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TUC Equalities Campaign Plan 2024 – 2026

Foreword

Our latest equalities campaign plan is fundamental to building a stronger trade union movement. It sets out how more diverse, more inclusive unions can win for millions of workers facing inequality and discrimination at work and in society. And as political narratives become more polarised, it offers a timely reminder of our movement’s defining mission: to stand up for all working people, regardless of background.

I want equality to be hardwired into everything we do. We must build on the success of our Anti Racism Task Force by prioritising race equality, tackling discrimination against Black workers in our labour market and eradicating the ethnicity pay gap. We must strive for women’s equality by tackling our persistent gender pay and pension gaps – and addressing the scourge of sexual harassment wherever it rears its ugly head. We must win fairness for disabled workers failed by in-built disadvantage in our workplaces.

And we must be at the forefront of the fight for LGBT+ equality, particularly at a time when our trans and non-binary members are in the crosshairs of the right’s vicious hostile political narratives. Cutting across all these areas of work is our commitment to fight the rise of the far right. The hatred and discrimination promoted by the far right is a threat to all workers and we must – and we will - unite to combat it.

Over the next three years, a new government, AI, the demands of net zero and industrial change will further transform the world of work. And that puts the onus on our movement to raise our game on equality, ensuring workers do not lose out from the upheavals to come. This new equalities campaign plan provides an invaluable route-map for us – let's make the most of it.

**Paul Nowak, general secretary, TUC**

Introduction

Our Equality Campaign Plan provides affiliates with details of the overarching narrative for the work that we do to challenge inequality in the workplace and covers our work on Black workers, women, disabled workers, young workers and LGBT+ workers. The priorities outlined here have been identified by our democratic structures and through our statutory conferences and are set out in the context of the driving aims of the TUC running until 2026.

The breadth of work undertaken by affiliates and TUC colleagues is outstanding. From lobbying work to submissions for evidence, and grassroots campaigning, we know it is impossible to capture every action that is taken to improve the working lives for everyone in our diverse movement.

Democratic processes are central to the work we do with affiliates to identify and progress our work to tackle discrimination and inequality at work. As such, while our three-year campaign plan will provide an overview of the work we do, this will be complemented by;

* Internal delivery plans that allow us to work effectively across the organisation and across our regions and nations
* Regular updates and reports on progress shared through our existing structures
* Annual updates to the general council following our statutory conferences.

This document highlights the key themes as democratically prioritised by the TUC equalities conferences in collaboration with the general council, our statutory committees and our executive. The aim of this document is to guide and support the work of the General Council and to provide vital equalities information as needed.

Whilst this plan outlines our priorities it is by no means exhaustive. In compiling this plan, we recognise that the TUC, our unions and partners will continue to deliver on the ever-changing equality agenda for members.

# Aim 1 - A growing union movement that reflects the diversity of the working class and has the power to intervene effectively for workers

* Working with affiliates to tackle the far right, tackling racism, tackling sexism, ableism and homophobia, biphobia and transphobia through political education, workplace guidance and training.
* Continuing campaigning on reasonable adjustment passports so they become mandatory in all workplaces as part of a reformed Disability Confident Scheme. Also, campaign for a National Independent Living Support Service and for the UNCRDP to be enshrined into UK law.
* Working with the Legal Officers’ Network to develop guidance on how we can support affiliates to consider strategic litigation when looking at discrimination cases.
* Working with the government to extend the public sector equality duty (PSED) requirements to cover the private sector.
* Continuing to campaign on issues relating to the hostile environment and the exploitation of migrant workers.
* Working alongside the government to introduce statutory rights for trade union equalities reps to ensure they have the time to support colleagues facing inequality and discrimination and contribute to positive changes in workplaces.
* Continuing to provide strong leadership to steer and support anti-racism work across affiliates to both protect the legacy of the ARTF, deliver our anti-racism manifesto and ensure that this area of work remains of the highest priority for our movement.
* Supporting our affiliates to recruit and organise young workers including promoting stories of young workers in our movement. This work will underline the importance of union membership to young workers, particularly as we provide examples where young workers are taking part in strike action and organising for better pay.
* Prioritising rooting out sexual harassment, racism and other intersecting forms of harassment and abuse across the movement. We’ll do this by continuing our zero tolerance approaches, as well as exploring the introduction of an independent, confidential reporting line and continuing the training on building preventative cultures for union leaders across our movement and structures.
* Working with unions on campaigns promoting the role of health and safety reps, and why it's important, supporting and encouraging more women and black workers become health and safety reps to ensure safety reps are more representative of the wider workforce as a whole.
* Continuing to support union leadership programmes to support Black, women, young, disabled and LGBT+ activists, reps and officers in our movement, through regional and national programmes.

