

UNISON Regional Black Members Rep and Equality
Coordinators Officers report



The Public Service Union

Committee Meetings

Planning Weekend - Exeter 2024

The planning weekend took place over a two-day period at the Unison Office in Exeter. The occasion not only served to formulate our plans for the year but also gave the committee and our regional officers the opportunity to network and share ideas.

The South West Region Chair and co- vice chairs lead the successful committee team including its strategy of planning meeting dates to prevent clashes with other meetings/conferences, regional events and activities while continuing to rotate the meeting venues throughout South West Region to include open and virtual meetings, so that Black members can witness and access the work our committee does. The outcome of the weekend was the formulation of a comprehensive set of objectives for the committee to work towards.

Committee members at the Planning Weekend, Exeter, Unison Office



At this meeting the decision was made to continue holding open and virtual meetings with a twofold objective, to raise the profile of the committee and its work and also to continue recruiting further committee members.

Work plan developed for the various activities:

- Get Active - which was in Croyde Bay
- Tolpuddle Martyrs 3-Day Festival in summer, 19-21 July 2024 - 'year of the LGBTQ' is to be celebrated at this event.
- Black History Month - virtual sessions to be confirmed and the visit to Haile Selassie Home in Bath.
- Proposed motion - 'Yes you can' has been proposed and needs to be confirmed.
- Nominations for the Nelson Mandela award
- To Start a newsletter for the South West to promote the South West regional SOG and to keep our members informed of regional and wider national issues - this still needs input from the committee and remains in its infant stage.

Tolpuddle Martyrs Festival

“Tolpuddle” held this year on 19th to 21st July and to celebrate the year of LGBTQ 2024. Typically, thousands gather in Dorset for the weekend of family entertainment, stalls, political debate, comedy and music.

The event is a celebration of trade unionism and labour politics organised by the Trades Union Congress (TUC) and featuring a parade of banners from many trade unions, a memorial service, speeches, and music.



South-West Black members leadership training weekend

This event was held in Unison Croyde Bay Holiday Resort on the 8th to 10th September.

An exciting event with some inspirational speakers, and there were the following workshops:

- Having the difficult conversation (Oreleo DuCran)
- Yes, you can (Adekunle and Marcia)
- Raffle with prizes for 'There for you'

Overall, this event was a huge success, thanks to our members' active participation and the engaging content presented. This event also highlighted the value of open communication in the workplace.

The networking opportunities enabled valuable connections and ideas to be exchanged, fostering a sense of camaraderie among Unison members. We are excited to channel the energy and inspiration generated by this event into our future endeavours.

Events like this, can ensure that Black members within branches, remain well-equipped to face the challenges ahead and make a positive impact on their organisation and the communities they serve. It also serves as a reminder of the importance of collective action and embracing diversity and inclusion. This event displayed how having the uncomfortable conversation in a controlled way can benefit staff who may not be used to having such conversation. This event also proved that you could achieve your goals with the right tools at hand to provide that additional support.





History Month

This year we chose to visit the home of an Icon- Haile Selassie; which is in Bath. This was an amazing visit and lots of information of this great man and his family.







A very good time was had by all of those who attended. A big thank you to Sharon's niece, Akosua; who gave all who attended a lovely gift to remember for quite some time.

Committee Motions

The following motions have been agreed by the committee and submitted to Region and to be sent to the NBMC standing orders committee in 2025:

‘Yes you can’

This has been piloted in a large organisation, that accepted that Black staff, did not progress in their careers as fast as their white counterparts.

Yes, you can turn your dreams into reality with hard work and determination someone can reach their goals.

Black staff have always felt that they must be that much better than their white counterparts; this is validated by interview experiences, networking with other peers and on receiving outcomes of their interviews or job applications. We all know that in many organisations that when Black faces does not fit, they will not get the job, despite they have the levels of experience and is well qualified for the role.

As a consequence of serious concerns raised by Black staff who work within the public sector, and feedback from numerous Wres reports, an initiative has been piloted at North Bristol Healthcare Trust called ‘Yes you can’, this initiative raised the profile of Black staff from all disciplines, some of which are professional staff within their own right. Some of the profiles were quite emotionally charged and showed that Black staff have endured personal and career challenges, yet they did not give up and have now achieved seniority within their career.

Committee Reports

Regional Council - 5th October 2024, Mercure Exeter Rougemont Hotel

This was a very well attended meeting that focussed on the wellbeing of our members who may have a gambling addiction, there was a presentation called 'Ara Recovery for all' which identified the harm that gambling causes.

Other regional business was discussed at this regional meeting.

AOB

North Bristol Healthcare Trust has signed up to the anti-racism charter 2024, and they are also piloting some anti-racism training for Champions and leaders, which will then be promoted throughout the Trust over the year. |It is hoped that |Bristol Branch will adopt the same.

Equalities Coordinator report

Rosie Legg and Rene Fonyuy

- It's been our first year in role in the jointly held Equalities Coordinator role, so we have spent time building connections and developing our skills, notably at the 2024 Branch Officer training weekend held in July.
- Over the course of that weekend, we recognised the valuable contribution of self-organised groups (SOGs) and began to formulate plans to support the development of these groups within the Bristol Branch. SOGs provide a great forum for engaging with the membership and encourage members to get active around issues that they are already passionate about. It is important that the groups are member-led and sustainable, so it helps to build in areas where there is already member activity and meetings taking place. For this reason, and to ensure that our workload is manageable, the first steps will be to support the establishment of SOGs of Young Members, Women and Black Members in the branch.
- We were an active part of the Branch development day held in October and will lead on work to strengthen the Branch's relationship with the regional team, ensuring that issues that affect our members are escalated appropriately.
- A key part of the coordinator role is communicating with members about key issues and changes in legislation. At the end of October, we produced a briefing on the Worker Protection Act that places new duties on employers to proactively protect their staff from sexual harassment.
- This year sees new employer obligations regarding reporting of race pay gaps, so look out for further information from us on that.
- We have and continue to explore arranging a trans awareness training session and other equality empowering seminars that we support our marginalised colleagues and members. We are happy to liaise with other branches to deliver this as this might reduce any associated cost and turn out might be better. We are aware of a particular branch that is happy to team up with this initiative.
- We are focusing on ensuring that as a branch going forward, we will jointly engage, collaborate, and celebrate key dates and milestones with SOG as a show of support, allyship and solidarity.
- As branch officers, we are focusing on ensuring that members have access to educational tools/resources insofar as it empowers and dismantled inequalities. Majority of these tools/resources are free/downloadable from Unison portal.

End of Report