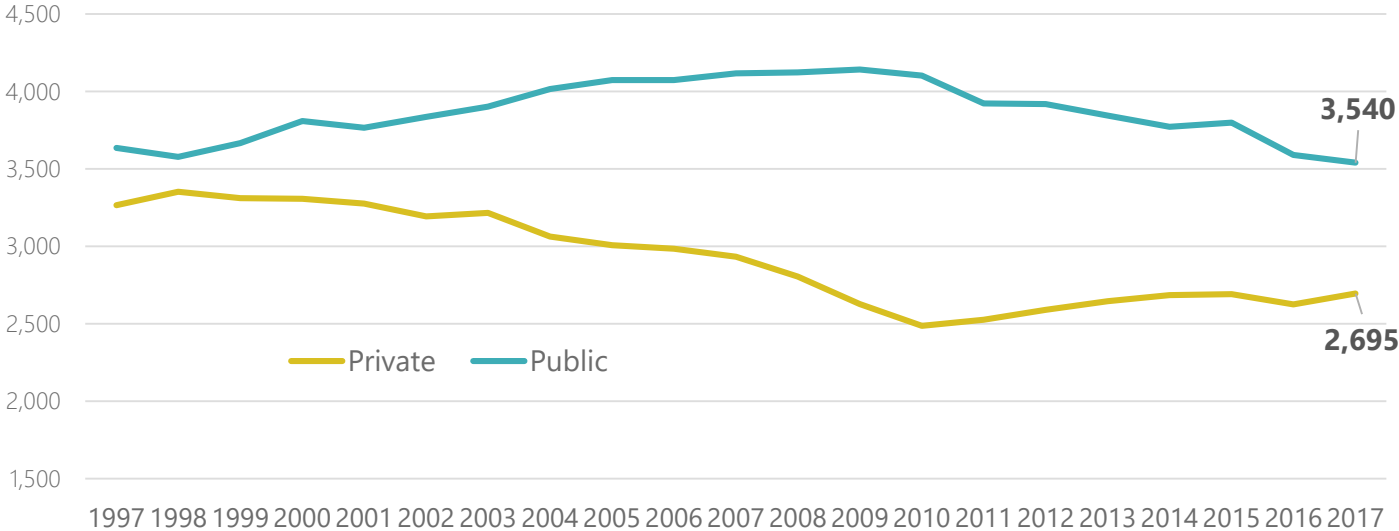
- What can and should we do now?

3 ways to participate

- **Ask questions** and vote for your favourite – links below this presentation

- **Answer the polls** – link below this presentation

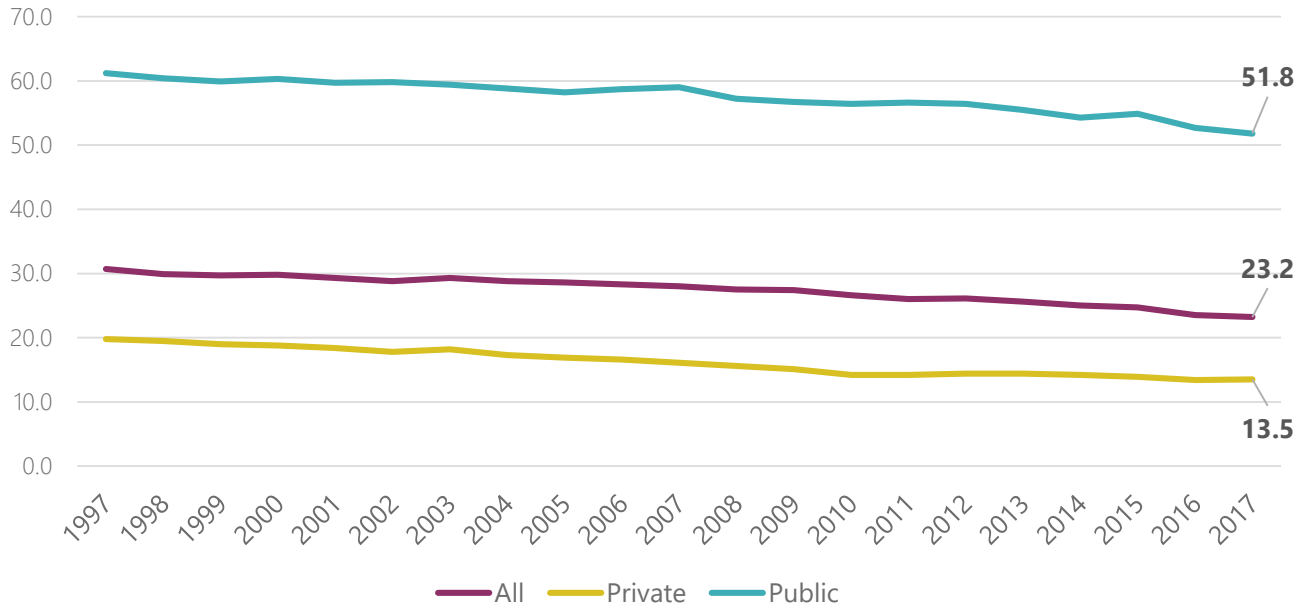- **Comment and chat** – click on 'Say something nice' (bottom-right)

