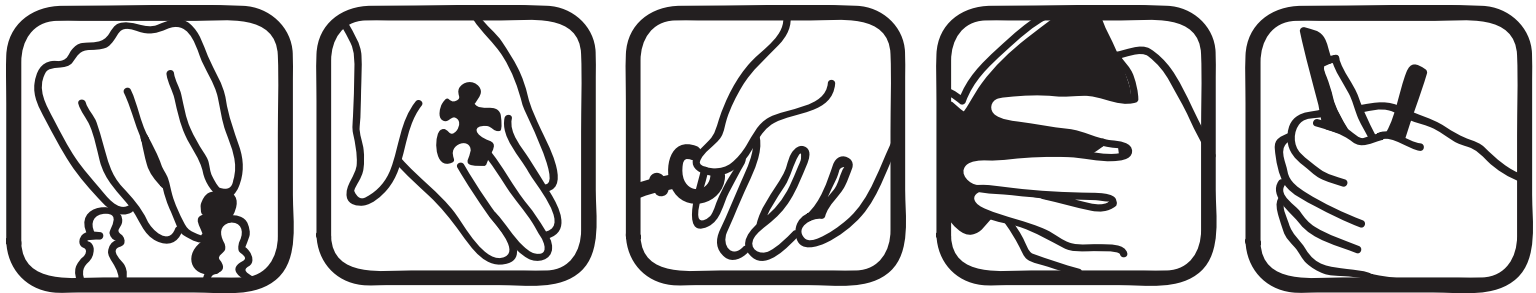


MODULE 2

ORGANISING AROUND RACE EQUALITY

UNISON BRANCH DEVELOPMENT & ORGANISING TOOLKIT



UNISON

Organising around race equality

Overview

UNISON is at the forefront of campaigning for equality in the workplace and in the union. Identifying and campaigning on equality issues can make a real impact on members' lives, since the union is dealing with issues that matter for members and can attract more involvement from groups that might not have traditionally been involved.

This session will encourage branches to identify and examine key race equality issues at the branch and workplace level. As a result of this process the branch will prioritise a number of organising and campaigning issues, thereby raising the profile and importance of race equality as a key issue. These priorities can be added to your *Branch Development and Organising Plan* (see *Core Module*).



Objectives

This session will:

- encourage activists to examine proportionality and fair representation at branch level, particularly with regard to race equality
- analyse the branch map with regard to members and potential members from differing ethnic origins
- analyse the results of employer monitoring under the Race Relations Amendment Act and identify any issues arising from this
- develop a relevant campaign around race equality issues
- plan how to encourage more black activists to get involved.

Before the session

Discuss the pre-course work with the branch secretary. This will prepare the group for the session and also encourage the branch to use the Race Relations Amendment Act to ask for key information from the employer. If the branch cannot get all of the information required still go ahead with the session and you can use their general impressions. Part of the action plan might be that the branch seeks more accurate information from the employer.

Ensure that the branch brings along enough copies of the employer information as you will use them in an activity.

Pre-Course Work

The information you will need for this session falls into two categories, information from and about the branch, and information from and about the employer.

Branch

You will need to bring the following information:-

- Any mapping information that the branch has
- An ethnic breakdown of union membership in the branch. Include any information about where those members work, departments, employers
- Any information you have about the ethnic origin of potential membership
- Representation from ethnic groups amongst stewards and the branch committee

If you do not have this information please provide some general observations.

Employer

Under the Race Relations Amendment Act, public authorities have a duty to promote race equality in the workplace. The employer is obligated under this law to monitor its procedures and practices and to publish the results once a year.

There are a number of areas that the employer should monitor and provide information to the union.

Before the session please request the following information from the employers your branch covers.*

- Staff in post by ethnic group and how this reflects the local community;
- Number of applications for employment, training and promotions;
- Staff involved in grievance and disciplinary procedures by ethnic group;
- Staff involved in performance assessment by ethnic group.

