

# Establishing legacy to generate change



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## NBMC CHAIR'S WELCOME AND REPORT

We are honoured and privileged to welcome you all to the UNISON National Black Workers' conference and thank you all for attending the conference. We celebrate to mark the end of the Year of Black Workers 2023 (YOBW23) on the same platform as the starting point where we launched the YOBW23 in Edinburgh, January 2023. We will pass the ***baton of hope of the spirit of Sankofa*** - African mythical symbol embracing past lessons for a brighter future.

The ***flame of the Equality baton*** in an Olympic style relay shall be handed over to the Black members' LGBT+ caucus at the conference to symbolically acknowledge intersectionality as ***living legacy of light***, and the spirit of Sankofa shall continue to burn in ***UNISON forever and ever***.

Perhaps, if I may start by introducing myself my name is Kebba Manneh and I am the chair of the UNISON National Black Members' Committee (NBMC), and my name is Annette Heslop (deputy co-chair of NBMC), I'm Mitsy Hammon-Russell (deputy co-chair of NBMC), Adejare Oyewole (NBMC communication officer), and we are the Chairs Group of the NBMC. We would like to say that if you are here as a first-time delegate, welcome to the Conference as UNISON family, and we hope to see you here again.

We would like to take this opportunity to extend our sincere and heart-felt condolences to the families of those who've lost their lives to conflicts/wars, natural disasters, COVID-19, in UK and across the World. May their Souls rest in peace, and their families find solace and strength in moving forward with their lives.

The NBMC continues to fight racism fervently on your behalf wherever it raises its ugly head at the workplaces, in the communities, in society at large, in the union, institutions, government and their agencies, we have valiant courageous efforts in our collective endeavours to protect and advance the interest of members particularly vulnerable members facing discrimination, servitude, forced labour, domestic violence, etc. We will continue to stand up for Black members' interest without fear or favour under our stewardship. Racism and racial discrimination are increasing as a reflection of our societal bankrupt of moral virtues, fortitudes, and humility. As a union, we have a moral, constitutional, and lawful duty to fight back and ensure that we challenge racism and racial discrimination in every form it rises its ugly head.

The NBMC has throughout the year continued to put Race at the heart of our work programme. We are excited about the YOBW23, and the resources that has been made available to fight discrimination particularly race discrimination has been great for the regions to be able to tap into such fantastic toolkits for activists.

The NBMC mission statement has overarching strategic vision to establish legacy to generate change that will make real tangible and positive improvement to Black Workers lived experience at workplaces and communities across UK.

The National Officer, Race Equality launched the YOBW23 Toolkit at the Fringe meeting at the NDC with a panel of guest speakers including Gloria Mills CBE, Dr

Neville Lawrence, Weyman Bennett (co-convenor) Stand Up to Racism and joint secretary of United Against Fascism, and a video message from Kim Johnson MP, Liverpool Riverside, member of the Women and Equalities Select Committee. Joint Forward Statement by our General Secretary and chair of the NBMC regarding the YOBW23 Toolkit document. It's worth noting that the YOBW23 Toolkit has rather useful tools in it that can be the right and correct tools for securing the legacy on specific work and campaigns. Such tools include UNISON Anti Racism Charter, Ethnicity Pay Gap, leading to Ethnicity Pensions Gap, Ending the Hostile Environment, Modern Slavery.

Windrush @75 was celebrated and acknowledged across the UK for the contributions made in the rebuilding of Great Britain, by the Windrush generation as the pioneers, courage, enterprise in making the journey, and paved the way for many successes we see today in Britain Black communities. The Pioneers has faith, hope, and charity, it should never be underestimated or forgotten because they brought their faith with them, which gave them hope in difficult and challenging times, and many of us still faces racism so our faith gives us strength to fightback. We (UNISON NBMC) are proud and honoured to be part of the celebration. UNISON internal Race Discrimination Inquiry Panel continues to collate evidence from Black Workers across all regions, and the panel is chaired by the NBMC chairs group. Katharine Newton KC (Black Barrister with lived experience) has been appointed to provide legal advice to the chairs group. It is worth to mention that since the inception of UNISON, this's the first time UNISON conducted Race Discrimination Inquiry which was requested by the NBMC.

On behalf of the NBMC, we would like to say a big thank you to Margaret Greer, our National Race Equality Officer for the professional and sterling support that she continues to give us and equally the same gratitude goes to Gloria Orosungunleka, Assistant National Officer, and Anna Costi, Assistant National Race Equality Officer on the same par.

We are grateful to the NBMC Committee for the confidence and trust, and we cherish your trust and confidence with energy, commitment, valiant courageous efforts in our collective endeavours to protect and advance Black members' interest without fear or favour under our stewardship, and we will never depart from that commitment.

We are also aware of those of us who may be activists and are feeling under the pressure. Keep the faith, truth always prevails, and righteousness shall conquer over evil, and racism is pure evil. Have a wonderful Conference to mark the end of the YOBW23, and the Equality spirit of Sankofa shall continue to burn in UNISON forever and ever. It teaches us to ***love one another, faith*** in what we stand for, ***hope*** will sustain us, and ***charity There for you*** when you need it in UNISON.

Thank you all for your Commitment to this Union, and may peace prevail upon us all.

Kebba Manneh  
NBMC Chair

Annette Heslop/ Mitsy Harmon  
NBMC Deputy Co Chairs

## UNISON NATIONAL EXECUTIVE COUNCIL MEMBERS REPORTS

### April Ashley

2023 was UNISON's Year of the Black Worker- Establishing legacy to generate change.

We began the year with an explosion of strike action amongst health workers, higher education workers and other UNISON members fighting for higher wages as the cost-of-living crisis continues to bear down. Black women in the NHS were on the picket lines in the fight for better pay and increased staffing levels. We know that low pay has led directly to the haemorrhaging of staff in the health service. And Long Covid is still a major issue for Black women in the health service and elsewhere. In Local Government although a great majority voted for strike action for pay, we fell afoul of the anti-trade union laws and did not reach the 50% threshold for industrial action. However, in Scotland local government strikes continued with increased pay offers.

But UNISON members have won some good victories. In Health, the *Pay Fair for Patient Care* campaign aimed at re-banding health care assistants, has scored good results for low paid staff many of whom are Black. And in Camden Local government, traffic wardens, mainly low-paid Black workers, won a victory of £15-an-hour minimum wage after eight weeks of strike action. Pay was increased from £12.70 an hour to £15.90 an hour. And by 2025 staff will be on a minimum hourly rate of £16.50.

### **Ethnicity Pay Gap**

UNISON is leading the campaign against the Ethnicity Pay Gap to ensure mandatory reporting of the gap. Research has highlighted that in London, the gap stood at 23.8%; Black men earn 10% less than white men and Black women earn 7% less than white women. Black women are still disproportionately on zero hours contracts in the very low paid care sector.

The TUC report, *'Still rigged – racism in the UK Labour Market'*, shows stark figures of unemployment, precarious working, and low-pay for Black workers.

*"One in six (14.6%) of Black and minority ethnic workers are likely to be in insecure work, compared to 11.15% of white workers in this position. Ministers have ignored the growth in casualisation suffered by Black workers who are disproportionately trapped in temporary jobs, agency jobs and zero-hour contracts. This trend has resulted in high levels of in-work poverty, resulting in Black workers being trapped in low-waged occupations and in situations where they are expected to do the most demanding and dangerous work."* (August 2022)

### **Justice for the Windrush generation**

My work on the Policy Development and Campaigns Committee (PDCC -sub-committee of the NEC) includes the campaign to get justice for the Windrush generation. The Tory government, unsurprisingly, reneged on its 'unequivocal commitment' to proceed with all the recommendations in the Windrush 'Lessons Learned' Review. UNISON will be mounting a legal challenge on the government's abandonment of key recommendations that will have a devastating impact on our Black and migrant members.

The Windrush Compensation scheme shows the contempt the Tories have for the suffering of the Windrush generation with pitifully small amounts received by a few,

and 23 people have died waiting for compensation. There should be immediate compensation for all victims.

No doubt many UNISON members were pleased about the sacking of Suella Braverman and her “dreams” of sending refugees to Rwanda. Unfortunately, the traditional Tory policy of scapegoating Black and migrant workers for the economic crisis to divide and rule working people will continue in this ramshackle government and will gather pace as a General Election draws nearer.

## **Manjula Kumari**

Dear Comrades

First and foremost, I would like to take this opportunity to thank you for your ongoing support into my 3<sup>rd</sup> 2-year cycle and to be given the opportunity to continue representing our Black members on the National Executive Council (NEC).

This NEC cycle 2023-2025 has seen an increase in Black representatives being voted into regional seats which is a positive move in increasing Black representation on the NEC, we want this to encourage other Black activists to aspire to be elected to these seats in the future.

I have been allocated the following sub-committees of the NEC and attend these to enable me to continue working for the members:

- Development and Organisation Committee (D&O)
- Finance Committee (FRMC)
- Campaign Fund Committee (GPF)

I continue to represent the NEC on the National Black Members Committee and ensure I take back to the NEC the work Black members need them to complete. There has been ongoing important work and training delivering Tackling Racism Training in the workplace.

There has been Leadership training for women and Black members where they have worked through learning and engaging to become activists.

A 6-week Ambassador course took place to focus on challenging institutional Racism by the employer.

Show Racism the Red Card was rolled out to all NEC members and continues to be cascaded to regions and branches as a rolling program where many have host events.

The Year of The Black Worker ‘Establishing Legacy to Generate change’ (YOBW) was launched at the 2023 National Black Members Conference in Edinburgh. This was an exciting event for Black workers who left invigorated with ideas to organise activities within their Branches and Regions. I was able to secure the backing of the NEC for YOBW lanyards to be sent to NDC 2023 delegates in their packs.

I participated in a Local Government podcast ‘Creating essential change for our Black workers’ sharing the barriers Black workers are fighting hard to overcome, I shared that I believe branches could follow 3 steps to make things easier for Black workers:

- Training.
- Secondments to gain experience.
- Social events to promote support and meet other activists.

We have been promoting and encouraging workplaces to sign the Anti-Racism charter to secure their commitment.

## **Julia Mwaluke**

I visited and supported our members on picket line for mental health social worker in Barnet.

Manchester metropolitan University health workers

AQA team, picket line Manchester.

Camden traffic attendant picket line

Nurse at Bolton hospital

Radiographer in London Hospital

Ashfield Academy in Leicester

Attended and chaired retired members conference and police & justice in Edinburgh October 2023

Attended and gave an award- life time achievement for a very well-deserved members Helen in Penrith Cumbria.

The National Black Member's Committee " Year of the Black Worker" celebration event at Unison Centre. With many trail- blazers who have not only improved the lives of Black Workers, all Workers.

We all owe an immense debt of gratitude to the struggles of Black workers in our union especially low paid health workers.

October was Fantastic Black Members History Month.

I travelled the country to give support, solidarity, and celebrations of what Black Heroes have achieved during past decades and centuries.

I attended Liverpool Black Members activist development weekend. It was a residential where some leaders of " Show Racist The Red Card" come and share their experience. Good opportunity to learn how to fight racism at workplaces.

I attended Gillingham to celebrate " The WILLIAM CUFFAY FESTIVAL, October 2023 as guest speaker I was invited open the ceremony for a local Black Revolutionary who paved path for Black leadership in British political campaigning and organising the trade union.

Born from free slave father in early 1880's he helped to form the metropolitan Tailor's Charter Association

## **Stand Up To Racism**

As chair of SUTR Wigan I organised and coordinate many demonstrations to stop far right movement intimidating refugees and asylum seeker in Wigan. I Spoke at many events for the past few months, and we are making good as we recruit new members.

Building a stronger, more diverse movement across the black members community and wider members of different backgrounds community.

Attended TUC meeting where recruiting 500 Black Members and trained them as activist. I volunteer to join and be part of the project.

The Cymru/ Wales Black Members Development weekend.

This was well attended committee meeting with special guest speakers such as Minister of the Economy Vaughan Gething.

The thought-provoking presentation on history of Black workers, Trade Unions by Abu Bakr Madden Al-Shabazz. Is a Black Academic and consultant, comparative sociologist, Psychotherapist.

Finally, Camden and Ashfield Academy have won their fight for improved pay.

I would like to thank all our NEC colleagues for their hard work. Solidarity.

## **Ash Silverstone**

Dear Members,

Firstly, I would like to thank you for the trust and confidence you placed in me by electing me to be your voice on our National Executive Council. It is truly a privilege to be able to represent Black Members on the NEC.

What is particularly special in 2023, our Year of Black Workers is that there has been a significant increase in Black representation on our NEC, which I am sure you will agree is an excellent foundation on which to build in order to continue to increase Black representation throughout all structures of our union.

Since taking office, I have been busy working to ensure that the views of Black Members are heard throughout our union. Here are just some of the things I have been involved in on your behalf:

- Attended TUC Congress in Liverpool.
- Attended Labour Party Conference in Liverpool. For those of you that follow me on X, you will see that I was able to speak on an important motion about honesty and integrity in Public Life. This is something particularly close to my heart, as like many of you, I was working on the frontline with many of societies most vulnerable people during the pandemic, but whilst we risked our lives to protect others; the government failed to protect us.
- Delivered our 'Defining Black' training to senior activists within the Regions.
- Attended a Show Racism the Red Card Event in Stoke-on-Trent.
- Spoke at the Greater London Region's Black History Month Event.

However, the one thing that I am most proud of achieving for us as Black Members is that I have been able to finally correct the error in our National Rule Book which had the word Black without a Capital 'B' in several places. Whilst this may seem minor or somewhat trivial to some, our Rule Book is at the core of how our union works, and as such, when I spotted the error, I felt duty bound to ensure that it treats us with the same level of respect as we treat ourselves.

In terms of my role on the NEC, I am on the following Committees:

- Development and Organisation (D&O).
- Finance and Resource Management (FRMC).



- Labour Link, which I am proud to say I was unanimously elected as Vice Chair of at our most recent meeting.
- Organising and Membership (which is a Sub-Committee of the D&O Committee looking specifically at our 'Organising to Win' Strategy)
- Audit and Investigation (which is a Sub-Committee of the FRMC Committee)
- National Black Members Committee's Race Discrimination Inquiry.

As we look across 2024 and beyond, I am committed to living up to the trust and confidence you placed in me when you elected me to be your voice. And I am equally looking forward to getting out across our union, to hear from our members and activists, working with you to help improve our great union, but most of all, I am looking forward to having the opportunity to say thank you to you.

Thank you for everything you do for the people and communities you work with and thank you for everything you have and will do for our union and movement.  
Semper Fi

# 2023 YEAR OF BLACK WORKERS

## Establishing legacy to generate change

### COMMITTEE ORGANISATION

The main national campaign, following the National Black Members Conference 2023, (NBMC) has been UNISON's Year of Black Workers (YOBW), launched at the conference with the mission statement "Establishing legacy to Generate Change" as the overarching strategic intent.

The two main themes under this banner were 'legacy' and 'change,' which have provided the focus for campaign activity.

The campaign has drawn on specific work and other campaigns the NBMC is already involved in, reflective of sector partners, to change the workplace and wider society. It has set outcomes for branches and regions as a focal point for change and, thus created legacy.

The 'Year of Black Workers 2023' saw the National Black Members Committee (NBMC) expand their work programme to develop initiatives to organise for race equality, challenge racism in the workplace and 'establish a legacy to generate change'. The committee has worked with branches, service groups, regions, national self-organised groups, and national committees throughout the year developing and delivering the campaign.

NBMC has produced a suite of negotiating materials and bargaining guides, held events to promote the YOBW campaign since the launch in January 2023 and produced the Year of Black Workers toolkit to help galvanise grassroots support and empower members to contact legislators, as well as calling for mandatory ethnicity pay gap reporting.

The campaign activities and successes have been varied across the union. It will require further analysis to identify how successful the impact of the YOBW has been across union structures from branches, service groups, regions, self-organised and national committees.

The focus for campaigning continued to be around the ethnicity pay gap, the cost-of-living crisis, and building on UNISON's anti-racism charter, which is currently being rolled out across the union with the aim of encouraging sign-up of employers to the charter.

NBMC continues to encourage recruitment and organisation of Black members, with a particular focus to recruit and engage more young Black workers and retired Black members.

The nature of the debate around immigration and the hostile environment with growing right-wing rhetoric has underlined the importance of UNISON's priority of challenging racism and discrimination in every form. NBMC has continued to put race equality at the heart of UNISON's work.

The Year of Black Workers (YOBW) has been an opportunity to take forward UNISON's vital work on race equality, to celebrate the unions long history of achievements, and come up with practical steps for change. It has helped members have those broader conversations about racism that is deep rooted in society. All of this, layered on top of a history of institutional racism, helped focus our minds on tackling discrimination and undertaking work around equality and equity informed by the lived experiences of Black workers.

UNISON has worked in partnership with Dianne Greyson's #EthnicityPayGapUK campaign and engaged successfully with both prominent MP's and Peers. We have used opportunities in Parliament, such as questions and debates to ask the Government to work for mandatory ethnicity pay gap reporting.

We have worked with CONNECT who provide public affairs, corporate communications, planning and events advice and support for UNISON to maximise our impact on this topic. Our communications on this included putting articles on our website outlining how the campaign is gaining support, keeping members informed.

NBMC has engaged with the TUC Race Relations Committee and TUC Anti-Racism Taskforce, to raise broader awareness of our Year of Black workers Campaign.

NBMC has also engaged with Runnymede Trust and the Fawcett Society's new advisory board following the 'Broken ladder' research report launched in May 2022, to prioritise influencing policymakers on the report's key recommendations on ethnicity pay gap reporting, 'Stand up to Racism, Show Racism the Red Card' are also key groups NBMC has worked with.

NBMC is delighted that in the run up to the next General Election, the Labour Party have given a commitment to make Ethnicity Pay Gap mandatory if they are elected to form a government.

NBMC has been innovative in communicating the campaign on social media and using podcasts. [Local Government Podcasts Episode 3 with Manjula Kumari and Sandra Charles](#)

## **NBMC COMMITTEE WORK PROGRAMME**

The National Black Members' Committee (NBMC) met virtually in March 2023 for a policy weekend to discuss campaigns, agree the issues that needed to be addressed in the 2023 work programme, and to consider the motions that were passed at the National Black Members Conference held in Edinburgh in January 2023

Due to industrial action on the rail network, the Committee met virtually again in June and in-person in September and November to consolidate work on the YOBW campaign and develop other aspects of the work programme.

This year, the Committee again split into two working groups to take forward the work in the manner agreed by members of the Committee as a whole.

This report will feed back on this work. Motions with similar themes are grouped together.

The membership of the working groups is outlined below:

### **Group 1 Members**

Lead – Annette Heslop / Mitsy Harmon Russell (Co-Deputy Chair /Job-share)  
Sandra Okwara, Kemba Hadaway Morgan, Azara Azam, Mavreen Ncube, Stella Sharkey, Christopher Kane, Hasina Hamid, Marcia Dawkins, Sharon Carby McLean, Bertha Kanyangu, Sandra Charles, Manjula Kumari, Mohammed Daji, Sonia Stewart, April Ashley, Bev Miller, Faith Jangara,

### **Group 2 Members**

Lead – Kebba Manneh, Carol Johnson, Adejare Oyewole, Boatemah Baffoe, Iqbal Syed, Patrick Yu, Chinny Iroegbu, Olusola Adejare, Tara Thomas, Ash Silverstone, Jamal Pasha / Abdul Rahman / Job-share), Davena Rankin, Julia Mwaluke, Jennie Antonio, Pam Sian, James Minto, Lola Oyewusi, Gamu Nyasoro, Kuldeep Bajwa, Shazziah Rock

## **DEFINING 'BLACK':**

UNISON is the UK's largest public service trade union with 1.3 million members. Our members work in the public services, and for private contractors providing public services including in the essential utilities. They include frontline staff and managers working full or part time in local authorities, the NHS, the police service, colleges and schools, the electricity, gas and water industries, transport, and the voluntary sector. We estimate UNISON has 185, 000 Black members, working in health and local government services, with significant numbers working in social care and schools. Many deliver frontline services, and many are low paid and on insecure contracts.

In UNISON, Black is used to indicate people with a shared history. Black with a capital 'B' is used in its broad political and inclusive sense to describe people in Britain that

have suffered colonialism and enslavement in the past and continue to experience racism and diminished opportunities today.

The terms 'minority ethnic' and 'ethnic minority' are in widespread 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 antiracist 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 these group of people disadvantaged in housing, education, employment and the criminal justice and health systems.

## ORGANISATION, DEVELOPMENT AND SERVICES TO MEMBERS/ POLICY, CAMPAIGNS AND INTERNATIONAL

### **ORGANISING AND RECRUITING BLACK MEMBERS:**

*Motions: 10. Access to immigration advice through UNISON legal services, 11. Building participation of Black members within branches, 12. Cost-of-living crisis and Black workers, 13. Equality is UNISON Business,*

UNISON is only as strong as its membership; recruiting, retaining and organising members has continued to be a priority for the union in the Year of Black Workers.

Recruiting Black workers is key to ensuring that Black members remain visible and vocal within union structures. An organised Black membership means we can continue to support members and lead on achieving race equality and challenging racism in the workplace.

Achieving race equality continues to be an important stream of UNISON's work and we saw this being developed throughout UNISON structures with the election of ten Black members elected to the NEC members in 2023, a key equality objective of establishing a legacy to generate change.

To achieve this objective, all Black members, especially young Black members must continue to take the lead in driving the anti-discrimination messages and must also be represented and engaged in all levels of UNISON's structures.

NBMC is proud of efforts during YOBW to involve and engage more Young Black workers.

**Access to immigration advice through UNISON legal services:** The NBMC continue to raise this issue through the NEC Black Members Seat representatives on the Services to Members and other relevant UNISON committees, including the 'NEC Equality Liaison Committee' to enhance the access to immigration advice and representation through UNISON's legal services.

