

Gender and race equality is not 'fashionable' – it's life and death



GMB union has blasted Government Equalities Minister Liz Truss for dismissing the fight against racism and sexism as 'fashionable', calling her words dangerous.

Today's speech from the Women & Equalities Minister delivered a smoke and mirrors speech to the Centre for Policy Studies saying **the Government has focused too heavily on 'fashionable' issues like race, sexuality and gender issues** at the expense of poverty and geographical disparities. [1]

GMB union has nonsensified today's speech and the minister's claims. Fighting deep rooted inequalities in society like sexism and racism must go hand in hand with fighting wider inequalities.

The union has also warned that today's speech is 'firing a shot across the bows of the Equality Act'.



Nell Andrew, GMB National Equality and Inclusion Officer said:

“Whilst it would be hugely welcomed if the Government finally paid attention to the impact austerity has wrought on working people and communities over the last decade – it’s a shame that they’ve instead fired a clear shot across the bows of the Equality Act.

“If Liz Truss is serious in her ‘new fight for fairness’, she could start by enacting Section 1 of the Equality Act that was passed in Parliament 10 years ago and which successive Tory administrations have refused to act on. This would force public institutions to adopt effective policies to reduce the inequalities that result from class or socio-economic barriers.

“A drastic move away from recognising peoples lived experience, ignoring qualitative evidence, is a dangerous use of smoke and mirrors to attack equality and human rights legislation.

“All major equality and employment laws came about because of workers and communities organising around issues like racism, sexism and homophobia; fighting for more equal rights for everyone.

“These laws themselves were not dreamt up from the warm hearts of politicians, it has come from the blood, sweat and tears of people at the brunt of injustice fighting back”.

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