



# Together Against Racism

National Executive  
Council Statement  
to 2022 ADM



# Tackling racism is a crucial priority for Usdaw and for the whole of the Trade Union Movement and society.

Racism is widespread and persistent. Black workers face discrimination in the labour market and racist abuse in their workplaces.

As trade unionists, we must take action to make sure that Black workers' voices are heard.

Udaw reps do a vital job in campaigning against racism in the workplace, and in making sure that Usdaw organised workplaces are free from racism and harassment.

This National Executive Council Statement sets out Usdaw's commitment to tackling racism, supporting Black members to become active in the Union, and campaigning for change.

**We stand together against racism.**

# General Secretary's Foreword



## This National Executive Council Statement is about racism at work and in wider society.

It comes at a really important time for the anti-racist struggle, not just in the UK but right around the world.

The last two years have been beyond anything any of us could ever have imagined. The loss of life from Covid has touched millions of people both directly and indirectly.

The fact that Black communities experienced higher mortality and were at greater risk of contracting Covid offered an early and shocking warning that Covid-19 was not affecting all population groups equally. Here was proof of what the Trade Union Movement had been saying for years; that racism literally wrecks lives.

Black workers are far more likely than white workers to be in low paid, insecure jobs such as temporary and agency jobs or zero-hours contracts. They are more likely to be in front line roles and throughout the crisis had less access to both statutory and contractual sick pay. This is institutional racism and it traps far too many Black workers in poverty, insecurity and low pay.

The ongoing struggle around Black Lives Matter after the murder of George Floyd on the streets of Minneapolis ultimately led to a greater sense of hope and promises of change, but this National Executive Council Statement asks, 'what has changed?' Statues may have been toppled, but the discrimination and injustice experienced by Black workers has not gone away.

We need to ask yet again if employers, Government and unions are doing enough to tackle the problem. If we are serious about making change happen then we need an honest assessment of where we are and a vision of where we want to get to.

This National Executive Statement offers both and I hope that reps and members will find it to be a realistic and inspiring read and resource.

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Paddy Lillis". The signature is fluid and cursive, written over a thin blue horizontal line.

**Paddy Lillis**  
General Secretary

# Section One – Racism Right Now

**We might choose to believe that racism is something that has largely gone away or even been eliminated from the workplace and wider society.**

But in reality racism is thriving and urgent action is needed to deal with the problem.

The evidence that racism remains widespread and persistent is overwhelming. One of the strongest expressions of racism is the position of Black workers in the UK labour market.

## **Black Workers in the Labour Market**

If you are Black your chances of being in low paid, insecure or casualised work are significantly higher than if you are white. Numerous studies show this but we can also see it with our own eyes. In hotels, on public transport, in shops, hospitals and in schools it is often the case that the lowest paid jobs are being done by Black and Minority Ethnic (BME) workers.

Black workers are far more likely to face insecurity at work and are more than twice as likely as white workers to be in temporary and zero-hours work. One in eight Black workers are employed on this basis compared with one in twenty white workers.

Black, Asian and ethnic minority workers are being forced into low paid, insecure work and the problem is getting worse. In recent years there has been a sharp rise in the number of Black workers, and Black women in particular, on temporary contracts.

Between 2011 and 2016 the number of Black workers on temporary contracts jumped 58% – more than seven times the 8% increase for white workers.

The number of Black women on temporary contracts soared 82% in that time, compared with a 37% increase for Black men. The problem is particularly acute for young BME workers.

Over 15% of young BME workers are on non-permanent contracts compared to 8% of young white workers.

The fact that young Black workers were, prior to the pandemic, almost twice as likely to be experiencing low paid, insecure forms of work helps set the scene for why the current crisis has disproportionately affected Black workers.

Black workers have suffered the brunt of job cuts during the pandemic – the employment rate for people from BME backgrounds dropped 5.3% in the year to September 2020, compared with a 0.2% decrease in the number of employed white workers.