**Building participation of Black members within branches:** The NBMC have started the work in formulating guidelines for branches to ensure there is appropriate

representation from Black members in branches, and work with LOAS in developing a training programme for Black officers in branches that can be rolled out in 2024.

The NBMC would like to work build on the work created in the YOBW and work with branches to ensure targeted recruitment events, university open days and linking with professional bodies to enable attendance at induction events for new staff as a recruitment opportunity.

To identify best practice and cascade these to other branches to increase Black members participation. Exploring how to create additional support for Black members with mentoring and having the opportunity to able to take up leadership roles in 2024.

**Cost-of-living crisis and Black workers:** The National Black Members Conference 2023 prioritised this motion for the National Delegates Conference in June 2023.

Unfortunately, the motion was not debated, however this is part of the National Executive Committee's (NEC) work programme. The NEC Black seat representatives are taking this work forward with the appropriate sub-committee on the NEC.

This all falls in line with UNISON NEC objectives and campaigns to challenging racism in the workplace and wider campaigns.

The NBMC prioritising the objectives produced relevant materials like the YOBW toolkit on the mandatory reporting of the ethnicity pay gap which will further enhance the union's bargaining, organising and recruitment of members and activist.

UNISON will continue to campaign in all sectors to raise the issue of the cost-of-living crisis and the widening gap between rich and working people. Highlighting the impact on Black workers being represented in the lowest pay grades and zero-hour contracts. Campaigning on the disproportionate impact of escalating cost of living on Black members and broader Black community.

The ethnicity pay gap campaign has highlighted the unacceptable level on inequality across the workplace for Black workers, collective bargaining arrangements covering workplaces, encouraging the reporting of ethnicity pay gaps to reduce the widening pay inequality continues to be the focus of the union's campaigns in 2024/25.

**Equality is UNISON Business:** The National Black Members Conference 2023 prioritised this motion for the National Delegates Conference in June 2023. The motion was debated, however the NBMC started working on this early in the YOBW to 'establishing a legacy to generate change'.

Recognising and building on the Equality survey information that has been gathered in 2023 and across the union including the devolved nations i.e., Scotland, Cymru/Wales, and Northern Ireland. The NBMC hope this will enhance and build on

the unions capacity and ability to support Equality coordinators and branches in combating discrimination and accessing legal services for Black members.

The unions aim is to seek to ensure equality treatment and fair representation for all members and to work for the elimination of discrimination on the grounds of all the protected characteristic groups in accordance with UNISON's Rule Book.

Equality Co-Ordinators need to be the central liaison point for equality in the branch and to distribute information on equality issues, if self-organised groups are to develop and flourish. The NBMC have been discussing with the NEC Black seat representatives how work with all equality groups can be developed and delivered in shaping a campaign about why equality is UNISON business, including highlighting resources available to activists, demonstrating the opportunities available to members if they choose to get involved in UNISON.

The NBMC is fully commitment to ensure equalities in line with the Rule Book is utilised and enshrined in all their work.

This is core policy objective for the NBMC and UNISON in challenging racism in the workplace, building this into branches organising framework in the YOBW and the legacy challenge of effective change for the future.

Engaging with all the Self-organised groups including Retired Members Committee/Organisations has been a significant feature for the NBMC in 2023 and is in line with UNISON Rulebook as amended at the 2022 conference.

### **CHALLENGING RACE DISCRIMINATION IN THE WORKPLACE:**

#### **Negotiating and bargaining around race equality**

*Motion 1. Negotiating to win anti-racist workplaces, 2. Challenging employment barriers faced by newly qualified Black social workers, 4. Call me by my name, 5. Black members feeling undervalued and like they don't belong, 6. Black workers and non-apparent impairments, 7. Securing the legacy of the Year of Disabled Workers – an intersectional approach, 8. Young Black workers and mental health at work, 9. The impact of the cost-of-living rise on Black low paid workers.*

**Negotiating to win anti-racist workplaces:** The NBMC were keen to promote the Anti-Racism Charter and supported the initiative at several sign-up events held across the union. The production of the 'anti-racism pledge card' with a five-tip plan to be an anti-racist ally is explored further in this report.

The YOBW negotiating guides and toolkit produced in 2023 included:

- Recruitment and selection
- Progression and development
- Bullying and harassment
- Ethnicity pay gap.
- Challenging racism in the workplace
- Redundancy

- Disciplinary
- Insecure work
- Performance management & career progression
- Ten good reason to use the race discrimination protocol.

The roll-out of the toolkit and charter across the union continues to be encouraged, the NBMC will update on the effectiveness of the take up across UNISON at the 2025 National Black Members Conference.

The NBMC have also been working to encourage Black members to become active in their branches by using all communication channels at its disposal, especially with the heightened activity in the YOBW. Further work will be planned in 2024 to write to relevant stakeholders to encourage participation of Black activist in negotiating and bargaining on race equality issues as part of the negotiating team or lead officer.

**Challenging employment barriers faced by newly qualified Black social workers:** The NBMC sought to work jointly with the Local Government Service Group Executive (LGSGE) to ensure the work was coordinated and not duplicated as the information will be critical in addressing the issue raised.

The NBMC wish to ensure the work was in line with any campaigns that might already be taking place in the area, this also included any research. Members of the NBMC attended the Social Work Seminar in September as part of the Year of Black Workers and will be reviewing several initiatives that could be implement across regions that will help deliver on this motion in 20204. The NBMC are planning further discussion with the relevant representatives in the service group.

**Call me by my name:** The NBMC explored how they wished to work on creating further awareness and guidance on the importance of a person's name, the process of developing a booklet to give an insight into why a person's name is so important in the fight for equality and respect. This campaign is planned to continue in 2024, with a draft evidence research that will support the development of a 'call me by my name booklet' as a follow up to continue campaign needed on deliver on this motion.

The NBMC regional representatives were encouraged to take back the details and discuss the issues with Black members to ensure the campaign maintains a strong equality, diversity, promoting dignity in the workplace towards Black workers.

The NBMC hope the booklet will be embedded in ongoing regional campaigns to complement the work of challenging racism in the workplace guidance policy and the YOBW toolkit in UNISON.

**Black members feeling undervalued and like they don't belong:** The NBMC are committed to carrying out the work programme steered by this motion. It is imperative that we create an inclusive environment where Black workers, feels valued, appreciated, and a genuine sense of belonging.

The establishment of initiatives such as diversity and inclusion training, mentorship programs, and regular forums for open dialogue to foster understanding and unity among our members and within our workplaces is crucial.



The NBMC believe addressing these concerns head-on, will not only improve the well-being of Black members but enhance the morale, productivity, and innovation in the workplace, fostering an organisational culture that truly values the diversity that Black workers bring to the workplace.

The NBMC are committed to create an inclusive workplace where Black members are seen, heard, and valued.

**Black workers and non-apparent impairments:** It is essential that the union and NBMC acknowledge the unique challenges faced by individuals' Black members with impairments that may not be immediately visible. The guides and materials produced and developed by the National Disabled Members Committee (NDMC) were featured in Black Action and webinar events organised by Black disabled members during the YOBW activities in 2023.

Disability guides include:

- Disability Leave bargaining guide and model policy.
- Reasonable adjustments bargaining guide and UNISON 'passport'.
- Access to work - Guide for UNISON disabled members
- UNISON's guide to supporting members with long Covid.
- UNISON Equality Resources May 2023

The NBMC worked with the National Disabled Members Co-opted members in 2023 addressing the diverse needs of Black members, including those with non-apparent impairments such as diabetes, lupus and sickle cell and thalassemia that promotes understanding, support, and inclusivity for disabled Black workers to thrive and contribute their best within organisations and UNISON.

**Securing the legacy of the Year of Disabled Workers (YODW)– an intersectional approach:** The NBMC acknowledged the success of 2022 as the Year of Disabled Workers (YODW).

The NBMC focused on ensuring the legacy of the year was maintained by making it a central priority for all on the NBMC, with the aim of making sure they continued to address the gains made in 2022 for the YODW, fighting for disability rights and taking that message out to branches, regions, and service groups, as part of the legacy and development of the YOBW campaign for Black members.

The NBMC considered and discussed the steps that still need to be taken to sustain the legacy of the YODW's and focus on the intersectional issues for Black disabled workers.

It is important to publicise the 'Disability Employment Charter developed by UNISON, access to this information will be available at the National Black Members Conference on Equality Unit stall.

**Young Black workers and mental health at work:** The NBMC have recognise the complex factors that significantly and adversely affect young Black people's mental

health and well-being. Issues such as historical British colonialism, health inequalities, the impact of racism, all contribute to disparities in diagnosis, treatment and occurrence that can be seen today.

The NBMC have sought to work with the young members forum and create a young Black workers network like the LGBT+ young members network and will be working towards that in 2024. The NBMC have sought out Black led networks that are thriving to address health inequalities and influence policy and practice for Black communities across several prevalent health and wellbeing challenges.

The NBMC will be holding a workshop at the 2024 National Black Members Conference titled '*Mental Health and Black Young Workers*'. The fringe will explore the importance of UNISON's role in addressing mental health, information on the recent equality survey, specifically how Black members can support the work being taken forward on behalf of Black young members in the workplace.

The role of professionals in the NHS and a personal account from a UNISON Black member of how their mental health has been impacted, the support and guidance from UNISON and signposting of information.

The UNISON activist space would be a good online resource to feature UNISON's online directory of community resources, which could be accessed by individuals, branches, and regions.

**The impact of the cost-of living rise on Black low paid workers:** Black members are over-represented in low wage jobs and often limited career progression.

The NBMC will be examining the recent undertaken in UNISON equality unit in September and disseminating the results with a view to developing guidance and negotiating materials like the YOBW negotiating leaflets developed in 2023 and addressing the specific effects of the cost-of-living rise on Black low paid young members.

The NBMC worked closely with the NEC Black seat representatives in seeking to work with branches, to increase participation of Black low paid young members and promote welfare services in UNISON.

The NBMC have been promoting UNISON's charity 'There for you' by publicising it in Black Action and other social media outlets, the benefits and funding you can receive has been vital to so many of our members, there is however, a low uptake from Black members the NBMC are keen to highlight and encourage full use of this service to Black members.

There for you will have a stall at the National Black Members Conference in 2024 and the NBMC would encourage delegates and visitors to access these critical services while at the National Black Members Conference.

UNISON is drawing up plans for two pilots' scheme, to target information through branch welfare and equality officers and see what difference this makes in the take up of services particularly women and Black workers. UNISON and the NBMC are

supporting the initiative to pilot targeting information about where to get help in the cost-of-living crisis (foodbanks, second hand school uniforms and help with energy costs).

The NBMC will keep members informed of this development and how best to access this support through various social media platforms across UNISON.

### **CAMPAIGNING:**

*Motion 16. Reimbursement of NHS immigration surcharge paid by migrant workers who work in the health and care sector, 17. Stop deportation to Rwanda, 18. Refugees deportation to Rwanda, 19. Detention of refugees, asylum seekers and others without their status in the UK, 20. Opposing anti-refugee tory policy, 21. Opposing the nationality and Borders Act 2022, 22. Cost-of-living impact on mental illness in Black workers, 23. Eliminating racism in Scottish sport, 24. Young Black workers and the cost-of-living crisis.*

**Reimbursement of NHS immigration surcharge paid by migrant workers who work in the health and care sector:** The NBMC welcome the campaigning work of UNISON and other organisations that persuaded the government to provide reimbursements and ensured the union could inform members about how to apply for it.

It is disappointing that nearly two years since the reimbursement scheme was introduced, many applicants are yet to receive payment. The issues raised will continue to be incorporated in the union, national health service group and Committee's national campaigning work.

**Stop deportation to Rwanda:** The NBMC welcome the 'Supreme Court' judgement on 15<sup>th</sup> November that ruled the governments Rwanda policy unlawful. The court unequivocally concluded 'it would not be safe to send people seeking asylum to Rwanda because of the risk of 'refoulement' (where someone is sent back to a country where their life will be at risk), which would go against both the UK domestic law (Human rights Act 1998) and international law and conventions.

The Committee will include an article in the next edition of Black Action in January 2024 on the campaign moving forward.

**Refugees' deportation to Rwanda:** The issues raised will continue to be incorporated in the unions and NBMC's campaigning work in 2024 considering the 'Supreme Court' decision on 15<sup>th</sup> November 2023.

**Detention of refugees, asylum seekers and others without their status in the UK:** The NBMC continue to raise the issues in this motion through Labour Link, and other affiliated organisation and migrant bodies like Care4Calai, Stand up to Racism. We condemn the continued political attacks on refugees, asylum seekers and others without status in the UK many of whom are UNISON Black members.

The NBMC recognise the government is fostering a punitive environment for refugees designed to punish and criminalise the most vulnerable of asylum seekers,

undermining international humanitarian obligations and damaging the UK's reputation on human rights.

The NBMC will continue to call for the right of all workers to employment which is safe and secure and will work with Labour Link to call on the next Labour Government to make all undocumented and precarious people residing in the UK to be granted indefinite leave to remain. The issues raised will be incorporated in the Committees campaigning work in 2024.

**Opposing anti-refugee Tory policy:** People seeking asylum in the UK are effectively banned from working. They can only apply to the Home Office for permission to work if they have been waiting for a decision for over 12 months and only for jobs that are on the Government's restricted Shortage Occupation list.

UNISON and the NBMC strongly supports restoring the right to work for refugees and asylum seekers and create safe and legal routes for refugees fleeing war and persecution to travel to the UK, the NBMC firmly support UNISON's campaign and the call for an end to condemning refugees' families and their children to poverty, uncertainty, and fear and to bring an end to the hostile environment created by this government.

**Opposing the Nationality and Borders Act 2022:** Despite the inhumane Act coming into law on 27<sup>th</sup> April 2022, UNISON have been lobbying and taking the lead through Labour Link to ensure we hold the government and home office to account.

The issues raised will continue to be incorporated in the union and NBMC's national campaigning work.

**Cost-of-living impact on mental illness in Black workers:** The NBMC are committed to carrying out the work programme steered by this motion. A formal request to have a meeting with the Scottish Regional Manager, Regional Secretary and Regional Convenor to discuss the points raised in the motion was accepted, but unfortunately has not yet taken place at the time of writing this report.

Further dates are being explored, as the motion highlights how the cost of living is impacting significantly on Black members across the country which is also adversely affecting their mental health and the NBMC are keen to address this moving forward.

It is important to note that Black individuals often lack access to culturally competent care, which can also result in mental health problems going unrecognised, by working together, by exploring how the NBMC can undertake the research to identify how gaps in knowledge can create and maintain inequalities in how Black members access and receive services can be address and seek better outcomes of care.

**Eliminating racism in Scottish sport:** The issues raised will be incorporated in the NBMC campaigning work, the details are specific to Scotland, however further discussions will be held in the New Year with UNISON Scotland Regional Management team.

The NBMC hope the work can be taken forward to include other strategic partners, which should also include contact with Cricket Scotland, Sport Scotland, and the Scottish Government through the union's Labour Link forum to ensure we are tackling racism in the game and build on the ongoing work that is vital to address the priority that has been identified in this area.

**Young Black workers and the cost-of-living crisis:** The NBMC recognise the disparities that continue to disproportionately impact hard on young Black workers. The NBMC continued to campaign on the Ethnicity Pay Gap (EPG) throughout 2023 and worked with Labour Link and the National Executive Council (NEC) Black representatives to campaign for legislation to be made mandatory in addressing the EPG. The Committee are keen to highlight the specific impact of the cost-of-living crisis on Black workers, specifically young Black workers and acknowledge the additional barriers they face in the workplace.

The NBMC are working on producing a factsheet highlighting the difficulties faced by young Black workers following discussion with members of the Young Members Forum in taking this work forward with the development and creation of a young Black network group. A planned webinar for November 2023 had to be postponed and will now take place in mid-February 2024 with the focus on how best to support young Black workers in the workplace and the impact of the cost-of-living crisis.

### **HUMAN RIGHTS AND INTERNATIONAL:**

UNISON policy on international and human rights issues continues to be an important part of the committee's work. Civil and human rights have always been and continue to be entwined. Black members have connections across the world and recognise that the events across the globe affect us all including the economy, environment, and workers' rights.

*Motion: 14. Solidarity with Ghana's LGBT+ community, 15. Solidarity with the people of Yemen and Yemeni trade unions*

**Solidarity with Ghana's LGBT+ community:** The NBMC were keen to address some of the fundamental aspects of this motion in recognising and asking the crucial question of decolonisation and decoloniality, as the Committee see racial, gender and LGBT+ equality as being interlinked. They are fundamentally the same challenge to structural oppression, calling for justice, respect and upholding human rights. The NBMC believes that UNISON and trade unions have an important role to play in building an inclusive world, free from discrimination where all have the benefit of social justice.

With that in mind the NBMC will continue to help circulate information and resources available for UNISON members around the question of supporting LGBT+ rights in Ghana as a matter of decoloniality. The aim in 2024 is to progress and support the development of closer working with the International Lesbian and Gay Association (ILGA World) to better support Ghanaian LGBT+ activists in their fight for social justice.

**Solidarity with the people of Yemen and Yemeni trade unions:** The NBMC recognise that this work has not progressed as well as they had hoped throughout the year. They are however, committed to addressing the actions in this motion as

part of their work programme in 2024 the Year of LGBT+ workers. The NBMC give there unwavering commitment and solidarity to work with the National LGBT+ Committee to achieve this.

### **STANDING ORDERS:**

#### *25. Amendment to National Black Members Conference Rules and Standing Orders No.9*

The National Black Members Committee will implement the decision of the National Black Members Conference 2023 of the Standing Orders Committee (SOC) to the National Black Members Conference in 2024. The mover of motions and amendments will have a **'right of reply'** falling in line with the UNISON Rule Book.

**Anti-Racism Charter:** The NBMC unanimously agreed to promote the Anti-Racism Charter pledge as part of the Year of Black Workers across all regions. The NBMC believe the Anti-Racism Charter is an excellent toolkit and is pleased to see that it is being rolled out in regions, with organisations and employers committing to champion a racially diverse workforce and introduce tangible outcomes within a 12-month period of signing the charter.

Five tips for being an anti-racist ally: "I pledge to be an anti-racist ally".

- Understand your privilege.
- Listen and do your homework.
- Speak up, but not over.
- You'll make mistakes! Apologise when you do.
- Ally is a verb.

The NBMC are keen to collate information and monitoring of sign-up across regions, including any barriers faced. The NBMC hope there will be an opportunity to review and map problem areas and best practice and work with the various sectors within UNISON to advance the charter.

### **Bargaining & Campaigning resources developed for the Year of Black**

**Workers:** UNISON has produced guidance:

Challenging racism in the workplace: a practical guide for UNISON branches

This document and UNISON's Race for Equality in the NHS campaign focus on equipping UNISON representatives to tackle race discrimination in the workplace.

There will be opportunities to tailor this for other sectors in the union. NBMC would encourage take up of these resources.

We have also produced other negotiating resources for Black members as follows:

- Recruitment and selection
- Progression and development
- Bullying and harassment
- Ethnicity pay gap.

- Challenging racism in the workplace
- Redundancy
- Disciplinary
- Insecure work
- Performance management & career progression
- Ten good reason to use the race discrimination protocol.

These can be found on both the Equality and Black members webpages.

A Black members leadership programme has been developed, which is aimed at increasing the number of Black activists. The programme supports new Black activists from underrepresented groups and has been designed to ensure UNISON can better support and develop the next activist generation.

A key feature of this programme is that regions provide ongoing support and identify buddies for these new activists. Now that the programme has been delivered nationally, it has been reviewed and once it has been modified it will be delivered regionally. A similar scheme has been developed for women members.

### **Race Discrimination Protocol and Race Discrimination inquiry:**

The Race Discrimination Claims Protocol was developed as part of the effort to improve the support UNISON provides for members suffering racism.

The Protocol aims to provide a more transparent, effective, and accountable way of dealing with racist discrimination by standardising the approach to legal referrals, fully investigating the details of race cases in every incident, setting out the process and basis by which a race case is assessed for legal representation.

Regions must invite Thompsons on an annual basis to discuss work being done on race discrimination cases with regional Black members committees and must also monitor problematic employer and report back to branches.

UNISON National Black Members Committee (NBMC) over the past two years has seen an increased focus on race and racism for both the best and worst of reasons.

The increasing number of complaints on the take-up and pursue of race cases in UNISON has led the NBMC to call for a formal inquiry into racism and racial discrimination cases in UNISON and the implementation of legal representation.

The 'Terms of Reference' have been agreed, with the purpose and scope ranging from how effectively and consistently strategies are working for Black members, where improvements are needed or where new initiatives should be focussed and implemented.

The inquiry will consider current policy and practice, bargaining and race equality strategies across the union, including the use of the Race Discrimination Protocol.

It will also include reviewing support, guidance and training for members, branches, and activists. The inquiry will hear evidence from Black members who have lived

experiences of racism at branch and regional level, both positive and negative written testimonies, via video link or face to face.

The next stage of the inquiry for lived experiences interviews will take place in February 2024

The inquiry has been sponsored by the General Secretary and has been endorsed by the President and NBMC. The timeframe has been extended from September 2022 to June 2024 to ensure the panel is effective in its response and recommendations.

The panel will provide reports on each phase of the inquiry to the NBMC representatives from the 12 regions and Co-opted Self-organised representatives who will report back to their regions and committee. A regular report will be provided to the NEC.

UNISON is committed to supporting and challenging racism in the workplace and making equality a reality across the union and removing racial discrimination in all its forms.

## **OTHER CAMPAIGNS AND ACTIVITIES OF THE COMMITTEE**

The **model anti-racism policy** is now on the Black members webpage and on the Bargaining guides page the bullet points that will help develop engagement with employers:

- Ensure Black workers have equal access to career progression, good quality jobs and pay.
- Help address deep-rooted discrimination, and reduce incidents of bullying, harassment, and other unfair treatment, including stereotyping.
- Improve the well-being of Black members.
- Contribute to the growth and future strength of branches.
- Recruit new members and activists, of benefit to all the membership.
- Place public authorities under a proactive duty to identify and publicise opportunities to promote equality.

