

# **2022-2023 TUC Trades Councils Programme of Work**



## Foreword from the TUCJCC

This is the first Trades Councils programme of work for a couple of years. We apologise for the gap. These, as in 2020, were partly attributable to the continuing Covid-19 Pandemic which we know has also affected a lot of what Trades Councils have been able to do, though we are glad to see things getting back to in person activity in a lot of places around the country.

We were glad to get back to an in person Trades Councils' conference in Leicester on 11/12 June this year. Though the attendance was smaller than pre-pandemic we hope that this will improve in 2023 when the conference will be at Congress House on the same weekend (10/11 June.) The discussion in Leicester was free-flowing and covered a lot of the current issues – the motions passed are listed at the end of this report. The guest speakers on organising in the Garment industry in Leicester and on the Clarks' dispute and Fire and Rehire -were well worth the time, and the panel discussions were also very useful in providing examples of what can be done, as well as identifying problems and issues to resolve.

The TUCJCC itself has continued to meet online and issue bulletins after each meeting summarising what has been going on around the country as well as the issues discussed at our meetings, and by the General Council. We hope you find these useful. We are grateful to Steve Gillan (POA) one of the General Council reps to the JCC, who has chaired most of our meetings as well as the conference.

We must record our sadness at the passing of Dave Wilson (TUCJCC rep for the Northwest) in March. Dave had been a stalwart member of the JCC as well as Trades Councils in his region, and his own union, the PCS.

The TUC Trades Councils Programme of Work is normally built on the decisions of that Conference and is designed to help Trades Councils focus on a range of issues in the year ahead. The TUCJCC sets out below some views on the issues we are facing as a trade union movement, and some ideas on campaigning activity your Trades Council might be able to act upon.

## **Trades Councils coming out of the pandemic.**

As noted above, many Trades Councils, as well as individual unions, are now meeting and running events 'in person' and on the streets. We know that some Trades Councils may be cautious about this, partly because of the nature and wishes of delegates, but also for general considerations about not swelling the increase of Covid cases.

We believe this is an issue for local decision. We know that meeting online is not ideal and hybrid meetings may not be possible, but we remind Trades Councils not to forget delegates etc who cannot use the Internet etc. Equally, when doing things in person please try to involve those who cannot be with you, using social media etc.

However, you meet and are active, the most important thing is to remember that Trades Councils can be the voice of the working class and community on a host of issues, including but not limited to those below. The upsurge in Trade Union activity and action which has come about as the pandemic restrictions ease and the cost of living and energy crises ramp up should give us plenty of reason to promote the causes, we believe in.

## **The Crisis is not the Fault of Working People.**

### **Tackling the Cost-of-Living Crisis; Britain Needs a Pay rise**

The overarching aim of the TUC remains to win a meaningful pay rise for workers across the public and private sector, that keeps pace with the rising cost of living and begins to reverse a decade of pay stagnation. The TUC will put forward a positive trade union agenda to show that this can be achieved, in contrast to the government's rhetoric that pay rises are impossible. This agenda includes:

- Greater collective bargaining coverage and increased trade union access to workplaces
- A real-terms public sector pay rise with a move towards restoring earnings lost over the last decade
- Calling on government for the national minimum wage to rise £15 an hour as soon as possible
- Defending trade union rights – showing that these are vital to enable workers to win the pay rise they deserve.
- Placing our demands for decent pay within a wider frame of winning a new deal for workers

In addition to campaigning to defend trade union rights, we will also use every strategy available to delay, challenge and dilute anti-trade union legislation or regulation that the government puts forward, working through parliament and through legal means where appropriate.

We believe we can win Britain a pay rise if:

- We use the cost-of-living crisis to promote the need for wage rises
- We amplify public and private sector unions' industrial campaigns for a pay rise and keep the pressure on ministers and employers
- We work with unions to eliminate sub-£15ph wages and to challenge outsourcing that drives down terms and conditions in all union workplaces
- We defend current rights at work, and prevent new restrictions on the rights of unions to bargain for higher wages
- We keep up the pressure for a higher National Minimum Wage
- We set out the case for sectoral fair pay deals and greater collective bargaining as practical routes to higher wages taken seriously in policy and political circles, and for this to be part of Labour's ready-to-go year one plan.

Under the banner of 'We Demand Better', a national demonstration, lobby of Parliament and local rallies have been organised in towns and cities around Britain. We will continue to undertake public-facing activity in town and city centres, workplaces, transport hubs and in communities, raising awareness of our campaign and drawing people to on-line resources that link to the TUC Solidarity Hub – fostering support for unions engaged in industrial disputes as well as actions that can be taken, including further engagement with MPs and petitions, supported by further data and analysis specific to the local area.

In addition, the conference debated and heard from those involved in such initiatives as 'Sheffield Needs a Payrise'. The model begun there has been picked up elsewhere but even those trades councils which are not able to start a full organising campaign may be able to find parts of the initiatives that they can use in their own campaigns. The motion from the Trades Councils' conference submitted to, and agreed by, Congress sought to build on and extend this activity.

## **Winning more for workers; Supporting Union Campaigns**

The TUC will continue to take forward the work of the Solidarity Hub, providing support for union industrial campaigns and for reps, including practical support to maximise ballot participation, training and research for reps and amplification through the TUC's media and communications.

The TUC will continue to align its trade union education services to priority campaigns and to union action.

Trades Councils can get behind local unions taking action, or publicising their case by visiting picket lines, holding street stalls to raise the focus, holding meetings to bring together workers in dispute. Trades Councils are also encouraged to work together to assist unions with members taking action across several areas.

Working nationally and regionally the TUC will work with unions to strengthen and diversify their reps base, developing the black leaders programme, women in leadership and young leaders' programmes.

The TUC will take forward the Equalities Campaign Plan and the Report of the Anti-Racism Taskforce. Trades Councils are encouraged to take up these issues both in the community, but also in their own structures. The action plan on pages 11 and 12 of the report is particularly useful as a starting point. Although Trades Councils are not mentioned specifically there is scope for work on organising to identify and assist Black activists and in networking to improve the trade union movement's ability to defend and advance the position of Black workers, amongst other things.

## **Defending the NHS and Public Services**

The Tory Government will maintain and probably intensify its explicit and hidden attacks on the NHS. The introduction of Integrated Care Services' (ICS) is an open invitation to further privatisation of an NHS which is still struggling to recover from the pandemic and underfunding over many years. Trades Councils need to be working with health unions as well as such organisations as Keep Our NHS Public / Health Campaigns Together to defend the NHS.

Elsewhere closure of Job Centre offices and continued tightening of benefit rules mean that an increasing number of working people will find it even more difficult to keep themselves and their families above the poverty line. The work of the small number of Unemployed Workers Centres needs to be supported, alongside continued advocacy and support for an improved benefit system and staff to run it.