## Racism in the Workplace

Of course racism is not just experienced by Black workers through the types of jobs they do. Even Black workers in relatively secure employment, whether low paid or otherwise, are at risk of being confronted by overt racism.

A recent TUC study found that most younger workers have experienced racism and discrimination at work. Even before the pandemic, a poll of BME workers revealed that nearly half were given harder or less popular work tasks than their white colleagues.

The same poll found that racism was rife in the workplace:

- Just over three in ten (31%) BME workers had been bullied or harassed at work.
- 32% had witnessed racist verbal or physical abuse in the workplace or at a work organised social event.
- 15% of those that had been harassed said they left their job because of the racist treatment they received.



## Online Racism

The sharing of racist images and content online is an issue of significant concern with over three-quarters of young BME workers saying they have seen racist material being shared in this way.

Most commonly this involves racist remarks, statements about Black people that are untrue, stereotypical or implicitly racist, so called racist jokes, symbols of hate, such as the swastika and threats of physical harm or death.

The role of social media and 'big tech' companies in amplifying far right narratives needs to be part of our understanding of the ways in which racism operates in 2022 and beyond.

## The Rise of the Far Right

The far right is in power in Hungary, Poland, Turkey, Brazil and Colombia - and influential elsewhere. Far right ideas have now become part of the political mainstream. Narratives of division, exclusion and blame have driven the upsurge in racism. The normalisation of extremism poses a huge challenge for everyone who believes in equality, justice and tolerance.

The far right umbrella encompasses a variety of parties, movements, networks and communities both online and offline. Although the biological racism of old is still very much with us, especially in the form of white supremacist organisations and networks, increasingly the far right has adopted what is known as 'nativism' or 'ethnic nationalism'. This ideology holds that non-native (or 'alien') forces - people, institutions or ideas - pose a fundamental threat to the native population or native culture.

The rise of the far right is deeply troubling, but can be challenged. Throughout history trade unions have been at the forefront of the struggle against the far right and its attempts to divide working people using narratives of hate and blame. Drawing on our core values of unity, equality and solidarity, we can strengthen our anti-racist networks and root them in our workplaces.

# Section Two – Usdaw Members’ Experiences

As trade unionists we know that racist discrimination and prejudice still influences decisions made about who gets hired, trained, promoted, retained, demoted or dismissed. It also impacts on people's experiences at work. We know from TUC and other research studies that the most prevalent form of racial harassment at work is racist remarks, including verbal abuse and racist jokes. Often when workers report a racist incident they are either ignored or identified as a 'trouble-maker'.

Statistics and reports tell us about the scale of the problems we are facing. They can also inspire us to take action, but the most powerful way we can get our message across is by giving a voice to our members; there is no substitute for hearing first-hand about the experience of Usdaw members in bringing home the reality of racism and its impact on workers and their families.

So, what do we know about what's happening to our BME members at work?

**Job Roles** – We know that a far higher proportion of our BME members work in sectors other than those where the Union is well-organised including the fast food sector, cleaning and security roles. One-fifth of Black members compared to only 1.5% of white members work in sectors and roles far less likely to be highly unionised.

This matters because it means our Black members are far less likely to be benefiting from the work done by Usdaw reps and officials to negotiate safe working practices, decent pay and improvements to terms and conditions.

**Abuse** – We also know that our Black members are more likely to report being threatened at work with nearly one in three Black members telling us this compared to one in five white members. This figure is drawn from a major survey of members conducted in 2020 and in part reflects the fact that Black members are in job roles that are more likely to bring them into conflict with the public, acting as security staff and policing entry into and social distancing in stores.

Our BME members also told us they were almost twice as likely to have experienced physical violence than white members – 16.3% BME members experiencing violence compared to 8.7% since the 'outbreak'. We know that both white and Black members face harassment and abuse from customers at work; for Black members the abuse is often racist in nature.

**Sick Pay** – Throughout 2021 we know that twice as many Usdaw BME members did not receive either statutory or contractual sick pay than white members. This strongly suggests our BME members are in less secure work and work in less well-organised workplaces.