### **Physical and Virtual events:**

The NBMC continue to support both physical and virtual events organised by Stand Up to Racism (SUTR), Show Racism the Red Card (SRtRC), and Unite against Fascism, engaging with various work programme opposing the hostile environment. The NBMC has worked alongside these organisations, publicising events in the Year of Black Workers 2023 (YOBW23) calendar of events.

SUTR and SRtRC have been invited to the National Black Members Conference 2024 and participated in the National Black History event in October 2023. Work with Learning and Organising Services (LOAS), There 4U and self-organised groups is



ongoing, especially considering the planning programme for 2024 and the Year of LGBT+

**Marking Stephen Lawrence Day Thursday 22<sup>nd</sup> April 2023:** Stephen Lawrence Day is held annually on 22<sup>nd</sup> April marking the anniversary of his murder, UNISON marked this national commemoration as part of the 'Year of Black Workers (YOBW) campaign'.

The TUC and Dr Neville Lawrence held an evening remembering the Legacy of Stephen Lawrence, 30 years on Friday 21<sup>st</sup> April, at Congress House, Speakers included Dr Neville Lawrence (father of Stephen Lawrence), Paul Nowak (TUC General Secretary), Gloria Mills (Unison National Secretary Equalities), and Marcia Riggs, campaign activist and sister of Sean Riggs who died in Brixton Station.

**Windrush Generation remembered in Brixton Square Thursday 6<sup>th</sup> April 2023:** A small delegation of UNISON activist and staff attended the vigil held in Brixton Square in solidarity for the Windrush Generation.

Campaigning for justice for the Windrush generation continues to be a key priority for UNISON, given the failure by the Government to abide by its own commitments to those affected by the scandal. UNISON was extremely disappointed that the Home Secretary decided in January 2023 not to proceed with three key recommendations made by independent reviewer, Wendy Williams in her 'Lessons learned' Review. This is despite a previous Home Secretary giving an 'unequivocal commitment' to ensure all the recommendations were implemented.

The abandoned commitments included the appointment of a 'migrants' commissioner, to engage with migrant communities directly and facilitate their feedback into the Home Office, a review of the remit and role of the Independent Chief Inspector of Borders and Immigration, and reconciliation events with Windrush families. UNISON's General Secretary Christina McAnea wrote to the Home Secretary prior to the decision to abandon these commitments, expressing the union's dismay at this potential decision taking place. UNISON's campaign will continue to seek to reverse this decision further details of the judicial review for justice for the Windrush generation is highlighted in another section of this report.

In addition to this, there is little evidence that the Home Office is building a more compassionate culture. With desperate refugees risking their lives to cross the channel, an actual culture change in the Home Office would prioritise providing safe and legal routes, not ineffective and inhumane 'get tough' schemes.

The gathering highlighted the importance of remembering those who have been affected by the fallout from the Windrush scandal, and to offer comfort to those who have lost loved ones, whilst not forgetting the journey ahead in terms of the fight for recognition and social justice.

It was a time of commemoration, remembrance, prayer, motivation, and lighting of candles for justice.

Remembering George Floyd: UNISON members continue to remember George Floyd on the third anniversary of his murder that took place on 25<sup>th</sup> May. The NBMC will continue to remember him and all those unjust killings of Black people across the UK and world.

UNISON welcome Chris Smalls, Founder and President of Amazon Labor Union (ALU): On 1<sup>st</sup> June UNISON were delighted to be joined by Chris Smalls, the Founder and President of the Amazon Labor Union and his colleagues, Gerald Bryson, President, and Co-founder of The Congress of Essential Workers (TCOEW), and Jordan Flowers, Co-founder of the ALU and TCOEW, for a discussion.

As key figures of the growing American Labor movement Chris will be joining us at this year's National Black Members Conference as our International Speaker to share his experiences and discuss in a workshop the importance of unionisation to tackle the common challenges Black workers are facing.

**UNISON Windrush Drop-in event held on Monday 17<sup>th</sup> July at the Houses of Westminster:** The event took place on Monday 17<sup>th</sup> July, with Yvette Cooper, Labour MP for Normanton, Pontefract, and Castleford; Shadow Home Secretary, David Lammy MP for Tottenham; Shadow Secretary for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, Anneliese Dodds, Labour for Oxford East; Shadow Secretary of State for Women and Equalities.

A UNISON delegation was in attendance with Gloria Mills as the UNISON speaker to mark this historic moment and stands as a symbol of the huge contribution that post-war British Citizens made to the UK. We were also treated to a rendition from Margaret Greer, National Officer, Race Equality of '**Something Inside so strong**'.

UNISON also marked Windrush day on 22<sup>nd</sup> June by calling for justice for the Windrush generation and affirming the union's commitment to fighting for migrant workers' rights. Christina McAnea said "last year on Windrush Day I said UNISON would always stand with the Windrush generation – and all migrant workers. I stand true to these words today. During UNISON's Year of Black Workers, we can all take this opportunity to double down in our efforts. UNISON branches are busy organising and supporting our migrant workers members who are still facing Home Office's hostile environment. And UNISON resources will continue to go on defending them as equal workers and equal citizens in the UK".

UNISON is currently working with other parties in a legal challenge against the Home Secretary, over the decision to abandon three of the recommendations made by the Windrush Lessons learned Review. Part of our case is highlighting the impact the Home Secretary's decision will have on those who have suffered from the scandal and the future impact on our migrant worker members.

**Tuesday 18<sup>th</sup> July – Nelson Mandela Day:** UNISON marked Nelson Mandela Day. By the time Nelson Mandela was 95 years old. He had received more than 250 honours and distinctions, including the Medal of Freedom, the Bharat Ratna, and the

"1993 Nobel Peace" Prize – Quote from Nelson Mandela ***“Education is the most powerful weapon which you can use to change the world – it is in your hands, to make a better world for all who live in it.”***

**Tuesday 18<sup>th</sup> July to 17<sup>th</sup> August:** Saw the start of South Asian Heritage Month (SAHM). The Committee acknowledged the start of (SAHM) with a social media post marking the month ‘Stories to Tell’.

"South Asian Heritage Month is a wonderful opportunity to celebrate what it means to be South Asian today, commemorate important dates and the intertwined history of South Asia and Britain, and more importantly educate people so that we all leave the month having learned something new. The theme for 2023 is 'Stories to Tell' allows us to ensure we never forget the past, whilst also focusing on what the present and future holds for the South Asian communities in the UK and beyond.

This all ties in very well with Unison marking 2023 as Year of Black Workers, Jasvir Singh CBE said as a member of Unison myself, I'm so grateful that my union is marking SAHM 2023."

The Committee will be planning and have featured an article in Black Action on the importance of celebrating South Asian Heritage Month in 2024.

**Official Emancipation Day Wednesday 1<sup>st</sup> August:** To mark the official end of slavery in the British Empire, many former (and some current) British territories celebrate Emancipation Day every year on the 1<sup>st</sup> of August. These include: the Bahamas, Belize, Dominica, Grenada, Jamaica, Montserrat, St Kitts and Nevis, St Lucia, St Vincent, Barbados, and the Grenadines, Trinidad and Tobago, Turks and Caicos Islands, and Canada (whereas, in Bermuda, Emancipation Day is celebrated on the last Thursday before August).

UNISON also marked the 23<sup>rd</sup> of August the Remembrance of the Slave Trade and its Abolition via social media outlets and an article in October's edition of Black Action.

**Sunday 20<sup>th</sup> August - UK Black Pride 2023:** The NBMC actively participated in events such as UK Black Pride 2023 and will continue to support various other events activities across UNISON and the UK as LGBT+ allies in the 2024 Year of LGBT+ Workers.

**UNISON Year of Black workers (YOBW) centre stage at Notting Hill Carnival:** UNISON's message at the Notting Hill Carnival 2023 was in tune with our commitment to the Year of Black Workers and Public Service. UNISON continues to support carnival, with a significant presence this year that was vibrant and particularly poignant as attendees continue to observe and remember the victims of the Grenfell Tower fire, which is on the route of the carnival procession.

Notting Hill Carnival is not just an important event, but a significant part of British history and tradition. It has changed over many years, with more culturally diverse communities taking part each year. UNISON is committed to ensure we promote inclusion and develop initiatives to enhance the participation of our members across community activities in the Black community.

**Black History Event:** Every October, we mark Black History Month to celebrate and honour the all too often forgotten and undervalued contribution of Black Britons across the UK and throughout history.

“Black History Month reminds us to dig deeper and think bigger”.

The theme for 2023 in the Year of Black Workers was entitled ‘Beyond the anniversaries - legacies, lessons, and achievements. UNISON supported Show Racism the Red Card by wearing red for ‘Wear Red Day’.

The day was vibrant and challenging, consisting of speakers, music, and spoken word on various topics, acknowledging the past, present, and future. It reflected on the 75th anniversary of Windrush, the 75th anniversary of the NHS, the 30th anniversary of the murder of Stephen Lawrence and the 30th anniversary of UNISON, representing Black self-organisation.

With over 120 registered to attend in-person and over 25 plus who logged in online, it was an inspiring day.

Regions and branches across UNISON continue to promote and organise around Black History Month, which were promoted in Black Action and E-Bulletins. A perfect time to acknowledge Black achievements and discuss wider issues affecting the Black community.

**Show Racism the Red Card:** UNISON is proud to be supporting organisations like Show Racism the Red Card and the amazing work that they do with young people. UNISON continue to support Ambassador Educational programme and the All-Parliamentary Group with MP’s

Support and activity took place across the country in branches ‘Wear Red Day’ and the Black History Month event held on Friday 20th October, where they also participated.

The 2024 School’s Competition will be launched in late February at the UNISON Centre.

**TUC Taskforce, Race Relations Committee, and other affiliates:**

UNISON has continued to work alongside colleagues at the TUC and TUC Race Committee and Anti-Racism Task Force. The strategy for discussion and action has continued to be an important part of UNISON’s YOBW campaign in 2023, with a shared commitment to eradicating racial injustice. The trade unions must continue to be committed to deliver and progress Black members, activist, and employees.

UNISON and the NBMC hope to build and strengthen alliances with organisations campaigning on racial discrimination and harassment at work such as the Runnymede Trust, Stand Up to Racism, Race Equality Matter, Ethnicity Pay Gap UK, and the Migrant Rights Network.

**Justice for Ricky Reel:** UNISON and the NBMC offered support to Sukhdev Reel whose son was attacked and murdered over 20 plus years ago. The family became

subject to police surveillance when she wanted her son's murder investigated properly but received little support, discrimination and racism from the police force who should have been helping her find the murders of her son.

Sukhdev has been a Unison member for over 25, the NBMC are committed alongside UNISON to help champion her cause and raise awareness in the union and beyond. The NBMC met with the Reel family and the family attended the Greater London Annual event in 2023.

The full story and links are available on-line in Black Action

**Justice for Chris Kaba:** On 5<sup>th</sup> September, Chris Kaba a 24-year-old unarmed Black man and father-to-be, was shot dead by a specialist firearms officer in Streatham Hill. The announcement by the Metropolitan Police that a specialist firearms officer has been charged with murder will ensure the campaign for justice is followed through for the family of Chris Kaba. UNISON will continue to support the family and the 'we will win' campaign.

**Equality Act Amendment:** The Government has published draft legislation to amend the Equality Act 2010 with effect from 1<sup>st</sup> January 2024. The Equality Act 2010 (Amendments) regulation 2023 codify certain EU0derived discrimination protections which would otherwise have disappeared at the end of this year due to Brexit.

Amendment includes:

- The right to claim indirect discrimination by association (to cover a person who does not hold the relevant protected characteristic but suffers the same disadvantage at the hands of the employer's PCP as those who do have that characteristic)
- An amendment to guidance on the definition of disability to state that consideration of a person's ability to participate fully and effectively in working life on an equal basis with other workers is relevant when looking at 'day-to-day' activities.
- A 'single source' test for establishing an equal pay comparator (the idea that an equal pay comparator can potentially work for a different business so long as the body responsible for setting terms is the same).
- An extension of direct discrimination protection to cover discriminatory statements made about not wanting to recruit people with certain protected characteristics even where there is no active recruitment process ongoing and no identifiable victim.

Confirmation that employment discrimination on grounds of breastfeeding falls under the protected characteristic of sex.

**UNISON Nominated for Caribbean African Health Network (CAHN) Awards held in Manchester:** In recognition of UNISON Year of Black Workers (YOBW) campaign UNISON were delighted to be nominated in the 'Anti-Racist Initiative' category for

our work, at the annual awards & Black History Month fundraising Gala ‘improving health for Black people’. UNISON came third in the category and will provide conference with the award received in due course. Representatives from the Committee in attendance were Sonia Stewart and Boatemah Baffoe.

**Training: Training:** UNISON and the National Black Members Committee continue to look at the best ways of supporting activists, including flexible and creative training opportunities to enable the strengthening of the union.

Activists are at the heart of the union, and we cannot underestimate the commitment and work that they do every day.

The NBMC will be undertaking the ‘trans ally’ training at the policy weekend in March 2024 in support of the Year of LGBT+, encouraging members to participate in events and activities promoting the legacy of the Year of Black Workers (YOBW), and Year of LGBT+ workers and the intersectional importance of collaboration.

**Important things to take forward:**

- Nelson Mandela Award – recognising the significant contributions of Black members in tackling racism in UNISON and across our global communities.
- Ensuring the ‘YOBW toolkit’ – is establishing the legacy to make a difference across the union and wider society in 2024.
- Explore the ‘Ethnicity Pay Gap Toolkit’ at the 2024 National Black Members Conference and ensure Labours commitment to make this mandatory when next in government.
- Windrush campaign continues, seeking compensation and addressing the hostile environment.
- Black History Month - A reminder for us to ‘dig deeper and think bigger’ to achieve significant and sustainable change in society.
- South Asian Heritage Month – Untold stories
- Abolition of Slavery – recognising on the 1<sup>st</sup> and 23<sup>rd</sup> of August each year

**UNISON and the National Black Members message for Black members:**

Beyond the anniversaries, legacies, lessons, and achievements. UNISON will continue to challenge and highlight model policies as good practice for employers.

## CAUCUS REPORTS

### Labour Link Caucus

Our focus has been on equal representation of Black Labour party members within national Labour link & the Labour party.

The caucus puts in a motion to Unison Labour link forum, titled ticking the boxes but not enough bum on seat. Asking the labour link to work with the Labour party to ensure that equalities, equity, diversity & Inclusion is at the heart of Labour party policies.

The forum was held on the 7<sup>th</sup> of July at the crown plaza Newcastle.

The outcome of this was agreement to ensure that a BAME person would be shortlisted for parliamentary seat when they put themselves forward. We haven't really seen the impact of that yet across the United Kingdom

We also attended the Labour party conference in October themed **Getting Britain's Future Back !!!** which was held at Liverpool. Below are the 5 key pledges from the Labour party.

- Breaking down barriers to opportunity
- Getting the NHS back on its feet.
- Switch on great British energy
- Take back our streets.
- Get Britain building again.

Unison influenced majorities of the Labour party policies securing a better deal for workers, a better national wage of £15, a dignified policy that protects the rights of disabled people.

In attendance as part of Unison delegation team is our General secretary Christina McAnea who moved Unison motion a better social care that's fit for purpose. All unison's motion passed at the conference.

The leader's speech was a speech that gave members hope & saw a brighter future of getting a Labour government in next general election.

I was fortunate to speak at the women's conference in support of BAME Labour emergency motion Flood in Libya & it's impact on women & girls. The emergency motion also passed & called for more humanitarian support for African countries impacted by natural disasters.

Lady Lola Oyewusi

NBMC Labour Link Caucus Officer

## Women's Caucus

The Women's caucus meet four times a year and discuss women's issues and decide on motions that we will bring from the National Black members committee to the National women's committee. The motions that will be going to National Women's conference is

Motion 14 Black Women's Maternity Care

Motion 21 Black Women and Mental Health

Motion 22 Violence Against Black Women and Black Girls is UNISONS Business

The Year of the Black worker has been a big part of all the work that has been done, the theme is to establish a legacy for change, Black History this year's theme was saluting our women. The Women's caucus have looked at the cost of living, and other issues that women face on a regular basis. Women are the largest group in the union, Black women are not in those leadership positions. There was a webinar regarding leadership which the National Women organised. There is a need to encourage our young members to be more active in the union, this is something that the women's caucus has been looking at. There are health inequalities that Black women face, and during our meetings we discuss them.

Annette Heslop/ Lady Lola Oyewusi

## Disabled Members Caucus

The Black Disabled Caucus meet four times this year. These meetings proved to be an important platform for discussing the challenges and concerns faced by Disabled Black Members within their organisation/workplace and supporting Black Disabled Members on how they can actively address these issues to implement the necessary adjustments and change.

This year the Black Disabled Members have been working on namely the ethnicity pay gap & it's impact on Black Disabled Workers in support of the Year of Black Workers addressing the issues of Ethnicity Pay Gap.

We also focused and discussed how we can continue in our fight in challenging and campaigning for reasonable adjustments, Disabled Passports, and equality within the workplace for Black Disabled Members. Far too many employers still refuse to accept some Black Workers are disabled and is entitled to reasonable adjustments unless their impairment is obvious, and hidden disabilities are not recognising. There is a disproportionate experience of impairments such as diabetes, sickle cell and lupus to name a few which are not obvious to others.

We had our Disabled Black Members Network Meetings in June and August 2023. These were fabulous meetings with Black Members from various Regions as it allowed space to network and organise. The Disabled Black Members Caucus is continuing to be committed to promoting inclusivity and equality for all.

Tara Thomas



## LGBT+ Caucus

UNISON Year of Black Workers 2023 has been a great opportunity for the Black LGBT+ representatives on the National Black Members Committee and the wider Black LGBT+ network to celebrate and contribute to the work of UNISON Black self-organisation.

The LGBT+ Black caucus took an active role in developing the bid for 2023. And the YOBW began with the successful launch of YOBW at National Black Members Conference in January with a busy stall to showcase the campaign. The January conference is one of the biggest meetings of Black LGBT+ members in the year. To start off the year, the Black LGBT+ caucus, led by film maker, Dettie Gould, produced, a film of Black LGBT+ activists celebrating YOBW 2023 which was launched at the network meeting.

It showed what ordinary members, activists, wanted to achieve in the year ahead. Memorably, one contributor encouraged other Black LGBT+ members to join in activities of the union to meet other members and become more active in Black LGBT+ self-organisation saying, 'Let's talk'. The film illustrated the intersectionality of Black members – we have lots of different aspects to our identity. We can be Black, and women, and disabled and LGBT+ - and none of those different aspects of ourselves can be prised apart. The film demonstrated UNISON's unique principle of self-organisation, which creates spaces where we can all proudly bring our whole selves into our activism.

February is LGBT+ History Month and so to highlight YOBW we developed a quiz celebrating Black LGBT+ activists and heroes. It showed that Black LGBT+ activism has always been at the heart of the trade union movement and UNISON. Also, that Black LGBT+ activists are the foundation on which modern Prides and LGBT+ campaigning is built. The quiz is a resource for regions and branches to use to put on their own activities for YOBW and beyond.

The Black LGBT+ Caucus participated in the work of National Black Members throughout the year:

There was Black LGBT+ participation in the round table discussion at the Houses of Parliament on 24th February 2023 with a cross party of MPs who supported the UNISON Ethnicity Pay Gap campaign to ensure robust monitoring across all employers and action to close the gap.

Black LGBT+ Caucus reps also took part collectively as the committee and working parties in the launch of the Ethnicity Pay Gap PowerPoint presentation and the Racism Toolkit which were rolled out at various events and presented to Self-Organising Groups as well as regional committees as part of the YOBW legacy.

Representation at the Black TUC conference in June where other unions purchasing lots of non-UNISON marked YOBW merchandise.

As part of our work to be increasingly inclusive and representative, South Asian Heritage month (18 July - 17 August) was publicised on UNISON's social media this

year; it has an active South Asian LGBT+ strand to its work which we will be connecting with in future.

Participation in the 75<sup>th</sup> Windrush celebrations at the Houses of Parliament on 17<sup>th</sup> alongside other SOG and regional Black representatives. This was to both celebrate the achievements of this generation and to highlight the continuing scandal of the threat of deportations and continuing delays in paying compensation.

Participation in the LGBT+ Unison delegation to the LGBT+ TUC Conference in June which promoted the UNISON year of the LGBT+ worker 2024.  
Developing the National Social Work seminar workshop on the Racism Toolkit.

We also represented the network at UK Black Pride, with Bev Miller, Manish Mansouria and Jennie Antonio delivering a presentation on the community stage about UNISON's self-organising groups and the Black LGBT+ network.

Jennie attended the Public Services International Congress in Geneva in October as the representative from National Black Members Committee. Information from the conference can be used throughout Black self-organisation in UNISON to further develop international work.

At LGBT+ conference in November 2023, the Black LGBT+ Caucus took part in a panel debate in front of 450 delegates, promoting the achievements of the Year of Black Workers. We emphasised that the current strong support Black LGBT+ members receive from National Black Members Committee was built on the work of people like Hussan Ortega and Tim Weston, on the panel, who had previously served on National Black Members Committee.

After participating in an extremely successful Year of Black Workers throughout UNISON, the Year of LGBT+ workers 2024 begins with the close of National Black Members' conference. To continue the legacy of YOBW and create a strong hand-over to LGBT+ 2024 we will participate in a training session with the new National Black Members Committee on with the new National Black Members Committee at the first meeting next year.

