

Breaking Down Barriers

Black Members' Development Programme Briefing and FAQs



Why Is the Programme Focusing on Black Members?

Like most other unions, Black members in Usdaw are under-represented in union roles and at union events.

Around 17% of our members are Black - this figure is based on our own internal monitoring data and statistics published by the Office for National Statistics about the sectors in which we organize.

If Black members were accurately represented, we would expect them to occupy 17% of lay roles and to make up just under a fifth of members attending regional and national events.

However, despite making progress over recent years we are still a long way away reaching that. On average, only 7% of lay roles on average are occupied by Black members. For instance, currently 7% of shop stewards, 5.8% of Health and Safety reps and 7% of Branch Secretaries are Black.

Therefore we want to encourage more Black members to step forward so the Union properly reflects its wider membership. Improving the representation of Black members in Usdaw is not only the right thing to do, it is necessary to ensure:

- Black members have the same opportunity as other members to develop and reach their full potential.
- We reflect the workers we are trying to recruit.
- We are, and are seen to be, relevant and welcoming to Black workers.
- We take up the issues that matter to Usdaw's Black members.
- We grow and strengthen the Union.

What Is Meant by the Term 'Black' Members?

Put simply, the term Black includes any member who is at risk of racism and of being treated less favourably because of their skin colour. This term therefore includes a wide range of members including Asian members, African and Caribbean members, Chinese members and members of mixed heritage or multiple ethnicities - who would all be able to apply for the programme.

What Is the Black Members' Development Programme Hoping to Achieve?

The Black Members' Development Programme is designed to help address the under-representation of Black members in the Union's structures and at union events and conferences. We hope the Programme will:

- Give Black members the support they need to become more involved in the Union by developing their skills and understanding of Usdaw and the wider union movement.
- Build a support network of Black activists to help build membership.
- Encourage and support Black members to be pro-active in their workplaces.

Is the Course Accredited - Do Members Receive a Qualification?

No. The reason for this is that the education and training elements of the programme need to be flexible so that tailored support can be offered to members enabling them to reach their own personal development goal. Accredited courses follow a relatively rigid 'curriculum' and so are not appropriate for this programme.

When Is the Programme Open for Applications?

Members can be nominated to the programme or they can self-nominate. Applications are now open.

Successful candidates will take up their places on the programme in Autumn 2024.

Who Can Apply?

Black reps are welcome to apply. You need to have completed the basic Usdaw rep training and be registered to, or have completed, the advanced Usdaw rep, Health & Safety Rep or Union Learning Rep (ULR) training.

What Happens After a Member Has Applied to the Programme?

Members will be shortlisted according to an agreed marking system / selection process. Members will then be contacted to inform them whether or not they have secured a place on the programme for the year.

The Union will take positive steps to ensure participants reflect the gender balance and ethnic diversity of the Union.

How Long Is the Programme?

It will run for a period of 10 months. Members will not be seconded to the programme but will secure release to attend 20 days of classroom and non-classroom sessions throughout the year.

The programme is a permanent part of the Union's rep development programme, with a new group of members taking up places on the programme each year.

Where Can I Find Out More?

If you have any questions at all about the programme, feel free to contact the Equalities Section at Usdaw Head Office on **0161 224 2804** or by emailing: breakingdownbarriers@usdaw.org.uk

You can also visit the Usdaw website for information about the programme and details of how to apply once the programme launches:

www.usdaw.org.uk/breakingdownbarriers