

The latest news and announcements from Derbyshire UNISON

Racism

Questions asked about make-up of commission set up by Number 10 in the wake of Black Lives Matter protests



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UNISON voices disappointment over report into racism in the UK

UNISON is disappointed in the report from the Commission on Race and Ethnic Disparities, which said that, while the UK is not yet a "post-racial country," it had found no evidence of structural racism in the country.

The commission was set up by the UK government in the wake of the Black Lives Matter protests last summer that followed the killing of George Floyd in the US.

There have been questions about the suitability of the chairman of the commission, Dr Tony Sewell, and head of the Number 10 policy unit Munira Mirza, who was involved in setting it up, as both

have previously questioned the existence of institutional/structural racism.

Margaret Greer, UNISON national officer for race equality, said:

"Urgent action is required to tackle the deep-seated and systemic discrimination that leads to inequality between people of different ethnic backgrounds in public sector workforces.

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“Ask someone who denies institutional racism to set up a commission to investigate race disparity. Appoint someone as chair who denies institutional racism. They do an in-depth investigation. Guess what they find? Institutional racism doesn’t exist”.

Noting that “equality is not a competition,” Ms Greer said that action was needed to:

- tackle the ethnicity pay gap;
- provide proper resourcing and stronger enforcement powers for the Equality and Human Rights Commission (EHRC);
- end the ‘hostile environment’.

“The commission had an opportunity to show strong leadership and produce a clear strategy to tackle racial inequality, with a plan of action and measurable and timely targets,” Ms Greer added. “It has failed to do that in this report and this is a lost opportunity all round.”

She said that UNISON will ensure Black staff are involved in strategies to tackle ethnic disparities, for fair employment outcomes and an end to institutional racism.

“It’s time that the government demonstrated a political will to act - we are disappointed that this has not materialised.”

The union will continue to call for urgent action in light of the release of the report and to work for all its Black members.