



GMB Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic Workers

23 Jan 2020

GMB campaigns and fights for better rights, pay and conditions for Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic workers.

Ensuring that equality is at the forefront of everything we do - making work and society a better, safer place for everyone - is part of our core values. This has to include Black, Asian and minority voices, whether it's through tackling structural and institutional racism, fighting the far right or fighting for health and pay equality for people of all ethnicities.

We campaign and lobby the government at both a local and national level on a range of equality issues. Being a member of GMB is therefore about ensuring that Black, Asian and Minority voices are heard - not just at work but in wider society.

Why is ethnicity and race equality important?

Despite hard fought struggles - such as the abolition of transatlantic slavery and the moral victories won by black workers such as the Grunwick Dispute - Black, Asian and minority ethnic workers still experience huge racial inequality at work.



This can include everything from more visible forms of racism and prejudice, including racist 'jokes' and harmful stereotypes, verbal abuse and assaults, to less obvious but no less damaging forms - such as structural and institutional racism.

This can be seen in the huge average pay disparity between workers of different ethnicities and the disproportionate number of Black, Asian and minority workers in low paid jobs and in insecure work.

What are some of the issues or barriers that Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic members face in the workplace?

Covid 19

While there is no scientific evidence to suggest that someone's ethnicity makes them more likely to be infected by Covid-19, there is increasing evidence that living circumstances and job roles put certain ethnic groups at higher risk. GMB has created a toolkit to help black, Asian and ethnic minority workers access a personal risk assessment and stay safe at work.

GMB has been working with black, Asian & ethnic minority members across the country to make representations to the [Equality & Human Rights Commission Inquiry](#) into Racism within Health & Social Care. A collection of workers' experiences during the pandemic has helped form our report, with the aim of tackling racial inequality across the sector.

Pay

Overall, Black, Asian and minority ethnic workers currently lose an estimated colossal £3.2 billion a year in wages compared to white workers, with people of Bangladeshi ethnicity earning 20% less than white British employees.

Leadership

While we know that BAME people statistically excel in college and university, we don't see this translated into the workplace or in workplace progression and development. Across most sectors there is a still a startling lack of representation of black, Asian and minority people in leadership roles, with only 7.1% of BAME workers holding very senior managerial roles in the



NHS and police chief inspectors at just 4%.

Public sector cuts

Black, Asian and minority workers are also disproportionately affected by economic recession, with savage cuts to public services having a huge impact - particularly on BAME workers' job losses as well many specialist services include black women's refuges and counselling.

Domestic Abuse

Black, Asian and minority and migrant women experience higher rates of domestic homicide – with figures showing women with mixed ethnicities were 10 per cent more likely to have experienced partner abuse in the last year than any other ethnic group. Cuts to specialist BAME women's services, needed because of language barriers, and culturally-specific support available for those who have endured domestic abuse, sexual abuse and forced marriage mean that Black, Asian and minority women workers are less likely to be able to access vital support needed to be able to flee domestic abuse.

Hate crime

The Tories' austerity agenda has whipped up a culture of fear. The rise of race-related hate crime and the far right impacts the safety and dignity of Black, Asian and minority communities, with asylum seekers and migrant workers being particularly under attack.

Racial equality

While in the last decade we have seen greater recognition of the significant contributions of BAME workers and the positive impact that having a truly diverse workforce at every level, in every sector, makes, words and awareness campaigns are not enough. For true racial equality in society we have a long way to go to end discrimination and ensure the world of work is fair and equal for all. GMB believes this starts in the workplace.

How does being a member of GMB make a difference to Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic workers?



Our Black Asian and Minority Ethnic members tell us that being a GMB member makes a huge difference to their working lives.

Support when you need it

On an individual basis, on average, union members get higher pay than non-members. They are also likely to get better sickness and pension benefits, more paid holiday and more control over things like shifts and working hours. This is because workers, through their union can join together to negotiate pay and conditions.

GMB is the trade union for everyone. We have members working in public services and private companies, in full and part-time jobs. We exist to get a better deal for our members and to support you when you need help. This includes if you experience racism or face discrimination in the workplace, individually or as something that affects you and your colleagues.

Collectively, GMB is committed to tackling, with our BAME members, structural and inbuilt biases and dismantling institutional racism. This includes having frank and transparent discussions with employers, on the meaningful changes needed to recruitment and promotion practices, practices that currently mean that BAME workers, especially women workers, seriously lose out.

Intersectionality

GMB also recognises the additional impact that ethnicity plays in barriers in the workplace for:

- BAME disabled workers and getting reasonable adjustments,
- BAME women workers experiencing domestic abuse
- Being LGBT+ and BAME can for some people have additional barriers to coming out
- Additional stereotypes and prejudice Young BAME workers may face.

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How can I get active around around BAME workers issues in GMB?

Join GMB Race! GMB Race is our self-organised group (SOG) made up of Black, Asian and



minority Ethnic workers from every type of workplace.

The aim of GMB Race is to ensure that race is always on the agenda: organising, recruiting and promoting equality at work and in society for all who identify as BAME.

We oppose all forms of prejudice and discrimination, acting as a contact and support for all GMB BAME members and developing training and events. It is free to join as a GMB member and the SOG aims to create a safe space to discuss and tackle issues around racial equality, wherever you work.

We've run regional GMB Race Summits, campaigns standing against hate crime, Black lives matters meetings, briefings on how to report racism in the workplace and stood in solidarity with refugees by taking aid and branch donations to Calais.

GMB Race also organises, participates and celebrates a number of events across the year including: Show Racism the Red Card (SRtRC), Black History Month, the annual Anti-Racism march, Hope Not Hate, UK Black Pride and sends delegates and motions to TUC Black Workers' Conference.

GMB Race also works alongside other self-organised groups and supports events like LGBT+ history month, Trans Day of Remembrance, and Women's history month.

For more information on getting active around BAME workers' issues or joining GMB Race, get in touch with your [Regional Equality Officer](#).

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We campaign and lobby the government at both a local and national level, on a range of equality issues and therefore being a member of GMB is also about ensuring that Black Asian and Minority voices are heard not just at work but also in wider society.

Why is ethnicity and race equality important?

Despite hard fought struggles, such as the abolition of slavery and the moral victories won by black workers such as the Grunwick Dispute - BAME workers still experience huge racial inequality at work.

From more visible forms of racism and prejudice, including racist 'jokes' and harmful



stereotypes, verbal abuse and assaults, as well as less obvious forms, such as structural and institutional racism.

This can be seen in the huge average pay disparity between BAME and white workers and the disproportionate number of BAME workers in low paid jobs and in insecure work.

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Public sector cuts

BAME workers are also disproportionately affected by the recession, with the savage cuts to public services having a huge impact in particular on both BAME workers' job losses as well as many specialist services include black women's refuges and counselling.

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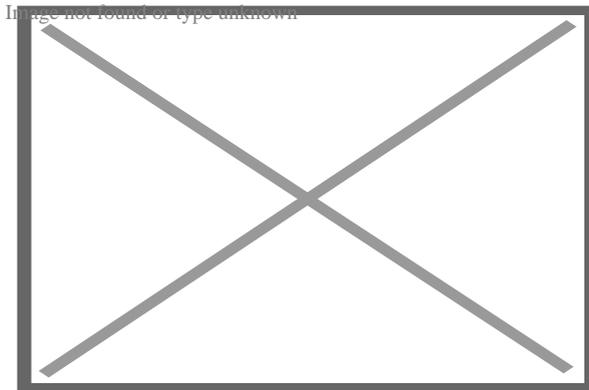


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