

Black Members in UNISON



ISSUE 3

NORTH WEST

OCTOBER 2020

BLACK LIVES MATTER

**INSIDE THIS ISSUE: HOW TO GET INVOLVED WITH NW BLACK MEMBERS COMMITTEE
WHAT YOUR BRANCH CAN DO • BLACK LIVES & COVID 19 • KNOW YOUR RIGHTS**

Welcome

“In UNISON, ‘Black’ – with a capital B – is used to indicate people with a shared history. ‘Black’ is used in a broad political and inclusive sense to describe people in the UK who have suffered from colonialism and enslavement in the past and continue to experience racism and diminished opportunities in today’s society”.

Sonia Stewart

Sonia Stewart
Equality Officer and Secretary
North West Black Members Committee



**“I am no longer accepting
the things I cannot change.**

**I’m changing the things
I cannot accept.”**

Angela Davis





Message from the Chair

NO JUSTICE, NO PEACE.

The ongoing experience of discrimination at work for Black Members has been heightened and exposed by the ongoing COVID 19 crises. As the Covid-19 Pandemic collides with the hostile environment, the massively disproportionate and tragic number of Black Workers deaths has put a spotlight on the effect of government policy. As expected, the government and right-wing media are trying to blame our diverse communities themselves for this, instead of recognising their own role. This means campaigning on this issue, is more important than ever.

Ameen Hadi

Ameen Hadi

Chair, North West Black Members Committee



www.unisonnw.org

How to get involved with NW Black Members Committee.

What can you do?

Join our email mailing list and/or our WhatsApp Group

Attend NW Black Members Committee meetings. They are open to all Black Members in the North West

Attend National Black Members Conference which is the biggest union black members event in the UK with 600 plus delegates . Contact your Branch and ask to be a delegate.

If you need advice or support on any workplace issue contact your Branch. If you need further assistance please contact NW Black Members Committee.

If you are interested in setting up a Black Members Group contact our Regional Officer Angela Blundell or Ameen Hadi for support.

Invite a speaker from NW Black Members Committee to speak at your Branch Committee Meeting or Branch AGM

For any of the above email a.blundell@unison.co.uk or ameen.hadi@salfordcityunison.org.uk

Supporting Campaigns

NW Black Members Committee is supporting the following organisations:

Please ask your branch to consider donations and invitations for them to speak at union meetings

Justice for Christopher Alder, FAO Janet Alder, 53 Cotehill West Lodge, Burnley Road, Halifax HX2 7LZ

http://fnd.us/christopheralder?ref=sh_8Bp0y7qxp258Bp0y7qxp25

Stand Up to Racism, F.A.O. Julie, PO Box 72710, London, SW19 9GX

<https://www.standuptoracism.org.uk>

"The Ubele Initiative". Wolves Lane Horticultural Centre , Wolves Lane ,London N22 5JD

CrowdJustice fund

<https://www.crowdjustice.com/case/weneednanswers/>

Summary of legal action:

www.leighday.co.uk/News

Defining Black



In UNISON, 'Black' – with a capital B – is used to indicate people with a shared history. 'Black' is used in a broad political and inclusive sense to describe people in the UK who have suffered from colonialism and enslavement in the past and continue to experience racism and diminished opportunities in today's society.

The terms 'minority ethnic' and 'ethnic minority' are in widespread official use. But these terms have negative connotations of being marginal or less important. In many neighbourhoods, towns and cities in the UK it is statistically inaccurate or misleading to describe Black groups as a minority.

Since the '70s the term 'Black' has been used in anti-racism campaigning in recognition of the common struggle against racism and under-representation.

Language changes and evolves but terminology is always important in terms of intention and direction. Using 'Black' is about creating unity in the fight against deep-rooted racism that sees Black people disadvantaged in housing, education, employment and the criminal justice and health systems.

Through UNISON, you can help yourself and other people by participating in the ongoing activities to promote equality in all aspects of life. Being a member of a union, you are not alone and as a member of the Black Members Group, you can also keep yourself informed about issues relevant to yourself and your situation.

Furthermore, you can participate in the making of UNISON's policies and be part of the campaigns against discrimination in all its forms. By participating you can also make Black members' voices stronger – the more we are and the more we stand together, the harder it is to ignore us.

