

Black

UNISON SOUTH EAST REGION
NEWSLETTER FOR UNISON BLACK MEMBERS



2011 Annual Newsletter

Welcome to the 2011 edition of our annual newsletter. We aim to distribute an annual edition to all Black Members within the South East Region. A quarterly newsletter will also be distributed to all network contacts and branches.

Vision - The South East Regional Black Members' Group (RBMG) works to eliminate discrimination and promote equality in UNISON, the wider trade union movement and in society generally.

The RBMG is a forum open to any Black member of a UNISON branch in the South East Region. Below is an overview of what the RBMG does:

- a. discusses and campaigns on equalities and other issues affecting Black members;
- b. meets for support, encouragement, information sharing and networking;
- c. ensures training and development for its members;
- d. ensures that issues affecting Black workers are communicated to and actioned by the relevant Regional Groups
- e. works with other Self Organised Groups (SOGs), unions, community organisations, charities and individuals, locally, regionally, national and international.

We meet 6 times a year, usually in London, and members are welcome to drop in for as much of the meeting as they can make.

Our meetings agree a Chair and Note-taker from those present to assist members to develop and practice those skills. We also elect members to represent us on internal and external bodies as well as attend events on our behalf. These opportunities are open to Job Sharing wherever possible to facilitate greater involvement and development of skills, and are filled in accordance with the principles of proportionality and fair representation.

REGIONAL TRAINING WEEKEND



UNISON Black members attended the Challenging Racism in the Workplace training weekend from 29th – 31st July 2011 at the Portsmouth Holiday Inn.

Once again it was a successful training weekend, which was well attended. UNISON Black members came together for an educational and empowering weekend. Delegates had an opportunity to network and share common issues within their workplaces and branches. The course provided them with the skills and the knowledge to work with their branches to implement the Challenging in the Workplace Toolkit.

Feedback comments from some of the delegates who attended said *'The course enabled me to develop clear strategies on how to tackle issues back in my workplace and branch'* and *'Very good handouts, group discussions. Very interesting to know what other organisations are facing or challenging'*.



Details of the Challenging Racism in the Workplace information for your branches can be found here:

http://www.unison.org.uk/challengingracism/pages_view.asp?did=7527

Look out for our next weekend residential course which will be held on 11th–13th November 2011.

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or call: [0845 355 0845](tel:08453550845)
for further information and advice

THE CRAWLEY INTERNATIONAL MELA 2011



On Saturday, 30th July 2011, members of the Crawley Local Government branch and regional staff successfully held a stall at the Crawley International Mela.

Traditionally Mela is an Asian festival featuring mostly culture from the Indian sub-continent but this year Crawley International Mela featured stalls and workshops from a wider area. Offering a blend of music, culture and dance from a global perspective, the main stage was packed with star performers and the community stage filled with the best in Bhangra, Zumba, Roma and Salsa.

There was also a wealth of workshops with an Eastern European Exhibition, Polish, Gypsy and Iranian workshops and a Far East area with Japanese calligraphy, Origami and Shiatsu massage.



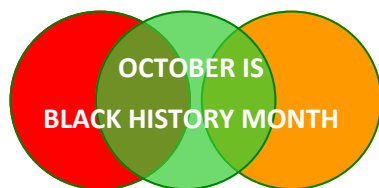
It was a great day out and an opportunity to raise the profile of UNISON and engage with the local community, raising awareness of UNISON's campaigns, the impact of the government cuts and the proposed attacks on public sector pensions and the huge cuts and changes in the Health and Social Care Bill.

UNISON Kent & Medway Mental Health Branch will be holding a stall at the Maidstone Mela on 10 – 11 September 2011.

**Photographs were provided by Mark Chilvers*



BLACK HISTORY MONTH



Across the UK, UNISON branches, employers and community groups will be celebrating the history of Black people in the workplace by organising workshops and events for Black History Month.



Black History Month is an opportunity to provide information about the perspectives and experiences of Black people, promote multiculturalism, and acknowledge Black peoples' contributions to British society and history. UNISON Black History month focuses on: changing worlds, changing minds, how society is evolving, and the social and economic challenges we face require us to adapt with confidence and promote trade union values of dignity and respect towards fellow workers.