Jennie Antonio  
NBMC LGBT+ Caucus Officer

Bev Miller  
NBMC LGBT+ Caucus Member

## National Women's Committee

The National women had 4 meetings a year and one was an online meeting. In the year, we have attended all the meetings and ensuring that the issues affecting Black women are part of the workplan. The national women's committee came up with several ideas to celebrate the year of Black workers. The national women organised a leadership webinar themed from activism into leadership to encourage more Black women to become active. Sharon Foster chair of the national women's committee, high sheriff of Bristol and our Committee member Lady Lola Oyewusi were guest speakers. Sharing our journey from being a lay member to union activists and to being a community leader within and outside of the union. It was a well-attended webinar with over 150 participants. There were lots of positive feedback.

This was to encourage women and especially Black women to become more active in the union and take on leadership roles. There is another webinar that has been organised that is taking place on the 22nd of November 2023, and it is about ending violence against women and girls.

The year of the Black Worker has been a priority on the National Women's agenda, in our March 2023 meeting Josie Irwin did a presentation with Annette giving an overview of what the Year of the Black worker was all about.

The November meeting was about planning for National Women's conference in February, agreeing Fringe meetings, workshops, guest speakers' what motion we are supporting and adding amendments.

At conference there is going to be a workshop on Intersectionality, Lady Lola & Annette will be leading on it.

The national women's committee have submitted two motions to the national women's conference about issues affecting black women which are:

### **Motion 14 Black Women's Maternity Care.**

**The national Black members committee has also submitted two motions to the national women's conference which are motion 21 Black Women and Mental Health &**

### **Motion 22 Violence Against Black Women and Black Girls is UNISON's Business**

**We also made amendments to motion 32 The Gender Pay Gap and Equal Pay & motion 33 Time to Smash the Gender Pay Gap our amendments are to incorporate ethnicity pay gap which is the campaign of the national Black committee.**

The conference social was discussed taking into considerations the concerns about the impact of the cost-of-living crisis and looking at the options of cancelling it. Lady Lola put in a very good suggestion that we should have the social because it was a way of networking, and it enhances our physical & mental wellness.

It's been a great experience being on the committee we have ensured that our Black voices are heard, also our issues prioritised on the agenda. Our contributions are valid, embraced and actioned.

Black women have enough obstacles we must never give up speaking up for ourselves.



Report by Lady Lola Oyewusi & Annette Heslop

## **CONFERENCE REPORTS**

### Women's Conference

This is the first face to face Women's Conference, post COVID. The focus for this Conference appears to be solidarity and being more supportive of each other; irrelevant of ethnicity, religious beliefs, or gender. Very inspiring Conference with some very animated debates.

Cost of living crisis is at the top of the agenda and many speakers alluded to this fact. Motion 21 was not carried as this went against some legal aspect of the Equality Act 2010; much as the delegates wanted to agree this motion it was felt that Pandoras box would be opened which could cause many problems for women.

### **Key Speakers**

Summary of the points made by keynote speakers:

- Andrea Egan – NEC President addressed the Conference. Critically with her choice of charity and then she updated the conference with changes that will be imposed as of the 1 April 2023.
- Christina McAnea - General Secretary, talked of her journey and sexism that she has experienced. She talked of the behaviours that have been endured by many women; some women just ignore things and do not want to make a fuss. The fight against sexism and discrimination must be challenged and women need to call people out. Spoke of the barriers she encountered as the first

female General Secretary; she made it clear that women need to stick together. She has declared that the Celebration of the Disabled members and the Year of the Black Worker needs to become a legacy, not just this year, but every year. Christina announced the results of the re-ballot; outstanding result and more ambulance staff will be going out on strike. Christina is clear that the Goer need to talk to the Unions which is all we ask; about pay for this year.

- 3 delegates for NDC, all three made a pledge and powerful speeches.

### **Key Motions of interest debated at the Conference.**

Motions 1-14 discussed in detail, cost of living being the main aim. Stories of people struggling within this climate, wages do not cover people's bills. People with hidden disabilities are struggling and trying all attempts to make ends meet. Maternity leave and entitlement are also an issue. Paid leave for women who are enduring domestic abuse / violence is being pushed for i.e., Australia has already made it law and it is now a statutory right; this motion was carried.

Motion 27 was brought forward by the Scotland branches due to them needing to travel home early via the only flight available. Misogyny is real and cannot be dismissed, it is encouraged to not accept it and report such behaviours, women are not to accept this. Sexual harassment still occurs which affects all individuals, it is encouraged that a policy should be developed by employers. Sexual harassment can have a devastating impact on someone's health, it has almost been normalised by society and become acceptable within the workplace. A policy would empower women within the workplace. It is seen as an endemic issue and most women have endured unacceptable behaviour.

Passionate speakers discussed their personal experiences publicly, which was powerful and emotional, the experiences shared made it clear that the behaviours are predatory and endemic within the workplace.

What was very clear is that a policy needs to be put in place to protect women in the workplace, and a system whereby women are taken seriously, and women feel that they can raise any form of sexual harassment that will be taken seriously and addressed.

Motion 21 – Was not carried since it may cause problems with the Equality Act 2010, and what the regional group was asking the Women's Conference to do, was just not feasible.

### **NBMC Delegate Contribution:**

Annette Heslop - Delivered the motion for women with the cost-of-living crisis, which was carried. Many of the speakers who supported this motion were low paid and were in a position whereby they have to use foodbanks and warming venues to keep themselves and their families warm.

Lots of networking and meeting members from different remits. Interestingly, the issues that women experience in the workplace is causing women mental health problems.

Hasina Hamid moved Motion 23 on behalf of the NBMC with the amendment 23.1.

## **Fringe Meetings and Workshops**

**Black Member Meeting** - Due to travel constraints Marcia and Hasina missed the Black Members meeting (it will be suggested that delegates travel from the night before as this meeting started at 12.15).

**Domestic Abuse** – (Motions 32, 32.1, 32.2 and 33). There were some very moving speeches from survivors of domestic abuse. It was clear that this topic sparked a lot of debate and rightly so. It was reiterated that domestic abuse impacts on women in their workplace as well as their home. There is no timeline to abuse or location preference, this can happen anytime of the day at any place. UNISON needs to focus on having clear ways to help all our members to safety, with real focus on the lower paid who are most vulnerable victims and re-assure our members that there is a way, and we can guide and support them to keep them safe. More focus needs to be given to honour based abuse / violence / killings. Domestic Abuse Champions to be trained to recognise, respond, and support. Branches to roll out training for these to help workplaces have the adequate resources to support women.

The Freedom Programme was created by Pat Craven and evolved from her work with perpetrators of domestic violence. Information is provided, not therapy. This is a 2-day programme for perpetrators of domestic violence and a 12-day programme for victims. Questions were raised as to why this was not the opposite because the consensus was that people need to be educated better to prevent becoming perpetrators rather than the victims having to do more work. However, lasting trauma for the victims could be the reasoning behind this. “Let’s not try to fix women. Let’s try to fix perpetrators”.

**Southeast Group Meeting** – (Motions 3-14 all about Cost-of-Living Crisis). Southeast region voted on motions 2 and 38 to be taken to NDC.

Annette Heslop spoke on the Cost-of-Living Crisis.

**Health Service** – Speakers were Kerry Baigent and Pat Heron

- strike action was discussed in detail.
- Data cleansing was not sufficient and not completed in some areas.
- Derogations managed inappropriately.
- Ballot was a problem; many people did not receive their ballot papers. Many did not fully understand the pledge, which was confusing and caused problems when members were balloting. It was also raised that maybe the postal strike caused problems for UNISON to receive ballot responses.
- NHS Pay – talks in Scotland have started; update will be given when there has been an agreement; the offer accumulates to £800. Wales have started talks, Northern Ireland and UK have not engaged into any talks.
- Re-ballot is in place 8 out of 10 came close to the target.

- Developed guidance on organising strike action in the workplace.
- Ambulance service strike action continues, another date is 8 March, there have been complexities in agreeing exemptions.
- There is going to be political pressure on the Government, as NHS workers will be lobbying parliament on the 1 March 2023
- Members have been threatened with withdrawal of visa renewals if they go on strike. They have also been threatened with disciplinary action or even termination of employment.
- Members asked if the pledge could be removed to avoid any further confusion.
- Region is building on organising within branches.
- It was also raised that UNISON appear to do everything at the last minute, even when branches have requested early intervention.

### **Hasina Hamid's Reflections of Conference (First Time Attendee and first time speaking!):**

As a first-time attendee, I was in such awe and extremely grateful for the opportunity to be able to represent the NBMC with Marcia Dawkins. It was a great experience; so very inspiring, enlightening and moving. I was very proud to be there working with Marcia for the NBMC and it was great to see so many other NBMC sisters also in attendance.

For me the support, encouragement, patience, kindness and belief from Marcia Dawkins, Annette Heslop, Sandra Charles, Sharon L, Lola, Sharon Foster, and Tara to name but a few, was appreciated and invaluable to me. It really helped me feel empowered to feel confident enough to challenge a personal struggle of mine (public speaking) and move the motion. I have felt really welcomed in to the NBMC since joining in 2023 and have really relished in working with everyone as I learn to navigate how the NBMC operates. Thank you, sisters, – big love! Here's to Cambridge for the next NBMC Meeting and the Policy Weekend 😊  
Pictures of the events:



## Health Conference

The National Health Conference was held at Bournemouth International Conference Centre.

Unison President Andrea Egan Chaired the first session of the conference and addressed conference and spoke about the pay deal, and the Year of the Black workers. The Standing order committee chair did the first report and there was a question asked about referencing back emergency motion on NHS Pay offer which had been submitted by Central Bristol Health, there was a vote, and it was referenced back but the Branch did not go and see the Standing orders and it did not get debated.

### Key Speakers

Christina McAnea, General Secretary

Spoke about the pay ballot, and all the work that had been done and she praised us. Unison believes in solidarity; the RCN had rejected the pay offer. The offer needs to stay on the table and the government should be held to account for the pay offer. Christina went on to speak about Northern Ireland and about their solidarity and collective action. There was mention of the different campaigns that had taken place where the outsourced staff had been brought back inhouse, this had been happening across the country and she mentioned North Middlesex hospital that had just won. Re-banding of Band 2 to 3 is something else that is happening across the country. The upcoming NEC election was also mentioned because the ballot had just opened, and she wanted to encourage conference to vote. Christina said that we need to listen to our members, equality should be at the front of what we do, and this is the year of the Black workers, “we grow a legacy, grow this year and years to come. The National care service make care work and we want proper pay for staff in the care service with decent public services for all. What we do in this union should be heart and centre of what we do.

Wilma Brown Chair, Service Group Executive Committee

Wilma spoke about all the roles played by the NHS team and praised them for what they do to make it work. The government is trying to divide us by looking at the Nurses only pay spine, she mentioned that she is a proud nurse, and she said “let me tell you now, I want nothing to do with this divisive nonsense “The NHS is One Team, and the pay deal is for all NHS workers, because we need all members and grades to make the NHS.

Baba Aye Health and Social Sector Officer at Public Services International France

**Baba spoke about the same issues that we have in the UK, that he has in his country. The struggles that there is in the health service, the cost-of-living crisis. He is an author and activist and is fighting for a better world.**



A summary of key motions that were debated and any significant points made.

- Motion 5 - 15 were on agenda for change terms and conditions. This was well debated, and there was a very good debate. 9, 10 and 11 was made into Composite A and this spoke about overtime, asking the employers to pay overtime and not let the workers work on the cheap.

- Motion 2 – 3.1 were on agenda for Change Pay

Motion 2 Flat rate pay uplifts: our approach to pay justice was carried but the amendment 2.1 had some very good debate and there was a lot of people speaking against it, and this was shown in the result of the amendment falling.

- Motion 3 Calling time on the Pay Review Body was moved by Gordon McKay and he gave a very speech, and the debate was good, there was 1 person who spoke against it, and it was carried unanimously. It was said by one speaker that “we need to organise, collective bargaining.

- Motion 15-17 motions on Organising and recruitment.

Well debated and all carried.

- Emergency motion 1 NHS Pay offer for England 2022-2024

- had a good debate and it was carried.

- Emergency motion 2 The NHS is One Team – no separate pay spine for nurses.

Had a good debate and it was carried.

Motions 18 – 20.1 Health, safety, and wellbeing all carried.

Composite B motions 21, 22 carried.

Motions 23- 25.1 all carried.

Motions 33- 38 on professional and occupational issues all carried.

Motion 36 protecting overseas Nursing and Care staff this motion ties in with all the things that had been spoken about, racism, mental health, the NHS has always been dependent on overseas staff. These workers are not unionised, not socially supported in housing.

Motions 29-32 Defending the NHS all carried, and conference finished on time.

The conference will be in Brighton next year.

### **NBMC Delegate contribution:**

Olusola Adejare moved motion 18:

## Motion 18

### Mental health illness and Black staff in the NHS

- some complex factors affecting Black members' mental health.
- Barriers face by Black staff in NHS when accessing mental health services.
- Lack of supports from some staff and managers in NHS.
- Some agencies who provide support and awareness for Black families

Annette Heslop

I spoke on Motion 26 which was the first motion that was debated at conference. The motions were put into categories, and this was a debate on equalities issues.

## Motion 26

### Challenging racism in the NHS

There were a lot of people that spoke on this motion, it was very inspirational, and we heard some real stories of peoples lived experience of racial discrimination. In my speech I highlighted some of the things that we as the National Black members committee are doing, especially as this is the year of the Black workers. I also mentioned what we are doing in my Trust around training to become an anti-racist trust, and the white ally's programme.

I moved Motion 27

Annette Heslop

### Motion 27 Tackling Race Discrimination and aftermath of COVID on Black Workers in the NHS

I moved motion 27 and I had delegates come and speak about their lived experience. My speech highlighted a lot of data from all different sections of the NHS in surveys that Black staff have taken part in, and this has shown that the NHS is institutionally racist.

- The NBMC want the National health service group executive to promote zero tolerance to race discrimination.
- gather information from the WRES data of racial disparities and disseminate it to other parts of the UK.
- explore how Black members can get equal access to career development opportunities, and training.
- hold an online seminar for challenging racism in the NHS 2023 ,2024 during the YOBW, to include the Race for Equality and One Team campaign.

- Encourage Black members to become more active at all levels in the health section on regional and national committee.

### **Fringe meetings and workshops.**

Meeting for Black members was held at the Bourne Lounge, BIC from 1.05pm to 1.30. We had very limited time, this should have been an hour meeting especially as it is the Year of the Black worker.

Some members were not happy that the Year of the Black workers was not every year (YOBW) I explained to the members that this was a start and would be something that we wanted to be continued for years to come, hence the word Establishing a legacy.

-The discussion was dominated by the change of using BLACK to describe non-white in Unison. Members call/suggest for a change in the rule book to change to reflect others like Asians and other non-white race. And to reflect Race, ethnicity and cultural heritage, there was a Branch that used REACH as their network name in their organisation and they said this helped to make the Black members more active in the network. There were questions asked about defining Black,

There was mention of the top table being all white, and how would we be able to change the narrative around proportionality and seeing more Black faces at the top.

-There was also called to recognise YOBW all years and not just limited to only a year.

- Attendance were encouraged to organise events in their branches for the YOBW and if they need any support, they should contact their regions, and the National Black members committee.

We asked the delegates to support our motions and encouraged them to speak on motions. We also recognised that some of the Black members were not delegates, and could not take part in the active debate, it was also mentioned that there are gate keepers and do not allow Black members to attend conference, and they are not given facilities time.

We want Black officers in branches , but there is no role in the rulebook about Black officers this is something that needs to be looked into , there is a lot of work that needs to be done and we also need to look at passing the Baton to our young future leaders , YOBW is the change that we all need and as Professor Gus John said at our Black members conference we need a federation of Black people

### **Fringe**

I attended the Operational service fringe Bringing services home.

The discussion was around bringing the outsourced private companies back inhouse, there was some very interesting presentations from guest speakers who explained how they were able to win their campaign of bringing back the outsourced services, the members were very interested in how this gave the staff a sense of belonging, getting all the agenda for change. There was some very good information

that had been shared, which will help all branches and region to campaign for their outsourced to be insourced.

Focus group Race for equality – tackling the disproportionate levels of disciplinaries' against Black NHS staff.

WRES Training has been rolled out in Wales and is in London, this needs to be rolled out in the devolved nations. Branches need to use WRES as a bargaining tool, training and workshops should be set up, Branches need take the lead. Reps need to take an active role in sitting on staff side so that they have input into policies, that are aimed at managers following correct processes, this often is not the case. The outsourced staff are finding themselves in disciplinaries, and then they are dismissed. A lot of work needs to be done regarding cultural awareness.

Annette Heslop  
Olusola (Sola) Adejare

### Water, Environment and Transport Conference

The WET service group is one of UNISON's service groups, the other service groups are Community, Energy, Health, Higher Education, Police and Justice service groups. UNISON supports more than 17,000 members working in water companies, the Environment Agency, passenger transport executives, bus companies, the Canal and River Trust and regional and local airports. Is not clear how many are Black members and would be very important to know Black members representation in the WET service group.

The conference highlights the work that has been undertaken across the service group in support of members, reflecting the activities at branch, regional and national levels. Wages have stagnated for vast majority of members who emerged from the crisis of the pandemic to the cost-of-living crisis. Service groups provide direct service. Campaigning for fair pay has been a common activity across the service group.

### **Key Speakers**

The key speakers were Christina McAnea (General Secretary) and Jon Richards (Assistant General Secretary for Bargaining & Negotiating Equalities).

Summary of the points made by keynote speakers:

- Inflation created massive increase and rising energy, transport, and food bills.
- No pay increases are enough.
- Rally and support of picket lines by Christina.
- National Executive Council (NEC) engages with civil servants to take independent action where necessary.
- Increase diversity, tackle inequality, and confront the history of slave trade e.g., Liverpool.
- Ensure Black workers are paid the same with their White colleagues.

### **Key motions of interest debated at the conference.**

A summary of key motions that were debated and significant points made.

- **Time to Shine a light on Dark Practices** – motion on the increasing expectations on members, more and more work is done out of normal working hours and in some cases routine inspections on wastewater treatment works is becoming the norm in hours of darkness.
- **Supporting our Disabled Members During Sickness Absence Meetings** - having trained reps to support and guide members during sickness meetings is essential in obtaining a good outcome. Supporting disabled members requires a further detailed knowledge of the Equality act 2010.
- **The Fat Cats are Still Smiling** – motion on the ongoing mismanagement of water companies' finances. Water companies need to be more transparent with how their organisations are being financed.
- **Securing the Legacy of the Year of Black Workers in Water, Environment and Transport Service** – significant motion submitted by the NBMC, notes that whilst 2023 is the Year of Black Workers, and its focus of 'Establishing Legacy to Generate Change', this year in and of itself is not the change we seek, it is merely the opportunity to generate change.
- **Work-life balance, mental health, and the Right to Disconnect.** - significant changes to working patterns and practices that have happened since the pandemic, including a large rise in remote and hybrid working, including in the Water, Environment and Transport (WET) sector employers.
- **Environment Agency Workers Deserve a Decent Pay Rise in Line with Inflation** - 2022/2023 was a year of industrial dispute across the Public Sector, partly to address the indecent pay increases. UNISON Members in the Environment Agency are not immune to this – EA members took strike action overpay for the first time, which members voted overwhelmingly for in November 2022. Since 2010 salaries in the Environment Agency have fallen by more than 20%, which means staff are effectively working one day in every five for free.
- **Securing the legacy of the year of disabled workers in WET workplaces** - success of UNISON's Year of Disabled Workers 2022. With the year now over, there has been renewed focus on the experience of disabled members in the union, in the workplace and in society, including those in the WET service group.
- **Hybrid and remote working for LGBT+ workers in WET** - in pre-pandemic times, lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender plus (LGBT+) workers faced challenges in the workplace, including discrimination, harassment, and a lack of inclusivity. Since the Covid-19 pandemic, there has been a marked shift towards home or hybrid working with advantages such as greater flexibility and work/life balance but can pose issues for LGBT+ workers.

- **LGBT+ workers in fields-based roles** – the motion notes the lack of diversity among field-based operational roles within the WET industries and how it hinders the creation of an inclusive and welcoming work environment in WET industries.
- **The importance of Women Health and Safety Representatives** - UNISON has approximately 5,000 Health and Safety representatives across the union working hard to defend members' health and safety at work. Over the past few years health and safety has emerged again as critical for protecting members' rights at work, especially in the Water, Environment and Transport (WET) service group. However, the gender balance of Health and Safety representatives in UNISON does not reflect the gender balance of our union.
- **Sewage and Wastewater Discharges into Rivers by Water Companies** - More than ever, water quality is at the forefront of public consciousness. Due to Ofwat's regulatory approach, which prioritises value for money for the consumer, and the companies adopting risk-based strategies to deliver maximum profits for their owners, little money is spent on maintaining infrastructure. This issue has been brought to light with the increased sewage discharges by water companies polluting our rivers and pose a risk for the public in enjoying water-based activities and a negative impact on local wildlife.
- **Funding of Local Bus Services** - Conference notes the Government scheme to cap bus fares at £2 in England as part of its support scheme during the cost-of-living crisis. UNISON recognises this is a temporary measure and feels the incentive does not go far enough to address the challenges working people face.
- **Mental Health Awareness Training** - Conference notes with concern the evidence that the last few years have shown there to be an increasing deterioration in good mental health of workers across public services and including in Water, Environment and Transport (WET) workplaces. - Conference notes with concern the evidence that the last few years have shown there to be an increasing deterioration in good mental health of workers across public services and including in Water, Environment and Transport (WET) workplaces.

### **NBMC Delegate contribution:**

There were 13 motions submitted, one of which I proposed "Securing the Legacy of the Year of Black Workers in Water, Environment and Transport Services" on behalf of the NBMC. I spoke in support of the motion 'Environment Agency Workers Deserve a Decent Pay Rise in Line with Inflation', highlighting the pay dispute and lack of decent pay rises over the past decade.

### **Fringe meetings and workshops.**

I attended two fringe events in connection of the Year of Black Workers in Water, Environment and Transport Services and mental health awareness and training.

