



## Contents

Introduction	2
SBMC Statement & Actions	3
Email to First Minister	4
Model Employer Statement	5
Message to members	6
Social Media Images	7
Outline risk assessment.	8
FAQ for activists and staff	9



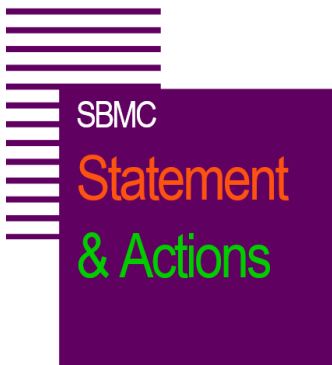
The Scottish Black Members Committee has identified a range of urgent actions to support members in the face of increasing racism. The SMT is taking the following action, and we call for your urgent assistance.

- SMT has relayed the SBMC actions to UNISON Centre for a UK impact.
- SMT has drafted an action plan to maximise the benefit of the SBMC Actions
- This includes safety information for Black members and a template “Joint Statement” you can use to secure employer support for our work.
- The most important step is to give members reassurance and to ensure that workers have support in accessing risk assessments. Risk assessments should be followed by action to address risk and keep people safe. Members need practical reassurance.
- Finally, I have emailed the First Minister to draw Government’s attention to our proposal that all public service employers work with trade unions to minimise the risk of injury to public service workers.

The SBMC call for action is a pivotal moment in our anti-racist work. Our collective work to deliver practical safety and reassurance for members will alleviate fear and protect workers from serious harm.

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads 'Lilian Macer'.

Lilian Macer  
Scottish Secretary



## SBMC

The Scottish Black Members' Committee is the democratic voice of Black Members in UNISON Scotland. The SBMC response to the rise of orchestrated racist violence is as follows:

### Statement

Everyone has a role to play in supporting equality and human rights. We must act together, or we risk extremism spreading and threatening more communities.

We are witnessing an alarming rise in racism and hate crime, some of it targeting public services staff and their families, as well as those from diverse ethnic backgrounds.

The people facing aggression include workers who moved here to support essential services, and those seeking refuge from conflict in their home countries.

Migrant workers deserve respect and support, not discrimination. UNISON Scotland stands firm with them - against any acts of racism in the workplace or our communities.

If you experience racism or hate, whether at work or elsewhere, reach out to your union for help. UNISON is here for you.

Contact your local representative or branch. If you are threatened at work speak to your manager. UNISON branches are working with employers to keep you safe.

When necessary - call the police, they are here to protect you.

Find your local branch contact details here:

<https://branches.unison.org.uk/>

UNISON is collaborating with the broader trade union movement and community allies to safeguard us all and confront racism effectively.

### Actions

1. SBMC asks branches to start allyship sign ups to show solidarity to Black members.
2. Ask branches to reach out to Black members to offer help and support in raising their fears with employers. Make sure our Black members know they are not alone.
3. Make sure employers are doing proper risk assessments, involving the worker in the assessment, and ensuring all fears are taken seriously and all risks are mitigated.
4. Employers should be creating safe spaces at work for people to talk about how this is affecting them (a good place for allies to come and learn how best to support them).
5. Employers should be issuing statements to Black staff to reassure them on how they will keep them safe.



## Email to First Minister

**Action** – Scottish Secretary to write.

**Purpose** – Seek Scottish Government support for risk assessment campaign.

Dear First Minister,

### **Protecting Public Service Workers from Targeted and Orchestrated Racist Attacks**

I know you will share UNISON members feelings of alarm and concern at the rise of racist attacks. There are specific aspects of the current situation that lead me to write seeking your assistance. The specific concerns are:

- The scale and impact of the racist violence
- The evidence of coordination and orchestration
- The targeting of public service workers and civil servants

UNISON is contacting the several hundred public service organisations we work with to request a joint approach. Our focus is a joint commitment to risk assessments and action to promote safety and reassurance. Key areas we are working on are travel to work, and safety for workers who travel in the course of their work. But we are addressing a range of concerns as they arise.

My request to Government is that you take a similar approach and urgently contact employer organisations to promote joint action with the relevant trade union on safety such as advice and risk assessment.

I am happy to discuss a joint response in greater detail if required, but I think the challenge is uncomplicated.

Thank you for considering my request.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Lilian Macer".

Lilian Macer

Scottish Secretary



**Action** – Suggest branches use this in contact with all members.

**Purpose** – Start the conversation about risk assessments and build a database of contacts.

## To All Black Workers in UNISON Scotland.

We are deeply concerned by the rise in violence and racist aggression. And we are alarmed at the fear and anxiety Black Workers are reporting to UNISON. We would like to reassure you that UNISON supports you and appreciates all your hard work in the face of so much uncertainty. If you are currently feeling unsafe or anxious about going to your workplace, your union is there for you.