Your branch can get involved in Black History Month activities following some of the examples given here, or using your own ideas.

- Organise an open-house event at your branch. Invite Black members to come along and learn about the work of UNISON and how it benefits them. Provide refreshments and ensure the venue is accessible.
- Promote UNISON's million voices for public services campaign and speak up for Black equality: [http://www.unison.org.uk/file/MVPS%20Factsheet%2011%20-%20Speaking%20up%20for%20Black%20equality%20-%20colour%20\(2\).pdf](http://www.unison.org.uk/file/MVPS%20Factsheet%2011%20-%20Speaking%20up%20for%20Black%20equality%20-%20colour%20(2).pdf)
- Run a poetry writing competition for members around the UNISON Black History Month theme of 'Changing Worlds, Changing Minds'.
- Work with groups like the Student Assembly Against Racism: www.naar.org.uk/saar to engage young people and run initiatives with local colleges, universities and youth groups.
- Contact local schools to see if you can run a history/citizenship class or an assembly about the role of the trade unions in supporting migrant workers to the UK.

For more information please visit : <http://www.unison.org.uk/bhm>

DATES FOR YOUR DIARIES

REGIONAL BLACK MEMBERS GROUP ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING & TRAINING WEEKEND

11th—13th November 2011, Holiday Inn Gatwick

The RBMG can meet expenses for lunch, travel (including any car parking) and dependent care for members' attendance at regional activities and events. Crèche facilities are available for our training weekends and can be provided for our meetings if requested.

NATIONAL BLACK MEMBERS CONFERENCE 3rd—5th February 2012, Brighton Centre, Brighton

Deadline for Motions/Amendments to Standing Orders: **12 noon, 21st September 2011**

Deadline for amendments to motions: **12 noon, 23rd November 2011**

Deadline for delegate registration: **11th November 2011**

All Black Members are welcome to attend, with approval by your branch

<http://www.unison.org.uk/conference/blackmembers.asp>

For more information and details on how to become a contact for the South East Regional Black Members Group or to book a place at one of these events please contact Mumta Erkadoo via the details at the foot of this page.

If you are already a member of UNISON and want to add your name to the national mailing list, receive e-mail copies of *Black Action* the Black members, and other national information please complete the form by following this link or contact us below.

<http://www.unison.org.uk/blackmembers/maillinglist.asp>

<http://www.unison.org.uk/southeast/blackmembers.asp>

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UNISON has approximately 6000 Black Members in the South East Region who have identified their ethnicity on the UNISON RMS database. We continue to encourage all Black members to update their membership details to ensure we have a true reflection of Black membership within UNISON.

With the continual cuts across public services it has been highlighted that this will have a heavy impact on Black communities as they already suffer the highest rate of poverty and unemployment in the UK.

There is already evidence that show unacceptable pay gaps between both women and men, and black and white workers. Black workers are often amongst the lowest paid jobs and will have to face pay freezes and job losses, leading to increased poverty.

As UNISON and its members organise to defend public services, challenging racism is as important as ever. Black workers and their communities have been disproportionately affected by the recession and will be hit hard again when public services are attacked.

New guidance has been produced for branches to support their work on Challenging Racism.

<http://www.unison.org.uk/acrobat/19614.pdf>

UNISON encourages Black members to step forward and become more active within their Branches and to take on roles within their workplaces as stewards and contacts.

Million Voices Campaign: Speaking up for Black Equality

<http://www.unison.org.uk/acrobat/18912.pdf>

Regional Black Members Group at Reading Carnival 2011



“Judy and I braved the May rain at Reading Carnival to promote UNISON and the Regional Black Members Group. Although the weather was typically British, the atmosphere was certainly ‘hot’.

The float, colourful bands (including us), the music and amazing smell of Jerk Chicken, Roast Corn and Rum Punch brought back memories of the Caribbean.

Kitted out in UNISON colours we revelled with carnival goers to distribute a special edition of Black Action and promote our union.

Even in this atmosphere it wasn't all fun. There were lots of enquiries and we even did some casework which is still ongoing in the branch”.

Sonia Palmer & Judy Richards.