The conference finished early on the Sunday, so I went into the Local Government section of the conference in the afternoon to listen to the motions there and a keynote speech from Lisa Nandy, British Member of Parliament, Shadow Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities since 2021. There I joined up with other NBMC delegates.

### Energy Conference

The conference was held on Monday 12 June in ACC Liverpool.

#### **Key Speakers**

Summary of the points made by keynote speakers:

- Steve Rotherham spoke to delegates about the efforts being made in his region to decarbonise industry and green the economy.
- UNISON Secretary General: UNISON is 'warning once again – about the elitist energy economy this government is creating'. Energy is a hot topic of political debate right now. Record energy price increases have hammered family finances. While many energy companies' profits have boomed. The Secretary General also used the opportunity to launch the Gridlock Report: Gridlock: How UK energy policy fails working families.
- UNISON Power: In the past year experienced a cost-of-living crisis which has placed many energy customers in increasingly difficult circumstances. It calls on Energy Service Group to take the following actions: survey on the scale of these issues; engage with employers about the difficulties face by members with action plans to mitigate the concerns; specialist training for members to deal with complexes issues facing by customers.
- Lindsay McNaught, Chair of the Energy Service Group Executive: The past year has seen record increases in bills, cushioned substantially with taxpayer subsidies which will ultimately require being paid back. These costs pressures are felt by energy workers as well as ordinary citizens, and while excess profits are being seen and widely reported, most of these profits have been taken place in oil and gas production and not in other parts of the energy sector where many of your members work.
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#### **Key motions of interest debated at the conference.**

A summary of key motions that were debated and any significant points made.

- National Disabled Members' Committee Motion "Effects of Long COVID in Energy workplaces": It calls upon the Energy Service Group Executive, working with National Disabled Members' Committee to circulate UNISON's guide to support members with Long COVID in energy sector, making clear that our members are entitled to protection under the Equality Act 2010 because of Long COVID. Publicise UNISON's two bargaining guides – on

Reasonable Adjustments policies and Passports and Disabilities Leave to energy sector. It encourages branches to open negotiate on these with their employer where appropriate.

- UNISON Northern Energy Motion “Fuel Poverty and the need for a social tariff”: It calls upon the Energy Service Group Executive continue to campaign for a re-nationalised ENERGY retail Market; to work with Labour Link to lobby for a social tariff and work with the NEC to create a national social tariff campaign, linking this with the cost-of-living crisis.
- Energy Service Group Executive Motion “Public Ownership of Retail”: It calls upon continue to promote to all the stakeholders it works with at every opportunity the need to take into public ownership the energy retail sector and the affordability of such a measure; promotes the important benefits of such a policy including the provision of decent energy jobs, decarbonisation of UK homes and affordable supply.
- Energy Service Group Executive Motion “Invest Today in Energy and Skills to Decarbonisation UK Homes”: It calls upon to work with other energy trade unions to build an effective lobby to call for a significant increase in investment into energy system; to work with Labour Link to promote a policy of widening Ofgem’s remit to include decarbonisation and future workforce investment as a key objective of its mandate; continue to work with European colleagues when European Public Services Union to promote the same approach and the need for investment both now and longer-term workforce planning, building on skills work already undertaken.

### **NBMC Delegate contribution:**

Summary of any contributions made by NBMC delegates – i.e., moved any motions or spoke in any of the debates.

NBMC Motion: “Securing the Legacy of the Year of Black Workers in the Energy Service” It calls upon the Energy Service Group Executive to work with NBMC and other Self-Organised Groups to understand the number of Black members in the Service Group, and to work to encourage those that do not have their ethnicity recorded in their membership data to update this, including analyse and interpret the data as well as to create and to implement a strategic plan to ensure that Black members are represented proportionately within the structures of the Service Group from Branch to Executive level.

It further calls upon to work with NBMC and Branches to capture Ethnicity Pay Gap data from employers, and support Branches to work with those employers to develop a strategy to reduce the pay gap, with the long-term aim of eradicating the Ethnicity Pay Gap.

Patrick Yu



## Local Government Conference

The Local Government Service Group Conference was well attended and just like other conferences we have attended, it was similar in style and a good learning and interactive opportunity for us. The session kicked off with reports from the standing orders committee and annual reports from local government service group executive (both general and sector committee). Amendments were made as conference progressed and various motions were debated and voted on. Time was also allocated for Champions Awards, Short Films and Presentation to Winners.

### **Key Speakers**

General Secretary Christina McAnea who due to train cancellations could not attend the first day's session. Christina paid tribute to the inspiring members she has met on her travels over the last year. UNISON's successes Holiday pay for thousands of Term Time Only workers, insourcing campaigns, regrading for homecare workers and many improvements to workers terms and conditions. Better pay and Government must raise out of date mileage rates were just some of the points raised.

Labour MP Lisa Nandy, Shadow Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities. Interestingly, Lisa Nandy mentioned in her speech that we need to do more as a trade union, but she forgot to indicate what the Labour Party is doing to lessen the burden of the working class or acknowledge our hard work and sacrifices over the years. She should have been telling us that she and her fellow MPs, and Keir Starmer would be joining us at the picket lines to demand better pay and dignifying quality of life for the aged, our children, teachers and schools, workers in all sectors and challenge the Tory government to provide equitable opportunities for Black workers, women, disabled, LGBTQ+, young workers, asylum seekers etc. We need unflinching support and assurances.

### **Key Motions and NBMC Delegates Contribution**

There were many speakers for various motions, and you could feel the passion and enthusiasm in the room. James Minto on behalf of the National Black Members Committee moved the first motion which was Composite C on Securing the Legacy and making 2023 the Year of Black Workers in Local Government Workplaces. Organising the recruitment of more Black Workers. Supporting Black workers to become more active within the Union and their employers. Supporting branches to work with the employers to develop a strategy to reduce the pay gap between Black and other workers. Developing a training plan to ensure that all activists within the service group receive training in race discrimination. There were four composites in all so the other three were pay in further education, early years funding and private day nurseries, and pay campaigning and beating industrial action thresholds. Other motions included pay campaign and promoting the Anti-Racism Charter. Other motions were on menopause, pensions, the cost-of-living crisis, harassment – it's not part of the job, and employment of trans, non- binary, and gender diverse in Local Government. There were also motions on recruitment and organising around improving facility time for Local Government activities, social care, and Protecting

Social Workers. It was great to hear many speakers within their motions talk about the importance of securing the legacy of 2023 Year of The Black Workers.

### **Local Government Conference Black Members Caucus**

Facilitated by Boatamah Baffoe and James Minto delegates from the National Black Members Committee

Members were asked if there were issues arising from the motions presented at conference this morning, and whether there were any priorities they wanted us to take forward to the NBMC and Local Government. We also asked if members were happy to share any lessons to be taken away from conference. The feedback received were as follows:

Members asked why the YOBW was not prioritised in conference bulletin and only pushed to the other side as though it was an afterthought? Attendees also raised concerns about why the huge banners in the large conference hall were not boldly displaying the YOBW? Delegates were not happy about this and were disappointed that not incorporating YOBW fully into Unison agenda is disgraceful. Afterwards, we approached Mike Short and Andrea Eghan about this issue. We asked if this can be corrected for the banners to display YOBW before the start of the afternoon session and for the next day, and subsequently for the NDC but this was not done accordingly or satisfactorily.

Members also raised concerns about why the conference top table panel of over 32 people had only one Black member. They also questioned why all on top table were not even wearing the YOBW lanyards. They asked for all seated at top table to have this on and that all attendees at conference and NDC could be provided with YOBW lanyards. Members questioned why the NEC has only about three Black Members disproportionate to the huge Unison Black membership.

Suggestion was made to change the mantra from “uncomfortable conversations” to conversations as there shouldn’t be anything uncomfortable about discussing racial issues. There were further suggestions that all conferences should acknowledge the anniversary of Stephen Lawrence murder and the Grenfell Tower fire disaster and offer a one-minute silence. Members also called for participants who were going to be attending NDC to continue pushing for the agenda of YOBW and encouraged more Black members to attend conferences and stand for positions.

Concerns were also raised about how the original source of funding for Self-Organised Groups have been affected and asked for this to be investigated. Questions were asked about what Unison as a whole hope to achieve from YOBW, who must be held to account and what is the plan after 2023? So, if senior leadership are happy, we suggest launching something called ‘Beyond the Year of Black Workers’.

### **Fringe Event Year of Black Workers at Local Government Conference**

Facilitated by James Minto and Boatamah Baffoe as delegates from the National Black Members Committee

Presentation by: Margaret Greer (National Officer, Race Equality)

This fringe meeting was prioritised by the Local Government Service Group Executive as part of their commitment to working with the National Black Members Committee on UNISON's Year of Black Workers. This fringe gave the chance to hear why the YOBW is important to UNISON at all levels and to consider what actions branch activists can make at a local level to bring about positive change for Black Workers in their local authority, schools, and contractors.

Margaret Greer kept the room vibrant and engaging with her presentation Year of Black Workers 2023 Establishing Legacy to Generate Change, a full room from start to finish. Margaret's presentation in summary looked at, Challenging Racism in the workplace, facts and figures what do we know, why the year of Black Workers in UNISON in 2023, areas of work to consider, to look at Black member engagement to establish change, 80% Women membership what the National Women's Committee will do to generate change, what tactics do you need to use to achieve a legacy? Campaign successes and high points to date, what are the next steps and questions to ask in 2023 and beyond. An excellent informative and well attended fringe meeting. The fringe was concluded with informing that the UNISON Year of Black Workers Toolkit will be launched at National Delegates Conference.

Boatemah Baffoe (PhD)  
James Minto

### National Delegate Conference

The UNISON National Delegate Conference (NDC), 13<sup>th</sup> – 16<sup>th</sup> June 2023, was held at ACC, Liverpool. Welcome to the NDC 2023, the Year of Black Workers...Establishing legacy to generate change.

The NBMC delegates were Kebba Manneh and Lola Oyewusi

The NDC was opened by the UNISON President (Andrea Egan) who address the conference referencing her 30 years' experience of activism in UNISON.

Andrea highlighted international solidarity with workers in Cuba and Turkey, particularly, the union's friends of the confederation of public employees' trade union in those countries Andrea concluded her speech with her presidential charity that offers wide range of services in the locality, including frontline support for survivors of domestic abuse.

The order of conference business was presented by Standing Orders Committee (SOC), and it has been a daily presentation by the SOC to assist delegates in judging what motions may be debated each day. Conference moved to the opening of debate on motions, starting with motion 5 – increasing participation of lower paid women in UNISON.

The afternoon session on Tuesday 13<sup>th</sup> June began with guest speaker – Professor Lynn Sudbury-Riley from the COVID-19 Bereaved Families for Justice campaign.

Over 6,500 bereaved by COVID-19, according to COVID-19 Bereaved Families for Justice, and the Public Inquiry into COVID-19 finally began. The public inquiry will be a statutory hearing which means that people could be summoned to give evidence on oath. The conference returns to the remaining order of business to debates motions for rest of the afternoon. The NBMC motion 4 – Equality is UNISON Business was moved by Kebba Manneh (Chair of NBMC) and it was carried. The NBMC's second motion 52 – The Cost-of-Living Crisis and Black Workers was moved by Lola Oyewusi (NBMC), and it was carried.

There were few fringe and Black caucus meetings after the closed of conference and during lunch breaks each day. We were unable to attend all fringe and Black caucus meetings as some of them happening at the same time.

UNISON General Secretary Christina McAnea addressed the conference with an attack on this Tory Government failures on almost every aspect of the public sector.



Christina highlighted the roadmap to a National Care Service as one of UNISON top priorities for future Labour government. The General Secretary mentioned in her speech, the Year of Black Workers 2023 (YOBW23), and while it's important to shine a bright light on key groups and issues, this is not just do this for one year and move on. She said, and I quote...*I don't have lived experience of racism, but my job as General Secretary is to do everything possible to make space for our Black members to speak up for themselves. To make sure their voices are heard loud and clear". We will build a legacy – one that grows our Black activists and increases Black representation in our union's democracy.* The General Secretary (GS) referred to the new NEC, and for the next two years will be kind of critical. In that, we must all work together, all parts of our union as we all have a part to play.

Ms McAnea presents Dr Neville Lawrence with UNISON honorary membership for life, and she described UNISON's long history of working with Stephen Lawrence's parents, and both parents received honorary memberships.



Dr Lawrence addressing the conference recounted how trade unions have helped his family's battle for justice over the murder of their son, and Black members visited their home offering support in solidarity. Dr Lawrence was invited to get involved with the unions, and he remembers when he first came to UK, in those days, you must have a union card to get a job. He recounted going to the unions again to ask them to help his family to get the people who had murdered his son.

In an emotional and deeply touching speech, Dr Lawrence explained when he was invited to a conference in Blackpool, they took campaigning leaflets with them and distributed the leaflets. Dr Lawrence asserted that, and I quote "*I am standing here in UNISON conference 30 years later because of you (UNISON), and all the other unions who have been with us for over the past 30 years*". He did not realise what racism was until he came to this country.

There were few other fringe meetings to note but the Palestine fringe was packed with people having to stand because there were not enough chairs. Delegates were informed about Palestine people living in a worse condition than the White South African apartheid.

National Delegates conference 2023 Fringe meeting YOBW23 Establishing legacy to generate change have had panel of guest speakers, including Gloria Mills CBE, Dr Neville Lawrence, Mr Weyman Bennett (co-convenor) Stand Up to Racism and joint secretary United Against Fascism, and a video message from Kim Johnson MP for Liverpool Riverside, member of the Women and Equalities Select Committee. Margaret Greer (UNISON National Officer, Race Equality) formally launched the YOBW23 toolkit and a joint Forward Statement by our General Secretary – Christina McAnea and chair of NBMC – Kebba Manneh.

Show racism the Red Card Fringe – SRtRC was well attended with John Barnes, and the speakers called on delegates to get involved with the UK wide anti-racism education charity campaign to combat racism in our schools and society across UK.

The conference was a credit to all who have contributed so far to the Year of Black Workers Campaign and activities.

Motion 5 Equalities in UNISON Business was moved by Kebba Manneh and both Lola Oyewusi and Kebba Manneh spoke on several other motions throughout the duration of conference.

Motion 54 Cost of Living Crisis and Black Workers was not debated, but we are seeking that the NEC Black Seat Representatives take this forward as part of the sub-committee work programme and UNISON's cost of living campaign.

Kebba Manneh  
Lady Lola Oyewusi

## Labour Link Forum

The forum was a full day packed with motions, speakers & workshops.

### Motions:

A variety of motions were up for debate and the focus was very much on what an incoming Labour government would do in terms of supporting Unison members. To ensure Unison policies will influence a new Labour government going forward.

There were several amendments all supported & with no composites.

### Motions as follows:

1. Rebuilding public services
2. Ending social care services
3. Local Government finances
4. Private renters deserves rights to a secure, decent, affordable homes public ownership of critical businesses infrastructure & transport
5. Fire & rescue services and funding
6. Menopause awareness
7. Bereavement leaves
8. Defend the right to strike
9. Stop bogus self-employment exploiting workers
10. The road to the next general election
11. 2023 year of Black workers
12. Ticking the boxes but not occupying seats- stop leaving BAME people behind
13. Support Disabled people's activism, including standing for public office
14. Transgender rights
15. Branch Labour link officers and local elections manifesto

Motions for Black members was overwhelmingly supported, and our motion was moved by Elizabeth Cameron, supported by Kemba Hadaway Morgan. Our motion was successfully carried. Lola Oyewusi spoke on Year of Black workers & stop bogus self-employment exploiting workers.

### Speakers

Speakers included our general secretary Christina McAnea, who began forum with an exhilarating speech on Unisons involvement to help form Labour Party policies.

Bridget Phillipson MP (Shadow Education minister) spoke about Labour's policies on s hooks, personal independence payments and special educational needs and disabilities in schools.

Anwar Samar MSP leader of Scottish Labour Party who mainly spoke about his views about Labour victory in Scotland and his commitments to achieving this.

### Workshops

We broke up into three groups to discuss the policy on Labour's new deal for working people. The policy was well received and the positive impact this would have on the future for all workers and trade union movements. These would be put in place during the first 100 days of Labour being in power.

All motions were passed, and the forum was friendly with the general feeling of a brighter future.

Lady Lola Oyewusi

## TUC Congress

Black Members' Delegates: Kebba Manneh, Annette Heslop

This was my first TUC Congress this is where all the Unions meet and have motions on very important topics that we all face. It was really a great experience when you see all the unions facing the same struggles. I really noticed that there was not a very wide delegation of Black members that were in attendance, the top table was not showing the real population. I do hope that there will be a change when Black people will be given a seat at the top table in the leadership position.

Keynote speakers

Maria Exall

The President of the TUC was the first speaker she spoke about being proud and out, her parents were both Trade unionist and they are no longer with us. Her speech was very positive, speaking about fighting for dignity at work, the Amazon workers, and their challenges. She said that the Labour party is nothing without a strong trade union, and that we need a Labour government.

There was, an award presentation Afshan Ali from the RCM won the learning rep award. Charlie Gough from the USDW won the young members award, Simon Wilde from the GMB won THE Health and Safety award. The Women's Golden Badge award was won by Heather McKenzie from the NEU.

Liz Schuler

President of the US TUC, gave a speech that was really the same as the UK, talking about standing solidarity with us regarding strike action. she mentioned the different strikes that have taken place Starbucks, the writers in Hollywood, and Amazon. There is 2/3 of American people that are in unions, 88% of young people that are in unions 9 out of 10 under 30s are in the Union. They are looking at the South and the different jobs that they can do, and they must be in a union. They are going to bring different workers across all industries. They want all workers to be involved in the Union. Mentioned Donald Trump, he said things that the working people wanted to hear, she talked about the different things that they are going through, she said that an immigrant didn't stand in the way of getting jobs it was a Billionaire.

Paul Nowak TUC General Secretary

Addressed congress and spoke about his union activism when he had his first job, he joined the union. He spoke about his family, his grandfather came here from Hong Kong in the 2<sup>nd</sup> world war, he said he was proud to be a grandson of immigrants, proud of the contribution that they and millions have made to this country. Every migrant is our sister and our brother, this government shame us all, it should not turn its back on people that are fleeing poverty, persecution, or war. He was proud of the city and spoke about how many people were in poverty, using food banks. Spoke about the 13 years of this government and fight the government on the right to strike and we will fight it every day until it is repealed. Wages that go up, waiting list that go down, children that are not hungry, money to take your children out. He has been in

post for 9 months and has been travelling around the country. He said we shall not wait for the election, not wait for legislation, we need to start the work now, he mentioned all the wins with strike action that have taken place across the country. We need to build a stronger trade union movement. Reps are the big part of the union, we need to reflect the workforce, we will train 500 new Black activist each year. There is a union for every workplace, we need a more equal society. We need a new government, and we need to vote Labour, Kier Starmer has made a promise he made a plan that in the first hundred days they are going to repeal the right to strike, new deal for workers, no more zero-hour contracts, no more fire and rehire. His speech was inspiring and was well received by the congress, he said that we need a change.

Angela Rayner

Shadow Deputy Leader of the Labour party

Paid tribute to Paul in his first year as the General secretary of the TUC. Spoke about what the next Labour government will do in their first 100 days. They are going to have an employment right bill, a fair work agenda for working people. Angela has been given some new positions, Shadow deputy prime minister, Shadow secretary of state levelling up housing. She was a single mum joining a union changed her life, and she is a Unison member. Good job and secure housing, this has been levelled down by this government, it is a sham and a scam. Torys can get fired and hired on better conditions. In her speech she mentioned strike being the last resort and that the Labour party will repeal these anti trade union laws. She said that they will work hand in hand with the Trade unions. The trade union laws will be updated for the 21st century, the Blacklisting of union reps will not happen again. Electronic balloting will be done, collective bargaining will be done. End the gender pay gap and bring a decent living wage for all working people. They will be building more council houses. We need a Labour Government, to get this victory we need to come together to get Britain for working people.

Lynn Sudbury-Riley from Covid Bereaved Families

Covid bereaved family enquiry, mentioned that we need to tell our stories.

regarding our loved ones that we have lost during this time. She mentioned.

UNISON's Christine McAnea and Paul Novak and their support regarding the the memorial wall in Westminster. This speech brought back memories of my mum who was.

one of the victims of covid it was very emotional.

Harriet Harmon

Shadow Labour MP, she mentioned our migrant workers that came to build.

up this country. She gave a tribute to the previous TUC General

secretary Francis O Grady, who is now Chairing the Equal Pay commission.

for women, she said that there are a lot of women pioneers that have pushed,



the doors open, men were not part of the movement but now we need them. to back up their sisters as allies. She mentioned covid and the work that all, public workers did at that time.

## Motions

There were motions on very important subjects, and they were laid out in different sections.

Section 4 Winning a better future for working people.

Section 2 The economy and the cost-of-living crisis.

Section 1 Industrial action and protecting our rights.

Section 5 Working together at the TUC.

Section 3 Building a stronger more diverse movement.

All the motions were debated and were all carried, except for one that went to a card vote. There were some really, good speakers, as it was my first congress, I was not familiar with how the voting was done and when a card vote was called it gave a bit of excitement to the congress. The motion that went to a card vote was Motion 75 TUC – the next 10 years, Prospect the union moved it and the GMB second it. The result of the card vote was against = 3137 for =1850 it was lost

## NBMC speaker

Kebba Manneh

Motion 38 Ending the hostile environment.

He spoke about the Empire Windrush arriving 75 years ago, and the racism that people undertook, he used a quote from Maya Angelo, and we rise against the racism they encounter, rise against the fearmongering politicians. We must put an end to this hostile environment. We in Unison are working with others to get a judicial review against Suella Braverman, and to request a public enquiry with Windrush scandal with a judge led enquiry. We must end the hostile environment. The speech was well received.

