

South Region Black Members Autumn Newsletter 2023



South East delegation to National Black Members Conference 2023, Edinburgh



This is UNISON's Year of Black Workers. UNISON has 185,000 Black members, most of whom work in health and local government services, with significant numbers working in social care and schools. Many deliver frontline services, and many are low paid.

UNISON national officer for race equality Margaret Greer said: "The Year of Black Workers will focus UNISON on the important issues that affect Black members and their everyday lives, with their lived experiences being central to our challenging racism in the workplace toolkit. This focus is vital in these testing times for race relations in the UK today."

UNISON's Year of Black Workers is underpinned by the desire of 'establishing legacy to generate change', and the national Black members committee hope to develop legacy campaigning work across several areas, including:

- The ethnicity pay gap, which shows the difference in the average pay between staff from ethnic minority backgrounds in a workforce, compared to 'white' staff;
- The TUC anti-racist manifesto;
- Implementing the NHS and social care workplace race equality standards;
- Ending the hostile environment for migrants, including removing the international health surcharge;
- Implementing UNISON's race discrimination protocol.

South East Regional Black Members committee (SERBMC) held their Annual General Meeting on 28th March 2023.

Rosita Ellis and Skip Bawa were elected as the Co-Chairs to the committee. The Committee Secretary, Mumta Erkadoo and Sharon Searle, Administrator support the committee.

Committee members elected: Shirley Owens, Sandra Charles, Hasina Hamid, Pam Dailey, Bill Acharjee, Danielle Samuel, Dolcie Obhiozele, Kathy-Ann Mark-Evans, Nickson Kahonde, Olusola Adejare, Marion Gitau, Rosita Ellis, Corinne Jack, Skip Bawa, Debbie Southward, Feyisayo Grace Adejare, Nelson Kahonde, Nutan Kiadhra, Abdul Rahman



**Skip Bawa,
Co-Chair
SERBMC**

This is my second year of being elected as Co-Chair SERBMC, Which I regard as a great privilege.

I hope we are all preparing to celebrate the Year of Black worker, in our local Branches. What a wonderful Opportunity to make more history!

We are already in May, and we must not lose focus on putting on events that Celebrate the Year of the Black Worker.

As your Co-chair I want to encourage everyone to do something to make something happen, memorable to yourself and others too.

All Black workers have amazing stories to share, perhaps an event of Sharing real Black worker stories which shows discrimination did not hold back Black workers in succeeding, will touch life's and inspire others. In my career with Hampshire County Council, I have seen growth of Black workers undertaking professional jobs, in my view all jobs are important!

I look forward to seeing committee members on the 22nd of June 2023, in Euston, Unison Office for our first SERBMC meeting this year.
Skip Bawa.

It's time to smash the barriers and break the walls around Black people

2023 is UNISON's Year of Black workers and to celebrate we'll be sharing the experience of Black workers from around the region. [This is a guest blog from Regional Convenor Rosita Ellis](#)



This is UNISON's [Year of Black Workers](#). In 2023 we have a new opportunity to establish a legacy of change and radical inclusion, and the South East region is fully behind this initiative.

I will be doing all I can from my position as Regional Convenor and Chair of the region's Black Members Committee to make sure our region supports branches and activists and makes the Year of Black Workers a priority in all our work plans and agendas.

It's time to climb out of the shadows and into the limelight!

2023 is UNISON's Year of Black workers and to celebrate we'll be sharing the experience of Black workers from around the region. [Bill Acharjee's Story.](#)





Black Members groups from Oxfordshire's three Unison branches (Oxfordshire Health, Oxfordshire County Council and Oxford University)

Black Members groups from Oxfordshire's three Unison branches (Oxfordshire Health, Oxfordshire County Council and Oxford University) hosted a joint community event on Saturday March 25th, 2023. The event was to mark our contribution to the launch of the year of the Black Work

The event included an audience with a clinical nutritionist talking about health issues affecting the black community, high blood pressure, diabetes etc. Attendees had the opportunity to participate in a Q & A session, and to have a Body MOT Health Scan as well as purchase recommended food supplements.

An art exhibition by a well-known local artist was on display and the artist kept young attendees engaged in various hands-on artwork of their own.

Refreshments and hot food, chicken curry, vegetarian curry, rice and peas, went down a treat with the attendees. We also had a celebratory fruit cake made especially for the event which garnered much applause.