Justice for George Floyd – the UK is not innocent!

Stand Up To Racism

NORTH WEST REGIONAL SUMMIT

Covid-19, racism and resistance

Sunday 4th October
2pm–5pm Summit with workshops – register on Zoom: t.ly/V31V

- The fight against health inequalities
- Decolonisation of the curriculum
- Refugees welcome here
- Opposing police racism
- Independent public inquiry into C-19 BAME deaths




What your Branch can do

Black Workers and the disproportionate deaths from Covid 19

Black Workers, particularly those working in the NHS and Social Care, are suffering disproportionately from Covid-19. Communities of such heritage have made up so far:

- One third of Covid-19 patients who have been in intensive care;
- Two thirds of NHS staff who have died;
- All but one of the doctors who have died after contracting Covid-19
- Double the average of households who have lost jobs/income.
- 94% of Doctors and Dentists, 71% of nurses and midwives, and 56% of healthcare support workers that have died despite BAME workers forming the minority of all these categories.
- Similar statistics are now available for other frontline workers such as bus workers, social care workers etc
- The letter from NHS improvement's chief operating officer, Amanda Pritchard, was sent to those running NHS care organisations across England. It said: "Emerging UK and international data suggest that people from black, Asian and minority ethnic (BAME) backgrounds are also being disproportionately affected by Covid-19."
- Some experts have cited social deprivation and higher rates of cancer, diabetes and heart disease among some BAME groups as likely factors, along with the fact that minority ethnic people make up a greater number of those employed in key worker roles who receive greater exposure to the virus.

As a matter of urgency in frontline services, we call on all Unison Branches & Regions, to take this matter up with employers asking them to:

- Identify what workforce data should be collected to aid a better understanding of the impact of Covid-19 and related issues to Black staff;
 - Identify how organisations can make sure their actions do not contribute to a disproportionate impact on frontline workers from Black backgrounds; collective or individual risk assessments should be mandatory.
 - Take actions to ensure tailoring and uptake of health and well-being and psychological support services by Black staff
- 

Black Lives Matter

Background Research

Let's talk about racism - TUC Report April 2017

<https://www.tuc.org.uk/sites/default/files/LetstalkaboutRacism.pdf>

Here is the latest survey by UNISON on racism in the NHS:

<https://www.unison.org.uk/news/article/2019/10/data-race-for-equality/>

The Employment of Black Workers in Local Government and Community Schools in Wales and England August 2016 <https://www.unison.org.uk/content/uploads/2016/08/23892.pdf>

Three main recommendations flow from above:

Resources and support for Black workers to ensure health and safety; this should be included in service wide and individual Risk Assessments which offer a variety of options to support their physical as well as mental health well-being.

Ensure that unions campaign with their employers have a strong equality, diversity and dignity policy includes zero tolerance for racism. They must make it clear that they will support all staff who raise concerns about racism and act to protect staff who are subject to racial abuse.

For unions to ensure employers Publish data on Black Workers Pay (Race Equality), statistics on recruitment, promotion and dismissal; set aspirational targets for diversity at their organisation to at least reflect the community it serves and measure progress against those targets annually.



Black Lives Matter

After the murder of George Floyd, the reaction across the US and the world has highlighted the racism Black Communities face from the Police and the criminal justice system. This is a long-standing issue in the UK e.g. Christopher Alder, Sean Rigg, Mark Duggan etc.

Also, in the UK it is concerning is the increased use of Section 60 and the use of the taser specifically targeting Black communities. This was highlighted by the tasering of a black man in front of his young child at a petrol station in Stretford, Manchester.

Continue to support local and national initiatives against racism and fascism working in collaboration with appropriate Black community organisations and campaigning partners such as Stand up to Racism, Unite Against Fascism, Ubele Initiative and Show Racism the Red Card.