## Fringe meetings

Monday lunchtime fringe meetings

There were a lot of fringe meeting that were taking place at the same time I attended the Windrush scandal is far from over fringe. The RMT and NASUWT chaired this meeting. The talk was based on a motion that had been passed at the TUC Black workers conference, it outlined an urgent need to investigate the creation of a hostile environment on the lives, of people that had a legitimate right to be in the UK. Gloria Mills speaking from UNISON was one of the guest speakers and she gave a very good speech on her experiences, she said that we must not be silent our members

did not want to speak out, when they were taken to the detention centre. She mentioned that a lot of our members lost their job, their lively hood. The government knew that these people were British citizens, the home office would ask for 4 forms of evidence to prove that they were citizens. The speakers gave their lived experience regarding being caught up in the Windrush scandal, people are born here and have been threatened with deportation, there is different campaigners Windrush lives, Windrush justice that are Lawyers that offer free legal assistance.

#### Evening fringe

I attended on Monday evening fringe meeting where Angela Rayner was the guest speaker, she spoke about what the Labour party were going to do in their first hundred days, it was a very short meeting, there was drinks and nibbles given to us. There were other fringes that was taking place at the same time.

There was fringe meeting throughout the congress during lunch and in the evening that had very interesting subject of discussion, there was a tour of the Slave Museum and there was a film that was about Apartheid South Africa 1970. I attended this film which was about the anti-apartheid struggle. There was questions and answers after the film was shown and we met the director and writer of the film. There were not many Black people in the audience, the film was based on a true story and showed that young British activists were active in the liberation movement.

Kebba Manneh Chair NBMC

Annette Heslop Deputy Chair

Mitsy Harmon – Russell Deputy Chair

#### Disabled Members Conference

This was the first time Hasina had attended the National Disabled Members' Conference and it was an enriching experience. It was nice to be back in Edinburgh following the National Black Members Conference earlier this year which saw the Year of the Black Worker commence early 2023. It was the third time that Bertha had attended, and it was good to be back in Edinburgh for the second time as Bertha had attended another conference earlier in the year in Edinburgh.

#### **Guest Speakers:**

Christina McAnea – General Secretary via Video and

Jon Richards – Assistant General Secretary, Bargaining, Negotiations and Equalities

Pam Duncan-Glancy MSP

Conference commenced with a Women's drop-in session which was both moving and inspirational. Members spoke of their lived experience of having both visible and invisible disabilities and the impact it has had on their lives, however, it was positive to hear how they have overcome barriers, and this was both very encouraging and motivating to hear. New delegates / first time speakers were given the opportunity to practise their speeches in a smaller group creating a safe supportive space for them

to hear feedback ahead of speaking in front of the whole conference. Neurodiversity was the main theme within this drop-in session as well as sickle cell amongst women. Women were encouraged to turn issues in to motions.

Unfortunately, some people highlighted their access issues with travel, accommodation and / or the conference venue itself which was disappointing to hear at this specific conference. One member spoke of being potentially disadvantaged with regards to attending due to not having anybody to attend with. People were offered reassurance and advised to raise these concerns with the conference team as well as their branches.

Next there was a meeting for Disabled Women members which was very interesting, gave a lot to consider and gave everyone an insight into what we could expect throughout the weekend.

## **Workshops**

There was an option of four workshops for delegates to attend which included:

- 1) Negotiating Reasonable Adjustment Passports and Disability Leave policies.
- 2) Celebrating the Year of the Black Workers: an intersectional approach
- 3) Mental Health: Bargaining for change.
- 4) Neurodiversity in the workplace: creating an inclusive culture.

Hasina attended the neurodiversity in the workplace workshop as this was a topic dear to her heart and relatable to her personally. It was amazing to hear peoples' experiences of masking, learning to cope, being diagnosed and what this meant for them individually. Members spoke of their experience of being Autistic and / or ADHD. The consensus was that those with an official diagnosis found they needed that not for the label, but, rather that it gave them a much greater understanding of themselves and compassion for themselves as well as others in a similar situation. More needs to be done to recognise neurodiversity. Reasonable adjustments in the workplace were discussed and reiterated how important it could be for a neurodivergent person to be allocated a regular desk space or car parking space. It was highlighted that reasonable adjustments are NOT special treatment, rather that they enable neurodivergent people to be on a more even playing field. It was raised that UNISON needs to do more for neurodiversity.

Bertha attended the celebrating year of Black worker's workshop which was well attended, and it reinforced what the different regions and branches have been doing during this special year. There was also a presentation which showed all the hard work Margaret Greer has put into this Year of celebrating Black Workers. There is still a lot to do to make sure that it does not fade away and that all the hard work continues into the years that are to follow.

The end of the day saw regional meetings of which Hasina attended the South East one. Abdul Rahman (South East rep), Susan Parkinson and Imran Hussain all from Oxfordshire Health branch led this meeting and represented the region. We looked at motions and topics that were of interest to delegates and how we can incorporate issues faced by disabled members.

Bertha attended the northern one which was well attended and most branches from this region were enthusiastic about speaking on the various motions that were on the agenda and dear to their hearts.

There was a meeting held for disabled Black members which was led by Sharon Carby-McLean and Ash Silverstone and saw issues such as sickle cell disease raised and the impact this has on Black members – more needs to be done to raise awareness and generate measures are put in place accordingly. Members raised that there should be a pool of money for the National Disabled Members Committee so that those branches who have less money wouldn't be disadvantaged in attending this conference as nobody from a disabled members group should be denied access to attend conferences due to a lack of money.

Motion 9 – Sickle Cell Disease needs to be taken seriously was carried from the National Black Members' Caucus group.

Motion 5 – Progression for all – Black Disabled Workers can't be left behind was moved by Bertha and carried. This motion was written by Bertha and another colleague, and it was very personal to Bertha.

Service Group Meetings commenced of which Hasina attended the health one. A disability and inequality campaign were discussed to challenge disability discrimination. Reasonable adjustments should be implemented from day one of employment for new starters and it was asked what the time scales are for getting these met or for existing workers. We spoke of flexible working being different to reasonable adjustments: two different aspects and those with a disability are entitled to both. Those with disabilities and / or Mental Health issues should not need to seek their own support workers. Bertha attended the local government one.

Members also spoke of whether 'workplace adjustments' would be a more appropriate term instead of reasonable adjustments as quite often, management hear this term and assume it will be costly, but it need not be.

### Public Services International Congress, GENEVA

In October I was honoured to represent UNISON Black members self-organising network, as part of the UNISON delegation, at the Public Services International 31<sup>st</sup> World Congress which meets every 5 years. Held in Geneva the title of the conference was 'People over Profit'.

Dave Prentis, outgoing President of PSI, ex-General Secretary of UNISON, set the tone of the conference in his opening address. Referring to the escalation of violence in Gaza which happened a few days before, he affirmed that the international trade union movement condemns all violence against civilians in Gaza and called for all hostages to be released. A few days earlier over 1000 people were killed in Israel while over 2 million Palestinians were now subjected to military bombardment. He called for an immediate ceasefire to seek peace and a two-state solution declaring 'the price of evil cannot be paid by the innocent'.

Dave paid tribute to the achievements of our public service workers during the pandemic: care workers, nurses, cleaners, porters, council workers, street cleaners, bin collection workers, those who cared for vulnerable, energy and water workers. He remembered and paid respects to the 2 million lives lost. He highlighted the provision of free vaccines for all which PSI had led the global fight for because in PSI our solidarity has no borders.

In a world dominated by privatisation and private greed PSI outgoing President called on us all to be proud of world-wide solidarity, to be proud of who we are, what we are and who we stand for.

Christina McAnea, UNISON General Secretary gave a keynote address beginning the debate Organising which was led by UNISON. She told conference that density matters when we're taking action to improve the working conditions and lives of millions of people across the world. Christina held up UNISON as an example of how to organise and achieve wins in our struggle. She referred to the courage of front-line care workers who continued working during the Covid pandemic, delivering close personal care even before we knew there would be a vaccine.

Christina highlighted two key strategic ways UNISON is organising, by focusing on a care workers campaign and on digital ways of contacting members and supporting activism. She declared that a main reason why people should join a union is the desire to become politically active. One main way UNISON is working to engage more with women workers is to change the use of language so the movement is something that women can feel comfortable with.

Conference heard from global examples of successful campaigning for workers' rights. Dr Attallah, a leader from the Kenyan doctors' union told us of their struggle for fair pay and conditions. First doctors successfully campaigned to change anti-union legislation and then built public support for their strike by engaging with the public to explain why they were striking. Secondly the union extended its membership to include student doctors and those on temporary contracts. In this way they grew density and national support for their industrial action.

We heard from another successful campaign of industrial action by health workers from Nagpur, India. Workers in primary health care centres worked during the pandemic without proper PPE being provided by employers and went without pay for months. Again, their success turned on them explaining their actions to the public and so winning huge public support.

Gloria Mills, UNISON Equalities Officer also addressed conference commending the work of PSI Committee especially the Women's Committee in addressing equality issues. For the first time gender parity at conference was achieved with 52% of attending delegates being women. Gloria also commended the inclusion of PSIs first non-binary delegates and 61 young members. She reminded us that these are no small achievements, these are hard won rights, hard won achievements. and we must not be complacent because we know that the price of progress is eternal vigilance.

Gloria inspired conference declaring that in PSI we're not standing still and the reason why you don't stand still is because we must create new legacies in pushing the boundaries of progress. Gloria set out our collective vision that we are on a mission to build a strong and inclusive trade union movement. We are sending a strong message to government not just across Europe but across the world that we will not pay the price of austerity mark two. It's a very important message that we need to send and because we've seen that it's women who have paid the price, marginalised women, marginalised workers, migrant workers who have paid the price of austerity. And what we are saying is that we will not be paying the price any longer.

Gloria set out the example of UNISON launching a national care service to give respect dignity and rights and decent pay to care workers. And she had one important message, that being a migrant worker, being a foreigner, being a refugee, being an asylum seeker is not a licence for hate. And on LGBT+ rights Gloria commended UNISON for the excellent work that they are doing all over in terms of promoting rights for LGBT plus workers, saying that 'in UNISON over two thousand members have been trained as transgender allies; this is a huge achievement in providing leadership in action'. She continued 'we will not stand by while our LGBT plus members is attacked for by populist politicians and governments for electoral gain and for political advantage'. Gloria ended on a vision for the future that we will rebuild trade union power.

Libby Nolan, UNISON President also spoke at conference saying that the NHS has always been dependant on migrant workers. During industrial action this year the importance of migrant workers solidarity was the way to fight racism and race hate. Libby set out an agenda for organising saying that we need more trade unionists on the shop floor to organise and oppose racism.

UNISON submitted an official concern to PSI about the lack of action the conference took following a walk-out by a block of nations in response to a minor amendment to the PSI work plan which would ensure LGBT+ inclusion. As a union we demanded that assurances that in future safety of delegates in the hall and beyond would be ensured by conference setting clear expectations for delegate behaviour. However, as a UNISON delegation and more widely in the conference hall, the incident drew delegates together in solidarity. My feeling is that we were reminded of the equality and inclusion we are all fighting for and the importance of keeping that focus.

The conference inspired us to build on our achievements globally and to continue to organise. It is only by growing our membership that we can grow our strength to make the changes we want for fairness and equality in the workplace and society.

Jennie Antonio

## REGIONAL REPORTS

### Eastern Region

#### **Race Equality and Cuts**

- **The Anti-Racism Charter** – Promoted at various events throughout 2023 including UNISON Anti-Racism Charter – Sharing Best Practice Webinar UNISON Eastern which brought together Black trade unionists and local employers for a lunchtime webinar on implementing the Anti-Racism Charter and sharing best practice. This was a great chance to see how the Anti-Racism Charter is working in other organisations and how it can make a real difference in your workplace. We extended the invitation to employers in the region. Even if they declined to sign, we encouraged their attendance.

Firdos Finch, Convenor for the Regional Black Members Committee will host the webinar and was joined by guest speakers Stephen Moir, Chief Executive at Cambridgeshire County Council, Nicole Rickard, Head of Communities at East Suffolk Council, Josette Kennington UNISON Eastern equalities activist of the year and Cambridgeshire County Branch activist and Tim Roberts, Regional Secretary UNISON Eastern.

There is a new resource space for Anti-Racism Charter on UNISON Eastern Region website.

- **National Black Members Conference 2023 in Edinburgh - 20th to 22<sup>nd</sup> January 2023**

Our Region submitted two motions of a high standard to the National Black Members Committee. The first on 'Negotiating to win anti-racist workplaces' was presented by Brian. This was supported by Debbie Rowden. This was based on our own Anti-Racist Charter that we have been promoting, supporting, and successfully implementing throughout the Region. It has been a huge success with over twenty signatories to it to date. But we cannot be complacent as there has been a lot of resistance to it in some quarters and we look to pressing for further success in our workplaces in the coming year.

The second motion first written by Hetty Okonji and successfully presented by Firdy on 'Reimbursement of NHS immigration surcharge paid by migrant workers who work in the health and care sector' is an extension of this governments hostile policy toward immigration following from their disgraceful treatment of the Windrush generation. Further work and support need to be provided to continue this challenge going forward. The government is once again attempting to turn a hate crime into a civil dispute to cover for themselves. This needs to be contested.

The regional committee members attended the following events:

- **UNISON One Weekend** at Whyboston Lakes – 20<sup>th</sup> to 21<sup>st</sup> May 2023
- **Luton Carnival** - 28<sup>th</sup> May 2023 Organising and recruitment event for new members.

## **Recruiting and organising Black Members/ 2023 Year of Black Worker**

- A number of Black members were asked 5 questions for Black History Month from the Eastern Region, and this was posted on the regional twitter page.

Who are you? Why is Black History Month important to you? What's your proudest achievement in UNISON? Who's your inspiration/role model? Why did you get involved in UNISON? Firdy Finch, Sophilia Matengenzera, Brian Periera, Glenn Carrington, and Lloyd Legister took part in this.

- Black History Month 2023 - Saluting Our Sisters at **UNISON Essex** - set up its own Black Members Self Organised Group, with the branch's 2 female Black Members Officers being on the Committee. Had event on 26<sup>th</sup> October 2023 for Black Members Month and theme was Saluting Our Sisters with guest speaker Dina Elmedina Baptists-Mendes who spoke about her journey into activism, stating the many discriminations she had encountered in her home country. She later located to UK and spoke about her experience then onwards including Brexit which opened up old wounds of racism and discrimination.

The Black members group assisted UNISON Essex to organise race equality as well as:

- Building a support network for Black members facing problems at work.
  - To provide a forum for the debate of race equality issues.
  - Assisting members in gaining the confidence to get involved in other levels of the union.
- Year of Black Worker Event in Norwich 2023

## **Other activities linked to UNISON objectives and priorities in 2023.**

- **National Delegate Conference** – 12 to 16<sup>th</sup> June 2023 – attended by Black members from the branch and regional groups meet to discuss issues and decide on their priorities for the coming year and poorer outcomes for Black workers and communities on all measurable metrics, we still have a long way to go in addressing these inequalities.

### **Other equality motions with a race element at the NDC:**

- Motion 10: Recruitment of Black Care Leavers
- Motion 53: Ethnicity Pay Gap from Eastern Region which was carried as amended.
- Motion 54: Year of Black Workers
- Motion 55: Please touch my hair – caring for Black patients and service user.

## **Planned future activities for 2024.**

- National Black Members Conference – Eastern Region will be moving 2 motions at this event. The first on Caste Discrimination Motion and the 2<sup>nd</sup> on Supporting Black Workers Experiencing Racism



- Luton Carnival 2024 – will have stall where recruitment will take place from
- Bedford River Carnival 2024 will have stall where recruitment will take place from
- Notting Hill Carnival 2024 – This is not agreed but it would be good idea to support event and publicise our region in order to use as recruitment tool.

### **Administration Membership**

Deputy Chair/Vice Chair/ Co Chairs Co-ordinators - Brian Pereira Firdy Findos

What proportion of the regional Black members' committee are women: 4

#### **Reserved seats**

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Disabled Members	Yes
LGBT Members	Yes

#### **Regional Committees**

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Regional Committee: Brian Pereira

Regional Council: Brian Pereira

Regional Local Government Committee: Firdy Findos

Regional Health Committee: Glenn Carrington

Regional Police and Justice Committee: Brian Pereira

#### **Regional Trades**

Union Council Race Relations Committee (3 seats): Glenn Carrington, Lara Samuel, Hetty Okonji, Uche Ohuegbe

### **Organisation**

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Nominations must be submitted by 29<sup>th</sup> October 2023

At the AGM on 26<sup>th</sup> November 2023, the Regional Black Members Committee were elected. Nomination and elections are held for vacant positions.

How often does the RBMC meet? 4 times a year

The committee is serviced and supported by the regional organiser who is supported with administration from the region.

#### **Funding and resourcing**

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Meetings of the RMBC, Education Courses and Conference are 100% funded.

#### **Liaison**

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The Regional Council, Committee, Local Government, Health, and Police meetings take place 4 times a year.

## Education and training

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### **Black members education weekend.**

Various topics related to anti – racism charter, microaggression, unconscious bias, developing Black leaders and race discrimination update.

There are 4 tutors and course for 2 days.



## West Midlands Region

### **Campaigns and activities**

#### **Race equality and cuts**

We as a SOG have worked continuously to improve race equality and representation in UNISON and workplaces. The SOG are very aware of the impact of the cost-of-living crisis on our members, as part of our organising around this the SOG have worked to support our Black members and encouraging them to speak to There for You.

#### **Recruiting and organising Black members / 2023 YOBW**

The Committee have met throughout the year to discuss Year of The Black Worker and Black History Month. The Committee have put on several events throughout and this will continue till the end of the year.

The Committee planned an away weekend in Telford which took place in September 2023 which went well. The Committee had new Black members who also attended. We as a committee did motion writing for National Black Members Conference 2024. Spoke about how we can continue to do this, it was suggested that each one of us to encourage to bring a Black member to our SOG meeting. There have been regular discussions on how members can recruit other members and the number of people on the mailing list has increased. The Chair has throughout the year been to Regional SOGs, Service Group Regional Committees and Regional Council talking about Year of the Black Worker, out of this a motion was put together about the Ethnicity Pension Gap.

Our Regional Awards Ceremony took place in November 2023, 4 of our Black members was awarded due to the hard work they have done throughout the Year of the Black Worker.



## Planned future activities for 2024

Priority Setting Day – A, day to focus on what the 2023 Priorities for the SOG will be.

Training Day - Focus on Recruitment and Organising - How to actually recruit!

To continue the legacy of Year of The Black Worker.

To plan an away day in the West Midlands.

To have events throughout the year.

### Membership

Chair	Paulette Whyte
Vice Chair	Shazziah Rock
Secretary	Shazziah Rock
Labour Link OBSERVER	Harbinder Singh / Jagbir Sidhu
Education Officer	Jagbir Sidhu
Women's Officer	Shazziah Rock
Disabled Members' Officer	Sharon Carby- McLean
Events Officers	Sharon Carby-McLean
International Officer	Jagbir Sidhu
Retired Members Officer	Carol Sewell
Finance Officer	Jagbir Sidhu

53.5 of the Regional Black Members' Committee are women.

### Reserved seats

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Disabled Members	Yes - Sharon Dixon
LGBT+ Members	Yes - VACANT

### Regional Committees delegates /reps

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Regional Committee:	Jennifer Haye / Harbinder Singh
Women's Committee:	Shazziah Rock / Jennifer Mackintosh
Disabled Members' Committee:	Sharon Carby-McLean
Education Committee:	Jagbir Sidhu
Regional Council:	Jagbir Sidhu

### Service Groups

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Regional Local Government Committee:	Paulette Whyte
Regional Energy Committee	Phebion Mudoti
Regional Health Committee:	Harbinder Singh
Regional Higher Education Committee:	Sheila Gill

### Organisation

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Elections take place annually via a majority vote at the AGM. Nominations are sought prior to the meeting. VACANT positions are taken from the floor. Any further VACANT positions are raised at each subsequent meeting.

RBMC meet on a quarterly basis following the AGM in March. Meetings of senior activists and Chairs happen as needed.

RBMC is serviced by a Secretary and an Administrator who are members of staff. Other support from staffing colleagues can be requested when required. Meetings are held in a variety of ways, including in person, online and now hybrid.

## Funding and resourcing

### Activities

Meetings of the RBMC

Education Courses

Conferences

Others

### Liaison

The following groups meeting on a quarterly basis: Regional Black Members' Committee with Regional Council, Local Government, Health, Higher Education, APF

### Education and training

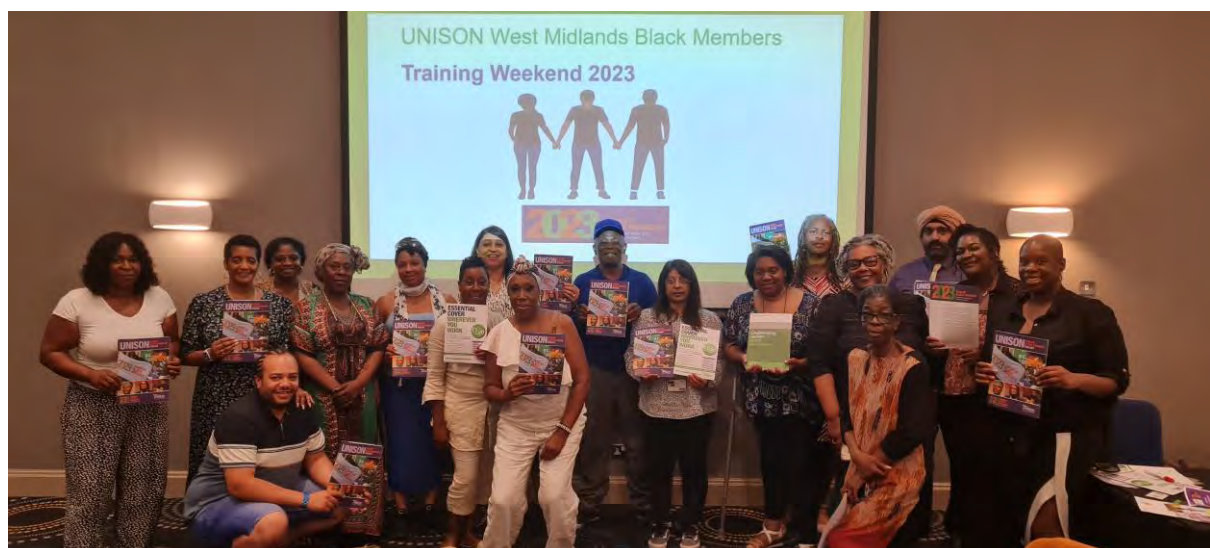
The following training and courses took place in the last 12 month as follows:

Black Members Training Weekend (Telford)

Understanding UNISON two days - Tutor Simon Holder – 25 in attendance

Motion writing

Menopause Awareness - National Speaker Evening event



## **Campaigns and activities**

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### **Race equality strategy and cuts**

As in previous years, the Race Discrimination protocol continues to be reviewed by the Regional Black Members Committee (RBMC).