What's the problem?

Union membership by sector over the last 20 years

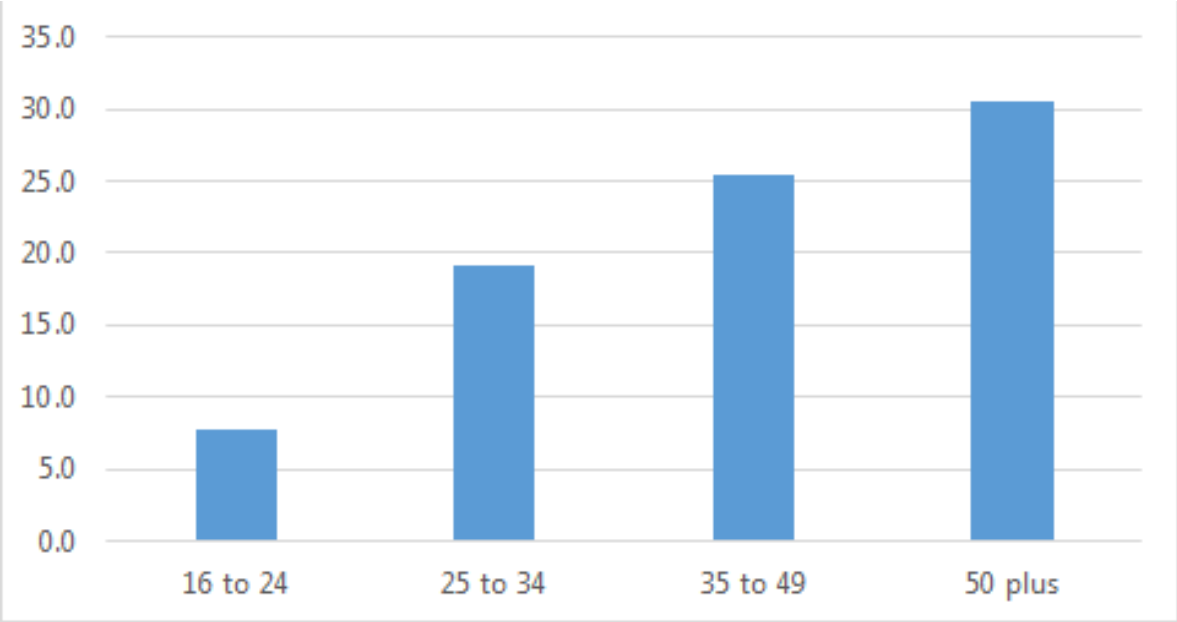Chart showing union membership by sector (Private in yellow, Public in teal) from 1997 to 2017, with values in thousands ranging on the y-axis from 1,500 to 4,500. Public sector ends at 3,540 and Private sector ends at 2,695.