Casualisation and the lack of employment rights that goes with it have undoubtedly had a disproportionate impact on BME workers. As far back as 2014 TUC research found that temporary working increased by 25% amongst Black workers and only by 10% amongst white workers over the previous four year period. In the same year one in ten Black workers was in temporary employment compared to just 6% of white workers.

**Having a Voice at Work** – Evidence from the first year of the Coronavirus pandemic tells us a lot about how our Black members were treated at work. During this time similar numbers of BME and white members had raised concerns with their employer – over two-thirds – clearly reflecting the high levels of concern that members had about whether they were safe at work during the crisis.

However, BME members were significantly less likely to be satisfied with their employer's response, just over a third reported being completely or mostly satisfied compared to almost half of white members. This suggests that many more BME workers are on precarious contracts in unorganised sectors and so feel far less able to raise concerns or where they do these are more likely to be ignored.

Racism at work continues to be a major issue of concern for Usdaw BME members. Unions have a vital role to play in giving Black members a voice and a means of resolving many of the problems discussed in this National Executive Council Statement.

**Having a Voice in the Union** – Unions have another and equally important job to do and that is to ensure that Black members feel that we are relevant to their lives and represent their interests. This means far more than running anti-racist campaigns or organising events for Black members, vital as those actions are, it means taking an honest look at ourselves and asking some uncomfortable questions such as:

- Are we doing enough to enable Black members to come together to network, to tackle their feelings of isolation and to support each other?
- Are Black members adequately represented across our structures and events?
- Does our collective bargaining agenda fully reflect the concerns of our Black members?
- Do we know enough about the challenges and concerns our Black members face both at work and in the Union?

Like all unions, Usdaw has made some progress in changing union structures to improve BME representation and in training and organising around race equality. However progress here, as in other unions and right across society, is too slow and needs to be accelerated. At the time of writing the TUC Anti-Racism Taskforce will, it is anticipated, help to encourage a step change in the way unions including Usdaw address these issues.

# Section Three – Campaigning Against Racism in the Workplace

Campaigning against racism in the workplace is a very visible and effective way of demonstrating that Usdaw organised workplaces take a zero tolerance approach to racism and all other forms of abuse or harassment. It also shows that the Union is taking up issues that matter to Black members who may not think that the Union understands their particular concerns or does anything to address them.

We know from our own research that the majority of Black members have experienced some form of racist abuse in the workplace. The same research also tells us that less than half feel able to talk to the Union or their employer about the abuse for fear of being disbelieved or having their concerns dismissed on the basis that they are being 'over-sensitive'. This is something the Union must take seriously, otherwise we risk failing our Black members at a time when they need us most.

In order to give Black members the confidence to talk to their Usdaw rep or full-time official and perhaps share their experience more widely, the Union needs to demonstrate that we are taking up the issues that matter to our Black members. We need to make it clear that tackling racism is an Usdaw priority, not just during Black History Month but every day of every month of the year.

As always, Usdaw reps are absolutely crucial when it comes to making any strategy to reach out to Black members a success. They are also at the forefront of making sure Usdaw organised workplaces are free from racism and harassment.

Over the next few pages are some examples of how campaigning in the workplace helps to demonstrate our opposition to racism and our solidarity with Black workers.



## Usdaw's No Room for Racism Campaign

Tackling racism does not begin and end with supporting members who take the step of approaching reps for help. Because of the nature of racism, it can be difficult for members to speak out.

Therefore, the Union has developed campaign materials that enable reps to be proactive in challenging racism. Usdaw's 'No Room for Racism' Campaign has everything reps need to set up campaign stands in workplaces that gets members and non-members talking about tackling racism in a way that is non-confrontational, but nevertheless sends out a clear and strong message that there is no place for racism in our Union, our workplaces or our society.

Everything you need to organise a 'No Room for Racism' Campaign in your workplace is available free of charge from Usdaw. To order campaign materials visit [www.usdaw.org.uk/noroomforracism](http://www.usdaw.org.uk/noroomforracism) and complete the order form.