If your employer has not fulfilled its obligations under the act, please ask for any information the employer has and when the employer intends to launch its monitoring systems.

You may need to share the responsibility for finding this information amongst the branch committee.

Note*

The current position under the Race Relations Amendment Act (2000) is that private sector firms are not directly covered by the Act.

Branches that have contact with private contractors should ask them if as good employers they intend to comply with the provisions of the Race Relations Amendment Act 2000 and how they intend to do it.

Branches should also enter into negotiations with their authority and encourage them to ask race equality questions to potential contractors.

For more information see *UNISON A guide to branches on the Race Relations Amendment Act 2000* or our website unison.org.uk/acrobat/14207.pdf



What you will need to run this session

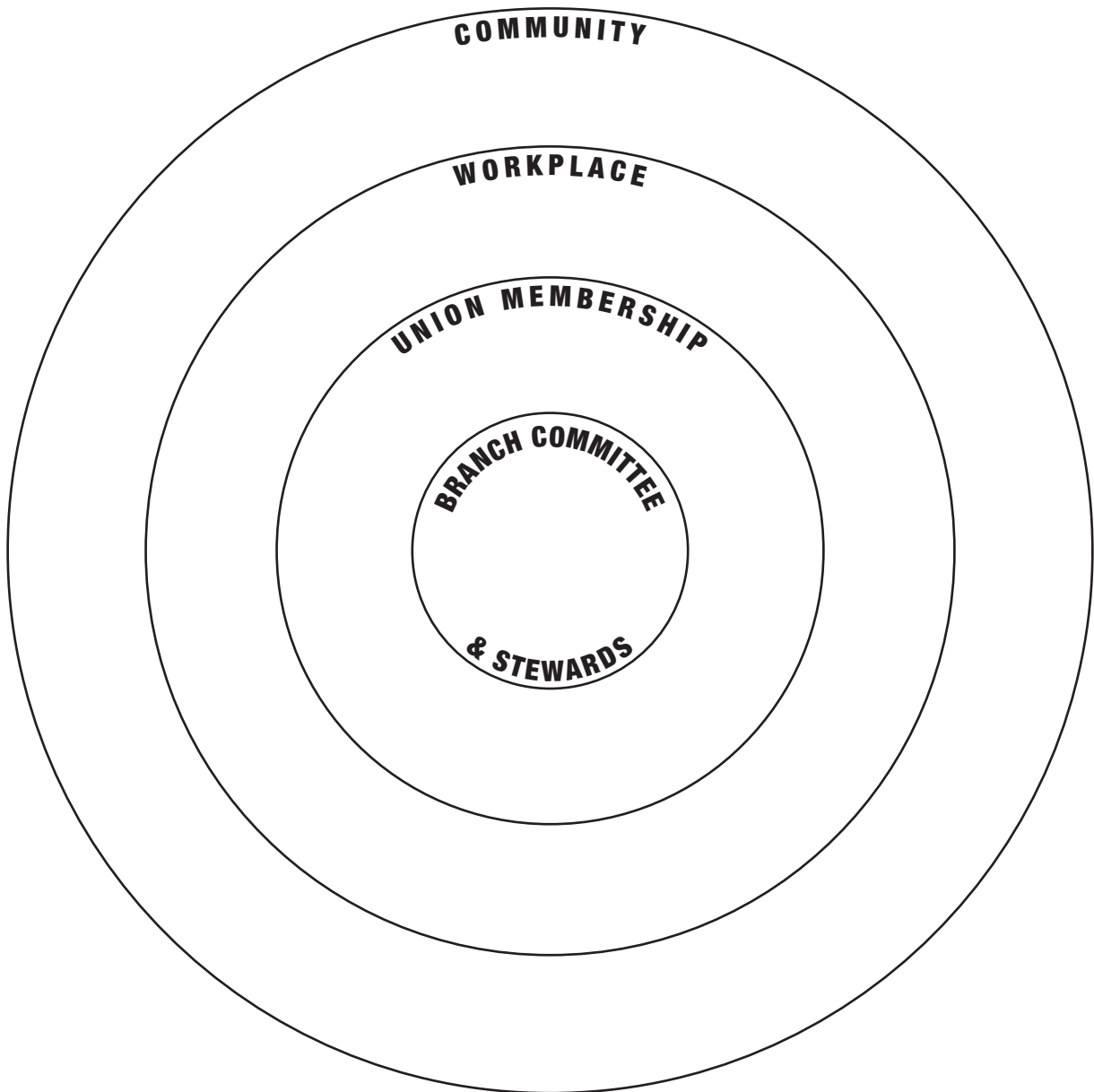
- four pieces of flip chart paper stuck together to form a large square. Draw the four circles on the flip chart. Copy the diagram on tutor note one. An example of a completed diagram is on *Tutor Note Two*
- flipchart paper and pens
- blank A5 coloured cards
- Blu Tack
- enough copies of *Handouts One, Two* and *Three*
- copy of OHP on transparency
- pre-course work