These are the steps you can take:

- List the work-related situations where you feel at risk. It might be travel to work, travel during work, or delivery of particular services to the public.
- Contact the union. We can offer advice on safety including how to request a risk assessment.
- Risk assessments are done by the employer, and we can support you to seek the work arrangements that keep you safe, and we can support that conversation.
- It may be possible to work from home in some services, but others will require attendance at work.
- Where travel to work is unavoidable there are key safety steps to consider

It isn't possible to anticipate all the issues a risk assessment might cover, but you have the right to a personal assessment and to receive UNISON support. We aim to contact all our public service employers to secure their support for this approach. We will be issuing further advice on personal safety, and we will keep you up to date as the work progresses.

To receive updates on this campaign please email [membershipassistancescotland@unison.co.uk](mailto:membershipassistancescotland@unison.co.uk)



**Action** – Suggest branches raise this template with employers.

**Purpose** – clarify the arrangements for personal risk assessments.

## Joint Statement

### Protecting You from Violence, Aggression and Racism

To all staff

As your employer, we recognise our organisational role in supporting your safety at work. We condemn all violence and racism and operate a policy of zero tolerance. We are working closely with UNISON to support the Government commitment to ensure that people feel safe.

This statement sets out the steps we will take.

Our commitment to your safety includes:

1. We will follow all relevant guidance and public information to respond to risks.
2. We will provide information and advice to staff on personal safety.
3. We will arrange joint risk assessments for individuals or groups who report risk and request support. We anticipate risk assessing arrangements for travel to work, lone working, home visits, working outside normal working hours etc.
4. We will send a clear message that we operate a policy of zero tolerance to aggression, violence and racism at or near our workplaces and in work related communications of any kind. This includes misinformed or misjudged comments in the workplace that create fear and anxiety. Whether intentional, or not.
5. We will provide a supportive environment, both online and in-person, within which all colleagues feel safe and supported at this time of heightened fear, anxiety and distress.
6. We will brief leaders and managers to make sure these measures reassure the workforce.
7. Finally, we will monitor safety impacts, and we will review our joint work to reinforce the message and respond to new events.

## Social Media Images

**Action** – Suggest branches use email or social media for comms profile.

**Purpose** – to promote awareness among Black workers.

[TBC Grieg Kelbie/Danny Phillips]

# Outline risk assessment

**Action** – Suggest branches distribute to reps.

**Purpose** – Outline guidance on how to support members.

1. Employers should work jointly with workers and their UNISON rep to assess any risks including violence and aggression.
2. Employers should include online and in-person risks and travel that is related to work.
3. Employers should already have some information and knowledge about possible risks – locations, communities, individuals, work situations. Again, this includes online or phone communication as well as the workplace.
4. If there is an information gap, the employer should consult more widely, with other staff and managers.
5. Employers will consider the degree of risk and the possible impact.
6. Employers should always consider if the risk can be removed completely. For example by working from home. If that is not possible, employers will consider how to reduce the likelihood of an incident, or, to reduce the impact.
7. Key issues include the following:
  - Is attendance at the workplace essential?
  - How to travel safely if travel is essential.
  - How to avoid risky situations at work, online or out in the community
  - How to avoid isolation and lone working
  - How to ensure safe communication at all times
  - How to identify and respond to work activities or processes which attract a greater risk of aggression or violence from service users
  - And check to ensure all security systems and technology is working effectively.
8. The employer should agree a list of controls to address issues such as travel, isolation, communication and workplace security.
9. An effective employer will ensure staff, colleagues and managers are all trained on enhanced safety arrangements to ensure a consistent safety culture and a safe working environment.
10. The employer should also be liaising closely with key partners such as the local authority, the police and community organisations.
11. Workers and union reps should never experience any disadvantage or negative treatment in response to raising a safety issue.
12. The employer should work with the union to monitor impact and review these arrangements to ensure they are effective.





**Action** – Internal use only – activists and staff

**Purpose** – We will expand and revise this as questions arise.

**Q: What do I need to do?**

A: Circulate the message to members, be ready to support the risk assessments, and support members in getting the action they need to stay safe.

**Q: Is this not an English issue?**

A: No. The disorder may have happened in specific places so far, but the risk is wider, and our Black members report the need for support.

**Q: Where can I get information on risk assessment and personal safety?**

A: We will be circulating more detailed information as the work progresses. The essential material is on the HSE or UNISON Website. This pack is based on the HSE. Details online here:

[HSE: Violence and aggression at work](#)

**Q: Are we supporting counter demonstrations**

A: This pack focuses on the personal safety of members at work. UNISON also has an organising and campaigning role and there is detailed guidance online. Details online here:

[UNISON will stand up to the politics of hate](#)

**Q: What are the safety law issues?**

A: Employers must do risk assessments and adopt controls to eliminate or reduce risk.

Unions reps have a right to be involved. Employers may be liable for any injury arising from their negligence. Workers cannot be punished or victimised for raising safety issues.

**Q: What are the equality law issues**

A: Employers may be liable if they expose workers to situations that cause fear or distress on grounds of race. Direct liability tends to be limited to conduct by colleagues, but employers may be liable if their approach to the management of safety is undermined by discrimination.

For example, a manager who refused to adopt safety measures because they sympathised with the violence. That would be discrimination. Workers are protected against victimisation if they report a discrimination or harassment issue.

But remember, the risk to members involves more than street violence and riots. Ill-informed, misjudged or hostile comments about the current situation by work colleagues may be unlawful.