



# Southampton District Branch's Black Members Group

March 2015  
Newsletter 1

Dear UNISON Black Member

After months of planning, the UNISON Southampton District Branch's first Black Members Self Organised Group (SOG) is now active!

Dave Forde and Veronica Gordon are your Black Members Officers.

Our first big task is to set up the Black Members Group Committee. If you are a UNISON Black member, you could be part of it.

The Committee will meet to:

- set the aims and objectives of the Black Members Group
- discuss and address local issues affecting Black members
- positively impact Black members' experience in the union
- build a support network for Black members facing problems at work
- provide a forum for the debate of race equality issues.

Additionally, we will have a say in how our Southampton District Branch is run and assist the Branch with organising for race equality. Dave sits on the Southampton District Branch's Committee on behalf of our Black Members Group.

Our Black Members SOG will be supported by the UNISON South East Region's Black Members Group, based at Guildford.

If you'd like to be involved in the new Committee – or if you'd like more details – please contact us, our contact details are below.

Throughout this newsletter we've added links to pages on the UNISON website that you might find useful.

Here's the link for details about UNISON Black members SOGs  
<http://www.unison.org.uk/about/our-organisation/member-groups/black-members/>

From Dave and Veronica

## What are UNISON Self Organised Groups (SOGs)

SOGs bring together members from under-represented groups, such as women members, Black members, disabled members and LGBT members.

Self-organisation helps UNISON to identify and challenge discrimination and build equality.

They are a way for members to get involved in the union, developing skills, expertise and confidence.

## Defining Black

In UNISON, 'Black' – with a capital B – is used to indicate people with a shared history.

'Black' is used in an inclusive sense to describe people in the UK who have suffered from colonialism in the past and continue to experience racism and diminished opportunities in today's society.

The terms 'minority ethnic' and 'ethnic minority' are in widespread official use. But these terms have negative connotations of being marginal or less important.

Language changes and evolves but terminology is always important in terms of intention and direction.

Using 'Black' is about creating unity in the fight against deep-rooted racism that sees Black people disadvantaged in housing, education, employment and the criminal justice and health systems. – UNISON, 2014

## Contact: So'ton District Black Members Officers



Dave Forde  
Black Members Officer  
& UNISON Steward



Veronica Gordon  
Black Members Officer

**Email:** [dave.forde@southampton.gov.uk](mailto:dave.forde@southampton.gov.uk)

**Mobile:** (Dave) 07928 190 215

Recruit a UNISON member and

**get £25!**

Contact Branch for details.

## The Black Vote in May's General Election

At the annual UNISON Black Members Conference in Brighton last month, Black members stressed the importance of registering to vote.

Research carried out by Operation Black Vote (OBV), published in a Report titled **The Power of the Black Vote in 2015**, shows that Black voters could easily decide more than 160 seats in the next election with an organised vote.

It found that the coalition governs with a working majority of just 83 seats - so the Black vote could have a major impact on the results of May's general election.

**Register to vote by 20<sup>th</sup> April 2015.** It just takes a couple of minutes and all you need is your National Insurance number.

Read more: [www.unison.org.uk/news/voting-is-key-black-members-conference-hears](http://www.unison.org.uk/news/voting-is-key-black-members-conference-hears)

*"One of our key challenges is to turn out the anti-UKIP majority. UKIP voters are extremely motivated to vote.*

*"But turning out those who value our modern, diverse, inclusive communities is the key to the future.*

*"The biggest nightmare is to wake up to a Conservative-UKIP coalition. One whose primary aim is to destroy the public sector, to destroy our rights and to destroy everything we hold dear.*

*"... make sure that this nightmare scenario doesn't become a reality."*

**Davena Rankin, NEC and National Black Members' Committee, speaking at the 2015 UNISON Black Members Conference**

Southampton's ethnic communities can have a "Very Significant" impact on the outcome of the elections.

Source: Operation Black Vote, published in [The Power of the Black Vote in 2015](#)

## Do you know you can go to UNISON Black Members & other events & training for free?

Veronica: *"This year I attended the National Black Members Conference for the first time. It was very informative, motivating and a good opportunity to meet other Black members, and to see how Black members are supported and organised nationally.*

*"I'd encourage more Black members from our Branch to go to UNISON's networking and training events.*

*"There are day or weekend events, from training to conferences. They're free to attend and the experiences are valuable."*

See list of **2015 South East Regional Black Members** events.

## 2015 South East Regional Black Members events

Dates for your diary! More details will be provided nearer the time:

SE Regional Black Members Meeting - Saturday 16<sup>th</sup> May

SE Regional Black Members Meeting - Friday 11<sup>th</sup> September

SE Regional Black Members Training - Saturday 12<sup>th</sup> & 13<sup>th</sup> September

SE Regional Black Members AGM meeting - Saturday 7<sup>th</sup> November

## Take up free training opportunities with UNISON

UNISON runs a range of education and training courses that are open to all members.

Some courses help members improve their general skills, others are to increase personal and professional development and others will help you to play a more active role in the union.

For more details contact Hayley Garner, Southampton District Branch Secretary on 023 8083 2740.

## Got family or friends working in these sectors?

•Local government •health care •education •police and justice •community •water, environment and transport •energy •private contractors

Tell them about UNISON membership.

UNISON can provide them help and support at work.

Ask the Branch about the £25 join a member bonus!

## Community news

Outside of UNISON, Veronica presents the Black community programme on Southampton's Unity 101 Community Radio.

If you have an African or Caribbean community event you'd like her to promote, please email the details to [vibrantvibes@unity101.org](mailto:vibrantvibes@unity101.org)

The show, 'Vibrant Vibes', airs fortnightly Saturdays 6pm-8pm on 101.1FM & online at [www.unity101.org](http://www.unity101.org)