

The Great Jobs Agenda – Fair treatment and respect

A TUC guide for trade union activists



The Great Jobs Agenda

Introduction

Work is an important part of our lives for most of us. On average we spend around one-third of our waking hours working, although some of us spend a lot more.

That is why people want to work in good jobs that they feel are rewarding. They want respect, decent pay, secure employment, hours that suit them, safe workplace, basic standards of employment, job satisfaction and the ability to achieve their potential. They also want a voice in their workplace.

Yet millions of us work in jobs that are the exact opposite of that. Bad jobs lead to ill-health, depression and anxiety, low self-esteem, and can leave people exhausted and unmotivated.

Bad jobs also effect not only the worker but their family with millions of children living in poverty because of their parent's low pay, or rarely seeing a parent because of the hours they are forced to work.

That is why the TUC wants to end these bad jobs and instead promote "Great Jobs"-ones that promote good physical and mental health and where workers feel listened to and valued.

The TUC wants the Government to pass a "Great Jobs Act" that gives all workers:

- A voice at work
- Fair and decent pay

- Regular hours
- Fair treatment and respect
- A healthy workplace
- Access to learning and progression

While we want action from the Government on these issues, there's also a lot that union workplace representatives can do to try to ensure that their employer takes action to support the TUC Great Jobs Agenda.

This guide suggests a few actions that you can take in your workplace to help achieve one of these important issues that the TUC wants to achieve - fair treatment and respect.

Everyone at work deserves a great job. A great job is one where the worker is paid and treated fairly. And it's one where workers get opportunities to progress, to learn and to have a voice on what matters.

That's why we've created the Great Jobs Agenda. The agenda will give the trade union movement a common set of bargaining asks in workplaces. And it sets out what we want the government to do to ensure that every worker has a great job with fair pay, regular hours and the opportunity to progress.

Frances O'Grady, TUC General Secretary

Introduction

We all want to be in a workplace free of discrimination, harassment and bullying. Unfortunately, as previous TUC campaigns over the years have shown, this is not always the case.

No one should be treated differently because of their personal characteristics, but this still happens. Too many workers have to deal with different forms of discrimination and harassment. Many women are still being paid less than a man whilst doing the same or equivalent job and sexual harassment and pregnancy discrimination are rife in workplaces.

Racial harassment and discrimination is still alive for Black workers, which includes being denied access to training and progression, with Black workers being more likely to face bullying at work.

Two thirds of union reps told us disability related sickness absence is the number one equality issue they deal with at work. The employment rate for disabled people is fifty percent. Mental health remains a barrier to getting into work and staying in work.

Only half of LGBT+ workers feel able to be out at work. More than one in three LGBT+ workers and almost half of trans workers have been harassed or bullied at work.

The TUC's Great Jobs Agenda has identified an action that employers can do to help eliminate discrimination, harassment and bullying at work:

- Adopt a zero tolerance approach to all forms of discrimination, harassment and bullying at work.

This guide gives three suggested actions for reps to support a zero-tolerance approach to discrimination, harassment and bullying at work.

1) Promote equality at work

For many years, trade unions have been at the forefront of campaigns on equality at work. TUC rules require unions to show a clear commitment to equality for all and to eliminate all forms of harassment and discrimination within their own union structures and through all activities. To achieve this, the TUC carries out an Equality Audit on representation and collective bargaining every two years to check progress on equality.

Union reps play a key role in the workplace through negotiating with employers to achieve fairness and equality for all.

Union reps can be proactive in finding out what equality issues are relevant in their workplaces. It is essential that reps take the lead to find and tackle issues that affect under-represented groups.

Employers should have a strong equality, diversity and dignity policy that explicitly includes a zero tolerance approach to all forms of discrimination, harassment and bullying at work.

What you can do

- ✓ Look at the TUC Equality Audit for good examples of how to embed equality into negotiations with employers.
- ✓ Promote equal rights for all members by seeking to negotiate policies and procedures with employers that advance equality and do not lead to one group being disproportionately disadvantaged.
- ✓ Ensure your branch and workplace representatives are reflective of the local community by ensuring women, Black workers, LGBT+ workers, disabled workers and young workers are able to hold these positions.