Actions & Demands of Anti Racist Movement:

JUSTICE FOR GEORGE FLOYD

Change petition with over 18m signatures

<https://www.change.org/p/mayor-jacob-frey-justice-for-george-floyd>

Follow the Floyd Family Lawyer for the latest on the case

<https://twitter.com/AttorneyCrump>

POLICING AND JUSTICE

Support the United Friends And Families Campaign demands

<https://uffcampaign.org/>

Scrap section 60 Stop and Search, which exacerbates police abuse and disproportionately targets Black people

DECOLONISE EDUCATION, RECOGNISE BRITAIN'S ROLE IN SLAVERY

Change petition – include black history in the curriculum

www.change.org “Include Black British History in the national education curriculum”

Support NEU demands on racism in the education system

<https://neu.org.uk/press-releases/black-lives-matter>



Black Lives Matter

COVID 19 DISPROPORTIONATE IMPACT

Act on findings and recommendations on institutional racism in the Public Health England Report

Sign the statement for an independent public inquiry on disproportionate impact

<https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSf9AI8WCZF4liHFdPzmDBFSKI6H80oOh2Lv7iaOssx0KQB2g/viewform>

END INSTITUTIONAL RACISM, JUSTICE FOR WINDRUSH

Implement all existing reports on institutional racism. As David Lammy says:

There are 35 recommendations in the Lammy Review. Implement them.

110 recommendations in the Angiolini Review. Implement them.

30 recommendations in the Windrush Lessons Learned Review. Implement them.

26 recommendations in Baroness McGregor-Smith's Review. Implement them.

NHS

Resources and support for BAME workers to ensure health and safety

An examination of the disproportionate GMC referrals for BAME doctors

BAME workers to be able to report incidents anonymously.

IMMIGRATION

Full citizenship rights for all

End detentions and deportations

Justice for Windrush, refugees welcome.

HOUSING

Justice for Grenfell

Invest in social housing.


ECONOMIC

Reparations for slavery for Caribbean families – slavers got reparations, it's time the descendants of slaves got reparations too.

HUMAN RIGHTS

End Prevent and racial profiling,

Place human rights at the centre of policies.



Black Members in UNISON



NORTH WEST

UNISON National Black Members' Conference 2020

**1.00pm Friday 22nd January to
5.00pm Saturday 23rd January 2021**

The Brighton Centre, Kings Rd, Brighton BN1 2GR

Please consider approaching your Branch to sort out delegations to the Conference. Whether the Conference is physical or in the end has to be virtual it would be great to have a strong delegation from the North West.

The deadline for your Branch to submit delegates is 29th October.
See link below for Conference bulletin with timescales.
shorturl.at/yHK09

STAY SAFE

Ameen Hadi, NW Unison Chair of Black Members Committee
Mob: 07557281471

#BlackLivesMatter



Black History Month Event

**Wednesday 21st
October**

4:00pm to 5:00pm

William Cuffay was a leader of the working class chartist movement in the 19th Century and his role should be remembered.
Celebrate the life of our Black heroes.



To register for this online event please email b.kelly@unison.co.uk

Have your say'' event organised in conjunction with the
People's History Museum and NW Black Members Committee

Black Lives & COVID 19

A UNISON Statement by General Secretary Dave Prentis - 18th June 2020

<http://www.unison.org.uk/content/uploads/2020/06/UNISON-Statement-Black-lives-and-COVID.docx>

We call on the UK Government to:

- 1. Implement the recommendations from the Windrush Lessons Learned Review by Wendy Williams in March 2020. Two years on and they are still waiting for the promised compensation;**
- 2. Implement the Lammy Review of the criminal justice system from 2017;**
- 3. Bring into force Section 1 of the Equality Act 2010 - the Public Sector Socio-Economic duty in England. This already enacted in the Scotland and Wales;**
- 4. Act on Theresa May's comprehensive Race Disparity Audit published in 2017.**

Continued warm words are not enough and action is needed today. Employers, governments, public bodies and regulators must be held to account for their duty of care, legal and lawful responsibilities. This includes, but is not limited to, the Health and Safety Executive, the Care Quality Commission (and devolved equivalents), Equality and Human Rights Commission and the departments of the Westminster, Scottish, Welsh and Northern Ireland governments.

A judge led Royal Commission or Public Inquiry must be convened and focus on Black deaths due to COVID 19 and the contributing factors. It must be used to galvanise change. UNISON stands ready to play the leading role as we did with the Stephen Lawrence Inquiry a generation ago that established that organisations could be guilty of institutional racism.

