

The latest news and announcements from Derbyshire UNISON

The fight for racial justice

The public protests in the wake of George Floyd's murder challenged corporations and institutions to address the glaring racial disparities in their organisation and in society



George Floyd's murder, one year on

UNISON is supporting the TUC and Stand up to Racism's call for action to mark the anniversary of the murder of George Floyd, to challenge racism and continue the fight for racial justice in workplaces and in wider society.

George's murder galvanised people in the UK, the USA and across the world into taking action against racial injustice on a scale not seen before.

The murder had a huge effect on people because it happened in real time - it lasted for over nine minutes and 39 seconds - it was recorded by a young teenage bystander who provided the world with this incontrovertible evidence to bear witness to this brutal and inhumane death of a Black man at the hands of the

police in the USA.

It touched the humanity and conscience of people of all ages, creeds, and races. It opened the eyes of the world to Black peoples' experience of everyday racism. It was a year like no other and, as the COVID-19 pandemic engulfed the world, hundreds of thousands of people took to the streets to give voice to the call for action on racial injustice.

In the UK, the pandemic amplified the structural disparities and inequalities and in particular,

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disproportionate deaths from COVID-19 of Black workers and people in Black communities.

COVID-19 has exposed the insecure jobs, poor and unsafe working conditions; and the concentration of Black workers in frontline, lower paid jobs unable to access PPE and sick pay.

UNISON continues to play a leading role in highlighting the discrimination faced by Black workers and we support action to hold employers and the government to account in addressing institutional and systemic racism.

We have produced a range of bargaining advice, briefing materials, training, webinars, and support for members on health and safety and published the updated race protocol.

The Black Lives Matter protests had a huge impact in changing the discourse and narrative on racism. In response to those protests, in July 2020, the prime minister set up the Commission on Racial and Ethnic Disparities that resulted in the publication of the discredited Sewell report in March which rewrote the history of slavery and denied the existence of institutional and systemic racism.

Trade unions rejected this report and UNISON supported the TUC's letter to the prime minister calling on the government to reject the Sewell report.

The government must implement a comprehensive race equality strategy to close the ethnicity, gender and disability pay gaps, reduce unemployment, provide training and guaranteed apprenticeships for young people and ultimately, good quality jobs.

The public protests in the wake of George Floyd's murder challenged corporations and institutions to review their policies and address the glaring racial disparities in their organisation and in society.

Many pledged to take action to change their organisations. We must hold them to account and make sure they deliver on their pledges. We must demand concrete actions and sustainable change to shift the dial in favour of fairness and equality for all.