## Joining Forces with Show Racism the Red Card

Show Racism the Red Card is the UK's largest anti-racism educational charity, established in 1996 thanks in part to a donation by the then Newcastle United goalkeeper Shaka Hislop. Shaka was inspired to challenge racism in society through education after an incident in the 1990s when he faced racist abuse at a petrol station.

The charity uses the high-profile status of football and football players to help tackle racism in society using education. Although the world of professional football might seem a million miles away from the lives of most Usdaw members, and in many obvious ways it is, the racism Black professional football players experience is the same as that experienced by Usdaw's Black members. Yes of course the workplace is different - their workplace is the football pitch, ours is the shop floor, the delivery van or the call centre, but the basic principle is exactly the same - everyone has the right to carry out their job in a workplace that is free from racist abuse.

Usdaw is proud to support and work closely with Show Racism the Red Card. They help us to:

- Highlight the damage racism does to people's lives and engage reps and members with the issue who might otherwise be reluctant to think about racism.
- Raise issues of racism in a non-confrontational way that members find interesting and accessible.
- Keep racism high on the agenda at a time when recorded race hate crime across the UK continues to rise.

Their work is crucial to challenging racist attitudes in society and breaking down barriers within communities.

## Wear Red Day

Every year Usdaw reps up and down the country show their opposition to racism and raise vital funds for Show Racism the Red Card by wearing something red and asking members and non-members in their workplaces to do the same on the third Friday in October.

Reps who were able to organise workplace campaign activity in 2021 emphasise how it helps to create a sense of togetherness and solidarity in the workplace as Mark, a rep from Morrisons in Cheadle, explains:

*"It isn't always easy to challenge racism. I've been a football fan all of my life and throughout that time I've come across racism from other fans. Most of the time I've felt I had to keep quiet. It makes me feel powerless.*

*That's why I thought I would organise around Wear Red Day this year. This was my chance to highlight the issue in a safe, fun and friendly way. Everyone got on board, members, managers and customers. It gave me the chance to raise the profile of Usdaw too. If racism is raised in the workplace now I know colleagues and managers will take a zero tolerance approach – it has helped to change workplace culture. We've a long way to go to tackle racism but Wear Red Day definitely takes us in the right direction."*



# Section Four – Taking Positive Action

Usdaw recognises that certain groups of members are under-involved in lay roles and at Union events and conferences and Black members are one of these groups of members.

We would expect around 15% of our members attending ADM to be Black and the same percentage to be Shop Stewards or Branch Officers. This percentage figure is based on national census data and the fact that Black workers are concentrated in the sectors where we organise. The statistics however are much lower:

<b>Branch Chair</b>	6.2%
<b>Branch Secretary</b>	5.7%
<b>ADM Delegate</b>	10%
<b>Shop Steward</b>	6.1%
<b>Health and Safety Rep</b>	5.5%





All trade unions need to take positive steps to encourage workers to join up and become members. On the whole, workers do not come to the Union to sign up – the Union has to go to them. Ask any Usdaw rep – recruiting members and organising the workplace does not happen by itself.

Getting Black workers involved in the Union is no different. Usdaw needs to take positive steps to recruit Black workers in the first place and once in membership, there is a further job of work to be done to keep them in the Union and encourage their activity and involvement.

Taking positive action to sharpen our appeal and generate activity amongst Black members is sometimes misunderstood as 'special treatment'. It is not, it is about taking steps to remove the barriers we know get in the way of Black workers joining and getting involved in the Union and addressing their under involvement.

Campaigning on tackling racism and organising an annual conference for Usdaw's Black members are examples of positive action. They are both effective ways of making it clear to Black members that they are welcome in Usdaw and that we are relevant to them.

# Section Five – Positive Action in Practice

## Black Members' Weekend Workshop

To make sure the Union is taking up the right issues we need ways of bringing members together to hear about what matters to them.