Schools and Local Government services are likely to be hit by the fuel price rises in particular but, again, these sectors have had reductions in funding and in pay for staff. Like the NHS, these services touch all of us and ought to be easy for Trades Councils to gather support to oppose cuts, redundancies etc.

The energy rises as well as inflation will have a disproportionate effect on pensioners who, were denied the increase they should have got in April 2022 when the Government dropped the 'triple lock' (if only for a year they said). Even if they had honoured it, many older people will face real hardship in the winter, if they are not already. Trades Councils can work with the National Pensioners' Convention and its local groups, as well as other supportive organisations such as the End Fuel Poverty Coalition.

## **International issues**

The war in Ukraine is taking much of the attention at present and Congress adopted a statement on international solidarity on these issues. However, there are many other international issues to which trades councils may wish to give attention and which should not be forgotten. A couple are addressed in the emergency motions passed at the Trades Councils conference. Most prominently, perhaps is the issue of support for refugees and asylum seekers. As well as opposing the ludicrous and vicious plan to deport refugees to Rwanda, support continues to be needed by those coming to this country in search of some relief from their suffering.

## **Not forgetting what's happening in your area**

Trades Councils should not lose sight of things that are happening on their own patch. This might be a specific threat to a local NHS service or other amenity, an application to build something in an inappropriate place, or an example of flagrant injustice. There is also the chance to celebrate what Trade Unions do, for example at Pride events as well as by commemorating International Workers' Memorial Day (28 April) and MayDay, as well as Heart Unions Week (13-19 February 2023) and other recruitment and organising campaigns and activities.

Finally, do not forget that registered Trades Councils are still entitled to apply for TUC Development Grants, normally up to £300 each. Application forms are available from your regional TUC Office. The grants are intended to help fund the development work of the Trades Councils and the costs of campaigning on issues of importance to the movement.

## **TUC Priority Areas 2022-3**

TUC Congress sets the priorities for campaigning for the TUC, building on existing priorities and campaign areas responding to the challenges faced by working people. The key priority areas listed below are not an exhaustive list of everything the TUC will be working on in the year ahead, instead, these are areas where trades councils will support the work of trade unions and the TUC in their areas.

### **Building and Diversifying our Reps Base**

Work will include:

- i. Rolling out programmes on tackling the far right;
- ii. training and guidance on tackling sexual harassment;
- iii. leadership programmes and networks for under-represented groups;
- iv. building on and extending the reach of trade union education provision.

### **Tackling the Cost of Living Crisis and Winning Fair Pay**

Work will include:

- i. providing analysis on pay and collective bargaining to support union campaigns;
- ii. highlighting the impact of public spending cuts and campaigning for a fair tax system;
- iii. supporting union coordination in industrial campaigns and industrial action;
- iv. supporting union organising campaigns focused on low-paid workers.

### **Employment Rights and the Right to Strike**

Work will include:

- i. providing evidence and campaign support to protect and enhance employment rights;
- ii. oppose the government's plans to roll back from EU employment rights;
- iii. oppose further anti-trade union legislation, including restrictions on the right to strike (Minimum Service Levels in Transport or other sectors).

## Conference Resolutions and Actions

### Stronger Unions

#### Organise the Unorganised – Linking with Trades Councils

This National Trade Union Councils Conference calls on the whole trade union movement to join with us in a mission to organise the unorganised and bring trade unionism back to all workers in our towns and cities. For far too long we have witnessed the collapse in union membership and the demise of collective bargaining as the main vehicle for setting wages and conditions. With rapidly declining living standards and a tight labour market, there is now a historic opportunity to recruit and organise workers to fight back and strike for higher pay and better conditions.

Conference applauds efforts made by some Trades Councils e.g., Sheffield TUC's "Sheffield Needs a Pay Rise" to form a partnership with BFAWU to put a Union Organiser on the streets. This model has now been extended to Leeds and Rotherham. BFAWU is now keen to extend this "Union Towns" model with other Trades Councils elsewhere in the UK. However, it does not have to be an exclusively BFAWU model. We call on other national unions to explore similar relationships with local Trade Union Councils.

Trades Union Councils are an essential link for the trade union movement into our local communities. Organising on a town or city basis across different employers and economic sectors can have a significant impact on levels of union consciousness and activity on local workers who become inspired by local victories. The experience of Sheffield Needs a Pay Rise is that workers get to know of union breakthroughs in similar workplaces and want some of the same action for themselves.

Organised workers in trade union branches who are affiliated to their local Trade Union Council know that de-unionisation of their local labour market has led to a collapse in wage rates, the rise of zero hours contracts and other forms of exploitative employment practices, insecure employment, minimum or no sick pay or holiday pay. We have been horrified to see bullying, sexual harassment and racism go unchallenged in such workplaces.

We cannot afford to let this become the norm whilst multinational employers rake in the profits. That's why local union branches have proved their willingness to help fund a Union Organiser in their local town or city. The key is to work with Trade Union Councils at a local level to rebuild trade unionism and we call upon the TUC General Council to advertise this motion to all its affiliates as soon as possible after this conference, highlighting the key sentence "We call on other national unions to explore similar relationships with local Trade Union Councils".

**This motion was selected as the motion to go to TUC Congress and was passed unanimously.**

***Trades Councils are encouraged to explore the possibility of developing similar organising campaigns with trade unions locally.***



### **A victory for one is a victory for all: sharing success**

Conference notes that the Trade Union Act of 2016 was specifically designed by the Tory government to make it harder for workers to organise strike action. However, we have seen many groups of workers successfully beating the 50% membership turnout threshold to obtain positive ballot results for strike action by well organised get the vote out campaigns. Some recent examples would include higher education workers in the UCU and Unite members in local government.

Similarly, we've seen groups of workers in previously considered unorganised sectors taking effective strike action using innovative methods, including the Just Eat delivery drivers and others in the fast-food industry.

As trade councils we celebrate such actions and provide support and solidarity to all such struggles and strikes. However, this often means that we go from one campaign straight on to another or combine several campaigns simultaneously. As such we have little time to consolidate the successes and share good and effective practice.

As a corollary to the union dictum that an injury to one is an injury to all, this motion proposes that a victory for one is a victory for all, and that successes should be shared between trades councils to help facilitate ongoing and future campaigns.

Conference therefore calls upon the TUCJCC to compile a register of details of successful campaigns and strategies used so that these can be shared among trades councils to facilitate support for other campaigns, and as a means of celebrating and sharing success to provide confidence for other workers in dispute. Working with Strikemap UK should be considered when attempting to achieve this.

