

UNISON NATIONAL BLACK MEMBERS CONFERENCE, BRIGHTON Report

Date: 19-21 January 2024

To: Enfield Unison Branch Committee

From: Roland Thomas

Subject: UNISON NBMC Report

Introduction:

I am writing to provide a summary of the key discussions and outcomes from the UNISON National Black Members Conference which took place on the 19-21 January 2024 at the Brighton Centre. The conference brought together Unison members from diverse backgrounds to address important issues affecting black workers and communities and to develop strategies for advocacy and support.

Key Themes and Discussions:

The conference featured a range of discussions and workshops addressing key themes related to the experiences of black members within the workplace, the union, and wider society.

1. **Workplace Discrimination and Equality:** Participants engaged in discussions about the persistent challenges of workplace discrimination, including racial bias in hiring, promotion, and disciplinary processes. Strategies for promoting equality and tackling discrimination were explored, including the importance of effective representation and collective bargaining.

2. **Mental Health and Well-being:** The conference addressed the specific mental health challenges faced by black workers, including the impact of workplace discrimination, microaggressions, and systemic inequalities. The need for culturally sensitive support services and mental health advocacy within the union was highlighted.

3. **Solidarity and Intersectionality:** Discussions emphasized the importance of solidarity among black members and the recognition of intersectional identities. The conference explored the interconnected nature of race, gender, sexuality, and other factors and the need for inclusive approaches to advocacy and representation.

4. **Political Engagement and Empowerment:** Participants discussed the role of black members in shaping political agendas and influencing policy decisions at local, national, and international levels. The conference highlighted the importance of political engagement and activism in addressing systemic inequalities.

Outcomes and Action Points:

The conference generated several key outcomes and action points, including:

1. **Development of Resources:** The commitment to develop and distribute resources tailored to the specific needs of black members, including guidance on tackling workplace discrimination, promoting mental well-being, and engaging in political advocacy.

2. **Training and Education:** Plans to provide training and education programs focused on empowering black members to take on leadership roles within the union, as well as building capacity for addressing workplace inequalities.

3. **Advocacy and Campaigns:** The identification of priority issues and potential campaigns to address workplace discrimination, promote equality, and advance the rights of black workers within various sectors.

4. **Networking and Support:** The establishment of networks and support systems to facilitate solidarity, mentorship, and mutual aid

among black members, as well as the promotion of inclusive and diverse representation within the union's structures.

5. African Reparations Are Overdue: Ultimately, Reparations is not about money but about repairing the damage and addressing the legacies of enslavement. Reparations measures include Restitution; Rehabilitation; Compensation; Satisfaction and a Guarantee of Non-Repetition.

Conclusion:

The UNISON Black Members Conference provided a valuable platform for meaningful discussions, learning, and collective action. The outcomes and action points generated from the conference will guide future initiatives and advocacy efforts aimed at addressing the challenges faced by black members within the union and the broader community.

I would like to express my gratitude to all participants, organisers, and contributors who made the conference a success. I look forward to continuing the important work that has been initiated through this gathering.

Sincerely,
Roland Thomas
EUBMG Chair