The RBMC invites Thompsons to address their committee on a regular basis, with a view to both update on the number of cases dealt with under the protocol, and on race discrimination cases in general.

The Region continues to monitor and ensure that the protocol is part of Employment Rights Act (ERA) training, and the RBMC continues to review the protocol and the number of cases submitted in the Greater London Region.

The Region assists members to trigger the ACAS Early Conciliation process, allowing protective claims to be lodged within the specified time limits to bring Employment Tribunal claims.

A representative of the RBMC attended a stage 2 Race Discrimination protocol case review meeting in the latter half of the year. The RBMC now has the protocol as a standing item on its agenda.

The Region has in place a Regional Diversity Forum that seeks to ensure that the Regional Equality Strategy strengthens the work carried out in the workplaces and Branches in the London Region. The RBMC works alongside the Region to this end. The Region has launched an anti-racism charter, and all core employers are being encouraged to sign it. The charter aims to tackle racism in the public sector, commits organisations and their leaders to having a clear and visible race equality policy as well as a programme of anti-racism initiatives (such as training for all staff). It also includes promoting a diverse workforce, addressing the impact of racism on staff wellbeing, and regularly reviewing strategies to improve racial equality, diversity, and inclusion, so that the organisation can reflect the communities it serves. Sadiq Khan, Mayor of London, was the first London employer to sign up to the charter on behalf of the Greater London Authority (GLA).

The RBMC will continue to monitor the progress of this project.

The Committee will continue to signpost members on how to access the support and assistance that UNISON offers to its Black members, through its various working groups.

### **Recruiting and organising Black members / 2023 YOBW**

By way of its work programme and events, the Committee is seeking to develop and organise members to feel empowered to challenge racism in their workplaces. The Committee is also focussing its attention on motivating and developing aspiring leaders to aim to occupy influential positions in society. Working alongside Labour



Link, one of the ways the Committee seeks to achieve this is through offering training such as 'How to become a Councillor'.

To enable the Region to achieve the goals set out by the National Black Members Committee, a YOBW steering group was created, whose make-up includes the Regional Convenor, RBMC Chairs' group and regional staff. The group meets bi-monthly to appraise events and activities that have taken place in the Region, and to agree plans for future events. Plans are currently underway by this group, to mark the success of the YOBW 2023 with an event at the end of the year.

As part of YOBW, the Region sought to increase the number of Branch Black Members Officers in post. A job description for the role has been created to support further recruitment to the role.

A dedicated section has been set up on the regional website, and circulars are sent to all Branches encouraging them to add year of the Black worker to their Branch Committee agenda and Branch equality plans, urging Branches to organise local events or initiatives to promote this.

Increasing recruitment and representation of Black members in the union, winning bargaining initiatives, which particularly benefit Black workers, proactively challenging racism and acknowledging the contribution of Black members to our union and London's public services are key elements of the regional campaign.

The Region is collating information on YOBW activity and initiatives where possible. Branches are engaging with YOBW 2023 by holding recruitment events to recruit a Branch Black members officer, having bi-weekly drop-in sessions, YOBW recruitment stalls, Unity and Black Excellence events and dinners, YOBW Branch events, distribution of YOBW merchandise and information and YOBW events linked to the NHS 75<sup>th</sup> birthday celebration.

The RBMC will continue to promote self-organisation, and organise to support new, and struggling Black member SOGs. The recruiting and organising working group plans to hold an event focussing on the recruitment of young Black members.

**RBMC AGM 2023** - The Regional Black members AGM took place on Friday 8<sup>th</sup> September 2023.

Adejare ('Jare) Oyewole was re-elected as Chair. Lola Oyewusi and Annette Heslop were re-elected as Vice Chairs.

#### **Attendance at Black Members and other National Conferences:**

The Greater London Region plans to continue to increase the number of delegates and visitors attending National Black Members Conference and other conferences, with the Committee assisting.

The Greater London Region's historical policy determines that one in three Branch delegates attending National Delegate Conference should be Black, so as to accurately reflect the population of London. So as to ensure that all delegations from London meet this criteria, the Region has implemented a manual checking system.

### **Other activities linked to UNISON objectives and priorities in 2023**

The Region has organised Branch Black Member Officers' training, which will take place in November. Take-up has been good, with the course almost fully subscribed. Further dates from the college are awaited, so that all Branches are able to attend. To date, it is estimated that a third of Branches have attended.

The Political Engagement working group organised an event seeking to educate members on how to have a political voice outside of being a Councillor or MP. A range of speakers attended the event on the 27<sup>th</sup> of July, to encourage and advise members on this topic.

The Immigration working group organised an immigration symposium, where members shared ideas on how to combat the present hostile environment. The event took place on Thursday 14<sup>th</sup> of September, with contributions from a number of speakers.

The Recruitment, Organising & Development working party, along with the Health working party also had events arranged, which unfortunately were postponed with new dates yet to be scheduled.

The Region's Black History Month event took place on Thursday 12<sup>th</sup> of October. An array of speakers attended and contributed, with the theme being 'Passing the Torch'.

### **Planned future activities for 2024.**

The Committee's work program was agreed at its November 2023 annual Policy Day, with the following work groups formed to discuss strategies, and plan events pertinent to the Committee's objectives.

#### **Working groups:**

- The RBMC 2023/24 work programme that was agreed included: -
  - Recruitment, organising and development, health and well-being and promoting self-organisation.
  - Motions
  - Black History
  - Immigration
  - Political awareness and engagement

The RBMC is hoping to establish how to 'pass the torch' from one generation of activists to another, and to develop future leaders. The Region plans to hold an inter-generational event that will assist with promoting equality at local and regional levels, which seeks to ensure that YOBW2023 leaves a sustainable legacy that will create lasting change.

The Committee has as its priority, how best to continue to support, represent and promote the best interests of Black workers in London, encouraging them to join UNISON, become active and ensure that their voices are listened to.





Photo: Windrush 75 Event at UNISON Centre



Photo: Cost of Living Event, UNISON Centre

## Regional Committee:

Chair	Adejare Oyewole
Co Vice Chairs	Annette Heslop /Lola Oyewusi
Secretary	Carol Shorter, Regional Organiser

75% of the regional Black members' committee are Women.

## Reserved seats

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Have you reserved seats for:

Disabled Members Yes

LGBT Members Yes

NB - there is also a seat for a representative from the Women's Committee, which is filled.

## Regional Committees

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Regional Committee: Adejare Oyewole

Women's Committee: Lola Oyewusi/Hazel Satenay J/S (but subject to change)

LGBT Committee: Vacant

Disabled Members' Committee: Vacant

Education Committee: Patrick Mushiga

Regional Council: Adejare Oyewole

## Service Groups

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Regional LG Committee: Adejare Oyewole, Hazel Satenay, Lydia Lezama

Regional Business and

Regional Health Committee: Shona Watson

## Other regional bodies or committees

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SERTUC Race Committee

Elizabeth Onabanjo, Annette Heslop, Hazel Satenay

Regional Diversity Forum

Gloria Hanson

Regional Education & Training

Patrick Mushiga

Regional Recruitment & Organisation

Adejare Oyewole/Gloria Hanson J/S (but subject to change)

Regional Welfare Committee

Simone McKoy

Regional Health & Safety Committee  
Elizabeth Onabanjo

Regional Europe & International Committee  
Ann Horsfall

## **Organisation**

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The Regional Black Members Committee is elected by service group. Branches are invited to make nominations to service group specific seats in line with the agreed constitution. If contested, the AGM elects to those seats by secret ballot.

The Chair and Vice Chair positions are elected by secret ballot at the AGM.

The RBMC meets 4 times a year including the AGM and a Policy Day.

The Committee is currently serviced by a Regional Organiser. Where possible, an LO and/or AO will support the Committees working parties and an Administrator provides administrative support.

A bid has been submitted for funding for the following the following activities:

Meetings of the RBMC  
Conferences  
Black History Month event  
Recruitment, Organising & Development  
Immigration symposium

## **Liaison**

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Regional Black Members Committee liaised with the following regional organisation as follows in the last 12 months: Regional council (3 times) Regional Committee (4times) Local Government (4times) Higher Education (4 times) APF (4times)

## **Yorkshire and Humberside**

### **Recruiting and organising Black members / 2023 YOBW**

Our register has been recently updated and 6 new members have joined the group. Having meetings hybrid has been beneficial as most now prefer to attend in person which has meant attendance improving.

Through the member learning programme there have been courses aimed specifically at Black members plus a Black History Walk in conjunction with Leeds Heritage Corner.

A BHM awards ceremony was organised by a local branch – Sheffield Teaching Hospitals to which the group supported.

The region hosted the first UNISON Black History Awards event, and this was a huge success.

Another branch – Kirklees LG held a YOBW networking event.

### **Other activities linked to UNISON objectives and priorities in 2023.**

Chair/Vice Chair have attended Race Discrimination case conference with Thompsons.

### **Planned future activities for 2024.**

Another Black History Walk

An event to mark South Asian Heritage month (tbc)

Through the member learning programme:

Black Women's Event in March

Wellbeing event for Black Men in October (tbc)

Black development/empowerment course – July/November

### **Administrative arrangements- Membership**

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Chair	Abdul Rashid
Deputy Chair/Vice Chair/ Co Chairs Co-ordinators	Pam Sian
Secretary	Rose Bent
Labour Link Officer	Mohammed Nawaz

### **Regional Committees**

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Regional Committee: Evelyn Beckley/Abdul Rashid

Regional Council: Abdul Rashid

### **Service Groups**

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Regional Local Government Committee: Judith Musegedi

Regional Health Committee: Evelyn Beckley

### **Other regional bodies or committees**

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Regional Trades

Union Council Race Relations Committee (3 seats):

### **Organisation**

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Each branch is invited to nominate up to 3 – 5 members of the RBMC depending on the number of members in the Branch. The nominations are held annually prior to the AGM. RBMC meets 4 times a year on a Saturday. The RBMC is serviced by the Regional Office

### Funding and resourcing

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Meetings of the RBMC receive funding for Education Courses Campaigns Publications/Newsletters, Conferences.

### Liaison

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The Regional Black Members' Committee liaised with the Regional Council, Regional Committee, Local Government, Health, Gas, Water, Electricity, Higher Education, Police and APF on a quarterly basis.

### Education and training

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The following education and training courses and by for regional Black Committee members /Black workers are as follows:

Black Leadership (online)	5	Half Day
How to Build a Discrimination Case (f2f by Thompsons)	14	Half Day
Black Leadership (f2f)	21	1day
Black Activism – Developing your skills within the union (f2f)	11	1 day.

### South- East Region

#### **Recruiting and organising Black members / 2023 YOBW**

The SERBMC held their AGM in March 2023, where they elected a full committee and held 3 well attended committee meetings this year.

2023 was the YOBW and marked the first year that two of the three members of the SE Convenors Group – the most senior elected regional officials in the union – were Black women. Rosita Ellis, Regional Convenor and Sandra Charles, Deputy Regional Convenor. In addition, committee member, Kathy-Anne Mark-Evans was elected as the first Black woman to be elected as Co-Convenor of the SE LGBT+ committee.

Also, as part of the annual SE Big Weekend event where all activists come together for the weekend event, Bill Acharjee, a committee member won the SE Equalities award.

As part of YOBW, the committee produced a YOBW toolkit to support Branches.

Committee members have regularly contributed to articles on the SE region website, including guest blogs, newsletters articles and podcasts. They have supported Branches and Black Member Officers with holding YOBW, MELA and LGBT+ Pride themed recruitments stalls throughout the year. In addition, a number of Branch led workshops have been delivered to support Black members mental health and



wellbeing and to mark the 75<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Windrush Day, branches were involved in events across the region.

The committee published, 3 newsletters this year, summer newsletter, Autumn newsletter and a Black History month newsletter.

The committee submitted a motion to the SE Regional Council AGM, 'Developing a 'Black Members Passport' to improve participation in regional activism and a Black Member learning programme to support professional development', which was supported and passed, subsequently the SE Regional 10 Step Black members training passport was launched in May 2023.

The committee submitted a motion to National Black members conference 2023, Challenging employment barriers faced by newly qualified Black social workers, which was successfully passed at conference.  
This year the committee have submitted a motion, Fight against Microaggressions for NBMC 2024.

To end the YOBW, the committee are holding the AGM and Network Day in December, where approximately 30 Black members will be in attendance.



Photo: Event attendees outside Southampton Civic building with Lord Mayor Valerie Laurent and Councillor Dave Sheilds, Sheriff of Southampton.

On 22<sup>nd</sup> June UNISON Southampton Branch hosted an event to commemorate the 75<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of Empire Windrush' arrival in the UK. On board the Windrush were the families we now know as the "Windrush generation".



South East Black members delegation to National Black Members conference 2023

### **Other activities linked to UNISON objectives and priorities in 2023**

A BSOF bid was submitted to support the SERBMC, the bid sets out clear objectives to increase the number of Black Member Officers (BMO) across the region.

There are currently 29 BMO's across 102 branches in the SE Region.

In October 2023 a BSOF Organiser was appointed to focus 1 day a week on the following objectives and priorities:

- Support Black Members Officers to set up Branch Black members groups.
- Work with SERBMC/Regional Organisers/Branches to identify, develop, support, and encourage Black activists in branches.
- Update membership details - work with branches to encourage Black members to update their ethnicity.
- Branch Newsletters/Communications - work with the BMO's to communicate with Black members regularly.
- Work with Organisers to set up and deliver training and workshops for Branch committee and members - i.e.
- Raise awareness - UNISON's Race discrimination Protocol.

### **Planned future activities for 2024**

Year of the LGBT+ 2024 – SERBMC will aim to deliver a network day for Black LGBT+ members.

SERBMC will aim to deliver a network day for Black member, which will be an opportunity for Black members to come together and encourage more Black members to become active in the union.

Promote and increase participation in the Black members training passport.

### **Administrative arrangements - Membership**

Deputy Chair/Vice Chair/ Co Chairs Co-ordinators      Rosita Ellis, Skip Bawa

#### **Reserved seats**

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Have you reserved seats for:

Disabled Members    Yes

#### **Regional Committees**

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Regional Committee:	Olusola Adejare
Women's Committee:	Debbie Southward
Disabled Members' Committee:	Abdul Rahman
Education Committee:	Bill Acharjee
Regional Council:	Nelson Kahonde

#### **Service Groups**

Regional Local Government Committee: Skip Bawa

Regional Health Committee: Olusola Adejare

Regional Higher Education Committee: Bill Acharjee

#### **Other regional bodies or committees**

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##### **Regional Trades**

Union Council Race Relations Committee (3 seats): Sandra Charles

#### **Organisation**

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The election process is carried out annually through regional online election process.

The Annual General Meeting will usually be held in the last quarter of the year. Notice of the AGM shall be sent out no later than 60 days in advance.

There are four meetings a year including the Annual General Meeting.

It is expected that at least 50% of the committee meetings will be held virtually in



order, to encourage attendance.

The committee is regionally supported with a secretary to the committee.

The Committee consists of:

a) twenty members directly elected at the AGM in line with the principles of proportionality and fair representation.

b) In addition, the Committee will also include the following representatives:

(i) One representative elected by Regional LGBT+ Committee

(ii) One representative elected by Regional Young Members Forum

(iii) Ex-officio: Black members of the Convenors Group and the NEC

Ex-officio members will not have voting rights.

(iiii) One representative elected by the Regional Disabled members Committee.

There will be a maximum of 23 committee members with full voting rights.

#### Funding and resourcing

The Regional Black Members' Committee receives from the Region for the following meetings, RBMC, education courses, campaigns, and Conferences.

The Regional Black Members' Committee liaised with Regional Council, Regional Committee, Local Government and Health four times a year.

#### Education and training

In the last 12 months the region as run a course and training for the Regional Black Members' Committee for Committee Members or Black Workers as follows:

Network day with tutor and 30 members attending the 1-day event.

Challenging Hostile Environments 10 members in attendance on an online for 1 hour.

## Northern Region

### **Race equality and cuts**

Our members have actively participated in Year of Black Workers events since its launch at National Black Members Conference. Our region sent a large delegation and following a successful presence at conference they were keen to see activities across the year. Our members actively pursued the uptake of UNISONs Anti-Racism Charter with 4 employers signing up to the charter with 3 more committing to sign up before the end of 2023.

General Secretary Christina McAnea joined us at our Regional Year of Black Workers Launch event in late summer 2023. Our SOG Chair Doreen Chananda gave an impassioned speech on the importance of race equality before being joined on stage by Christina and the Deputy Chief Executive of Gateshead NHS Trust, who became the first employer in our region to sign up to the charter. Members of our group have worked well with the regional Political Officer to promote this charter amongst Labour groups across the region.

Our Black Members are involved with those discussions and follow up meetings within those employers who have signed the charter, and they are instrumental in preliminary meetings where employers are convinced to commit to sign up.

Our committee developed a mobile Black History display piece to celebrate our hidden history of activism and anti-apartheid campaigning with allies since the war. These display boards combine our shared history with testimony from our current membership and were designed to mark our Year of Black Workers.

Across the region we have delivered Workplace Race Equalities Standards (WRES) training to Black Members and to all branches. This training emphasises the use of WRES as a tool to pursue equality through negotiations with employers in the NHS, Social Care and we also highlight way to use similar data in Local Government branches. This training compliments Branch Development Day training and new stewards training which encompasses anti-discrimination training provided by Show Racism the Red Card. This training has become mandatory in our region as agreed by Regional Committee to ensure equalities are at the heart of what we do.

2023 saw the return of our Anti-Racism Ambassador Course delivered in partnership with Show Racism the Red Card after a long hiatus following lockdowns and pandemic related changes. Members of our BMSOG took part in this year's course and they now join the long list of their peers in returning to the workplaces with new skills and an eagerness to improve working conditions for Black staff.

Our members have also played a key role in disseminating information about UNISONs Migrant Worker Network amongst their personal and business networks and this is something we will continue to do to grow the Network positively into 2024.

### **Recruiting and organising Black members / 2023 YOBW**

Our committee members have planned and delivered several recruitment events around Year of Black Workers and Black History Month. Using our YoBW mobile

display to harness interest and to showcase the good work that UNISON Black members achieve this has acted as a great recruitment tool.

Since the launch of the Migrant Workers Network our members have used it to recruit migrant workers working in private and social care successfully. This is something we intend to utilise further into 2024 as we look to expand our membership.



### **Other activities linked to UNISON objectives and priorities in 2023.**

Our Black Members Self Organised Group has played a key role in planning and attending regional events to celebrate diversity such as at Newcastle's Mela, followed by the Mela in Middlesbrough, we also had a presence at Diwali on Teesside. Our members spoke at these events, encouraging new members to join us and get active in our SOG.

Members from our group joined other members and staff from the region at this year's famous Durham Miners Gala, all those in attendance wore our Year of Black Workers t-shirts and we carried banners and flags promoting our special year and the good work we do promoting equality.

Our committee held a Black Member Residential weekend in Durham during November which was very well attended. We heard from prominent Black staff from



across UNISON as well as local partners in Thompson's and Show Racism the Red Card. These inspiring sessions led to our members planning activities for 2024 with a workplan currently in development.

The weekend coincided with Remembrance Sunday, and our members took part in a session that focussed on the hidden history of the Black contributions to both World Wars 1 & 2, members had not all realised the depth of the involvement of our ancestors in these wars and the lengths taken to hide that fact. This led to a poignant minute's silence.



### **Planned future activities for 2024.**

Following the residential weekend our committee is compiling the feedback from each session which will determine our workplan for 2024, our Chair's team have committed to delivering an inclusive workplan devised in conjunction with our members. The year will of course begin with National Black Members conference in Brighton.

Our members have already acknowledged that the Migrant Worker Network and growing our Black representation at branch level is a priority for 2024 as well as an increased push to have as many large NHS and Local Government employers and providers signing up to our Anti-Racism Charter, in pursuit of the charter we will also look to have ethnicity pay gap reporting as a regional priority. Our members are committed to support employers with the follow up planning and deliver of change in

their organisations and seeking to ensure that Show Racism the Red Card is the provider of choice when it comes to anti-racism and unconscious bias training.

### **Administrative arrangements- Membership**

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Chair	Dorren Chananda
Deputy Chair/Vice Chair/ Co Chairs	Hezzel Chifungo
Co-ordinators	Iqbal Syed
Labour Link Officer	Iqbal Syed, Mavreen Ncube
National Delegates:	

The regional Black Members' Committee predominately made up of women.

### **Service Groups**

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Regional Health Committee: Mavreen Ncube

### **Other regional bodies or committees**

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Regional Black Members Committee is elected by the members of the Self Organised Group at the Annual General Meeting and meet quarterly.

Our committee meets quarterly but there is often need for the leadership team to meet with the regional support to plan and deliver events between the meetings cycle.

### **Liaison**

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The Regional Black Members' Committee liaised Regional Council, Regional Committee, Health in the last 12 month on a quarterly basis.