***TUCJCC to consider including stories of successful union campaigns in the TUCJCC bulletin.***

### **Rail Industry Campaigns**

Conference believes that changes proposed to the railway industry by the Government will lead to a reduction in jobs and seriously affect the safety of the travelling public, while continuing to enrich the private rail operating companies. Services being reduced following Covid but not being reinstated, along with fare price rises, will result in passengers getting a second-rate service.

Trades Councils and County Associations are urged to support rail union campaigns, including RMT - Defending Rail Jobs, Pay and Pensions, RMT - SOS Save our Station Staff, TSSA - Future Rail, TSSA - Safe at Work ASLEF - Invest in Rail, against these proposals at local, regional and national level. The involvement of Trades Councils as representatives of local working communities will give invaluable assistance and support and strengthen the message and the cause. Possible actions include Support via social media platforms, leafleting campaigns in local areas, Highlighting campaigns to MPs and politicians such as local mayors and council leaders.

asking other unions for their support, Supporting rail union and passenger organization Health & Safety Campaigns.

*Trades councils are already doing much to support rail industry union campaigns, as well as others, and are encouraged to continue doing so.*

### **Urgent union action needed to stop workplace airborne transmission of Covid-19**

- i. Covid-19 including Omicron, is overwhelmingly transmitted by airborne spread – people breathe in the virus from the surrounding air. Airborne protections are essential to stop transmission.
- ii. This means providing clean air in the workplace and all indoor spaces. As a society we have the means to do this and rapidly.
- iii. While individual workers should take measures to protect themselves (such as wearing a FFP2 or better face mask, and getting vaccinated), only employers can provide clean air in the workplace, free of coronavirus. It is also their legal responsibility.
- iv. Given the high level of Covid-19 transmission everywhere including workplaces, the threat of the Omicron variant, and failure of employers and government to protect workers, we call the union movement to urgently develop action plans to improve airborne protections in the workplace.

Conference supports:

- a) An information campaign aimed at union members about why airborne spread is so infectious, and the tools members need to use to stop it happening.
- b) Provision of hand-held CO2 monitors to Health and Safety reps to monitor ventilation. These are accurate and simple to use with some basic training.

Making demands on employers to:

1. Review risk assessments – all risk assessments must now include ventilation and air quality in all areas of the workplace.
2. Work with H&S reps to monitor ventilation and air quality and institute the necessary improvements.
3. Installation of air filters in all poorly ventilated areas in the workplace, where ventilation cannot be sufficiently improved. These are highly efficient, not expensive and readily available.
4. Provide all workers with FFP2, or better, masks. So called “surgical” masks leak at the sides and above the nose; they are not designed to protect against airborne spread. FFP2 provide respiratory protection and are highly effective. They are also cheap and readily available.
5. Initiate plans to improve ventilation with fresh air in the medium term. Measures 1 to 5 above can be taken immediately and should not wait for ventilation systems to be installed.
6. These measures should be taken together with others under the “hierarchy of controls” within the workplace. It is the employer’s responsibility to implement all

levels of the hierarchy. The airborne protections are essential; handwashing, cleaning surfaces and social distancing are not enough. For detailed information on airborne protections see: <https://doctorsinunite.com>

Conference supports the proposal by Independent SAGE for a simple messaging scheme designed to convey the results of mechanical and natural ventilation assessments of indoor rooms and spaces in public buildings and calls on the trade union movement to campaign for the government to make such a scheme a legal obligation.

***Trades councils are encouraged to work with unions to campaign on covid health and safety campaigns and workplace improvements.***

## Economy

### Workers need a pay rise

Since the financial crash of 2008 average wages have fallen by 10%. Soaring bills are leaving many having to choose between heating and eating. By the end of 2022 families will have seen their standards of living falling further and it is predicted they will be £1200 worse off. Inflation is exceeding 5% and rising, the energy price cap has been raised with bills going up by an average of 50% and the 1.25% increase in National Insurance contributions (NICs) will come into effect in April.

The cost-of-living crisis is affecting those who can least afford it.

The effect of low paid precarious employment, cuts in Universal Credit and spiralling living costs has led to more than 14 million people living in poverty. In work poverty has massively increased with close on 5 million jobs paid below the living wage.

The decline in wages has impacted recruitment to the NHS, resulted in shortages in HGV drivers and led to over 2 million having to get second jobs to survive. The public sector has been forced to accept a pay freeze while the cruel tactic of fire and rehire and the callous disregard given to workers whose employment has been outsourced has had a massive impact on take home pay.

In the meantime, the wealth of the richest 1000 people in UK has increased from £252bn in 2009 to £771bn in 2019.

As trade unionists we want all workers to receive wages resulting in secure and decent quality of life.

Conference believes, however, that:

- i. It is recognised that any wage increases gained by workers through struggle will be taken back through rising prices and/or increases in output per worker to protect profit levels
- ii. Bosses will use increases in wage costs as an excuse to sack workers and make fewer workers produce more.
- iii. The struggle for higher wages is not only an industrial struggle but is also a political one for so long as the capitalist system exists, so will the struggle exist.

Conference resolves to call for the Trade Union Congress to

- a) Launch a well-planned, well-organised and well-financed campaign under the slogan Workers Need A Pay Rise.
- b) Campaign for a £15 per hour minimum wage and increases to this must be linked to future price rises
- c) Campaign to demand actions by government to mitigate and reduce the present cost of living crisis facing working class people.

***Trades Councils are encouraged to support cost-of-living campaigns and support union pay campaigns.***

## **Workers' rights and minimum wage**

Conference welcomes and supports the Composite 4, 'End fire and rehire and workers' rights', agreed at the 2021 Labour Party Conference, and in particular its support for stronger individual employment rights, the repeal of all anti-trade union laws, sectoral collective bargaining.

£15 per hour statutory minimum wage; increasing statutory sick pay to a living wage, to be paid from day one of absence, and for the lower earnings limit that means low-paid workers are not entitled to SSP to be abolished; a ban on zero-hours contracts; ending outsourcing in public services; the creation of new collective rights and freedoms, including banning 'fire and rehire';

a better work-life balance, including a legal right to flexible working by default, a 'right to switch off' so that homes don't become 24/7 offices, and reductions in working hours without loss of pay; and a full package of measures that will end insecurity and instead win pay increases and better working lives.

Conference calls on all trades councils to support these campaigning points in local communities, to ensure all jobs are good jobs and people receive fair rewards for the profits and wealth they create.

***Trades Councils are encouraged to support employment rights campaigns and campaigns to raise the minimum wage to £15 per hour.***

## **No to extortionate Energy Bill price rises – nationalise the gas and Electric companies now!**

This National Trade Union Councils Conference is appalled at the huge surge in inflation this year 2022 which is already hitting working class families hard. This catastrophe in living standards comes on the back of an absolute fall in real incomes since the Tories came to office in 2010 following years of austerity which has seen annual pay rises below inflation or frozen.

