

Racism Ruins Lives

***An analysis of the 2016-2017 Trade Union Congress
Racism at Work Survey***

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Commissioned by the Trade Union Congress

Submitted: 13 September 2018

Published: 15 April 2019



I've had three workplaces where I've had to bring grievances that were race related (racist in nature)...You can never absolutely prove it...It's insidious. The ignoring you is as bad as the shouting at you...I ended up on anti-depressants and suicidal. It makes you forget who you are, your strengths, your abilities. I'm a skilled intelligent woman who's worked for 35 years and I ended up barely able to send an email. It's like the perpetrators don't realise. Leaves you powerless. I'm having to leave my job and take a £10k wage reduction for a short-term post instead of my permanent one. It's either that or my life. My children/family have insisted. They want me alive (Black/ Black British Female, Children's Services)

Foreword

Frankly it's just too painful. It is ruining lives (Black/ Black British Female)

There is no doubt that racism and xenophobia remain widespread as the recent upsurge in reports of racist abuse and hate crime since the EU Referendum have demonstrated. Whilst there is considerable statistical data available about levels of unemployment, worklessness, lack of promotion and disproportionately low levels of access to training, the Trade Union Congress (TUC) believes that there is very little discussion about the day-to-day experiences of Black and Ethnic Minority (BME) workers in the workplace. The effects of racism at work has become the invisible issue that is not discussed when considering the position of BME employees at work.

To address the lack of presence of BME voices in the debates about racism in the workplace, the TUC carried out an online survey of union and non-union members to capture the experiences of discrimination in the workplace. The survey was completed by over 5000 respondents. The survey asked people to tell us about their experiences at work; if they had been racially harassed, attacked or bullied, if they had been treated differently by their employer because of their race (e.g. by being denied promotion, access to training or being unfairly disciplined). The survey also asked people to tell us about their experiences of raising issues of racism in the workplace; how their employers responded to their complaint, what support they were able to get and what impact the experience of workplace racism had on their lives.

This report shows that racism in the workplace still plays a major role in the life experience of BME workers. It places these experiences in a context that takes account of the historical roots of racism and the contemporary political events that influence people's attitudes and behaviours towards BME people. The report addresses specific BME workers experience of racism and xenophobia in the workplace. These include survey participants experiences of anti-Muslim racism, antisemitism, the experiences of discrimination experienced by the Roma, Gypsy and Traveller communities, Irish and Eastern European workers. This report also highlights the need to think intersectionally about the experiences racism in relation to gender and sexuality.

The experience of participants highlighted in this report challenge the assumption that racism is only a problem when specific incidents of racism take place,. It highlights the accumulative effect that institutional racism has on BME workers health, wellbeing and ability to function at work. The report shines a light on the personal and institutional nature of contemporary racism in the workplace and in doing so highlights the extent, scale and impact of the racism that BME workers experience and how it ruins their lives.

Over the years the TUC have consistently stressed the need for a separate, clear government race equality strategy and action plan. A strategy that is not based on the assumption that individual BME workers need to do more to jump over the

barriers of discrimination that are erected against them in the workplace – a strategy that results in real structural and cultural change.

Wilf Sullivan
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Acknowledgements

The authors would like to thank Natasha Owusu and Wilf Sullivan at the Trade Union Congress for their help, support and patience in the planning, analysis and writing of this report. Most importantly, we would like to thank the thousands of people who have used this survey to share their experiences of workplace racism. Remembering and reliving experiences of racism can be extremely painful. Mindful of this, we have tried to treat your personal statements with the utmost care and sensitivity. It is a simple fact that without you we would not have been able to draw further attention to the nature, scale, impact and persistence of workplace racism.

Executive Summary

Black History Month 2018 coincides with the fiftieth anniversary of the introduction of Race Relations Amendment Act 1968 which outlawed, among other things, racial discrimination in employment. Yet racism remains a widespread and endemic feature of everyday working life in Britain. And while there is a vast body of evidence in relation to racial inequalities in employment, levels of income, promotion and access to training, discussion relating to the role played by workplace racism in producing these outcomes remains fairly muted. Further still, discussion of the various *and* cumulative impacts of workplace racism have been silenced all too often.