Each year the Union holds a national conference for Black members called Black Members' Weekend Workshop. This event is open to anyone who might experience unfair treatment or discrimination because of their skin colour. We use the word 'Black' as shorthand to describe this.

Black members regularly tell the Union that as well as experiencing racism both in the workplace and in society they frequently feel uncomfortable or isolated because of their skin colour. Everyone knows that going to a Union event for the first time can be daunting. It is particularly daunting if there are no other members like you there - no other women if you are a woman member for example or no other young members if you are a young member.

The weekend workshop is an effective way of tackling that isolation and boosting members' confidence to get more involved in the Union.

We always get members coming along to the Black Members' Weekend Workshop who have never been to any kind of union event before. These members then go on to get active in the rest of the Union and that is what it is all about - taking a few positive steps to reach out to members that gives them the confidence to go further and get involved in the mainstream work of the Union.

## Usdaw's Equality Structures

The Union's well established equality structures help to give a voice to four groups of under involved members - Black members, Women members, LGBT members and Disabled members.

Every region has a Regional Equalities Forum (REF) with seats set aside for Black members. The forums take a lead in the equality work of each region - co-ordinating activity, running campaigns and sharing ideas and information.

To make sure that equality issues are taken up at a national level, the Union also has a National Equalities Advisory Group (NEAG). This is made up of REF members, again with seats set aside for Black members. The General Secretary, Deputy General Secretary, the Union's President and National Executive Council members also sit on the group - a clear sign of the importance given to the equalities agenda within Usdaw.

Members of the NEAG help shape the Union's equalities work by drawing on their direct experience of issues in the workplace.

The structures mean that the Union brings Black activists together at a regional level as well as nationally, helping to generate activity and strengthen networks amongst Black members. Black activists are at the heart of the Union's work - driving our priorities, telling us what the issues are in workplaces and helping to set the campaigning agenda for Black workers.

The forums regularly:

- Organise weekend schools and get-togethers on tackling racism.
- Raise Usdaw's profile at anti-racist festivals and community events.
- Visit workplaces with large numbers of Black workers to recruit and organise.
- Hold workplace anti-racism campaign days.



# Section Six – What Action Do We Need From Government and Employers?

Government and employers need to do much more than pay lip service to race equality. Some employers have made positive steps to tackle racism at work, but many more are slow to act without being required to do so by law.

The 2017 McGregor-Smith review into race in the workplace made clear recommendations to address the discrimination and bias that Black workers face throughout their careers. But while the Government encouraged employers to adopt the recommendations, they made a choice not to legally require employers to act.

Similarly, recommendations made by other reports into race inequality, such as the Lammy review into criminal justice, the Williams review into the Windrush scandal and the Marmot review into health inequalities, have not been implemented in full.

More recently, a report from a commission set up by the UK Government to look into racial disparities in 2021 was roundly condemned for denying the experiences of racism by BME workers and being complacent about the UK's progress towards being an anti-racist society.

A lack of action, where there are obvious steps that can be taken, leaves the Government and employers complicit with a status quo where Black workers continue to be at a systemic disadvantage that perpetuates barriers to opportunity and drives inequality.

The following key steps need to be taken as a priority:

- Introduce mandatory ethnicity pay gap reporting.
- Strengthen employment rights and tackle insecure work.
- Extend the duty to conduct equality impact assessments.
- Commission an independent inquiry into the disproportionate impact of Covid on BME communities.



## Introduce Mandatory Ethnicity Pay Gap Reporting

There is a persistent hourly pay gap between BME employees and white employees. The ethnicity pay gap stands at 23.8% in London, the region with the highest proportion of BME workers, and is further impacted by ethnic group, gender, age and disability.

Most employers do not have detailed systems for monitoring the position and progression of BME staff. Without up-to-date information it is very difficult to develop a clear picture or address patterns of inequality in recruitment, retention and progression.