A huge factor in the current inflation surge is the escalating price of fossil fuel energy, notably electricity and gas, which has left millions of households struggling to pay their energy bills. For many there is simply not enough to pay to heat their homes and put food on the table.

This Conference notes that the cost of extracting and transporting gas and generating electricity is no higher today than it was a year ago. The huge rises in energy prices are due to private profiteering due to shortages of supply, which allows those corporations in control of the energy markets to ratchet up eye-watering profits.

Whilst UK consumers faced a 50% price increase in April 2022, it should be noted that French consumers have faced only a 4% increase thanks to energy production and supply remaining in public ownership. There has never been a clearer argument in favour of taking back the energy companies into public ownership in the UK.

The Conference therefore agrees to campaign for:

- i. The re-nationalisation of the energy companies who produce, transport, and generate the energy we use as domestic consumers
- ii. A windfall tax on the highly profitable energy companies
- iii. Massive public investment in renewable energy e.g. wind, solar, which is now cheaper than fossil fuels and will help to combat climate change
- iv. No to fracking or any increase in fossil fuel extraction
- v. public investment in other measures to green our economy and reduce our cost of living e.g.
  - a) Invest in 1 million new zero-emission council homes
  - b) A massive public sector home insulation programme
  - c) High quality system of publicly owned public transport with low fares

We call on the TUC, trade unions and trades councils to work together in ensuring that these issues are promoted locally and nationally.

### Public ownership of energy

Conference calls on trades union councils to build a broad-based campaign, engaging local communities, for public ownership of our energy system.

The two increases in household fuel bills last year pushed half a million more households into fuel poverty. The increases this year, leaving aside any due to the Ukraine crisis, are likely to result in a total of 6 million households in fuel poverty. Mental health will also be impacted by rising household bills, adding to the pressures faced by overstretched and underfunded mental health services already under pressure due to the effects of Covid.

Yet the 'big five' energy retailers are making big profits. British Gas more than doubled its profit in the first six months of 2021, helping parent company Centrica to offset the losses when 7,000 engineers took industrial action to defeat the company's 'fire and rehire' plans.

If our energy system were brought into public ownership, the companies would not be duty bound to prioritise huge returns for shareholders. They could invest in the energy system, invest in renewables, and use the financially buoyant times to build up reserves to protect against the types of price fluctuation we are seeing. In Britain, recent research at the University of Greenwich showed that eliminating private energy ownership would be equivalent to a staggering 25 per cent reduction in energy prices.

Conference calls for an immediate and tighter cap on gas and electricity charges, a windfall tax on energy sector monopoly profits and the permanent abolition of VAT on household fuel. Ultimately, we recognise that only public ownership of energy will end the profiteering that is driving up energy bills and holding back development of sustainable energy production in Britain.

***Trades Councils are encouraged to support campaigns for a greener, publicly owned energy sector, as outlined in the above two motions.***

## State Pensions and Retirement Age

Trade unions have opposed the raising of the age for payment of the state pension for a variety of reasons but not least that 44 years of NI contributions was more than enough for the miserly pension that we receive. Already the state has secured an additional year of NI contributions and non-payment of one year's pension. This is set to rise to age 68 meaning 3 years of failure to pay pension entitlement.

One of the reasons given for this change was that average life expectancy was rising. This has now gone into reverse. Even prior to the coronavirus crisis the average life expectancy in the U. K. had been falling for the preceding five years and this is likely to be exacerbated by a high death rate and the long-term effects of "long covid".

From April this year the Government will be increasing NI contributions by another 1.25% with nothing in return for pensions. Enough is enough. Workers already pay a disproportionate share of UK taxes and deserve at least a few years of good health in retirement.

Conference calls for a concerted national campaign to stop any further increase in the delaying of paying the State pension.

***Trades Councils are encouraged to campaign for fair access to state pensions, without delay.***

## Social and Civil Rights

### Police, Crime, Sentencing and Courts Bill

The Trades Union movement commemorates Workers' Memorial Day every April, to remember workers who have lost their lives in the course of their work, and those who are currently disabled because of their work.

This Conference knows that the rights we have in 2021 were hard won through protest, through strike and through public assembly. This includes the rights to a weekend and a defined working week; health and safety legislation including those children should attend school instead of factories; and the right to a pension and a retirement.

This Conference notes that these rights and protective legislation reduce death and injury at work and give redress to workers when such tragedies occur.

This Conference believes that the Police, Crime, Sentencing and Courts Bill will enable police and government to prevent all forms of public protest and association, which will be to the detriment of our trade union interests and the wider public interest. We recognise that there are attacks on our freedoms and we must have the right to assemble, to demonstrate and to protest to defend these rights.

This Conference therefore calls for the following actions:

- i. That the Trades Union Congress support calls for the above bill to be rejected by the houses of parliament.
- ii. That opposition parties in parliament, and locally, support calls for the above bill to be rejected; speak against this bill at every opportunity and ultimately vote against it.
- iii. That all the above parties and TUC publicise the bill, its intentions, and its intended outcomes, to build mass protest against this bill both before and after Royal Assent.

***Trades Councils are encouraged to support campaigns to protect the right to lawful protest.***

### The 'Trojan Horse Affair'

Conference expresses its concern about events in Birmingham in 2014 following a hoax letter being sent to Birmingham council alleging a plot to run schools according to Islamist principles. Some in government and the media used this to make unsubstantiated allegations about violent extremism and the letter was used as justification for adverse reforms in counter-terrorism policy. Subsequent official inquiries have disproved the idea that there was an organised plot, but many individuals and institutions have been affected by what was a fraudulent allegation.

Conference urges the TUC to call for the following:

That the Department for Education should be transparent on this issue and hold a public inquiry into the Trojan Horse affair to establish the full facts.



That members of the local community at the time who are found to have faced injustices and abuses should be recompensed for any damage this has caused them.

That those who are found to have been wrongly impacted by banning orders and subsequent job losses should be exonerated together with those whose names are found to have been wrongly tarnished by allegations of extremism.

That a public apology should be issued by the Department for Education to people who are found to have been wrongly impacted and whose names have been tarnished in the public, community, and media.

***Trades Councils are encouraged to support campaigns for justice for victims of the Trojan Horse affair where possible.***

## Appendix I – TUC Equalities Action Plan

### Introduction

You will see throughout this plan our determination to grow stronger and bigger. Our commitment to equality for Women, Black workers, LGBT+ and Disabled workers underpins everything we do.