There is an immediate and critical role for our union to work with employers (or to force them through all available collective means including legal action) to ensure that Black staff are listened to and respected so that:

- risks are addressed effectively and meaningfully;**
- appropriate action is taken to support staff to work safely;**
- where work cannot be made safe for that individual, paid alternatives are provided;**
- employers listen to and act on the issues and concerns Black staff have about their circumstances and experiences;**
- the huge toll of systemic structural racism on Black staff is acknowledged and support provided.**

Black Lives & COVID 19

Safe workplaces are a human right. Nobody should fear going to work. Racism isn't business as usual. Racism, hidden or overt must not be 'part of the job'.

Public service workers battling COVID 19 as part of their job cannot be expected to battle the Home Office at the same time on immigration matters. UNISON campaigning on immigration, Windrush and opposing the hostile environment has led the way in supporting and advising migrant worker members, securing an exemption for some from the damaging Immigration Health Surcharge, Indefinite Leave to Remain for the families of those who have died as a result of COVID-19 and exposed the problems in the current Immigration Bill. The one-year visa extension campaign for medical and care professionals must be extended to all health and social care staff as a first step – but UNISON is calling for all essential workers to receive Indefinite Leave to Remain so they can do their job and support their families without additional worries about the Home Office.

This union will continue to be pro-active and visible in standing with our members and communities. As a public service union, we are in constant dialogue and engagement with our members who live in those communities and rely on those services. We value our local equality reps and the leadership of our national and regional Black Members Committees to guide us. Self organisation through trade unions is also the most effective way to increase diversity in public service workplaces and leadership.

We will move forward together to tackle systemic institutional structural racism and build unity at a workplace level. We will call out and oppose the dog whistle politics and policies that feed violence against Black people and support peaceful, socially distanced, protests.

COVID 19 has shone a bright spotlight on what is important and what we value in our society. UNISON, therefore, calls on the Government and employers to end the ethnicity pay gaps that deny Black workers equal pay for work of equal value. Black men earn £4 less per hour. In-work poverty is costing lives in the UK. Black and migrant workers are having to risk their lives to feed their families. Economic inequality coupled with systemic and structural racism that drives it is costing a disproportionate number of Black lives.

This union says loud and clearly that Black Lives Matter.

We are prepared to be judged on our actions.

We demand our Governments do the same.



COVID 19 – know your rights

Guidance for Black members

COVID 19 and Black people

It's become clear that Black, Asian or Minority Ethnic (described here as 'Black') people are more vulnerable to COVID-19 than white people.

With the recent publication of the 'Beyond the data' part of Public Health England's review of COVID-19 impact on Black communities, the evidence is clear. The review found "that the highest age standardised diagnosis rates of COVID-19 per 100,000 population were in people of Black ethnic groups (486 in females and 649 in males) and the lowest were in people of White ethnic groups (220 in females and 224 in males)... Death rates from COVID-19 were higher for Black and Asian ethnic groups when compared to White ethnic groups."

Although the review contains recommendations for the Westminster government the recommendations are clearly of interest to the devolved administrations in their work. One of the recommendations covers the use of occupational (or job-related) risk assessments to reduce exposure to the virus.

What does it mean in practice for you and your job?

Employers have a particular duty to look after the safety of their Black staff during the current crisis and this guide outlines your rights at work.

Do I have to go to work?

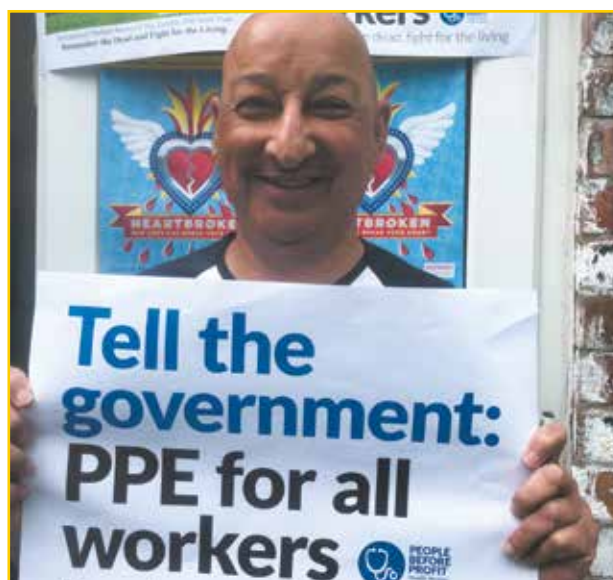
Many key workers have been attending their normal place of work throughout the 'lockdown'. However, for others, with the easing at varying rates within Scotland, Wales, Northern Ireland and England, it will bring to an end an extended period away from the workplace. Whilst there is specific government guidance for 'clinically vulnerable' and 'extremely clinically vulnerable' people (or 'shielded'), there is no specific guidance for Black people.