Ethnicity pay gap reporting should be a requirement for all employers, regardless of the size of the workforce, and be accompanied by a practical action plan to ensure fair treatment for BME workers and reduce pay gaps.

The Equality and Human Rights Commission should be properly funded to investigate and impose meaningful sanctions on employers who persistently fail to report or make progress on objectives.

Employers do not need to wait for the Government to make reporting mandatory, and a number of employers have already committed to report voluntarily or following pressure from unions.

## Strengthen Employment Rights and Tackle Insecure Work

As the challenge of precarious work continues to grow, Black workers remain more likely to be employed on zero or low hours contracts, in temporary work and on agency contracts. Black workers are also twice as likely to be at risk of fire and rehire practices that downgrade terms and conditions in favour of the employer.

Deregulation of the labour market is a red flag for equality at work. Employment rights need to be transformed to ensure those most at risk are protected. Banning zero-hours contracts, strengthening regulation, raising sick pay and day one rights that apply to all workers would ensure support reaches those workers who need it most.

Alongside this, anti-trade union laws must be repealed, and rights to organise strengthened to empower workers to collectively bargain to improve terms and conditions in their workplace.

## Extend the Duty to Conduct Equality Impact Assessments

Public sector employers are already required to conduct equality impact assessments. This is where they have to look at the impact that their policies or practices are having on, or are likely to have, on equality. This must be extended to private sector employers too. This is particularly important in retail and distribution where significant changes to customer shopping habits and the introduction of new technologies at work are leading to restructures that disproportionately affect the jobs of Black workers.

Safeguards are needed to protect workers who are more at risk because of a more precarious position in the labour market. Requiring all employers to conduct equality impact assessments is crucial to identify where changes to ways of working pose a disproportionate risk to workers with protected characteristics and inform action plans to mitigate the impact.





## Commission an Independent Inquiry into the Disproportionate Impact of Covid on BME Communities

Covid-19 has exposed and deepened disadvantage and discrimination for Black communities. Decisions by Government repeatedly ignored equality impacts and failed to address the needs of Black workers - who were more likely to face job disruption through furlough, loss of hours or redundancy and less likely to receive the PPE and sick pay support needed to protect themselves from the virus in frontline roles. These failures dealt a hammer blow to labour market equality, with Black workers falling out of the labour market in greater numbers, and contributed to devastating and disproportionate loss of life for Black workers.

The Government must publish all equality impact assessments related to its response to Covid-19 and be fully transparent about how Black communities were considered in its policy decisions throughout the pandemic. The report should inform an action plan to tackle the inequalities that Black people face in work, health, education and other areas of life.

# Section Seven – Usdaw Action

**As the statement has set out, Usdaw has been campaigning against racism and taking positive action measures to address the under involvement of Black members for many years.**

However, as a Union, and as a movement, we recognise that the pace of change needs to be much faster. Black workers remain under-represented in union structures and there is more urgent work that needs to be done to support the advancement of Black members in unions.

The annual Black Members' Weekend Workshop is a successful space for Black members to come together and there is a desire among members for initiatives that connect Black activists with sustained and practical support over a longer period of time to build on the enthusiasm generated by the event.

The Union has been working closely with the TUC's Anti-Racism Taskforce and sister unions to share best practice, resources and opportunities to tackle racism and promote race equality. Going forward we have ambitious aims and the Union remains committed to action – organising, bargaining and campaigning – to secure real change for Black workers.

## **TUC Anti-Racism Taskforce**

In response to the Black Lives Matter protests in the UK in 2020, the TUC set up an Anti-Racism Taskforce to co-ordinate the response and actions of unions to address racism and support Black activists in the movement. The taskforce is made up of representatives from the TUC Race Relations Committee, affiliated unions, anti-racism campaigners and race equality organisations. Paddy Lillis, General Secretary, sits on the taskforce and the Union is heavily involved with the initiative.

During the past couple of years, the taskforce has been gathering evidence from Black workers about their experiences of racism to develop recommendations and an action plan to tackle structural racism in both workplaces and in unions.