## Cymru/Wales

### **Campaigns and activities**

#### **The launched of the Year of Black Workers (YOBW23):**

On 14<sup>th</sup> March 2023, we (Cymru/Wales Black Members' Committee) launched the Year of Black Workers 2023 (YOBW23) in Wales region at the Cardiff UNISON regional office. The keynote speaker was Vaughan Gething MS, (Welsh Government Economy and Transport Minister), and signed the UNISON Anti Racism Charter (ARC) and the Ethnicity Pay Gap campaign (EPG) on behalf of the Welsh Government.

Rt Hon Alun Michael (Police & Crime Commissioner for South Wales) signed both the ARC and EPG on behalf of the Criminal Justice agencies in Wales. Emma Wools (deputy Police and Crime Commissioner for South Wales) presented a thought-provoking presentation on behalf of the Criminal Justice agencies in their responses to the Welsh Government Anti Racism Action Plan by 2030

#### **UNISON Anti Racism Charter**

UNISON Cymru Wales is asking all public sector employers to sign up to UNISON'S Anti-Racism Charter, which aims to help tackle racism in the public sector, Betsi Cadwaladr University Health Board the largest health board In Wales was the 1<sup>st</sup> to sign the charter followed by Powys Local Government and Conwy County Borough Council unanimously voted by elected members to sign the Anti Racism Charter on the 1<sup>st</sup> of December.



***The first county council in Wales to sign up to the charter, Powys has demonstrated its commitment to working with UNISON to tackle racism and any form of discrimination, which has no place in the Powys workforce.***

#### **Allies Project across Wales:**

Kebba Manneh (chair NBMC & Cymru/Wales UNISON Black Members' Committee) was keynote speaker at the launch of this project at the Senedd/Welsh Parliament. Anti-Racist Wales is a Welsh Government Action Plan which aims to create an anti-racist Wales by 2030. UNISON Cymru/Wales has committed to supporting the

implementation of Anti Racist Wales by developing a network of allies who will assist colleagues within UNISON to have the relevant conversations in the workplace to embed the data and analytics to support the work of the Anti-Racist Wales Accountability Group. The network will also assist in sharing good practice and challenging inequality and racism across our employers and bargaining groups in Wales.



***UNISON Cymru Wales Black Members with members from Welsh Government***

The Anti-Racism Allies project will develop intelligence to inform the response and information to be shared with the Race Equality Action Plan Accountability Group, making UNISON an essential and key social partner in the objective to make Wales anti-racist by 2030. UNISON is leading the way in this work creating an effective and trained network of allies, and campaigning for facilities time for these allies, to ensure that the public sector in Wales can meet the aims and objectives of Anti-Racist Wales.

Black people continue to be disproportionately stop-searched by the police across all four of Wales' force areas: South Wales Police, Gwent Police, Dyfed-Powys Police and North Wales Police. The biggest disparities came in Gwent, where the report found that Black people are 10 times more likely than White people to encounter a stop and search.

In the public sector, Black people remain substantially underrepresented in senior jobs, with only 1.3 per cent of teachers and 1.9 per cent of police officers identifying as Black and Minority Ethnic (BME), despite the Welsh BME population standing at 5.6 per cent.

Cymru Wales has supported various community initiatives to help combat the rise of racism and attended rallies throughout Cymru Wales proudly displaying our new UNISON YOBW Banner.

## **Planned future activities for 2024/5**

We aim to continue to push for all sectors of Public Service to be aware and sign the UNISON Anti Racism Charter.

To continue to work with Strategic Community partners.

- Show Racism the Red Card
- Race Equality First
- Race Council Cymru
- All Wales Ethnic Minority Women's Network

At the time of writing the Cymru Wales will be attending our annual Black Members development weekend, this is where we will be putting together our regional action plan for 2024/5

### **Administrative arrangements - Membership**

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Chair	Kebba Manneh
Secretary	Denise Thomas
Communications Officer	Kemba Hadaway-Mogan
Labour Link Officer	Kemba Hadaway- Morgan
Women's Officer	Denise Thomas and Kemba Hadaway-Morgan
Disabled Members' Officer	Denise Thomas and Neelo Farr
LGBT+ Officer	Natalie Forbes-Smalley

### **Regional Committees**

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Regional Committee:	Sam Alkarnaz
Women's Committee:	Denise Thomas and Kemba Hadaway-
LGBT+ Committee:	Natalie Forbes-Smalley
Disabled Members' Committee:	Neelo Farr, Denise Thomas
Education Committee:	Gary Dovenshire and Francesca Peets, Shirley Newbury
Regional Council:	Kebba Manneh
Regional Publicity and Campaigning Committee:	Sam Alkarnaz, Themba Moyo, Evelyn Williams, Kemba Hadaway- Morgan I, Neelo Farr, Tony McClean

### **Service Groups**

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Regional Local Government Committee:	Sam Alkarnaz
Regional Energy Committee:	Adnan Saleemi, Tansaim Hussain-Gul
Regional Health Committee:	Pam Singh and Daxa Varsani

### **Organisation**

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Members are elected each year at the Annual General Meeting- Cymru Wales meet every quarter unless needs to meet urgently.



Meeting is usually organised via the Regional Office we currently have the support from a regional organiser until an area officer can be assigned dates are proposed at the end of each RBMC meeting.

## Northern Ireland

### **Campaigns and activities**

#### **Race equality and cuts**

Our group was deeply saddened and shocked by the passing of Pamela Dooley who started our regional group many years ago and had been relentless in her fight for equality and human rights and in highlighting the plight of Black and Migrant Workers in our region.

Our group was involved in a number of demonstrations and events to mark anti-racism key dates and in reaction to attacks both North and South in 2023.

The year was also marked by the many strike days in Northern Ireland where Health Care staff have not received the pay package others have been given in the rest of the UK. There was a very noticeable increase in the number of Black and Migrant Workers on the picket lines, which was very positive for both increasing the visibility of Black members in UNISON and for the relationship and integration within branches.



## **Recruiting and organising Black members / 2023 YOBW**

2023 was marked by a flurry of stalls and activities to celebrate 2023 Year of Black Workers.

We organised recruitment and information stalls in the various local hospitals; attended cultural celebrations such as Barrio Fiesta; took part in events organised by the Trusts to welcome newly arrived international nurses; or took part in international nurses' day celebrations.



The number of Black and Migrant Workers in our region has continued to increase in the last 12 months. Members work mostly in the health sector (93%) and over half are nurses (54%). 70% are female. A third of our members come from the Philippines; a third from India; and the mixed last third has an increasing proportion of members coming from Africa.

Most noticeably, our Black members membership remains almost exclusively made up of first-generation migrants and almost all new Black and Migrant Worker members are currently on sponsorship visas / work permits (recruited by the Trust or by independent health care providers).

This has created a new set of challenges for our union. Although it is not the first time we have people on work permits, the immigration and political environment have significantly worsened for people who experience difficulties.

Migrants on work permits / sponsorship visas are extremely vulnerable to exploitation as they are tied to their employers both legally and financially. The consequences of this are particularly drastic in the private care sector (see repayment clauses below). Migrants and their families are also constantly at risk of being at the wrong end of the 'hostile environment' should they fall short of any of the immigration requirements hanging over them.

As the issue of immigration advice through our legal services remains unsolved, this situation has been very difficult for branches to deal with, and for members affected to get proper support.

Our weekly English classes in the UNISON regional office continue to be a good recruitment tool. With more health and social care staff being recruited internationally we are once again meeting members who are nurses in their home country but working as auxiliaries / care assistants while trying to pass their IELTS / OET exam.

Many refugee support organisations also send us referrals, especially from asylum seekers with very good English levels, many of whom are hoping to be able to practice eventually as doctors, physiotherapists, dentists in Northern Ireland. This has allowed us to keep close links with other BME and refugee support organisations.

This is also the case with our monthly face to face immigration advice clinic. This supplements the existing JCWI phoneline service and allows us to provide advice to refugees and asylum seekers referred to us as well and continues to put UNISON on the map in the community sector.

We organised an online Pension seminar for migrant workers in April with a very informative presentation from the UNISON pension unit. This came on the back of questions from migrant workers in one of our hospitals re pensions and what to do when you plan to move back to the Philippines or India after retirement.

We also held a conference in Derry marking 2023 UNISON year of Black Members, October Black History month and International Day on mental Health. This was a seminar exploring mental health issues faced by Black and Migrant communities in Northern Ireland and was organised and driven by one of our committee members. This will lead to further work in the year to come.

Members of the group also represented UNISON and our group at many events throughout the year, keeping us visible and involved in a number of related projects (e.g., Northern West migrant forum; city of sanctuary unison overseas nurse's forum; etc).

**Other activities linked to UNISON objectives and priorities in 2023.**



**Sponsorship visa holders and repayment clauses:** This has been the focus of a lot of our work over the last 12 months and there has been much progress since last year.

We reported in our last annual report that members were being charged thousands of pounds in repayment clauses. On the back on the lobbying, policy and media work of the UNISON Centre, progress was made with the updated version of the Code of Practice for the Recruitment of International Health and Social Care Personnel, and this was used to progress the issue regionally.

- We commissioned research to look at the pressure points and identify what could be challenged either legally or politically.
- Our local legal team agreed to take on a number of repayment clauses cases and these cases settled with money being repaid by the employer.
- Members affected by this issue were involved in getting local (and national) media interest on the situation of visa holders in care homes. They shared their experience of being treated like 'property of the care home' and pushed to work in unsafe conditions, to be then faced with huge repayment bills when they felt they had no option but leave.

The local BBC coverage (and BBC enquiries) combined with the legal cases had a palpable effect on subsequent cases and on encouraging other actors to engage with us.

- We met with the Department of Health to discuss how to better promote the Code of Practice and ensure private sector employers realised the code applied to them and followed the guidance.
- We also engaged with the local platform of the Independent Health Care Providers who also promoted the code amongst its members and invited us to share our members' experience and concerns.

Since the summer, we have noticed a distinct change in trend. Several employers have agreed to waive the fees or cut down the bill without having to refer cases to the legal team; employers have been aware of the code of practice, framing what they can recoup and under what circumstances, and in one instance a large chain of care homes has approached us for guidance regarding their work contract with visa holders.

Although the issue is far from having disappeared, there has been a real sense of progress for our group.

We will continue to keep pressure on the Department of Health and the commissioning bodies (i.e., the Trusts in Northern Ireland) to ensure Private health care providers adhere to the code of practice for the recruitment of international health care personnel.

## **Planned future activities for 2024**

Over the next 12 months, our group intends to:

- continue to push for access to immigration advice as part as our legal services until progress is made on this issue.
- continue to keep up the pressure on Care Home providers both in terms of the work conditions and treatment of migrant workers and on the issue of repayment clauses!
- Following our conference in October, we have also started to focus on the issue of mental health for Black communities and have started a working group to look at a work plan for 2024.
- New issues affecting newly arrived migrant workers have also started to be reported this year and will need to be on our work plan for 2024: the difficulty in getting accommodation (especially around some of our local hospitals) and the lack of support and time given to settle in for new recruits. This leads to an increasing number of people failing their OSCE and being sent back prematurely.

#### **Administrative arrangements- Membership**

Chair	Flora Alfante
Deputy Chair/Vice Chair/ Co Chairs Co-ordinators	Beverly Simpson

#### **Regional Committees**

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Regional Committee: Flora Alfante / Beverly Simpson

#### **Service Groups**

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Regional Community Committee: Patrick Yu

#### **Other regional bodies or committees**

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Regional Trades  
Union Council Race Relations Committee (3 seats):  
ICTU – Patrick Yu, Flora Alfante

#### **Organisation**

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Participation remains opened to all Black Members and Migrant Workers in the region.

The group has moved to monthly zoom meeting and aims to have face to face activities throughout the year.

The group has regular working virtual meetings and meets physically around activities / social events throughout the year.

A bimonthly email bulletin sent out to all Black and Migrant Workers in the region. This has details of our decisions and campaigns as well as courses and relevant events coming up.

Black Members who attend the meeting on a regular basis are drivers in pushing issues that should be dealt with.

Members who attend the B&MWC meetings report back to their branches.

A report is produced on the activities of the group for each Regional Committee meetings and our delegates use these as an opportunity to link with branches as well.

#### Funding and resourcing

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The Regional Black Members' Committee receives from the Region for the following activities, Meetings of the RBMC, Education Courses, Campaigns, Publications/newsletter, Conferences, and others.

#### Liaison

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The Regional Black Members' Committee liaised with the listed parts of UNISON in the last 12 months and meet quarterly with the Regional Council, Regional Committee, Local Government, Health, Gas, Water, Electricity, and Higher Education.

#### Education and training

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In the last 12 months the Regional Black Members' Committee ran four Black Workers (please indicate day training, weekend training schools and topics covered)

The following Education Courses were run in the region in the last 12 months for / by the Regional Black Members' Committee for Committee Members / Black Workers as follows:

English classes  
(IELTS and OET preparation)

CPD courses – the region runs an extensive CDP programme and B&MW would attend courses on a regular basis for 60 members on Thursdays.

The following Regional Black Members' Committee have received training on UNISON tutor training course as follows:

Name	Training Received	Accreditation Date
Alfante Flora	ERA	30/03/17
Vishnu Viswanadh Korath	ERA	22/06/23
Beverly Simpson	ERA	02/11/23

## Scotland Region

### **Campaigns and activities**

#### **Race equality and cuts**

SBMC has had an input to Scottish Government via the NDPB sector to include a statement to commit public sector organisations to tackle racial inequality,

the below statement has been added to the Public Sector Pay Strategy 2023-24 Technical Guide

***“3.19 The Scottish Government is committed to “increase the number and impact of actions that employers are taking to address racial inequality in their workplace”. Public sector employers complying with the Public Sector Pay Strategy have a key role in ensuring delivery of that ambition.”***

SBMC secured funding during YOBW to produce a video to help people to understand and tackle racism and race discrimination by highlighting UNISON’s Race Discrimination Protocol and making it more accessible and visible to members. This is progressing but still a work in progress.

UNISON Lifelong Learning contacts in Scotland also prioritised access to training courses for Black Members who SBMC identified during a survey at the start of the year who said they were interested in UNISON training.

To strengthen race discrimination casework, SBMC engaged with Thompsons solicitors to increase the impact of our work and reach more members with the offer of legal advice and assistance.

### **Recruiting and organising Black members / 2023 YOBW**

The Scottish region continues to meet its objectives for Year of Black Workers (YOBW) 2023. The objectives include the provision of support and guidance to branches on anti-racist work; embedding anti-racist practice throughout UNISON Scotland; increasing participation of Black members in UNISON work in Scotland and raise a positive profile of the Scottish Black Members Committee within UNISON. With ambitious work plan, members embarked on a period of greater strength, led by a new



committee with shared vision, to deliver real impact for every Black member in Scotland.

Our calendar events include activities to target organising work at young Black workers and Black workers from the LGBT+ community.

Data show that UNISON Scotland Black membership is growing rapidly among women, young people, and Black workers. This provides greater impetus for YOBW vision to be realised.

Statistics from survey undertaken of Black members in 2022 and 2023 show that 40% of Black workers have experienced racism but 74% have not contacted their branch. Key actions taken forward are creating a template with the help of activists identified in the 2023 survey are embedding these groups within Glasgow City, NDPB, Edinburgh City, Glasgow health, Scottish Ambulance Service, SL etc.

The SBMC did an excellent presentation on UNISON's Year of Black Workers at Scottish Council and to many individual branches and committees across Scotland. Various branches made commitments to support the activities in the year ahead around tackling racism and encouraging more Black members to get involved in branch and committee activities and activism.

For a better impact SBMC got funding to produce a YouTube video capturing key highlights during 2023 YOBW 2023. This will be complemented with a short animation video, powerful at highlighting racial discrimination.

To get better on equality we embedded the NEC rules about how to be an accredited rep; reps must train no later than within one year; all reps must do equality training; all reps who represent or negotiate must do challenging racism training.

SBMC also secured funding in YOBW via BSOF to recruit a temporary Area Organiser to help with the October networking day (at the end of Black History Month) for Black Members, and to organise increased awareness-raising, recruitment of more Black activists and networking across Scotland and to support meeting the objectives of SBMC set in February 2023. The postholder took up the post in September.

## **Other activities linked to UNISON objectives and priorities in 2023.**

### **Launch of UNISON Year of Black Workers**

UNISON Scotland Black Members Committee officially launched its campaign at Glasgow City Chambers in June 2023. A very successful event, carried by national newspapers, speakers at the event celebrated the committee's work, and outlined the challenges in tackling racism and discrimination in Scotland – and improving the working conditions and opportunities for Black workers in Scotland.

The celebratory event showcased the very positive contributions made to ensure a more egalitarian and inclusive nation, dismissing stereotypes, enacting change for a more cohesive and fair society.

### **International Women's Day Black women's workshop**

UNISON Scotland hosted the 2023 International Women's Day (IWD) on the 8th of March in Glasgow. A workshop was organised for Black women workers, with the theme 'challenges and opportunities for Black Scottish women'. Participants shared lived experiences.



### **Networking, Development and Profile-building**

Members of SBMC also engaged with Scottish Council, Scottish Disabled Members Committee, Labour Link Committee, Scottish Young Members Committee and NDPB committee over the year, delivering presentations on their work and their asks for YOBW. SBMC also encouraged attendance at and supported participation at several significant rallies i.e., the Sheku Bayou enquiry and Erskine rallies.

The SBMC Chair (Raza Sadiq) became an active member of STUC, eventually being elected as Vice Chair. Raza presented UNISON YOBW details to the STUC committee and equality group and spoke at the St Andrew's Day march. He and another member of SBMC organised a race conference and presented the SBMC YOBW presentation. This year Raza was elected to the STUC general council seat with Zia Hussain being elected to attend STUC congress in 2024. Raza has become the chair of the STUC Black Workers Committee for 2024 and continues to share key messages from SBMC in relation to YOBW and build upon the reputation of UNISON SBMC across the wider trade union field.

## **Planned future activities for 2024**

SBMC want to measure real change in the composition of UNISON membership – i.e., increasing numbers of Black members, increased identification of Black members in data systems used by UNISON, and increasing numbers of Black activists.

SBMC members have also instigated the creation of several new SOGs for Black members in branches across Scotland and they wish to continue to build upon that work.

The BSOF postholder will continue to undertake work agreed with the steering group and SBMC.

## **Administrative arrangements**

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Chair	Raza Sadiq
Secretary	Kay McKerrell
Communications Officer	Segun Adebayo
Labour Link Officer	Kash Tannk
Education Officer	Peter Sharma
Membership Officer	Tina Makendenge

42% of the regional Black members committee are women.

## **Regional Committees**

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Education Committee: Peter Sharma

## **Organisation**

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Nominations made and votes counted (votes from registered delegates) before AGM (due Sat 25<sup>th</sup> November). Results announced in days before AGM.

Quarterly for SBMC committee meetings, monthly or more for YOBW catch-ups and activity (not always full committee attends YOBW meetings).

Scotland SBMC lead support (AO) supports arranging online meetings for SBMC and YOBW and supports building activism. BSOF AO supports organising/hosting/facilitating of YOBW events and building activism.

SBMC is a SOG, identifying and agreeing workload priorities and targets at their annual policy weekend.

## **Funding and resourcing**

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The Regional Black Members' Committee received Funding from the Region for Campaigns 10K YOBW and 5K for other activities.

## **Liaison**

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The Regional Black Members' Committee liaised with Regional Council twice in the last 12 months and some Health branches informally in last 12 months.

## **Education and training**

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The region run various Lifelong Learning Courses for 30 + members in the last 12 months for or by the Regional Black Members' Committee for Committee Members or Black Workers

The Regional Black Members' Committee member who has received training on UNISON tutor training course was Raza Sadiq

## NATIONAL BLACK MEMBERS' COMMITTEE ATTENDANCE

There were four meetings in the schedule of the National Black Members' Committee over the last year which took place in March, June, September, and November 2023.

Name	Region / Self Organised Group	Potential Attendance	Actual Attendance
Sandra Okwara	Eastern	4	2
Carol Johnson	Eastern	4	2
James Minto	East Midlands	4	3
Faith Jangara	East Midlands	4	2
Gamu Nyasoro	East Midlands	4	1
Adejare Oyewole	Greater London	4	4
Annette Heslop	Greater London	4	3
Lola Oyewusi	Greater London	4	3
Iqbal Syed	Northern	4	4
Mavreen Ncube	Northern	3	2
Sonia Stewart	North West	4	3
Boatemah Baffoe	North West	4	2
Azara Azam	North West	4	4
Christopher Kane	Scotland	4	1
Chinny Iroegbu	Scotland	4	4
Hasina Hamid	South East	4	4
Olusola Adejare	South East	4	2
Marcia Dawkins	South West	4	3
Tara Thomas	South West	4	4
Kebba Manneh	Cymru / Wales	4	4
Kemba Hadaway Morgan	Cymru / Wales	4	3
Sharon Carby-McLean	West Midlands	4	2
Shazziah Rock	West Midlands	4	1
Miriam Latona	West Midlands	3	2
Pam Sian	Yorkshire and Humberside	4	2
Mohammed Daji	Yorkshire and Humberside	4	3
Kuldeep Bajwa	Yorkshire and Humberside	4	3
Patrick Yu	Northern Ireland	4	3
Stella Sharkey	Northern Ireland	4	0
Bev Miller	National Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender + Committee	4	3
Jennie Antonio	National Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender + Committee	4	3
Sandra Charles	National Women's Committee	4	3
Davena Rankin	National Women's Committee	4	2
Bertha Kanyangu	National Disabled Members' Committee	4	3
Abdul Rahman /Jamal Pasha (j/)	National Disabled Members' Committee	4	2
Ashley Silverstone	NEC	4	2
April Ashley	NEC	4	1
Julia Mwaluke	NEC	4	2
Manjula Kumari	NEC	4	2



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