The pre-course information, including employer information and mapping information



Tutor Note One

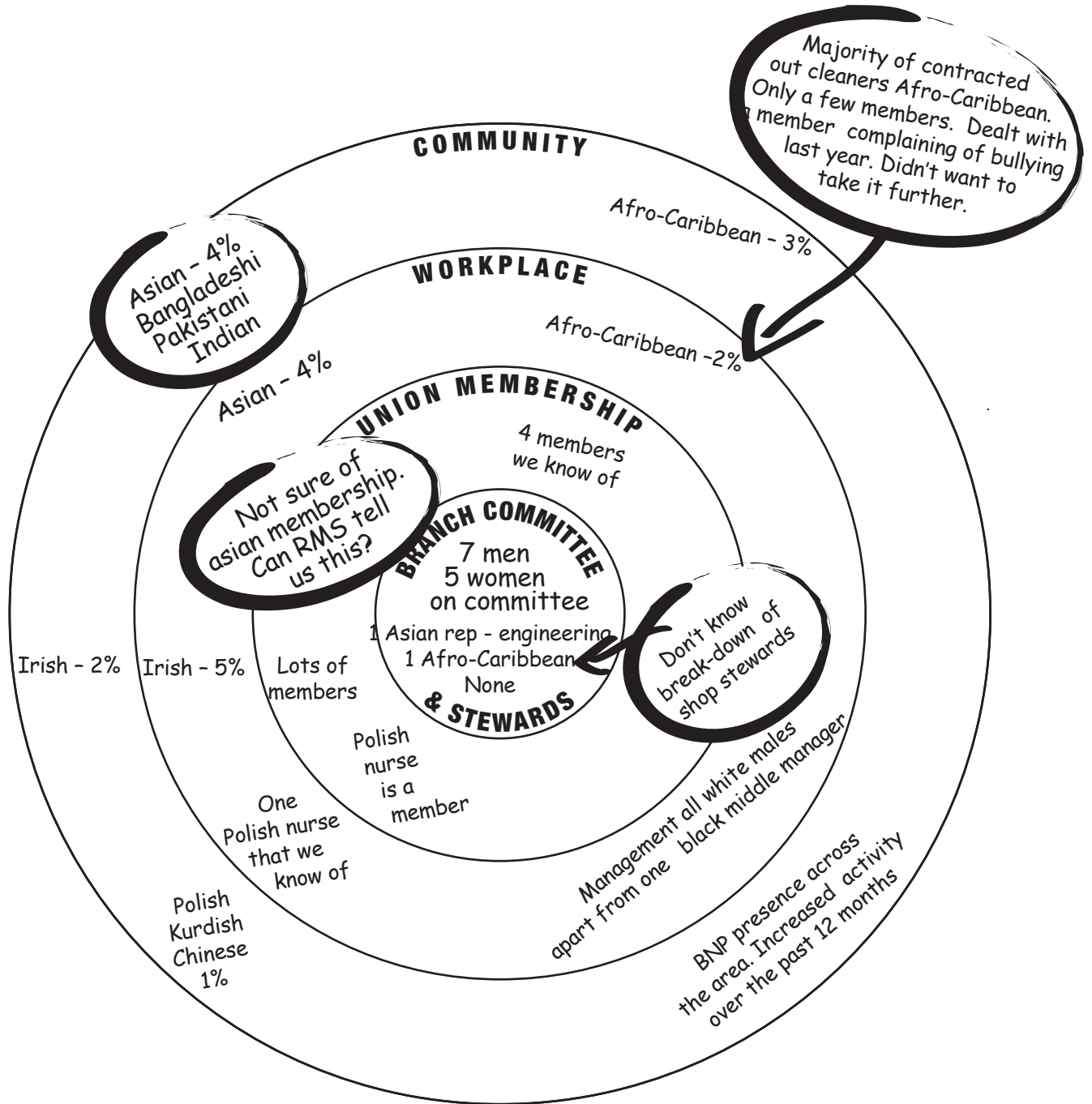
Example of blank diagram for step 2





Tutor Note Two

Example of completed diagram for step 2





Running the session – tutor's notes

Step One

Setting the context and why organise around race equality?

Resources: OHP and Handout One

Once you have welcomed the group, set the context for the module, go through the OHP and use the following points as a guide:

- UNISON has always been at the forefront of fighting racism where it exists and has adopted campaigning against racism as a high priority. Current campaigns include countering the rise of the BNP and campaigning around institutional racism
- after the racist murder of Stephen Lawrence in 1993, a government inquiry was set up, the resulting report the 'Lawrence Report' showed the police to be institutionally racist
- recommendations that came from the report were wider than addressing the issue of the police and included local authorities
- as a result of the key recommendations there has been a recent amendment to the Race Relations Act of 1976, the Race Relations Amendment Act. Go through Handout One and mention that there is more information on the Commission of Racial Equality web-site if they are interested in finding out more
- if you want to learn more there is an 'Organising Around Institutional Racism' two day course available (*due out Autumn 04*)
- emphasise that it is important that we use the law effectively and also organise and get active around the issue of racism and institutional racism in the workplace.

Put the group into pairs and give out Handout One. Ask the pairs to think about the following questions:

- Why is race equality an important issue for the branch to organise around?
- Why will it be beneficial?

Go round each pair and ask for a maximum of two points. Write the points up on a flipchart and ensure this is put on the wall. You may want to refer back to it later on.

Possible answers could be:

- it helps us to deal with real issues around racism in the workplace;
- we can involve more black activists in the workplace;
- we need to tackle an issue that is important for lots of our members;
- we can use the new Race Relations Amendment Act to help us organise;
- we can start to build a picture of race equality in the branch and in the workplace.

Step Two

Building a picture

Introduce the diagram with four circles (pages 4/5).

For this activity you might want to involve people in putting the information on the four circles.

1. The first step of this part of the activity is to look at the circle titled wider community. Ask the group to write up on the flip chart their perceptions of the breakdown of ethnic groups in the community. Later you will look at the information provided by the employer which will give accurate figures on how reflective their workforce are of the local community.

Also ask the group, has there been any local BNP presence?

2. Next the group should go onto the next circle entitled '*Workplace*'. Ask the branch to write on the flip chart their perception of the breakdown of ethnic origin in the workplace. The branch workplace map may help here.

The group should look at similar categories as before but also write down whether there are particular clusters of workers, for example white males in management or an ethnic group working in a particular area/job or contracting company. Are there any areas of potential membership?

3. On the next circle are the words '*Union membership*'.

Ask the group to write in the circle the make up of union membership, they should include gender, age, part-time/full-time workers and ethnic breakdown.

Refer to existing branch mapping here to help find this information.

Emphasise that the figures might not be absolutely accurate but that a general guess will do.

4. On the smallest circle is written '*Branch committee and stewards*'.

Ask the group to write in the circle the make up of the branch committee. Include gender, age, part-time, full-time workers and ethnic breakdown.

