



YEAR OF BLACK WORKERS

Establishing legacy to
generate change

Negotiating for race equality: ethnicity pay gap

The [Office for National Statistics' latest figures](#) show that “many ethnic groups including Bangladeshi, Black Caribbean, Black African, Pakistani and Arab consistently earned less than those of White British ethnicity during the period of 2012 to 2019”.

[Research from the #EthnicityPayGap Campaign](#) reveals that “Black (of African and/or Caribbean heritage) and Brown (Black and mixed heritage) women could consequently miss out on £105,000 to £350,000 of earnings across a working lifetime spanning an average of 35 years.”

The TUC recognises that the ethnicity pay gap is a major cause of in-work poverty experienced by Black workers and the cause of severe intergenerational inequality in Black communities.

Why is it vital to close the ethnicity pay gap?

Because it will

- ensure **Black** workers have equal access to good quality jobs, career progression and pay
- help address deep-rooted discrimination and reduce unfair treatment, including stereotyping
- recruit new members and activists, of benefit to all the membership and contributing to the growth and future strength of your branch
- place public authorities under a proactive duty to identify activities to promote equality and diversity.

No workplace where racism is allowed to flourish can ever be effectively organised. That's why anti-racist work must be part of all branch activity.

UNISON calls for mandatory ethnicity pay gap reporting. Despite decades of work towards equal pay, **Black** workers are still earning less than their white counterparts for doing the same work.

How can branches make pay fairer?

- Educate yourselves. Make sure union reps have the knowledge and skills to notice, deal with and report discrimination in pay and progression. Encourage Black members to communicate with branch officers and workplace reps. Make sure Black members are properly represented amongst reps and branch officers.

More information in UNISON's [Bargaining for equality and diversity: a trade union priority](#) and [Black members equality](#)

Contact your regional education teams and / or LAOS to find out what training and resources are

available to assist you with negotiating with your employer or promoting the issues in this leaflet with your members <https://learning.unison.org.uk>

- Has a pay audit looking at pay by ethnicity been conducted by the employer? Does this reveal any significant pay gaps between different ethnic groups?
- Encourage the employer to report the ethnicity pay gap as well as the gender pay gap.

One example of how the employer can approach this is provided by CIPD (Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development) in their [Ethnicity pay reporting: a guide for UK employers](#)

- Urge your employer to develop an action plan with clear pay and diversity strategies and goals with timescales embedded and explaining how they plan to reduce the pay gaps. They should both involve and consult with the trade union on this action plan. There should be accountability at senior levels for achieving specific goals and addressing ethnicity pay and representation gaps.
- Is progress regularly monitored and actions reviewed with the trade union?
- Have all the workplace policies and procedures been equality proofed? Is the trade union involved in the equality impact assessments? Do policies and procedures impact adversely on Black workers even unintentionally?

More information: [UNISON's model equality impact assessment flowchart](#)

- What does equality monitoring data reveal? Are Black workers mainly employed in low-paid jobs? Black workers are too often disproportionately represented in low-paid jobs.
- Negotiate with employers to get rid of zero hours contracts and other forms of insecure work. Black workers are far more likely to be in low-paid, insecure jobs, often with fewer rights and less protection.

The [Work Foundation](#) has found that “ethnic minority workers are more likely to be in severely insecure work than white workers (24% versus 19%).”

- Are Black workers being excluded from overtime opportunities, bonuses and other forms of performance-related pay? How are opportunities for overtime made available to staff? Are there procedures or agreements to ensure the fair distribution of overtime working and allocation of work for bonuses? Are such procedures being followed?
- Is there a strategy to achieve Black representation at all levels of the workplace? Does the employer invest in staff training and development at all levels and grades of the workforce?
- How are training opportunities and professional development advertised to staff? Is it open access? Is the training and development programme truly accessible to all employees equally?
- How are promotions, secondments or acting up and career progression opportunities made known to staff? Is it open access or does it depend on who you know?
- If Black people continue to be under-represented in the workforce at more senior levels, despite measures undertaken, will the employer consider positive action in the selection process?

Under employment legislation, employers cannot positively discriminate in favour of Black workers. However, **positive action** is allowed. It means taking specific steps to improve equality in the workplace, by meeting the particular needs of Black workers, lessening a disadvantage they might experience or increasing their participation in a particular activity. More information: Equality and Human Rights Commission [‘What is positive action in the workplace?’](#)

- Are exit interviews held with departing staff? How is this information analysed and used within any equality or ethnicity pay gap action plan?