Produced in consultation with our equalities committees, this campaign plan supports and enhances the specific priorities and campaigns of our member unions in their industrial sectors. It will succeed only if it is the plan for all of our movement – member unions, workplace reps, grassroots members, and our allies too. Everyone can contribute to building our movement's strength and resilience.

The primary purpose of the campaign plan is to highlight the key themes as prioritised by the TUC equalities conferences in agreement with the TUC equalities committees.

The aim of this document is to guide and support the work of the general council and to provide vital equalities information as needed. This campaign plan sets out both our strategic approach to equality and sets out the activity that we will undertake. This plan covers our work on Black workers, women, Disabled workers and LGBT+ workers but the TUC also has a separate programme of work covering younger workers.

The TUC has the following intersectional priorities.

- Ending sexual harassment at work
- Winning flexible working for all
- Beating the far and radical right at home and internationally
- Seeking comprehensive workforce monitoring agreements covering pay-gap reporting, recruitment, retention, promotion, pay and grading, access to training, performance management and discipline and grievance procedures.
- Winning a statutory obligation on employers to report on and produce actions plans for gender, disability and ethnicity pay gaps

***This document may also be made available, on request, in accessible electronic formats or in Braille, audiotape and large print, at no extra cost.***

## Women

Four key themes emerged from our women's conference this year:

- Trade unions leading to end gender-based abuse
- Women's health and safety in the working place
- Bargaining for women's rights and representation
- Solidarity with our international sisters

### Trade unions leading to end gender-based abuse

TUC women's conference 2022 brought together women from across our movement, and they were clear about their priorities. Half of the motions to women's conference related to tackling violence against women and girls (VAWG) with a particular focus on tackling sexual harassment in our workplaces, in our schools and further/ higher education institutions, on public transport and in our trade unions.

Our own research tells us that half of all women have experience sexual harassment while at work, and that sexual harassment can be more prevalent for younger and disabled women, Black, LGBT+ and migrant workers, and those in insecure forms of work. Seven in 10 Disabled women and LGBT+ workers have experienced sexual harassment in the workplace. We know that 4 out of 5 women do not report sexual harassment to their employers. Trade unions in recent years have led calls for a preventative duty on employers to prevent sexual harassment and the reintroduction of protections against third party harassment, the government confirmed they will introduce this legislation and it is now being introduced as a private members bill. Trade unions must continue to campaign to ensure this legislation is as robust and impactful as possible, and we must lead by example.

### *We are calling for government to:*

- Ensure that the legislation introduced shifts the responsibility away from victim-survivors having to report an incident of sexual harassment for action to take place, and instead shifts the responsibility on employers to take all reasonable steps to prevent sexual harassment.
- Ensure that the EHRC, the body responsible for enforcing the duty have the resources and powers they need to make the duty effective.
- Ensure that as part of the duty there is an easy, clear, and anonymous route for people to report employers who they feel are not taking a preventative approach.
- The government did not commit to extending time limits on tribunal cases from 3 to 6 months, we will continue to call on them to do this.

### *We will campaign for employers to:*

- Take a preventative approach by introducing practical steps as set out in our toolkit such as risk assessments and anonymous climate surveys as best practice.

- Introduce anti-sexual harassment workplace policies and improve procedures for reporting and investigating reports of sexual harassment.

***The TUC will:***

- Work with affiliates and key stakeholders through the #Thisisnotworking alliance to lobby and influence the preventative duty legislation.
- Support trade unions to tackle and prevent sexual harassment in their own organisations through our pilot train the trainers scheme.
- Support reps to effectively respond to victim-survivors of domestic abuse and sexual harassment through developing training and resources.
- Undertake quantitative and qualitative research work on Black women's experiences of sexual harassment in the workplace. Engage academic(s) for a literature review and use our findings to inform our campaigning.

**Women's Health and Safety in the workplace**

Women's health and safety in the workplace was a key issue in the pandemic where we saw poor fitting PPE, lack of gender sensitive risk assessments and conflicting guidance for pregnant workers and new mothers exacerbate the challenges women face at work. Key issues such as menopause discrimination have also become more prominent in recent years as research revealed that nearly 1 million women have been forced out of the labour market due to a lack for them in the workplace while they are experiencing menopause.

***We are calling for government to:***

- Enact section 14 of the Equality Act that allows for dual discrimination claims, and to extend beyond two protected characteristics.
- Ensure that the tribunal system has enough funding and resources so that women can enforce their rights when they have been breached.
- Ensure paid neo-natal leave is paid at a living wage rate, has no cap on it in terms of leave entitlement, and that applying for it is as simple as possible for parents who need to take such leave at a very difficult time.
- Introduce legislation to better support families experiencing pregnancy loss.

***We will campaign for employers to:***

- Work with unions to develop and implement clear policies and practices around gender sensitive occupational health and safety, including menopause.
- Review their sickness and absence and flexible working policies which can be particularly impactful for women working while going through any of the above experiences.

***The TUC will:***

- Continue to raise awareness of employers' responsibilities regarding health and safety under current legislation, including the new HSE guidance on individual risk assessments

for pregnant workers and new mothers, which the TUC working with affiliates successfully got them to change.

- Lead a campaign to raise awareness of gender occupational health and safety, and the impact of menopause, menstruation, fertility, endometriosis, and other gynaecological experiences on women in the workplace and ensure this is reflected in Health and Safety Executive and EHRC guidance and advice.
- Consult with affiliates about making menopause a protected characteristic ahead of the Women and Equalities Select Committee consultation.
- Work with affiliates and all our equality committees to develop best practice and example workplace policies through an intersectional lens.
- Campaign and lobby key governing bodies such as the HSE and EHRC to provide and update guidance in relation to gender and health and safety.

### **Bargaining for women's rights and representation**

With the gender pay gap still at 15.4 per cent<sup>1</sup> and the gender pensions gap more than double at nearly 38 per cent, this is just one example of the work that still needs to be done for women to be truly equal in the workplace and wider society. These inequalities can be compounded by other forms of discrimination, disproportionately impacting young women, Black women, Disabled women and LBT women. Equal pay and tackling the pay and pension gap, ensuring, and enforcing equality impact assessments, and centring women in discussions about how the world of work has and is changing in the face of climate change, automation, levelling up and how we address challenges are essential.

Research has shown that many of the underlying causes of the gender pay gap are connected to a lack of quality jobs offering flexible work. Due to the unequal division of unpaid care and the lack of flexible working in jobs, women often end up in lower paid part-time work or out of work altogether. Flexible work can mean many ways of working, including homeworking, term-time working, part time, compressed hours, job sharing, annualised hours, flexitime, mutually-agreed predictable shifts and other changes to when, where and how long people work. Flexible working is essential for women to be able to work - more than nine in 10 mums who worked flexibly told the TUC they would find it difficult or impossible to do their job without it. But too many flexible working requests are denied – half of working mums did not get the flexibility they asked for and many don't feel able to ask in the first place due to justified fears of rejection and negative treatment.