# Aim 2 - Workplaces where every worker has strong rights and is protected from discrimination

* Recognising the vital role collective bargaining plays in delivering workplace equality and continuing to support affiliates to achieve change through negotiation. Therefore, calling on the Government to implement policies aimed to support and protect the extension of collective bargaining and creating rights for unions to access workplaces to meet with workers.
* Working with the government to deliver legislative protection from sexual harassment and a preventative duty on employers to protect staff from all forms of harassment at work. Also, the removal of the “three strike” element from third party harassment.
* Working with the government and unions to fully implement the New Deal commitments and deliver mandatory pay gap reporting for Black and disabled workers. We will continue to call for pay gap reporting for all employers with over 50 staff, including tangible action plans to address any disparities. Alongside this work we’re also calling for the government to work with us to develop plans to tackle the gender pensions gap and LGBT+ pay gaps.
* Campaigning for an advertising duty on employers to advertise all jobs as flexible upfront unless they can prove the job cannot offer any flexibility.
* Pushing for legislative and regulatory changes that will make Non-Disclosure Agreements (NDAs) unenforceable as well as building a collective understanding of how employer NDAs and gagging clauses impact cases including race discrimination and sexual harassment cases.
* Establishing a comprehensive ethnicity monitoring system covering ethnicity pay-gap reporting, recruitment, retention, promotion, pay and grading, access to training, performance management and interaction with discipline and grievance procedures.
* Calling on the government to strengthen the Equality Act 2010 and specifying that Long Covid as a named disability so those affected can access the reasonable adjustments they need at work and recognising Covid-19 as an occupational disease so that those who caught Covid at work are properly compensated.
* Campaigning for reform of the Gender Recognition Act and the introduction of a comprehensive ban on conversion therapy.
* Build on the work of the Trade Unions for Trans Rights Network and bring together activists and communities across the country and collaborating to organise against transphobia, while tackling far right narratives.
* Continue to monitor and track progress through our Equality Audit.
* Providing training and support to reps and activists on challenging far right narratives in the workplace. With a particular focus on challenging anti-migrant, anti-Muslim racism and anti-Semitism spreading in communities and workplaces.

# Aim 3 – A fairer economy that delivers rising wages and strong public services

* Working with the Government to implement the New Deal for working people as well as all actions in the disability employment charter, ensuring it challenges inequality in the labour market, in workplaces and in wage packets.
* Working with the government to implement its commitments on insourcing will form a crucial part of our equality campaigning. The TUC will push employers to conduct equal pay audits throughout their supply chains including analysis of in-sourced staff compared to out-sourced to examine structural inequality in subcontracting of pay and conditions.
* Pushing the government to abolish the exploitative use of zero-hours and short hours contracts by giving workers the right to a contract that reflects their regular hours, at least four weeks’ notice of shifts and compensation for cancelled shifts.
* Work with the government to increase statutory sick pay to the same level as the real living wage, as well as delivering their commitments to abolish the waiting period and lower earnings limit (and any earnings threshold), extending coverage to almost two million workers.
* Calling for a significant increase in real wages, and an end to the longest pay squeeze in modern history. This is underpinned by a call to raise the minimum wage to £15 an hour for everyone so that no workers are left behind. This also includes our calls for a comprehensive and fully funded care workforce strategy and the end of lower minimum wage rates for young workers.
* Promoting cross-cutting campaigns like Our Work Matters, where predominantly women and BME outsourced workers from different workplaces and employers up and down the country are coming together to demand fair pay, a secure contract and dignity at work.
* Campaigning to fix the staffing crisis in social care. The government must work with unions and employers to tackle widespread insecure work and poverty pay in the sector which are driving high staff turnover rates.
* Continuing to campaign for a properly funded and staffed NHS that has the resource to tackle unequal health outcomes and take action on failed government commitments, including the 2018 National LGBT+ Action Plan.

# Aim 4 - An economy where workers are equipped for the challenges of the future

* Campaigning for access to affordable, flexible, high-quality childcare in a well-funded, sustainable sector with the interests of children at its heart and a diversity of provision that delivers for parents, children, workers. This can only be achieved with a well-paid, professional workforce.
* Work with the government to introduce consultations on the introduction of new technology at work including requiring employers to conduct equality impact assessments.
* Work with employers and Government to provide opportunities for upskilling, retraining and redeployment for young workers whose jobs are impacted by technological change, and ensure the UK is leading in lifelong learning and skills development.

# Aim 5 - A strong TUC that is sustainable, effective and a great place to work

* Building on the work of the unions as employers workstream of the Anti-Racism Taskforce, we will ensure unions are an inclusive place for all staff to work, especially staff with protected characteristics. We'll provide opportunities for staff to share their experiences and proactively review HR practices to ensure that they are fit for purpose.