What if I have to go to work?

If you are a Black worker, your employer should consider the implications of research pointing to Black workers being disproportionately adversely affected by COVID-19 compared to other groups, in their workplace health and safety risk assessments. The risk assessment should be thorough and take account of your specific circumstances.

Your employer should act immediately on the findings of their risk assessment. This does not necessarily mean treating you exactly the same as other staff, but instead responding to your individual needs and circumstances.

It is also important that safety concerns are reported to your employer. However, it is recognised that many Black workers may not feel safe to identify risks and issues without fear of losing their job. Speak to your local representative if you would like support or advice.



The Equality Act 2010

If you are a Black worker then you have additional rights under the Equality Act 2010 (in England, Scotland and Wales – Race Relations (NI) Order 1997 in Northern Ireland) that are particularly important at this time.

The Equality Act defines race (including colour, nationality, and ethnic or national origins) as a 'protected characteristic'. It is unlawful to directly or indirectly discriminate against people at work because of a protected characteristic, such as race.

Black people may face a disadvantage at work as they are more vulnerable to COVID-19. Therefore employers should be engaging with Black staff groups including union networks, as part of their equality and diversity action plan, to understand their issues and find solutions.

Employers should also ensure that decisions on deployment, redeployment, furloughing and redundancy, as well as the treatment of vulnerable and shielding workers, do not have a disproportionate impact on any groups.

Risk assessments

All employers must do an overall risk assessment of the workplace, but they should also carry out a risk assessment specifically for Black staff. Employers will need to prioritise higher risk workers for specific personal risks assessments to mitigate risks to these groups of workers.

There should be no detriment to your pay, benefits or employment rights.

The risk assessment should cover the following:

- do you come into contact with other people at work?
- does your job allow you to maintain an appropriate social distance from colleagues and members of the public as recommended by the government?
(distancing requirements are to keep 2 metres apart from another person, and in England, where people cannot be 2 metres apart, to have the ability to manage transmission risk)
- do you face any other additional risks that may make you more vulnerable to COVID-19?

It is also best practice to include how you travel to work. Risk assessments should also specifically consider those staff who live with a Black person.

Acting on the risk assessment

The employer must then look at how to remove or reduce the risks that have been identified.

This could include some or most of the following:

- organising your workload to allow you to work from home as much as possible
- redeploying you to the safest available on-site role, enabling you to stay appropriate distance away from others
- reducing your shift lengths so you have less interaction with other people
- providing you with additional personal protective equipment (PPE)
- staggering your start time so you travel when public transport is less busy.

If you are unable to maintain the appropriate social distance from others, your employer should carefully assess whether this involves an acceptable level of risk.

What if I need PPE?

You may need to wear PPE. This depends on what you do, who you work with and where. You are more likely to require PPE if you are providing direct care to service users, or cleaning premises contaminated by COVID-19.

However, there may be other circumstances when social distancing and other measures are not possible. Your employer has a duty to provide the PPE so you can do your job safely.



Fighting everyday race discrimination

UNISON Black members are leading discussions around the wider issues of racism the pandemic is revealing.

Our members have always been at the forefront of challenging the major social issues of our time. We need to continue to be pro-active and visible in standing with all our members and communities.

We need to improve employment opportunities, challenge employment discrimination, implement positive action measures to redress employment and economic exclusion of Black people.

Speak to your local representative if you would like support or advice.

What if I'm also vulnerable to COVID-19 for other reasons?

Disabled people (who may come into the government's classification of 'clinically vulnerable' and 'extremely clinically vulnerable' people) may be more vulnerable to COVID-19 than non-disabled. In addition, men have been found to be more vulnerable than women and the risk increases the older people are, and the larger their BMI.