The taskforce aims to co-ordinate and target the movement's response on race equality, push for meaningful changes in law, develop a collective bargaining agenda on race equality and empower and develop Black members to organise and advance in union structures. It also aims to provide support to affiliates on anti-racist and race equality actions in their own unions.

## Usdaw's Black Activists Development Programme

In 2022 the Union is launching a significant new programme to encourage, develop and support Black members who want to become more involved in the Union.

The Black Activists Development Programme has been informed by the aims of the Anti-Racism Taskforce, and developed in conjunction with Usdaw Black activists, looking for more long-term support that builds on the network and support structures of the Black Workers' Weekend Workshop.

The programme is intended to be a stepping stone for greater involvement in the Union. The aim is that training and support will be offered to a small number of Black members each year who want to develop their understanding of, and become more active and involved in the Union and the wider union movement. What this looks like may be different for each member, with a mix of classroom and non-classroom based activities to support each member with their objectives in becoming more involved and organising on the issues that matter to them. Training will focus on core trade union values and the implications for activism in the workplace, building the skills needed to navigate the Union and create a support structure for Black activists.

We know that role models are crucial and act as a strong incentive to greater activity and involvement and Black members who complete the programme may be involved in mentoring other members in future years, developing a strong and connected network of Black members.

At the time of writing, the intention is to commence a pilot of the programme later in 2022, with feedback and experiences from the pilot used to shape the roll out of the programme nationally. The programme is intended as a sustained and long-term action to raise the visibility and voices of Black members in the Union.



# Language

This National Executive Council Statement uses the term Black to describe anyone who is subjected to racism and discrimination on the basis of the colour of their skin. This term therefore includes Asian people, Caribbean and African people, Chinese people and a wide range of others who themselves or their ancestors originated in countries outside Europe.

There has over the years been a lot of discussion in British society and in trade unions about the best way to refer to Black people. Some people have said that using the term Black means we are ignoring the differences that exist between people of diverse cultures, origins and beliefs.

Usdaw, the TUC and the anti-racism campaigning organisations in the UK use the term Black because we need to find an acceptable way of describing people who have a common experience of racism.

A study by the TUC and London Met University puts it like this:

*'We recognise that the term Black is not an accurate description ... (just) like the term white ... the term Black though is used in much the same way as the term worker - not everyone who works for a wage likes to think of themselves as a worker - they might prefer to be called by their job title or by a term like supervisory staff or technical worker. But to get a sense of collective solidarity (which is) the basis for trade unionism we need to recognise what brings us together.'*

It is not an accurate description just like the term white is not. When speaking to and of individuals you would be more specific.

## What is Racism?

Racism is when a person, is treated less favourably because of their skin colour, nationality, religion, belief, or culture. The most common form people face is verbal abuse through the use of racist terminology and racial stereotyping.

## Why is Language Important?

Language is a very powerful method of structuring attitudes. The words we use about people influence how we see ourselves, others and the world around us. They affect how we think about others, which affects how we treat them.

Language can contribute to the creation and perpetuation of racial stereotyping and belief systems. It is important to acknowledge that certain language and words are unacceptable regardless of whether or not they are intentionally used to hurt, the intent behind language does not necessarily alter the effect words can have.

## Useful definitions

- **Discrimination** – is treating someone differently because of their colour, nationality, ethnic or national origin, religion, belief or other personal characteristics.
- **Race** – the term 'race' is a social construct used to classify people. Originally race was based on a false belief that biologically there were different species of humans. We know that this is not true – there is only one race 'the human race'.
- **Ethnicity/Ethnic group** – is a category of people who identify with each other based on similarities such as common ancestry, language, society, culture or nationality.
- **Prejudice** – involves 'pre-judging' someone and is used to describe the negative attitudes some people have towards certain groups.
- **Xenophobia** – describes attitudes, prejudices and behaviour that reject, exclude or incite hatred and fear against persons, based on the perception that they are outsiders or foreigners.





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UsdawUnion



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