### **We are calling for government to:**

- Introduce a statutory obligation on employers to develop gender pay gap action plans.
- Introduce a statutory obligation for ministers to report on the gender pensions gap and produce action plans on how to close it.

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<sup>1</sup> The Gender pay gap is 15.4 per cent for all employees. The overall gender pay gap is calculated using all median hourly pay, excluding overtime, for all male and female employees using the latest Office for National Statistics (ONS) Annual Survey of Hours and Earnings (ASHE) data.

- Fix auto-enrolment so it works for low paid and part-time workers, including removing the £10,000 earning threshold.
- Introduce a day one right to flexible working for all workers and an advertising duty on employers to advertise all jobs as flexible upfront unless they can prove the job cannot offer any flexibility.
- Introduce universal, flexible, high-quality childcare that is available to all from the point at which paid maternity or parental leave ends.
- Introduce a minimum wage of £15 per hour, as soon as reasonably practicable, for all workers.
- To carry out and publish Equality Impact Assessments for all government policies and publish the results, in line with the Public Sector Equality Duty.
- Extend the Public Sector Equality Duty to the private sector.

***We will campaign for employers to:***

- Continue to publish their gender pay gap and encourage employers with less than 250 employees to publish.
- Work with trade unions to develop action plans to tackle them.
- Publish their gender pensions gaps and work with unions to produce action plans to tackle them.
- Review practices that might disproportionately impact women and marginalised groups from pay and job progression in the workplace, for example using the Equal Pay Toolkit develop with Trade Unions and the Equality Trust.
- Introduce comprehensive workforce monitoring agreements covering recruitment, retention, promotion, pay and grading, access to training, performance management and discipline and grievance procedures as well as pay-gap and pensions gap monitoring.
- Introduce flexible working policies and advertise jobs as flexible upfront.

***The TUC will:***

- Continue to campaign for day one rights to flexible working and an advertising duty on employers, including through lobbying the private members bill on flexible working.
- Developing reps' resources and training on Equal Pay, tackling pay and pensions gaps and on flexible working
- Campaigning for a £15 per hour minimum wage.
- Promote our Equal Pay and Gender Pension Gap campaign days and build on our successful campaigns this year.

**Solidarity with our international sisters**

Supporting our sisters globally is always a key priority of women in our movement. With attacks on women's bodily autonomy and hard-won rights at risk across the world, and with

women and girls at the sharp end of war, conflict and climate emergency, and with the far right increasingly using misogyny as a recruiting tool, supporting our international sisters is as vital as ever.

***We are calling for government to:***

- Ensure safe passage for women and girls fleeing war, conflict and climate disasters.
- Remove No Recourse to Public Funds so migrant and refugee women in the UK can access health care and resources, and ensure they are covered by any legislation aimed at tackling violence against women and girls in the UK.
- Condemn the removal of women's rights to abortion and health care by our international partners and to reverse the decision to remove references to "sexual and reproductive health and rights" and "bodily autonomy" from the UK-organised 'Statement on freedom of religion or belief and gender equality'.

***The TUC will:***

- Work with affiliates to support reps in tackling far right misogynistic narratives in the workplace.
- Work with sister unions internationally and stakeholders in the UK and Ireland to counter anti-abortion narratives.
- Campaign for migrant and refugee rights to safe passage, and rights to remain.

## Disabled Workers

Disabled People were hit hardest by Covid-19. In fact, 6 in 10 Covid-19 deaths were Disabled People, and the pandemic also caused enormous mental distress. There are now two million people in the UK with Long Covid and a TUC survey of those experiencing it showed that over half had experienced discrimination or disadvantage as a result.

Disabled People are also facing a huge cost of living crisis, with two in five Disabled workers pushed into financial hardship during the pandemic. Disabled workers were also twice as likely to have had to visit a food bank than non-Disabled workers. Whilst Disabled People often face higher household costs than average, they experience a disability employment gap of 28.7 per cent and a disability pay gap of 16.5 per cent meaning they earn £3,500 less a year compared to non-Disabled workers, so effectively work unpaid for 52 days of the year. The gap is even higher for Disabled women.

Disabled workers face huge barriers accessing reasonable adjustments. A TUC survey during the pandemic showed almost half (46 per cent) of those who requested reasonable adjustments failed to get all or some of the different/additional reasonable adjustments they needed to work effectively. Many Disabled workers feel unable to even ask for fear of discrimination and those who do are asked are left waiting for months, sometimes years, for a response.

A key reasonable adjustment for Disabled workers is changes to working hours and location, including those with Long Covid. Disabled workers have a different set of rights, and access changes to hours or location through the reasonable adjustment provisions set out in the Equality Act 2010. However, increased access to flexible working for everyone would help to ensure Disabled workers could work flexibly without being treated with stigma or discriminated against. We must also ensure that the gains in remote working for Disabled workers are protected, whilst addressing the challenges, such as isolation and lack of access to proper equipment.

The TUC is calling for reform of social security, of access to work, and of the economy, to ensure a decent standard of living for all Disabled workers.

### ***We are calling for government to:***

- Close the Disability Pay and Employment gaps by 2024.
- Incorporate the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities into UK law.
- Enact a statutory requirement for employers to report their Disability Pay and Employment Gaps with action plans and regular monitoring.
- Ensure fair access for Disabled workers to request reasonable adjustments, without being discriminated against for doing so. Employers should face a substantial penalty for non-compliance.
- Ensure that everyone with Long Covid is recognised as Disabled to make sure that all working people with Long Covid are formally protected.
- Reform Access to Work, so that it is sufficiently funded and available to Disabled job seekers.



- Reform the benefits system, so that it does not force Disabled workers into in-work poverty – and delivers for all Disabled workers, including freelancers.
- Scrap Work Capability Assessments.
- Ensure accessibility is a priority in public spaces including through public transport and parking provision.
- End food insecurity for all, noting the link between food poverty and mental distress.
- Commit to an inclusive education workforce, including through teacher training which is accessible and promotes the recruitment of Disabled People.
- Introduce a day one right to flexible working for all workers and an advertising duty on employers to advertise all jobs as flexible upfront unless they can prove the job cannot offer any flexibility.

***We will campaign for employers to:***

- Introduce menopause policies that meet the needs of Disabled workers experiencing the menopause.
- Introduce flexible working policies and advertise jobs as flexible upfront and ensure the benefits of home working for Disabled workers are protected whilst addressing the risks.
- Introduce comprehensive workforce monitoring and action plans (to be agreed with Trade Unions). Employers should collect and publish data including: pay gap monitoring, the proportion of Disabled People in each pay quarter, and data on recruitment and promotion, pay and remuneration, training, appraisals, grievances, and disciplinary action.
- Adopt reasonable adjustment passports.

