

## SECTION 4

# GENERAL COUNCIL STATEMENTS

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## 01 Uniting against racism and the far right

### Introduction

Our movement is built on the values of unity and solidarity, bringing workers together to stand as one. The far right seeks to divide us pitting worker against worker. The values of the far right and the core principles of our unions are irreconcilably opposed.

The Tories' 14-year record has damaged community cohesion and relations. They paid lip service to equalities while waging an assault on working-class communities, watering down and removing social protections, and actively seeking to weaken trade union rights.

In the lead-up to the 2024 General Election, the Conservative government resorted to the politics of hate in a desperate attempt to divert attention from its failures. They and Reform stoked anti-Muslim hatred, demonised migrants, trans people, and those claiming social security and tried to undermine the values of unity and solidarity that form the bedrock of our movement. Their actions have spread anxiety and fear within our communities.

The violence and chaos that took place in many towns and cities during the summer was a deliberate attempt to exploit the fears of those ordinary working people, families and communities who have lost faith in government, democracy and civil society. The violence on our streets was the latest result of the deliberate spread of toxic anti-Muslim, anti-migrant, racist narratives, fuelled by right-wing politicians, influencers, and certain elements of mainstream and social media. These destructive forces have been unleashed in communities that need support and solidarity – not fear and division.

However, we also saw what happens when workers and communities come together to reject racism and fascism, we unleash a collective power that can change the course of history. This summer, we saw the strength of our collective resolve, and we applaud our members for taking a courageous stand against violence, bigotry, and hate.

We have stood strong against racist and fascist threats before and we are prepared to do so again, but as the political climate shifts toward open violence and harm on our streets, our response must grow even stronger.

Across the globe, the political landscape has seen significant influence from far-right ideologies which has allowed them to find electoral success, as seen in the European elections including Germany following the recent elections with the AfD (Alternative für Deutschland) and, very nearly, the French ballot, where strategic alliances, coordinated electoral efforts, and mobilising public and worker power prevented the far-right from gaining political control.

The rise of the far right internationally is alongside the surge in racism, xenophobia and anti-Muslim hatred. The far right is targeting Black, women, disabled, LGBT+ workers and

communities. The politics of hate transcends and intersects across many marginalized and vulnerable groups. Their twisted ideology threatens the rights of women, seeks to deny bodily autonomy, attacks disabled individuals, and vilifies the LGBT+ community for simply existing.

These forms of hatred and discrimination are infiltrating our workplaces too. Our recent research revealed that 1 in 2 LGBT+ workers have been bullied at work and that far too many Black women have faced sexual harassment in their workplaces. The far-right narrative of division isn't just poisoning the internet – it's making our workplaces more hostile and discriminatory.

We are strongest in defeating racism and the far right by organising in our branches and workplaces and now is the time for action. The trade union movement must step up to confront this dangerous tide and ensure our workplaces remain spaces of solidarity, respect, and dignity for all workers.

### **Our plan to defeat the far right must include:**

#### ***Organising against hate in our workplaces***

We will not stand by while the far-right sows division in our workplaces. Organising is the heart of our movement, and we must include the voices and experiences of those most affected which will mean organising on the ground collectively through unions and community organisations. We will build on the work of the TUC Anti Racism Task Force in ensuring unions are safe spaces for Black workers and are actively working towards empowering Black members so that the trade union movement reflects and represents the diversity of its diverse membership. And we will commit to demonstrable plan for eradicating far right and racist extremism within workplaces and in our trade union structures.

We will train and equip reps to identify and challenge far-right narratives. We will prioritise member education to help break down disinformation and dangerous propaganda.

Beyond workplaces we have a duty to counter the right-wing narratives seeping into our communities and to present a vision of a fairer, more prosperous, and sustainable Britain. Alongside support for community organisations, mosques, and migrant centres, we must join forces to demonstrate that there is a united front against racism in our communities. This is why trade unions need to support anti-racist organisations including Stand Up to Racism. Solidarity is our greatest strength, and it's needed now more than ever.

We will promote campaigning activity that celebrates diversity and our trade union values of equality, justice, and solidarity, and show workers that solidarity and unity will build a better future for all.

We will partner with local community organisations, anti-fascist groups, and advocacy groups to amplify our message of unity and provide a united front against far-right activities. And we will share our strategies and successes with our sister union centres engaged in the same fight in Europe and around the world and learn from their victories too.

#### ***Delivering for working people***

We will encourage the Labour government to undo the damage of 14 years of Conservative rule including abolishing racist legislation and immigration laws. Their policies of austerity, neglect of public services, and wage stagnation failed working people. Delivering the new deal for working people in full is more than just a political milestone – it's a vital step toward putting money back into workers' pockets, securing decent jobs, and investing in our infrastructure and communities.

We will push to secure investment in our public services and build an economy that rewards work not wealth. A united Labour and trade union movement can provide the hope working class communities need and deserve. And we will be clear, that tackling the far right requires a coordinated political response that provides an alternative to the toxic narratives of hatred.