Our thanks to all who facilitated the event and enabled it to be such a roaring success. It was well attended and very well received. We look forward to holding further events in 2023.

Shirley Owens & Dolcie Obhiozele

Black Members Officers, Oxfordshire County Council.

<https://southeast.unison.org.uk/year-of-black-workers-2023/>

Resources

You can find out how to order and purchase physical resources to use in your branch for Year of Black Workers here. These include mugs, pens, lanyards etc.

This leaflet summarises everything we're aiming to achieve throughout the year

The logos and graphics for use online for Year of Black Workers can be found on the [UNISON Resource Space](#).

We have prepared a number of factsheets, guides, quizzes and toolkits to help members, activists and branches throughout the year:

- [Challenging racism in the workplace toolkit](#)
- [Black LGBT+ History Quiz](#)
- [Factsheet 1: How to find a Black Members Officer](#)
- [Factsheet 2: Black members officer action plan](#)
- [Factsheet 3: Equality as a Standing Item](#)
- [Factsheet 4: Engaging with employer forums](#)
- [Factsheet 5: Bargaining guides](#)
- [Factsheet 6: Running a Black members event](#)
- [Factsheet 7: Campaign Planning](#)
- [Factsheet 8: How to set up a Black members Self Organised Group \(case study\)](#)
- [Factsheet 9: Anti-racism toolkit](#)
- [Presentation: Further information on how to set up a Black members Self Organised Group](#)

Powerful anti-racism debate opens UNISON health conference

“We are one team against racism, just as we are one team for patient care”



UNISON’s national health conference opened in Bournemouth today (Monday) with a passionate debate on the continuing fight against racism in the NHS.

The motion ‘Challenging racism in the NHS’, noted that data from the NHS Workforce Race Equalities Standard (WRES) continues to show that higher levels of Black workers are experiencing harassment, bullying and abuse from staff and patients, than their white colleagues.

Black workers also have less access to training and career opportunities than white workers and are more likely to be disciplined.

As one delegate told the conference: “Racism is rife in the NHS.”

Marking the fact that 2023 is UNISON’s Year of the Black Worker, the delegates discussed the ways in which they can tackle such institutional racism. [Read full article](#)

Nutan Kiadhra Women’s Officer of Bucks Healthcare Trust and SE Region Black members Committee member

Having attended this event I found that not only reading the motions informative but how the Motions came to life when you have speakers for and against said Motions.

Over the three-day period I heard many personal stories in support of these motions. Some stories were just too hard to hear which brought me to tears as they were truly heart wrenching and raw. I applaud every story shared as it took courage for people to come to the rostrum and speak. It is important to hear personal experiences, first hand or not, as it is important for all to hear. For me: I felt I wasn’t alone as I could relate to their struggles.

It wasn’t until the final day of the Conference when I finally plucked up the courage to speak on:

Motion 23: Health & safety expertise within Unison health branches, post Covid pandemic,

an experience a close friend of mine had during the height of the pandemic where Black people were highlighted to be most at risk whether young, fit, healthy or not

NMC opening professional cases against multiple Nigerian nurses

The Nursing and Midwifery Council is investigating evidence about the possibility of fraud at an overseas test centre in Nigeria where examinations for nurses wishing to migrate to the UK take place. Hundreds of Nigerian nurses who took these examinations are being contacted and will have professional cases opened. [Read FAQs for supporting any members affected](#)

A watershed moment in attitudes towards racism

– remembering Stephen Lawrence

A [guest blog from Sandra Charles](#) (pictured on right of image), UNISON South East deputy regional convenor



Taking Year of Black workers into the heart of government

On 21 February, Bill Acharjee from the South East Regional Black members committee attended a cross party roundtable event in Portcullis House aimed at combatting racism

2023 saw the launch of UNISON's 'Year of Black Workers' campaign with Margaret Greer, UNISON National Officer for Race Equality, putting out a call for ten Black Members Officers to attend a parliamentary round table at the House of Westminster.

The event was hosted by Bell Ribeiro-Addy (Labour MP for Streatham) and with several other MPs in attendance who all sympathise and want to progress UNISON's campaigns around the Ethnicity Pay Gap (EPG), Cost-of-Living, justice for the Windrush Generation, immigration, and the hostile environment, so I jumped at the opportunity to get involved. [Read more](#)



“We’re so excited and we have so much planned!”

2023 is UNISON’s Year of Black workers and to celebrate we’ll be sharing the experience of Black workers from around the region. This video message is from Susan Cooper-Olawale.



