**It’s not fair for black workers with A-levels to earn less than their white counterparts**

Nerves will be running high in homes all over the country this week, as young people and their parents wait for A-level results on Thursday.

For many parents, the exact breakdown of As, Bs and Cs isn’t what really matters. The important thing is knowing that if your child works hard in school and in working life, they’ll be rewarded for it.

But unfortunately, that is less clear for black families. TUC research published today shows that black workers with A-levels earn 10% less than their white counterparts – missing out on an average of £1.20 an hour.

In fact, white workers who only have GSCEs earn more on average than black workers with A-levels.

And the gap only gets wider if you go on to higher education. The black pay gap for those with degrees is 14%, and it’s 20% for those with higher education certs and diplomas.

That shocks me. In Britain in 2017, hard-working, educated young black people still don’t have an equal opportunity to thrive.

And it’s not just about qualifications either. This pay gap exists at all levels of education. On average, black workers get paid 8% less than white workers – costing them an average of £1.15 an hour.

Now don’t get me wrong, I’m not saying that education isn’t worth the effort for young black people. Those who gets their results this week will still earn more than they would with a lower level of education. Whoever you are, more education will push up your wages.

But anyone with a sense of fairness and decency can see that it’s wrong to reward black workers so much less when they have the same qualifications.

Equality is a core value of the trade union movement. We believe that everyone should have the chance to make the most of their talents, whatever their gender, race, sexuality, disability, age or religion.

So we’re calling on the government to take action on the black pay gap by requiring employers with more than 50 staff to publish data on progression, employment type and pay, broken down by ethnicity.

This will expose the worst offenders, and allow workers and their unions to demand a fairer deal for black working people. This isn’t a new idea. The government has already introduced rules requiring employers to publish data on the pay gap between men and women.

So if they know it works, why not extend it to black and minority ethnic workers too?

We also call on the government to develop a comprehensive national race equality strategy, and to work with trade unions to develop practical ways to address racial inequalities in our workforce.

On Thursday, black students will tear open their envelopes with just as much excitement as everyone else. But the harsh reality is that whatever it says inside, race will still play a huge part in how much they get paid.

Beth Farhat

Northern TUC Regional Secretary