### ***A call to action***

This is a call to action for all our unions. The far right seeks to destroy everything we have fought to build. But together, united in our shared values of solidarity, equality, and justice, we can – and we will – defeat them.

Now is the moment to organise, rise up, and defend the rights of all workers. Together, we can build a fairer, more equal future for everyone.

## **02 Tackling and preventing sexual harassment in the trade union movement**

### **Introduction**

Trade unions have played a vital role in highlighting the scale and impact of sexual harassment in the workplace. We have pioneered research on the issue, and led campaigns to change the law, laying the foundations for the culture change that is needed if we are to end sexual harassment and the cultures that allow it to thrive. But like every workplace, we need to get our own house in order. No one should ever feel unsafe in a trade union space.

A culture of sexism and misogyny creates a permissive environment in which sexual harassment can occur. If we are to effectively tackle sexual harassment in workplaces including our movement, then we must change the culture that enables it, including the sexism and misogyny that women face daily. Sexual harassment is about power and control. We know anyone can experience sexual harassment, but as our own research has shown, it is women who are overwhelmingly the victims/survivors of sexual harassment, and the majority do not report.

Through our research we also know that sexual harassment can be more prevalent for younger and disabled women, Black, LGBT+ and migrant workers, those in insecure forms of work and those working in male dominated industries, and that experiences of sexual harassment can be compounded by racism, ableism, ageism, homophobia, biphobia, transphobia.

To build preventative cultures we must acknowledge that culture change does need to happen. We must be intersectional in our approach, recognising the role inequality and multiple forms of discrimination play in perpetuating permissive cultures for sexual harassment. And we must understand that this work cannot be time specific and must be part of an ongoing course of action.

### **Statement of commitment**

The TUC Executive Working Group was established in 2021 to tackle and prevent sexual harassment within our own movement. Working with our democratic structures, the Working Group has developed a statement of commitment that sets out principles and key actions that all unions must commit to if we are to tackle and prevent sexual harassment in our movement and show leadership in the wider world of work.

This statement of commitment sets out our intent as a movement and provides a mechanism for us to monitor and assess our progress and review the changes we need to see in our unions and across our movement.

## **Principles**

- The trade union movement believes sexual harassment and the cultures that enable it are unacceptable and morally wrong. Sexual harassment is a health and safety issue and has a real and detrimental impact on individuals – overwhelmingly women – our workplaces and in our organisations. It has no place in the trade union movement.
- We recognise the intersectional impacts of sexual harassment, particularly on Black, disabled, migrant, LGBT+ and younger workers and will ensure that our work addresses the experiences of workers with these characteristics.
- Sexual harassment is not inevitable. It can be prevented through practical action including workplace policies and collective bargaining to protect workers and members against harassment and transform workplace and organisational cultures. Appropriate action should be taken to build positive cultures of prevention within our movement.
- Tackling and preventing sexual harassment in our movement, as well as in our members' workplaces, must be a priority for trade unions. We must lead by example. There must be genuine and full commitment and dedication to properly resource and support culture change across trade union structures by the senior leadership of the trade union movement.
- Our own staff, activists and members must be safe, equal and have dignity in trade union workplaces and spaces. This is not only our legal responsibility, but our moral duty. It is vital that we uphold decent standards of behaviour – there must be no tolerance of sexual harassment, or any form of discrimination, that serves only to weaken our movement.
- We believe victim/survivors and support them to make reports should they wish to. This means that all reports, including historical reports, should be taken seriously, supported by fair, robust, transparent, and independent processes of investigation (meaning either external or those who are involved in the investigation are independent from the case or incident being investigated).
- No-one should suffer a detriment for reporting incidents of sexual harassment or supporting a colleague or member to do so. Staff and members must have access to safe, confidential reporting routes and support throughout any reporting or investigation process.
- We do not silence victim/survivors or anyone reporting incidences of harassment, victimisation, or discriminatory behaviour.

## **Actions**

There are a range of actions that we must take to embed meaningful and lasting culture change. Recognising that this work must be ongoing and sustainable, the below commitments lay the foundations for building safe spaces for our staff and members and driving the culture change necessary to tackle sexual harassment.

All unions must:

- take steps to understand the extent of sexual harassment and the cultures that enable it within their organisations. This can be done through anonymous climate surveys or independent inquiries, for example
- emphasise that they have a clear moral and legal responsibility to take action on harassment and bullying as well as zero tolerance of all forms of harassment and bullying
- have a standalone anti-sexual harassment policy for staff and members that makes a clear commitment to tackling and preventing sexual harassment, outlines a clear code of conduct, safe and confidential reporting routes, transparent and fair processes for handling reports both formal and informal and what steps can/ will be taken to remedy and prevent sexual harassment occurring again
- have safe reporting routes and a clear process for raising reports against trade union staff or members and the findings to be shared with union executives at least annually to support monitoring progress and ensure actions to prevent harassment are in place
- commit to ongoing training and education for staff and members
- ensure the use of NDAs or settlement agreements is in line with TUC and Acas best practice guidance. They must not be misused in cases of sexual harassment, or any other form of bullying, harassment, or discrimination, or as an alternative to carrying out robust investigations.

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