Union density over the last 20 years

Non members by sector

| | 1997 | 1998 | 1999 | 2000 | 2001 | 2002 | 2003 | 2004 | 2005 | 2006 | 2007 | 2008 | 2009 | 2010 | 2011 | 2012 | 2013 | 2014 | 2015 | 2016 | 2017 |

Private — 17,589
15,249

Public — 3,316
3,198

Private   Public

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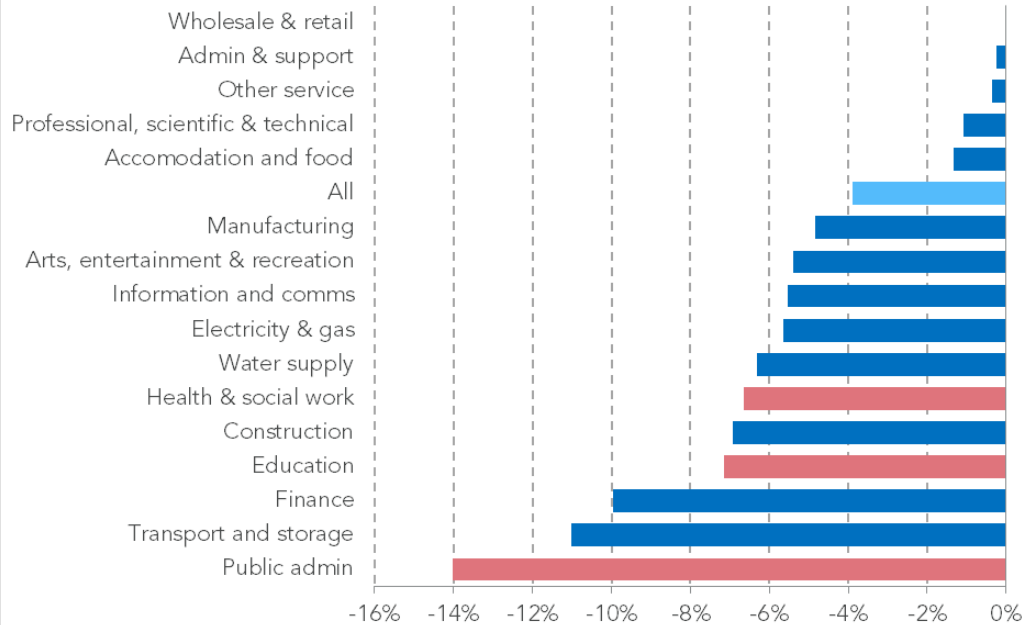Changing the world
of work for good
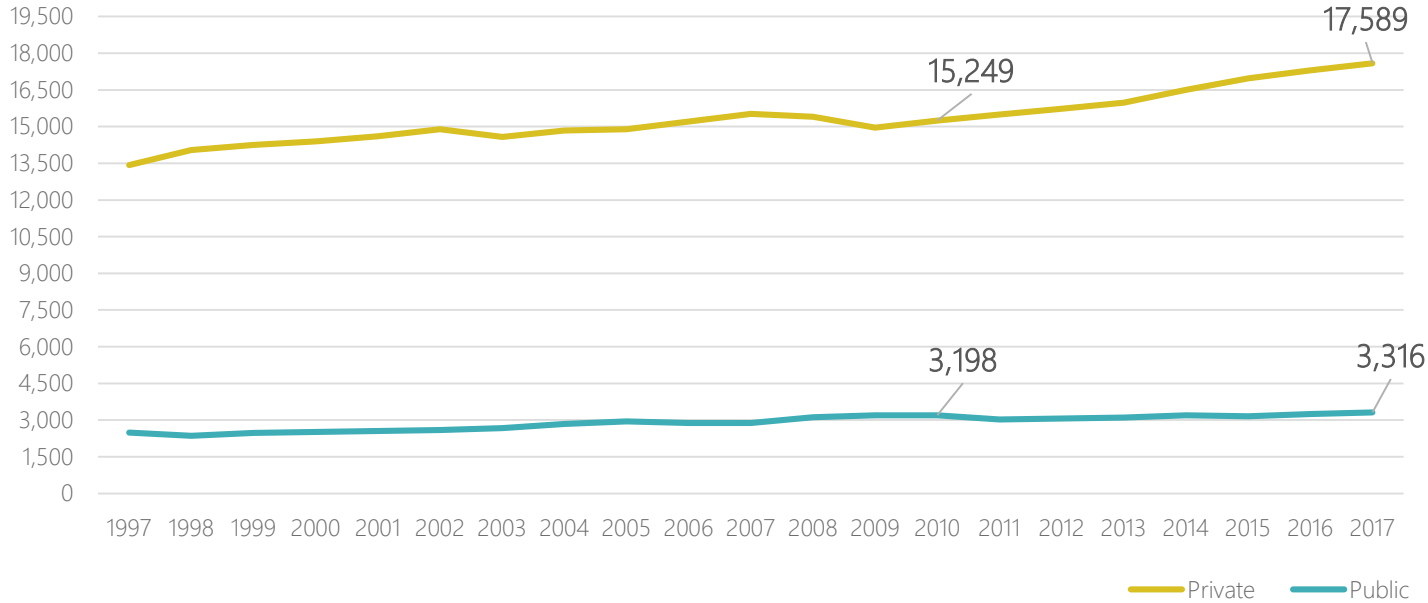
Union density by age - 2017