5. Now you should analyse the union membership and branch organisation circles and compare these circles to see if they are reflective of the membership and the workplace.

Ask the group whether the branch committee and stewards are reflective of the membership. If they aren't reflective, ask the group why this might be an issue. Are there any particular areas of improvement?

You may want to circle any areas for improvement in a different colour pen.

Ask the group if the union membership is reflective of the make-up of the workplace. Are there any groups of potential members?

Ensure that you record these points on the diagram as they will form the basis of the action plan later in the session.

Step Three

Analyzing the results

During this session you will need to use the pre-course work that the branch will have requested. This is information from the employer that they are required to provide under the Race Relations Amendment Act. This activity will get the participants to analyse the key points that have come up on the diagram and also looking at the employer statistics to discover if there are issues around racism and institutional racism in the workplace.

For example, you may have identified on the diagram, a group of workers who have lots of issues but feel nothing is going to change and management do not listen to them. This issue may also be apparent in the employer statistics where the group haven't brought any grievances over the last year despite definite problems.

Split the group into two. If there are more than around eight people split the group into four smaller groups.

Distribute Handout Two. This has the questions each group will examine, also distribute copies of the employer information.

Ensure that you take some brief feedback from each group. To save time you can ask each group to feed back a different part of the activity sheet.

Step Four

Campaign ideas and priorities

The group should now draw together and make some conclusions from the main points we have received during the previous feedback. This will help us to form some priorities and plan around issues of race equality specific to the branch.

1. Distribute about five blank cards to each participant. Ask each person to write four or five specific campaign issues or action points that they believe have come out of the discussion so far. Each issue or action point should be written on a separate card. These will form the basis of establishing some priorities for organising and campaigning around race equality in the branch.
2. Encourage each person to put their cards on the wall or the floor. Be mindful of access issues here and offer help as necessary. Cluster the cards into a number of themes.

These could be access to training opportunities, educating members about the asylum seekers issue and identifying more black reps.

If you have a number of campaign ideas and action points that aren't realistic, go through the following short exercise to prioritise the issues. You should aim to have one or two priority issues.

3. Give each person either some small stickers or a coloured pen. Ask them to put a dot by four of the action points that they think is the most important for the branch to achieve. Point out which action points have the most votes.

If there isn't a clear priority ask the group to put a dot by the one prioritised action point that they think is most important. This will establish which is the most pressing priority.

If there still isn't a clear priority encourage the group to have a discussion about one obvious priority that needs to happen first before anything else can happen.

Write the priority up on the board.

Step Five

Developing an Action Plan

This part of the session will bring together what the picture of race equality means for the branch, identify key priorities for the branch around race equality and draw up an action plan. Your priority issue can be added to Part B of your *Branch Development and Organising Plan*.



Actions for the plan could include:

- identifying new black stewards
- finding out more about what black workers feel about the workplace and how they perceive the union
- recruiting black workers in a particular non-union area
- campaigning on a collective issue for example, training and promotion of black workers
- setting up a black member's self organised group
- asking the employer key questions about their race equality scheme
- how to influence the bargaining agenda.

Now you have your key priority. Go to *Action Planning Sheet* (page 14/15).

If there is not enough time to go into detail make sure that you at least plan with the group what the first few steps are and make a date for the next meeting.

The final plan can be given to the branch secretary at the end of the course for consultation with the branch committee.



Handout One

The Race Relations (Amendment) Act 2000

Overview

The Race Relations Amendment Act came into force on 2 April 2001. The new act amends the Race Relations Act 1976 and enables us to get an accurate picture of race equality in the workplace, while also significantly strengthening the public authorities duty to promote racial equality.

The new positive duty on public authorities to promote race equality gives statutory force to a key Lawrence inquiry recommendation:

**“It is incumbent on every institution to examine their policies and practices to guard against disadvantaging any section of our community.”
(Stephen Lawrence Inquiry Report).**

General duties

The general duty applies to all public authorities and it aims to make the promotion of race equality central to the work of the listed public authorities.