Pregnant women are also considered 'clinically vulnerable'. Where you live, the number of people in your household and deprivation are also factors that will affect your risk.

When your employer is assessing your risk, they should also include the additional risk you face, for example due to being disabled and being 'clinically vulnerable'.

Note that the impact on a protected characteristic (eg disability, sex, age, pregnancy) will be relevant for potential rights under the Equality Act 2010.

What if I don't feel safe at work?

UNISON believes that our members should never be in a situation where they might endanger themselves and others in the course of doing their jobs.

Putting you in that situation is potentially a breach of health and safety law and may also spread coronavirus to others. It may also amount to unlawful discrimination.

As a last resort, when faced with a dangerous working environment which cannot reasonably be averted, every employee has the right not to suffer detriment if they leave, or refuse to attend their place of work (or take other appropriate steps) in circumstances where they reasonably believe there is a risk of being exposed to serious and imminent danger (section 44 of the Employment Rights Act 1996).

Although this is very much a right of last resort, the context of a situation will be key to whether refusing to return to work or any other steps are appropriate. This means that an employee cannot automatically refuse a reasonable instruction to return to work without a good reason.

If you feel you are being put at risk, it is crucial to get advice and discuss the situation with your UNISON representative. Contact your branch and if needed you can seek advice from our regional office or legal team.

UNISON Black members groups

UNISON is committed to increasing its representation and participation of Black people within the union. It is important that there is a visible and vocal presence of the Black members' experience. There is a whole spectrum of activity that members can be involved in from becoming a workplace contact to sitting on one of UNISON's national committees.

UNISON's Black members group works with all parts of our union to improve equality in the workplace and challenge racism and discrimination.

Black members equality

Annual Report



3 Full Black Members Committee Meetings.

Engage and supported the Regional Black Workers Project with final report and recommendations.

We have had 3 further online Meetings with Black Members in the North West since May.

We have passed a motion on Black Workers & Covid raising the issue of disproportionate Black deaths both within our region and the wider trade union movement.

Contributed to the new Regional Programme on work challenging racism.

Attended Black Lives Matter protests and taking the knee events.

New North West Unison Black Members Banner

Supported individual Black Members who needed advice and reassurance.

Supported new Black Member Groups in Wigan, Bolton, Manchester Foundation Trust.





TAKE THE KNEE

#TakeTheKnee

#SayTheirName

#BlacklivesMatter

#JusticeForGeorgeFloyd

#JusticeForBreonnaTaylor

#JusticeForShekuBayoh

#PublicInquiryNow

#EndTheHostileEnvironment

#BlackAndWhiteUnite



STAND UP TO RACISM

International Conference

Black Lives Matter

No to Trump & Johnson's Racist Offensive

17 & 18 October 2020

Register: shorturl.at/kWX07



"We've got to face the fact that some people say you fight fire best with fire, but we say you put fire out best with water. We say you don't fight racism with racism. We're gonna fight racism with solidarity."

Fred Hampton



Black Members in UNISON

NORTH WEST

NW Black Members Committee AGM Thursday Oct 8, 2020 4:30pm

UNISON, Arena Point, 1 Hunts Bank, Manchester M3 1UN

All Unison Black Members Welcome.

A G E N D A

APOLOGIES

GUEST SPEAKER: WEYMAN BENNETT- STAND UP TO RACISM

CHAIR'S OPENING REMARKS

NOTES OF AGM HELD ON THURSDAY 20TH OCTOBER 2019

VACANT POSITIONS ON COMMITTEE

UNISON NATIONAL BLACK MEMBERS' CONFERENCE 2020

AMENDMENT TO MOTIONS TO CONFERENCE

BLACK HISTORY MONTH EVENT

BUDGET & WORKPLAN 2021

ANY OTHER BUSINESS

(Items must be notified to the Chair at least one week before the meeting)

DATES FOR 2020 MEETINGS – TBC following consultation

CLOSE

Join Zoom Meeting: Meeting ID: 387 324 0211 Passcode: NWBMC

Please share with other Black Members you know.

Ameen Hadi, NW Unison Chair of Black Members Committee • Mob: 07557281471

#BlackLivesMatter