Membership amongst young workers is falling everywhere

Change in 16-35 year olds' trade union membership rate 2002-04 to 2014-16, by industry

Industry	
Wholesale & retail	
Admin & support	
Other service	
Professional, scientific & technical	
Accomodation and food	
All	
Manufacturing	
Arts, entertainment & recreation	
Information and comms	
Electricity & gas	
Water supply	
Health & social work	
Construction	
Education	
Finance	
Transport and storage	
Public admin	

-16% -14% -12% -10% -8% -6% -4% -2% 0%

The decline in young people's membership has been sharper in the parts of the economy where it had furthest to fall…

…Health & social work, Education & Public administration had the highest membership rates in the early 2000s.

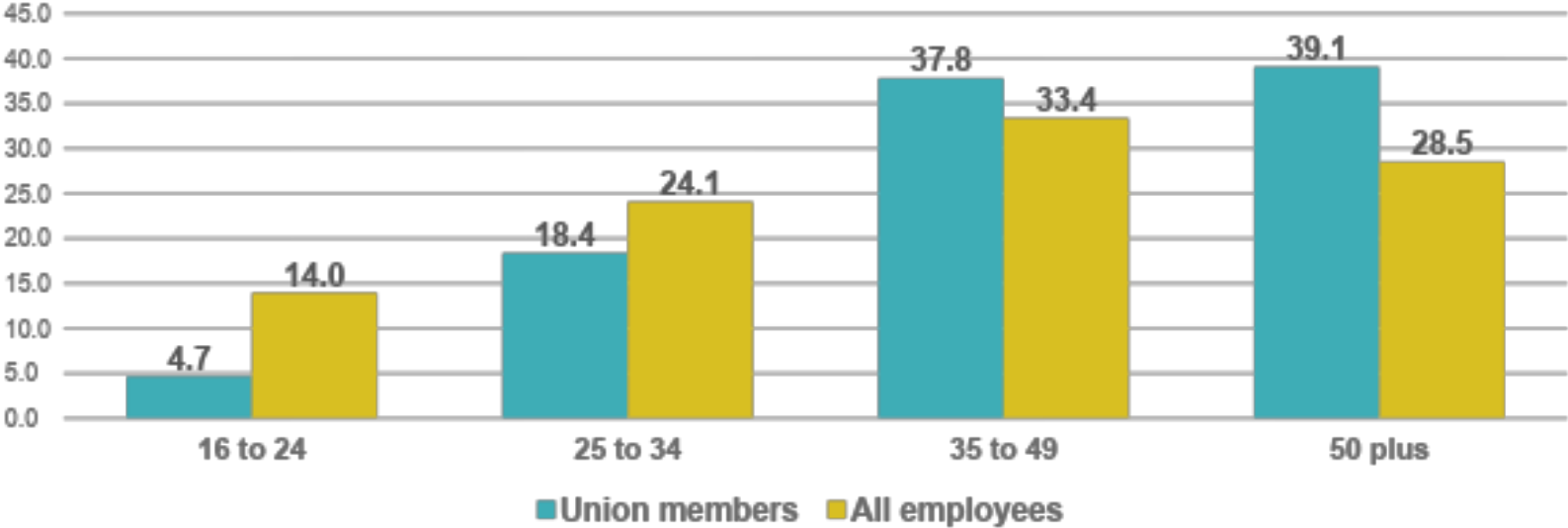# 21-30s, working in the private sector
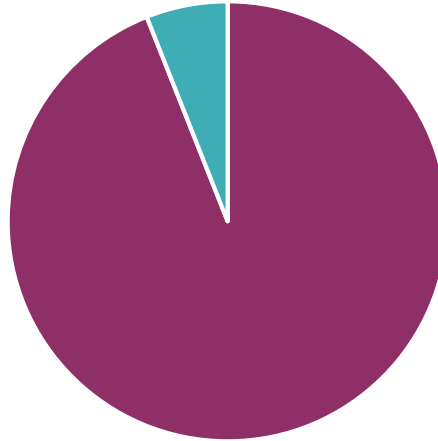
Not union members   Union members