- ☑ Proactively show that unions are champions for equality by challenging all forms of discrimination, harassment and bullying in the workplace and within your union.

2) Monitoring

Monitoring is essential to achieve a zero tolerance approach to all forms of discrimination, harassment and bullying at work.

The purpose of monitoring is to identify possible inequalities and remove any unfairness or disadvantage for underrepresented groups.

Monitoring is the process of gathering, analysing and evaluating information. There are different ways that the information can be collected which include surveys, questionnaires, consultations and feedback. The most vital part of monitoring is to act on the findings. There isn't much worth in collecting the data if it isn't used to tackle the identified inequalities. Not taking action would be a waste of time and resources as well as being ineffective.

Monitoring should be done by sex, race, disability, sexual orientation, gender identity, religion and belief and age.

It is important that particular care is taken to explain why the data is being collected and how it will be used. If this is not clear members may be reluctant to provide the information. This is particularly true when monitoring sexual orientation and gender identity as LGBT+ people might not be out. Also a worker's disability status may not be known to the employer and they may have concerns about experiencing further discrimination.

For employers, monitoring equalities makes good business sense. An effective management information system will enable employers to manage on the basis of a

realistic assessment of the organisation, rather than on an assumption.

The process of monitoring is important to enable reps to identify equality issues and use those findings to negotiate with employers.

What you can do

- ☑ Ask your employer if the union will be consulted on any proposed monitoring arrangements and if monitoring will extend to recruitment, staff on temporary or agency contracts, applications for promotion, training, grievance and disciplinary actions as well as termination of contracts.
- ☑ Find out how the information will be collected, shared with the trade union and that it complies with data protection laws.
- ☑ Find out how the information will be stored and who will have access.
- ☑ Develop an action plan to address any identified inequalities and negotiate targets with employers.

3) Clear procedures to raise concerns

All workers who experience harassment and discrimination should feel confident and safe in the workplace. Many workers worry about the repercussions from raising a complaint such as being blamed for creating a problem, not being taken seriously, or even worse, losing their jobs.

The TUC believes employers should make sure there is a simple method for raising concerns and make sure workers feel confident that their complaints will be taken seriously, acted on and dealt with satisfactorily.

A 2016 TUC poll on sexual harassment showed that very few women report their experiences. Four out of five women did not report the sexual harassment to their employer and only one per cent of those who experienced sexual harassment reported it to their union rep.

The 2017 TUC Racism at Work survey respondents told us that nearly half of BME workers who experienced racism at work did not report the complaint to their employer. Only 22 per cent of respondents reported the discrimination to their union and 36 per cent reported that the incident had made them feel isolated from work colleagues.

The latest 2017 TUC report on LGBT+ workers experience of harassment and discrimination showed that almost three fifths of respondents who experienced unfair treatment did not report the incident to their employer. Only 15 per cent of those who experienced harassment and discrimination told their union rep.

In 2015 the EHRC published research showing that 54,000 women lose their jobs because of pregnancy discrimination each year. The research also showed that young mothers were disproportionately likely to face discrimination and harassment at work. The report found that one in five young mothers were verbally harassed because of their pregnancy and six times as many young mothers reported they were dismissed.

An employer should make it clear that they will support all staff who raise concerns and protect staff who are victimised.

What you can do

- Review reporting procedures to ensure there is a simple method of reporting that is accessible to all staff, and that there are satisfactory grievance

procedures in place that are effectively communicated to all staff.

- Make sure all staff – including HR staff and managers - receive compulsory training on equal opportunities policies including the procedures for reporting.
- Make it clear to all union members who raise concerns that they will be supported by their union throughout and after the process.

Summary

This booklet has looked at three of the many areas where union representatives can make a real difference in dealing with discrimination, harassment and bullying at work. You will find advice and guidance on other equality issues on the TUC website.

The TUC Great Jobs Agenda is based on making a practical difference that will transform the working lives of millions of people. You can play your part by trying to change your workplace. Details of the campaign, and other issues that are covered in the Great Jobs Agenda are on the Great Jobs website.

Find out more

For more information about the campaign, go to:

<https://www.tuc.org.uk/lets-secure-great-jobs-everyone>

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