***The TUC will:***

- Continue to demand change to the National Disability Strategy and highlight the lack of consultation with Disabled People in its development. We will promote alternative tools such as the Disability Employment Charter, which calls for concrete measures such as a two-week deadline for responding to reasonable adjustment requests.
- Continue to lobby and campaign for legislative reform (listed above) to improve experiences of work for Disabled People.
- Conduct a survey on Long Covid to update our evidence base, campaign for everyone with Long Covid to be recognised as Disabled, and produce support for affiliates and reps.
- Raise awareness of invisible impairments and produce resources for Trade Union reps.
- Run campaigns which encourage more Disabled workers to join a trade union, encourages Unions to improve our own accessibility, and encourage activism on the part of Trade Union members.

- Run a Disabled workers leadership school to develop Disabled leaders across the Trade Union movement, providing training in negotiating, organising and other key areas.

## **LGBT+ Workers**

LGBT+ workers are facing an increasingly hostile environment in the UK. The Government and the media are using LGBT+ workers' rights, and especially trans rights, as part of a deliberate culture war, with the goal of splitting working people. This has been accompanied by a worrying rise in hate crime.

Transphobic far-right groups seek to undermine progress on equality and inclusion in the workplace – progress which has been hard-won by Trade Unions. The current moral panic around trans rights is very similar to the panic around gay and lesbian identities in the 1980s, epitomised by Section 28 legislation.

LGBT+ workers (and especially young LGBT+ workers) are also facing a cost-of-living crisis. Contrary to the 'pink pound' myth, polling suggests that the LGBT+ pay gap stands at circa 16% and LGBT+ people often have additional household costs such as fertility treatments, transition related healthcare, and costs associated with moving to urban areas.

The COVID-19 pandemic has had a negative impact on the mental health of LGBT+ people living in the UK. Evidence points to increased feelings of isolation and loneliness through the loss of safe, supportive, and identity-affirming peer-groups, communities and spaces.

### **We are calling for government to:**

- Consult with unions on a strategy to make sure workplaces are safe for all LGBT+ people. As a minimum, the Government should introduce a new duty on employers to protect workers from harassment by customers and clients.
- Enact a trans-inclusive ban on Conversion Therapy.
- Urgently Reform the Gender Recognition Act, giving trans and non-binary people the right to self-determination.
- Introduce NHS gender identity equality monitoring standards for patients and staff. This is important to ensure a consistent and equitable treatment of trans staff and patients.
- Provide funding to develop sustainable mental health services designed by and for LGBT+ people, with clear referral pathways, reduced waiting times and continuous support.
- Introduce mandatory, comprehensive training for staff in schools and colleges on tackling homophobic, biphobic and transphobic language and abuse, defend inclusive sex and relationships education, and call for guidance on supporting trans pupils.

### **We will campaign for employers to:**

- Ensure LGBT+ inclusion in the workplace through introducing inclusive policies and practices.

### **The TUC will:**

- Continue to publicly challenge transphobic far-right narratives and organisations that seek to create hostility for trans and non-binary rights, and campaign against rising hate in and outside of the workplace.

- Launch a TUC Alliance for Trans and Non-Binary Rights.
- Lobby government to reverse the decision to remove references to 'sexual and reproductive health and rights' and 'bodily autonomy' from the UK-organised 'Statement on freedom of religion or belief and gender equality'.
- Produce guidance which affiliates can provide to employers on supporting trans and non-binary employees and promoting trans equality in the workplace.
- Provide unions with guidance on trans rights, parallel with and connected to the TUC's crucial work on gender equality and sex discrimination. We will emphasize that trans women are part of unions' crucial work around gender equality and sex discrimination (e.g., sexual harassment, pay gaps).
- Assist affiliates in holding employers to account on workplace inclusion and uphold protections in the Equality Act.
- Continue to champion Pride as a protest. We will encourage affiliates to support and attend smaller, community-based and/or identity-specific Pride events.
- Campaign for increased awareness of the challenges and stereotypes facing LGBT+ young people when seeking support with eating disorders, and campaign for adequate funding for specialist LGBT+ eating disorder services.
- Send solidarity with unions and voluntary organisations fighting for LGBT+ rights in countries where LGBT+ people are subject to the death penalty, persecuted, and/or facing societal discrimination such as LGBT+ free zones. We will actively promote LGBT+ rights through our international work, and encourage our affiliates to do the same.

## Black Workers

Black workers were disproportionately impacted through the pandemic by Covid-related job losses and are now significantly more likely to be trapped in unemployment than white workers. Black workers bore the brunt of the economic impact of the pandemic and in every industry where jobs were lost to the impact of Covid, black workers were more likely to have been made unemployed, even now data shows us that Black workers are being held back in their search for work.

The Race Relations committee will be tackling the structural discrimination and inequalities that hold Black people back at work.

### ***We are calling for the government and public bodies to:***

- Introduce race equality requirements into public and private sector contracts for the supply of goods and services. This would incentivise companies to improve their race equality policies and practices and minimise the use of zero-hours, temporary and agency contracts and promote permanent employment.
- Ensure that companies that do not meet the requirements are not awarded contracts.
- For the EHRC to work with trade unions to use its investigative powers and the newly established Race Equality Fund to address race discrimination in all labour market sectors.
- For the EHRC to work with the TUC and our affiliates to undertake strategic litigation to tackle racism
- Enact a statutory requirement for employers to report their Ethnicity Pay Gap with action plans and regular monitoring.

### ***We will campaign for employers to:***

- Work with trade unions to establish a comprehensive ethnic monitoring system covering ethnicity pay-gap reporting, recruitment, retention, promotion, pay and grading, access to training, performance management and discipline and grievance procedures.
- Analyse, evaluate and publish their monitoring data.
- Work with trade unions and unions to develop action plans that address racial disparities in their workplaces.

### ***The TUC will:***

- Ensure the Race Relations Committee feeds into the work currently being undertaken by the TUC on outsourcing in the private and public sectors.
- Gather evidence on the effects of outsourcing (including the equality effects).
- Seek to influence the debate on business models of employment.
- Produce resources for unions to counter the exploitative effects of insecure work.
- Develop the case for insourcing.

- Work with affiliates to develop strategic litigation tools to tackle racism across sectors and challenge the disproportionate levels of disciplinary and dismissals of Black Workers.

### ***Black Workers and Health and Safety***

The disproportionate impact of the pandemic on Black workers and continued denial of institutional racism in the workplace highlighted that Health and Safety is also an anti-racist issue. The impact of workplace segregation led to Black workers dying disproportionately because of a lack of health and safety protections in the workplace.