Where young people work

Sector	Number of young workers	Workers in unions	Young workers in unions
Wholesale and retail	873,000	12%	6%
Accommodation and food services	598,000	3%	1%
Private sector	3.2 million	13%	5%

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Age of union members

	16 to 24	25 to 34	35 to 49	50 plus
Union members	4.7	18.4	37.8	39.1
All employees	14.0	24.1	33.4	28.5

■ Union members ■ All employees

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Summary of the problem

- Less than 1 in 10 workers aged 16-24 are members of a union

- Less than 1 in 20 current members are in this age group

- We'll lose 40% of our existing members through retirement over the next 10-15 years

- High numbers of young people work in industries and sectors where union membership, density and presence is low.

What has the project told us?

Top line – there are four barriers to collective organisation. The first three are…

Low expectations: Young workers don't identify as having problems at work. If anything they consider themselves fortunate. It's common for them to say "I have to be at work half an hour unpaid every day for briefings and debriefings, but overall I'm treated fairly."

Lack of trust: There are very low levels of trust between colleagues in precarious work. It's common to hear "I could never talk to a colleague about a shared issue - they'd be straight behind my back to the boss and then I'd be in trouble."

Sense of futility: When YCW's have tried to change things in the past nothing happened. It's common to hear "Why would I put my neck on the line to try and change something if it's never going to get better anyway?"