To address this, the Trade Union Congress (TUC) commissioned the *Racism at Work* survey. Between December 2016 and February 2017, some 5,191 people took part in the survey. As well as answering a whole series of closed questions relating to various aspects of their everyday working lives, no fewer than 4,833 responses were given to the following open-ended questions:

- (1) If you have experienced or witnessed any of the above [examples of racial harassment], please provide further information about the incident(s) (1,683 responses);
- (2) If you have been treated differently by your employer please provide an example (855 responses).
- (3) [Have you witnessed racial discrimination or harassment towards colleagues, clients or service users in the last 5 years?] Please describe your experience (1,261 responses);
- (4) Is there anything else you'd like to tell us about your experiences in relation to racial harassment and discrimination? (1,034 responses).

By offering a detailed quantitative and a qualitative analysis of the responses given by the people who took the survey, this report shines a light on both the personal, structural and institutional nature of contemporary workplace racism. In doing so, we draw attention to the various ways in which workplace racism has had a profound effect on people's lives, both inside and outside their place of work.

Key findings

Over 70% of Asian and Black workers who took the 2016-2017 Racism at Work survey reported that they had experienced racial harassment at work in the last five years.¹ What is more, around 60% of Asian and Black workers, and almost 40% of participants from a Mixed heritage background reported that they had been subjected

¹ It is important to note that the analysis presented in this report is based on a non-representative survey sample. That is to say, the survey sample is not representative of the general population of Britain as a whole. Therefore, the analysis presented in this document cannot be generalised beyond that of the surveyed population itself. This is a consequence of the convenience rather than probability sampling, as well as the opt-in nature of the survey itself. This is reflected in the overall demographic profile of the survey participants. Nevertheless, the findings presented in this report provide a number of significant insights into the nature and scale of workplace racism today. For further discussion on the survey's methodology and the nature of the survey sample, see Appendix B.

to unfair treatment by their employer because of their race. The most prevalent form of racial harassment encountered at work was racist remarks. In fact, 46% of respondents from a Black, Asian and Mixed heritage background, and 32% of non-White Other participants reported that they had been subjected to 'verbal abuse and racist jokes'. In addition to this, one-third of employees from a Black, Asian and Mixed heritage background reported that they had been bullied and/or subjected to ignorant or insensitive questioning, while 11% of Black, Asian and Mixed heritage employees also stated that they had been experienced racist violence at work.

Ethnic minority employees also stated that they had been subjected to excessive surveillance and scrutiny by colleagues, supervisors and managers, as well as being denied promotion and development/'acting up' opportunities. What is more, ethnic minority employees reported being given unfair performance assessments, as well as being treated as being intellectually inferior to their White counterparts.

The *Racism at Work* survey also asked participants to share their experiences of raising issues of racism in the workplace and the different types of support they may, or may not have received. Indeed, the survey tells us that that far too many employers still fail to take this issue seriously. The personal statements provided by survey respondents also further attests that talking about and challenging workplace racism is extremely difficult, precisely because of a number of coercive and repressive practices which maintain and reproduce institutional and structural racism, and White hegemony. Over 40% of employees who reported a racist incident to their employer said that their complaint was either ignored or that they themselves had subsequently been identified as 'trouble makers'. At the same time, more than one-in-ten respondents raising a complaint said that they were subsequently disciplined and/or forced out of their job as a result of doing so. Moreover, survey participants also reported being subject to a counter-complaint, being subject to disciplinary action being transferred to another department/ worksite and/ or being forced out of their job, after raising a complaint/ grievance.

The TUC's *Racism at Work* survey also further evidences the profound impact that racism has on class experience, class position and the life chances of ethnic minority workers; the combined effect of which contributes to the reproduction of racial inequalities in labour market participation. For example, employees on non-permanent contracts were more likely to report racial harassment and discrimination by their employer than those with permanent contracts. This finding suggests that racism adds further precarity to people's everyday working lives. Similarly, ethnic minority staff working less than 16 hours a week were more likely to report that they had experienced racial harassment at work than those who worked full time. In comparison to participants working for large companies/ organisations (i.e. those employing more than 1,000 people), ethnic minority people working for small and medium-sized employers were also more likely to report that they had experienced workplace racism. While, 49% of participants reported that racism had negatively impacted on their ability to do their job, the *Racism at Work* survey also reveals the extent to which workplace racism, alongside other forms of prejudice and discrimination, continues to determine who gets hired, trained, promoted, retained, demoted and dismissed.

