

Resolution Date: 09 June 2020

Resolution Title: Black Lives Matter – Unite and Fight

This Branch opposes the widespread discrimination against members of the black community in the education, judicial, health, housing, and political systems in the UK, and across the globe, and applauds the movement of solidarity following the murder of George Floyd.

While the killing of George Floyd in the US shocked the world and brought the issue of police brutality to the fore, Britain is not immune to such trends. In the UK there has been a 22% increase in the use of 'stop and search' during lockdown. Figures from the UK's Independent Office for Police Conduct confirm that over the last decade, black people were "more than twice as likely to die in police custody" than those of other ethnic backgrounds (<https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/52890363>). The UK has also exported billions of pounds worth of riot gear and security equipment to police forces across the US, where it is now being used to brutally repress Black Lives Matter protests.

In addition to harassment of minority communities, there is a history of trade unions and political groups being harassed. Our branch has supported campaigns calling for democratic accountability of the police and this work now has increased importance.

This trend of discrimination has been evident in our workplaces too. For example, our reps at St Mungos highlighted that "BAME staff are being put through the disciplinary process at almost twice the level of their white counterparts." and sought action from the executive to end this discrimination (http://www.housingworkers.org.uk/readnews.html?con_id=659).

Some employers have introduced risk assessments that consider physical and mental health of vulnerable staff, with support for BAME employees, those with pre-existing health conditions and older workers. Yet employers in our sector also tell us they cannot even produce monitoring data showing an ethnic break down of sickness statistics.

Housing associations frequently produce impressive looking documents claiming to be working for equal opportunities but our experience is that they have gone backwards on this in recent years. There has been a clear lack of improvement in the number of BAME staff in senior positions (http://www.housingworkers.org.uk/readnews.html?con_id=490).

Discrimination has never been fully eliminated in the housing system either. The Race Equality Foundation reported post-Grenfell that "The persistence of poverty in Britain,

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means that many others will also be experiencing housing deprivation. But, it is also clear that the persistence of racial discrimination means that black and minority ethnic communities are at greater risk." (<https://raceequalityfoundation.org.uk/housing/homes-for-all-we-still-need-to-tackle-racial-inequality/>).

The links between race, bad housing and high death rates from Covid-9 underline the effect of austerity and the running-down of social housing (https://www.insidehousing.co.uk/insight/the-housing-pandemic-four-graphs-showing-the-link-between-covid-19-deaths-and-the-housing-crisis-66562?fbclid=IwAR3WNqadVqC-WGvKq_0oIbkUYhqAbFRg40J97wTWnJtv9UBQ4jCFaPEzZOo)

It is crucial that the Labour movement, armed with a socialist programme, joins with Black Lives Matter protests and fights for fundamental change.

This Branch therefore stands in solidarity with the Black Lives Matter movement, which has united people of all ethnic backgrounds and all ages, to demand an end to divisions and disadvantage for particular groups in society.

This Branch pledges to:

- Continue to support black and minority ethnic members to identify and fight discrimination in the workplace; and
- Work with members to develop our strategy for challenging discrimination across all areas of society;
- Campaign for Unite and other unions to play a leading role in supporting the Black Lives Matter movement, and supporting calls to end low pay and zero hours contracts, reverse austerity and privatisation, and for a mass programme of council house building.