Susan Cooper-Olawale is the Schools Convenor and Black Members Officer for UNISON’s Kent local government branch.

August in England - WINDRUSH SCANDAL PLAY



Almost everyone knows Lenny Henry as a comedian, but his talent does not stop there he has performed some strong supporting character parts in Black films and had leading parts in Shakespeare plays. I have been fortunate enough to see this talented black man perform live in a play called 'The Resistible Rise of Arturo Ui' with him being the lead character which is a gangster , this was a few years back, however, on the 13th May I again watched him live in a one man show about Windrush it was excellent he injected some comedy moments but the message was serious as well as heart-breaking, there was a young girl in her early 20's seated in front of me with her parents and she sobbed so much I think the reality really hit home with her.

Lenny Henry's playwriting debut is a poignant, hilarious portrait of a life affected by the terrible injustice of the Windrush Scandal.

This show was sold out months ago so below is just a brief description of its contents:

August Henderson, fifty-two years in England, a proud West Bromwich Albion fan, part-owner of a fruit and veg emporium, and a devoted dad. He's got the gift of the gab, exaggerates his musical talents, has no head for paperwork and is about to marry the woman he loves. And then the Home Office threatens him with deportation. August won't go quietly.

August eight years old when travelled to England on his mother's passport.

Article by Sandra Charles, SERBMC

UNISON SE Region launch Year of the Black Workers 2023 Black members Training Passport

UNISON's Year of Black Workers is underpinned by the desire of 'establishing legacy to generate change'.

With approximately 10600 Black members in the SE region, one of the priorities for the SE Regional Black members committee was to produce a programme of UNISON training to support Black members across the region.

As a result, the committee have helped to produce a Black Members Training passport which aims to empower, develop, and support Black members across the region and build Black member activism.

2023

YEAR OF BLACK WORKERS

Establishing legacy to
generate change



South East Region Black Members Training Passport 10 steps to Empower, Develop and Support Black members and build Black member activism in UNISON

Black Members Training Passport		Tick Preferred attendance		
<i>All these courses will be demand driven and courses listed below can be completed in any order:</i>	Tick course/s	Online	In person	
			Brighton Office	UNISON Centre, London Euston
1. Organising Steward (essential) <i>NB. *if you have already completed this course, you do not need to complete this course again</i>				
2. Black Member Officers course (including how to set up a Black Members Group in your branch)				
3. Unconscious Bias				
4. Breaking Barriers				
5. Race Protocol				
6. Confidence skills and Resilience building for Black activists <i>– strategies to support our Black members to deal with negative behaviours and attitudes as and when they arise. Do's and don'ts of how to deal with racism, prejudice, and discrimination.</i>				

7. Next steps to participation				
8. Race Discrimination				
9. Mindfulness & Wellbeing – <i>strategies and techniques to deal with stress and negative behaviours</i>				
10. Motion writing, speech writing and building confidence in public speaking and understanding conference procedures				

The Organising course can be booked here, on page 50:

https://southeast.unison.org.uk/content/uploads/sites/41/2023/06/AW_7098_UNISON_Training23_V518.pdf

All courses will be demand driven. Once we have minimum numbers to run each course,
we will contact you with the planned course date and further details.

Please complete the following information and email to:

educationse@unison.co.uk

Name	
Membership number	
Email	
Contact number	
UNISON Branch	
Date	

Upcoming events:



National Windrush Day on 22 June 2023 will mark the 75th anniversary of the arrival of the passengers of the Empire Windrush to the UK. The day celebrates the contribution and achievements of the Windrush generation and their descendants.

<https://www.blackhistorymonth.org.uk/section/windrush-75/>

Interested in becoming Active in your branch?

Speak to your UNISON branch or contact Mumta Erkadoo, SERBMC Secretary
m.erkadoo@unison.co.uk

<https://www.unison.org.uk/get-involved/in-your-workplace/help-your-branch/>

<https://southeast.unison.org.uk/equality/black-members/>

Did you know you can create your own account and **update** your own personal details including your ethnicity?

- Access member-only content, including unrestricted access to UNISON Knowledge
- Manage your subscriptions
- Access favourite articles
- Rate and comment on content
- Access benefits and entitlements
- Stay up to date
- Manage your personal information

[Register or Sign In to My UNISON](#)

[UNISON National Black members website](#)

<https://www.unison.org.uk/about/what-we-do/fairness-equality/black-members/>



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