

BLACK

STAFF

MATTER

#BLACKSTAFFMATTER

27/02/19

**DAY OF ACTION
AGAINST
WORKPLACE RACISM**

Introduction

The 4th Day of Action against Workplace Racism will be held on Wednesday 27 February 2019. Whilst this campaign is promoted as a day of action, I am asking all branches to hold a week of activity to raise awareness of workplace racism – see below our schedule of action.

This annual campaign event has grown from strength to strength as it involves a whole union approach in tackling the issues of workplace racism and its impact on careers, mental health and well-being and relationships with peers/students.

This year, our theme will be ‘Black Staff Matter’ which explores the impact of workplace racism and the changes black staff are seeking across the sector. Branches are encouraged to raise awareness of these issues and we suggest the following activities in which discussions and actions can help further engage members in seeking solutions.

I would like to thank the Black Members’ Standing Committee for their tireless work on ensuring the voice of UCU black members are heard within our union structures.

Dave Muritu, UCU NEC and Chair of UCU Black Members’ Standing Committee



Weekly Schedule of Action

Monday 25 February 2019

'Barriers to progression'

Black workers experience severe disadvantages in job promotion and career progression despite demonstrating higher skill set and qualification than their white counterparts. ***What are the barriers that prevent black academics from progressing? Is there a general perception that is accepted by managers about black people?***

Watch our film where UCU members attending our annual black members' conference held December 2018, **talk about their experiences of being overlooked** or told to jump through hoops unlike their white counterparts in order to progress and consider the following questions below:

- do you recognise the issues referred to in the film?
- have you experienced any barriers to progression in the same way?
- does your experience differ in any way from those expressed in the film?
- are you able to discuss approaches to addressing the problems identified?

<https://youtu.be/SecGgrklLaLs>

Tuesday 26 February 2019

'Far-right activity on campus'

Free speech not free hate: Far right activity has been growing on our university and college campus with platforms being given for hate speeches. With proactive action taken by UCU members, students, sister unions and anti-fascist organisations, we have successfully blocked the path for fascists to gain a foothold in our workplaces. University and College employers have a duty of care to ensure that safety and well-being of staff and students. ***What is your branch doing to ensure your institution does not provide a platform for hate?***

Watch our short film where UCU members talk about challenging racism on campus and consider the following questions below:

- have you identified far right activity on campus?
- what are the reporting mechanisms for such activity at your institution?
- what steps should we be taking to combat the rise of the far right?

<https://youtu.be/ca2Pa7dH8tA>

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Wednesday 27 February 2019

'Harassment at work'

The Equality Act 2010 provides protection against harassment at work. However, many black workers suffer in silence for not wanting to report incidents of harassment at work for fear of being harassed out of their job or having that imaginary chip on their shoulder if raised. ***How can your branch support and challenge harassment toward black workers?***

Watch our short film on harassment at work and its impact on black workers and consider the following questions below:

- have you experienced or witnessed racist discrimination at work?
- what action was taken?
- do you know where to go or who to report such incidents?
- are you confident your institution can deal effectively and appropriately with racist incidents?
- how can UCU colleagues support each other to combat such discrimination?

<https://youtu.be/HcS7rwhA6jM>

Thursday 28 February 2019

'Precarious contracts'

The Equality and Human Rights Commission's report

<https://www.equalityhumanrights.com/en/publication-download/healing-divided-britain-need-comprehensive-race-equality-strategy>) into precarious work found that black workers were twice as likely to be employed on a precarious contract as white workers affecting black women in particular.

What can be done to remove this barrier?

Watch our short film on living and working whilst on a precarious contract and its impact on black workers and consider the following questions below:

- colleagues speak of having to work way beyond their contracted hours to secure a foothold in the sector. Is this something you recognise?
- how long have you been on precarious or fixed-term contracts?
- do you know many colleagues in the same or similar position to yourself?
- how often do you meet with colleagues to discuss any or all of the above?

<https://youtu.be/U20tslcsFsg>

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Friday 29 February 2019

'What needs to change?'

The issues raised by UCU black members are not unique to our sectors and have been discussed time and time again and the situation is not getting any better. As you discussed over the past four days, *what solutions have you come up with? What can you do to change your attitudes or general stereotypes about black people? In the shadow of Brexit, how can we ensure that our workplaces are safe places for black staff and students?* UCU black workers have made suggestions on what action they would like to see managers, colleagues and students alike take in order for effective change to take place.

Watch our short film and discuss how your branch can introduce changes in which black workers are not penalised for being black and consider the following questions below:

- which, if any, of the suggestions in the film take place where you work?
- what three changes would you like to see as the first steps towards creating a discrimination-free workplace in your institution?
- how can your branch facilitate positive change?
- what are the key issues you will take back to your workplace as a result of watching the film?

<https://youtu.be/gPHVxXCITtc>



Resources

We have produced the following resources to assist you in campaigning against workplace racism.

1. Watch our series of short films on workplace racism and the impact on black workers - all our films (below) are available from <https://www.ucu.org.uk/action-against-workplace-racism>.
Witness – the lived experiences of UCU black members
Unconscious bias
Micro-aggressions
Barriers to Progression
Far right activity on campus
Harassment at work
Precarious work
What can change?
2. Host a meeting to discuss what and how branches can challenge and change perceptions including working with other equality groups to ensure that workplace racism is challenged on an intersectional basis. Use our survey findings to assist discussion
https://www.ucu.org.uk/media/7861/The-experiences-of-black-and-minority-ethnic-staff-in-further-and-higher-education-Feb-16/pdf/BME_survey_report_Feb161.pdf
3. Involve black staff to share their experiences of everyday racism in the workplace – devise an action plan of how branches can work toward addressing the issues raised
4. Share the witness document capturing some of the experiences of UCU black members - https://www.ucu.org.uk/media/8476/Witness---voice-of-UCU-black-members-Feb-17/pdf/WITNESS_-_Voice_of_UCU_Black_Members_-_Feb_2017.pdf
5. Use our bargaining guide on tackling workplace racism to raise the issues identified with employers as an integral part of the collective bargaining agenda - https://www.ucu.org.uk/media/8233/pdf/pdf/ucu_tacklingworkplac Racism_bargainingtoolkit_jul16.pdf .
6. Submit an article for the 'Black Voices' blog - <https://www.ucu.org.uk/black-voices>
7. Establish a Black Staff network group
8. Downloading and tweet a photograph with our selfie poster using the hashtag #blackstaffmatter
9. Display our new set of campaign posters
10. Get our hashtag trending #blackstaffmatter

UCU uses the term 'black' in a political sense to refer to people who are descended, through one or both parents, from Africa, the Caribbean, Asia (the middle-East to China) and Latin America. It refers to those from a visible minority who have a shared experience of oppression. The word is used to foster a sense of solidarity and empowerment.