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Majority of black Britons experience workplace discrimination, study finds

A large majority of black Britons have experienced racial discrimination in the workplace, a landmark new study has shown.

At the start of Black History Month, we are highlighting the largest survey ever undertaken on the experiences of black Britons.

In the survey racism in the workplace was raised as a key issue, with 88% of participants saying they experienced racial discrimination in the workplace.

Based on the testimonies of over 10,000 Black Britons, the [Black British Voices Research Report 2023](#) also found that 98% of respondents have had 'to compromise who they are and how they express themselves to fit in at work'.

Survey respondents said that 'fitting in' was a major source of discrimination – even higher than unequal pay as the primary workplace obstacle.

It was also reported that black Britons often face protracted and nonlinear career progression, encountering obstacles to promotion and being accused of benefiting from tokenism when they do advance.

Efforts by employers to address racial discrimination at work, the survey concluded, are often experienced as superficial or even perceived to make matters worse.

Below are some of the other headline findings:

- One in six black Britons do not consider themselves to be British.
- 95% believe the national curriculum neglects Black lives and experiences.
- 90% of young black people expect to experience racial prejudice as adults.
- 87% of black Britons distrust the criminal justice system.
- Fewer than 1 in 60 respondents felt fairly treated by the health system.

- 96% perceive financial literacy to be critical to their future security.
- 94% believe the government is not taking sufficient action on behalf of black Britons.

PCS and anti-racism

PCS places a focus on racism as a workplace issue, and believes that trade unions have the responsibility to ensure employers root out racial discrimination in all forms.

Our members are protected from race discrimination in all areas of work by law. But as this report demonstrates, this does not prevent black workers from experiencing discrimination.

Mentioned in the report, racism in career progression is an area in which PCS has been very active. In May 2023, PCS general secretary Mark Serwotka wrote to the Cabinet Office to raise concerns about what appears to be racist institutional bias in the promotion system of the UK Civil Service.

In this and other anti-racist work and campaigns, whether on a national or regional or branch level, PCS's aim is to promote working environments that are safe and welcoming, and in which everyone is treated fairly, regardless of their race or ethnicity.. We also have a responsibility to call out and fight racism in our communities.

We are committed to giving our reps and members the skills to tackle racism where they live and work, across the civil service and private sector.

Racial incident helpline

Where a hate crime or incident takes place at work, your workplace rep should encourage you to report it.

If you feel uncomfortable raising this issue with a PCS rep, PCS operates a 24-hour racial incidents helpline (for PCS members only) to report incidents involving racism at work (020 7801 26780).

We also have a [national black members' committee](#) that advises the national executive committee on campaigns and issues relating to *black members in PCS and wider society. The committee is a safe space for members to raise and discuss black issues, then to communicate them to other members.

*Black: In PCS “black” is used in the political context to apply to people who are Asian, Chinese, African, African/Caribbean, Arabic etc. i.e. people from African and Asian Diaspora, including people of dual heritage.

Members and reps can read more about [what to do if you experience racial discrimination in the workplace](#) and why and how PCS [challenges racism in career progression and performance management](#) by logging into PCS Knowledge [on PCS Digital](#).

Please check back on the website over the next few weeks for Black History Month content.