#### ***We will campaign for employers to:***

- Improve safety for Black workers in the workplace.
- Ensure the safety of Black employees so they are not negatively impacted because of ethnicity.
- Ensure risk assessments are robust in providing protection to Black workers in the workplace.

#### ***The TUC will:***

- Improve take-up of H&S rep positions by Black trade union activists' by understanding and removing barriers to take-up.
- Support affiliates with this work with their own members.
- Campaign for the TUC research on health, safety and racism in the workplace recommendations to be implemented

### ***Black Women and Sexual Harassment***

The Race Relations Committee will continue to focus on the double disadvantage faced by Black Women in the workplace. The priority for the coming year will be on the work that the TUC is undertaking on sexual harassment.

#### ***The TUC will:***

- Undertake quantitative and qualitative research work on Black women's experiences of sexual harassment in the workplace and engage academic(s) for a literature review.
- Convene stakeholders in an alliance to interrogate as well as input into the work.
- Run a campaign focused on activating Section 14 of the Equality Act and multiple discrimination.
- Develop training and materials for unions including incorporating into the train the trainers project on sexual harassment.

## **Combatting the far and radical right**

The Race Relations Committee and TUC will continue to work on combating the far and radical right. The aim of this work will be to ensure that unions bed their work against the far and radical right as an organising and industrial issue.

### ***The TUC will:***

- Develop cross-union activist networks.
- Develop and mainstream the winning workplace unity course.
- Finalise and pilot a course on combatting the far and radical right internationally.
- Develop a train the trainer course to enable educational materials to be used by activists in the workplace.
- Strengthen our international networks and support the implementation of the ETUC Roadmap on combatting the far and radical right.

## **UN Day Against Racism xenophobia and related intolerances**

### ***The TUC will:***

- Continue to work with Stand-up to Racism, Hope Not Hate, Show Racism the Red Card, Searchlight and other organisations to highlight the UK's international obligations to combat racism through building the UN Day demonstration and rally.
- Continue to work to encourage trade unions internationally to support the #WorldAgainstRacism campaign which organised trade unions and NGO events internationally highlighting the UN Day Against Racism.

## **The Hostile Environment**

### ***The TUC will:***

- Continue to campaign on issues relating to the hostile environment.
- Campaign for a proper Windrush Compensation Scheme and to oppose the Nationality and Borders Act.
- Convene an alliance of organisations and trade unions campaigning against the Nationalities and Borders Act that will work together to develop assistance for individuals and communities affected by the Act.
- Continue working with the 'Migrant Rights Network, which has updated the TUC's Guidance on Document Checks and Workplace Raids. The TUC will work with MRN to highlight the new guidance through webinars and by developing training on the new regulations on document checks for workplace reps.

## Black Workers and Casualisation

### *The TUC will:*

- Ensure the Race Relations Committee can feed into the work currently being undertaken by the TUC on outsourcing in the private and public sectors.
- Gather evidence on the effects of outsourcing (including the equality effects).
- Seek to influence the debate on business models of employment.
- Produce resources for unions to counter the exploitative effects of insecure work.
- Develop the case for insourcing.

## Anti-Racism Taskforce

During the last two years the Anti-Racism Taskforce (ARTF) has delivered on a series of outputs detailed in the ARTF programme of work, which covers; collective bargaining, organising, public policy and unions as employers. The ARTF provides a framework for our unions to carry on the work of racial justice, equality and diversity following TUC Congress in 2022 with the support of the TUC.

## Trade Union Anti-Racism Manifesto and Action Plan

The Anti-Racism Manifesto and Action plan to build an anti-racist trade union movement launches at Congress 2022. They set out the movement's shared commitments and actions towards racial justice. Setting out measurable actions that our unions are committed to deliver to progress Black members, activists, and employees in the trade union movement.

## Implementation and Oversight Group

The progress of our movement in implementing the pledges of the Manifesto and the Action Plan will be overseen by the ARTF Implementation and Oversight Group. This Group will be led by the TUC General Secretary and will oversee affiliated unions delivery against their commitments for a minimum duration of five years.

### *Networks:*

- **Black Activist Networks.** We will continue building on the work of the organising workstream, working with TUC Education and regional teams across the TUC to create a Black Activist Network, and participation programmes.
- **Legal Officers' Network.** The TUC's legal officers' network will dedicate a network meeting to explore cases of race discrimination and invite expert counsel to help develop strategies for strategic litigation.
- **Anti-Racism Network.** Made up of civil society organisations, trade unions and grassroots groups who will meet regularly throughout the year to build on approaches of collective campaigning on a race-specific policy agenda.



- **The HR Network.** This has been set up as part of the Unions as Employers workstream and will continue operating, sharing best practice and resources for trade union HR teams to better recruitment, retention, training and progression for Black staff.

### Monitoring of Unions as Employers

From the conclusions drawn up by the two surveys: the HR survey and Black Staff survey, a set of actions will follow which will support Black staff working in trade unions and support trade unions through HR practices. These will include an annual survey on HR practices and ongoing work on the experiences of Black staff in trade unions.

### The Equality and Human Rights Commission

The Equality and Human Rights Commission (EHRC) is a vital part of the legislative and institutional protections in Britain for people whose human rights are at risk or have been breached, including those facing discrimination and inequality.

We believe the EHRC should use its powers to advance human rights and equality, including responding to key reviews of legislation, funding human rights and equality litigation and conducting inquiries into significant human rights and equality concerns.

On trans and non-binary rights, actions from the leadership of EHRC have fallen well short of what is expected from an equalities regulator. The EHRC guidance, interventions and position in relation to trans people's rights is incorrect, with regards to the Gender Recognition Act and Conversion Therapy.

The EHRC have also disbanded its disability advisory committee and we have concerns over the lack of action by the Commission in connection to links between the DWP and the deaths of Disabled benefit claimants and miscommunication over employers' responsibilities for workers with Long Covid.

From the introduction of the Equality Act 2010, the government has attempted to undermine this important legislation. We continue to be concerned that the EHRC governance arrangements do not provide the level of independence from Government that is needed; and that it does not have sufficient funding and financial autonomy. We believe such concerns should be addressed by enhancing the ability of the EHRC to deliver its vital role, including the provision of sufficient funding, and improvements to accountability and governance. The EHRC must centre the voices of those with protected characteristics.

Ensuring that the EHRC has adequate funding and powers will be crucial to effective implementation of the duty on employers to prevent sexual harassment.

We will work with affiliates and key stakeholders to set out a positive vision for the equality regulator that ensures that human rights and equality are not only protected but advanced and that the regulator upholds its role to foster good relations and fairness between those who share protected characteristics and those who do not.