Genuine ignorance
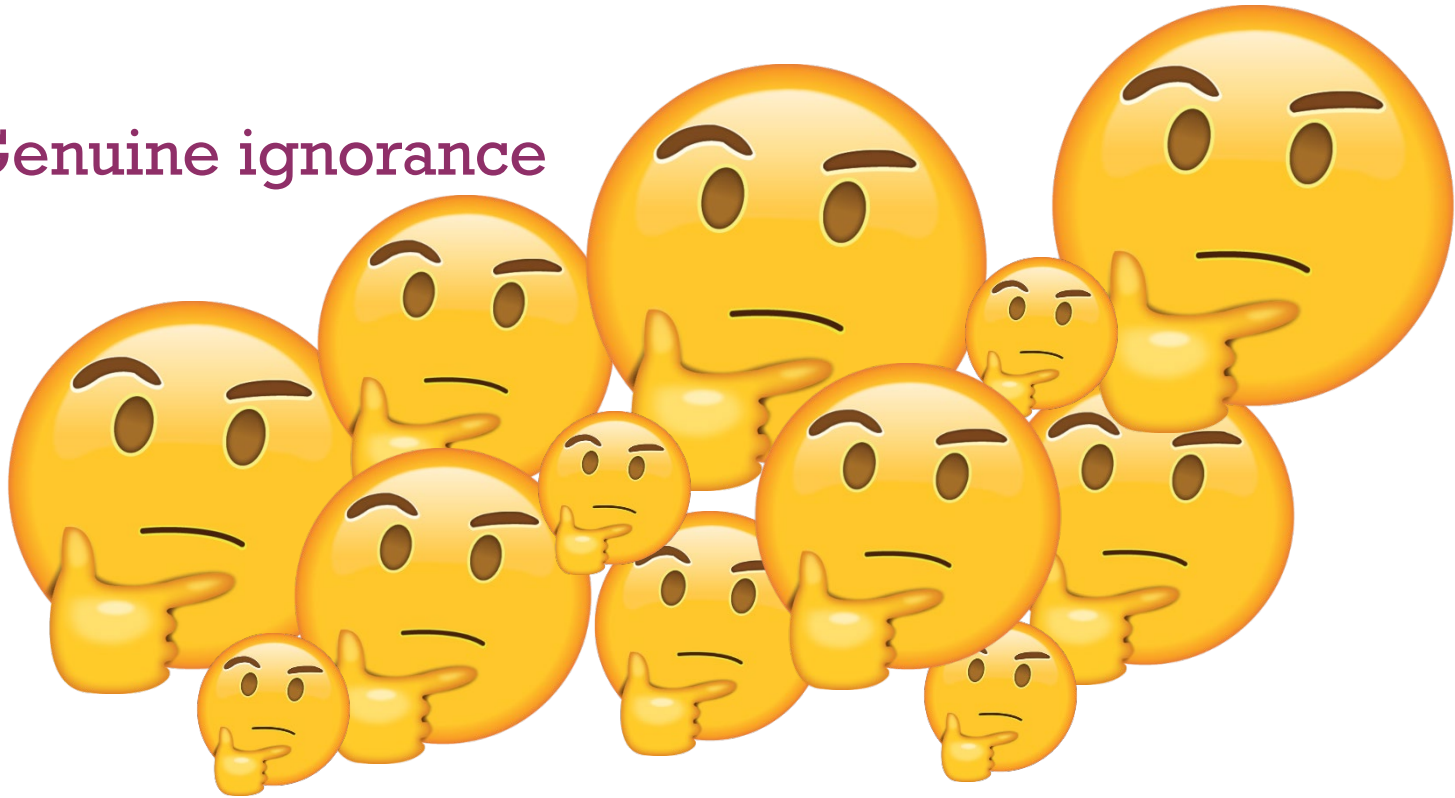
Radio Society of Great Britain