The general duty expects public authorities to take a lead in:-

- promoting equality of opportunity
- encouraging good race relations
- preventing unlawful discrimination.

This means that public authorities must take race equality into account in the day-to-day work of policy-making, service delivery, employment practices and other functions.

The Race Relations Act and the Amendment (2000) makes it unlawful to discriminate on racial grounds. This covers terms and conditions, recruitment, pay, access to opportunities, dismissal or disadvantaging a worker on racial grounds.

Race equality schemes

Each authority is required to produce a race equality scheme, during which they are obliged to consult with relevant bodies. The scheme should explain how they will meet both their general and specific duties. Under the Race Equality Scheme the public authority will have to:

- assess whether functions and policies are relevant to race equality
- monitor policies to see how they affect race equality
- assess and consult on policies they are proposing to introduce
- publish the results of their consultations, monitoring and assessments
- ensure public access to information
- train staff on new duties.

Monitoring

The public authority is obliged to monitor employment practices and procedures by ethnic group. This includes staff in post and applications for employment, training and promotion.

Any public authority which employs 150 or more full time staff should monitor on a variety of levels including staff who:

- receive training
- benefit or suffer detriment as a result of performance assessment;
- are involved in grievance procedures
- are involved in disciplinary procedures
- cease employment with the public authority.

These results should be published once a year and shouldn't make it obvious which members of staff they are referring to.

For more information see *UNISON A guide to branches on the Race Relations Amendment Act 2000* or our website at www.unison.org.uk/acrobat/14207.pdf



Handout Two

Analysing the results

In your group, compare the workplace and employer circles on the diagram. Consider the following questions:

What is the diagram telling you?

- Is the workforce reflective of the local community?
- Are there any groups who are disproportionately clustered in one area or type of job?
- Is the management structure reflective of the workforce?

What is the information from the employer telling you?

- Are there any patterns emerging?
- Are there any differences between the employer statistics and your impressions?
- Are there any areas where you need further information?

Are there any other issues around race equality that haven't been raised?

Be prepared to feed back the main points of your discussion to the larger group.

CAMPAIGN PLAN

Use the sheet below or your own version of it, with appropriate timescale and relevant areas of work. Break each area down into tasks and write in with the initials of the lead person responsible in the appropriate time slot.

Main areas of work	Weeks 1- 3	Who?	Weeks 4 – 6	Who?	Weeks 7 - 9	Who?	Weeks 10 - 12	Who?
For example: Awareness raising	Identify targets for awareness raising: Develop appropriate		Circulate materials – plan series of workplace events		Run events			



The context of the Race Relations Amendment Act 2000

- **Racist murder of Stephen Lawrence in 1993**
- **Government inquiry was set up to investigate police handling of the case, resulting report showed the police to be institutionally racist**
- **Recommendations from the report included tackling all institutional racism**
- **Government response was the Race Relations Amendment Act which allows us to bargain on race equality issues**



Race Relations Amendment Act

● **Amendment to the Race Relations Act 1976, the RRAA.**

● **Under the RRAA, the local authority has a general duty to:**

- **promote equality of opportunity**
- **encourage good race relations**
- **prevent unlawful discrimination**

● **The employer is also obliged to:**

- **develop race equality schemes in consultation with the union**
- **monitor key policies and procedures by ethnic group.**



UNISON's campaigns against racism

● **An anti-racism strategy which intends to place race equality at the heart of UNISON's work.**

There are a number of priorities in this strategy:

- 1. tackling racism in the workplace**
- 2. effective implementation of the Race Relations Amendment Act**
- 3. promoting respect for asylum seekers and fighting for humane immigration rules**
- 4. combating the far right and promoting community cohesion.**



Opportunities

- **To ask the employer to provide key information around race equality.**
- **To identify key issues around race equality.**
- **To campaign and negotiate around any issues of institutional racism**
- **To recruit and organise black members.**
- **To get more black activists involved in UNISON.**