National Federation of Young Farmers Clubs

Canoe Scotland

National Association of Choirs

Grand National Archery Society

British Beekeepers Association

British Exploration Club

National Association of Flower Arranging Societies

National Neighbourhood Watch Association
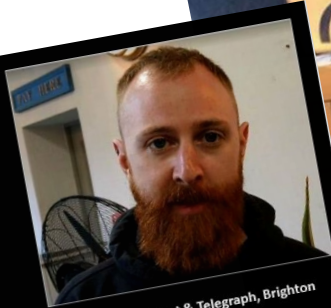
…or fear
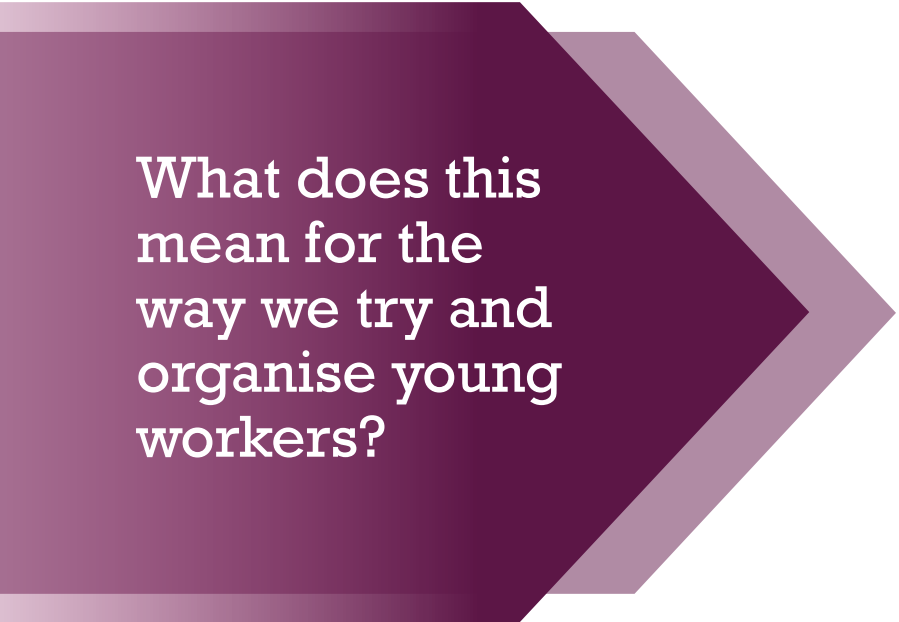
What does this mean for the way we try and organise young workers?
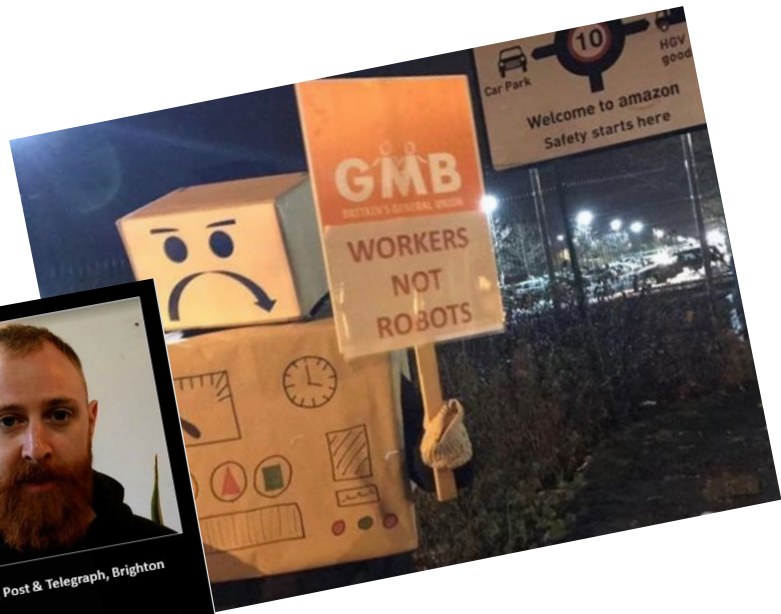
There's lots going on…

"If this is how they respond to two pubs just threatening to take action, imagine what we can achieve when we all come together in a union across the country. We're more determined than ever."

Chris Heppell, Post & Telegraph, Brighton

JD Wetherspoon brings forward annual pay award, abolishes 18-20yr rates, and sets £1/hr over-night premium in response to two pubs balloting for strike action.

BAKERS FOOD AND ALLIED WORKERS UNION BFAWU

#spoonstrike

GMB
BRITAIN'S GENERAL UNION
WORKERS NOT ROBOTS

Welcome to amazon
Safety starts here

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But some questions for our existing approaches

- Being where young workers work

- Role of young workers structures in unions

- How we talk about unions – past, present future

- The tools we use…understanding of the potential of digital
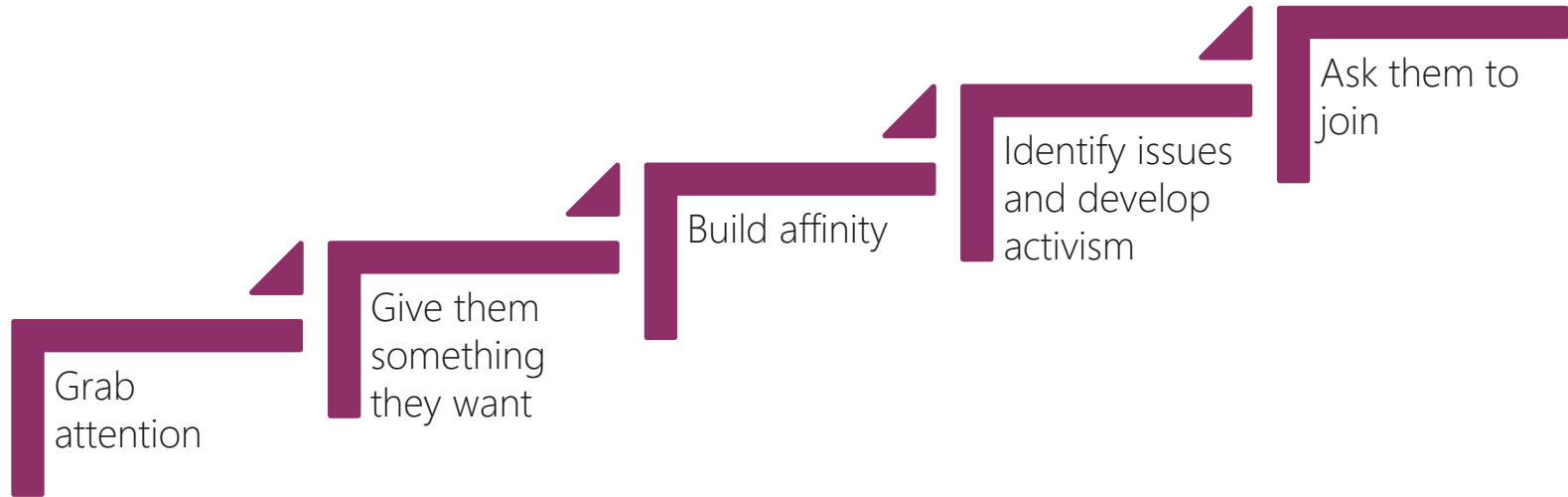
- Slaying sacred cows…

Getting people on a journey

Grab attention

Give them something they want

Build affinity

Identify issues and develop activism

Ask them to join

Emotion and motion
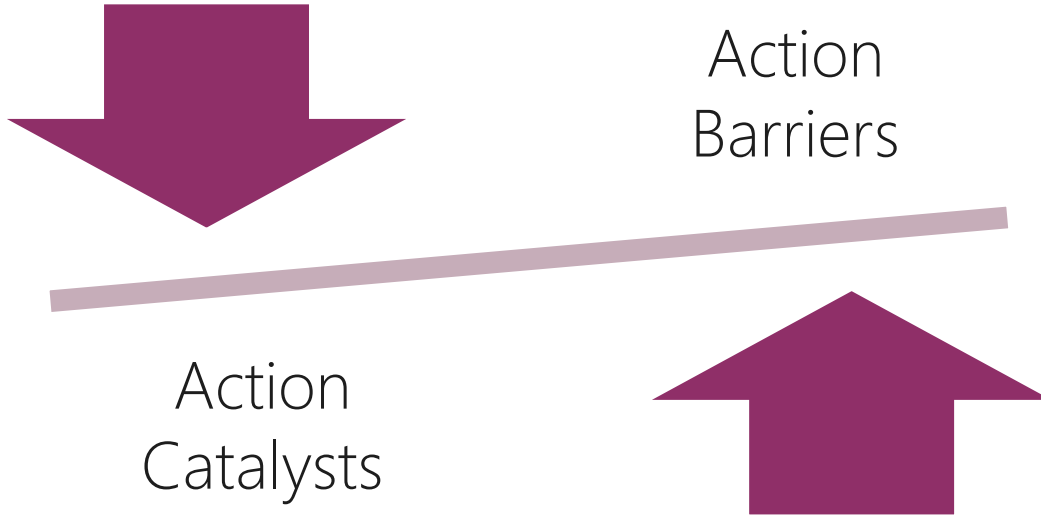
Action barriers - Moving people

Apathy	• Anger
Fear	• Hope
Inertia	• Action
Self-doubt	• YCMAD
Isolation	• Solidarity

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Moving forward

Moving forward…

- Crisis requires a whole movement response

- But we've done it before…Organising Academy

- Understand and invest in digital

- Innovate…make good practice, common practice

- Measure of success is organising to a scale that matches the size of the challenge

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