The TUC's *Racism at Work* survey also stresses the need to think intersectionally about the experiences of ethnic minority people if we are to sufficiently grasp both their marginalisation in the workplace and the unequal position ethnic minority people

occupy in the labour market more generally. For example, a considerable number of women identifying as Black reported that they had been pressurised, if not explicitly forced, to 'straighten' their hair, as well as being objectified in hypersexualised ways. What is more, almost 15% of ethnic minority women and 8% of ethnic minority men stated that racial discrimination had caused them to leave their job. In light of this, future discussions on how to address workplace racism must also recognise that racism occurs alongside sexism, homophobia, transphobia and disablism, thus making some people vulnerable to multiple forms of discrimination and domination.

The 2016-2017 *Racism at Work* survey also documents the fact that workplace racism can have a significant impact on people's physical and emotional well-being. Worryingly, of the Asian, Black and Mixed heritage participants who reported experiencing racism at work, 55.6% reported that this had impacted on their mental health, while 28% declared that workplace racism had an impact on their physical health. Not only this, 28% Asian, Black and Mixed heritage participants who had experienced racism at work said that this had resulted in them taking a period of sick leave.

The personal statements provided by survey participants also draw attention to the ways in which contemporary workplace racism is rooted in forms of racial thinking that once underpinned imperialism, colonialism, slavery and scientific racism. For example, people racialised as non-White continue to be thought of as 'intellectually inferior' to White people, 'child-like', 'degenerate' and 'subhuman'. What is more people racialised as non-White were also framed as belonging to places characterised as 'dirty', 'wild', 'uncivilised' and 'backwards'. Indeed, this was also evident in terms of the gendered ways in which many survey participants experienced racism at work.

The personal statements provided by survey participants also provide insights into the workplace experiences of racism both build-up and aftermath of the 2016 European Union (EU) Referendum and the election of Donald Trump as President of the United States (US). This was arguably most prevalent in terms of Islamophobic narratives which associate Islam and Muslim people with terrorism. Relatedly, the *Racism at Work* survey further highlights that xenophobia remains a significant problem. Indeed, the survey demonstrates that the prevalence and deepening of anti-immigrant sentiment before, during and after the EU Referendum has had a profound impact on the working lives of participants who self-identified as White European. In doing so, the survey sheds further light on the exclusionary, if not probationary, nature of Whiteness.

Echoing wider academic, political and media narratives, survey participants describing themselves as White British used the *Racism at Work* survey to suggest that globalisation, deindustrialisation, neoliberalism and austerity have had a disproportionate, detrimental impact on the 'White working class'. In fact, a worrying number of White British participants used the survey to downplay the nature and extent of workplace racism, express various forms of White resentment and/ or allege the pervasiveness of 'reverse racism'. This included expressing opposition to attempts to promote equality, diversity and inclusion in the workplace, while also opposing 'positive discrimination' and 'political correctness'. The personal statements provided by many White British respondents also highlight the way in which White resentment can in classed and gendered ways. This was commonly expressed as a

belief that contemporary society is organised in such a way that it disadvantages White, working class, straight men.

Overall, the evidence captured by the 2016 *Racism at Work* draws further attention to the role played by historically coded forms of racial thinking, as well as the structural and institutional dimensions of racism in the workplace. Not only does the survey demonstrate the systemic nature of racism, it also sheds further light on the hegemonic nature of Whiteness. The analyse presented in this report also suggests that the entrenched nature of workplace racism and racial inequality must be addressed through substantive structural, institutional and legislative reform. The *Racism at Work* survey also provides a number of critical insights in terms of the anti-racist educational work that must now be carried out. It is our view that the key findings presented here should be used to achieve a better collective understanding of how the past, and the broader politics of the present, shapes people's everyday experiences of racism at work, especially the continuities between the types of racism encountered in the workplace and the forms of racism articulated and practiced by the economic and political elite in this country. To this end, we must also challenge the idea that we live in a post-racial society. In doing so, we must counter the way in which workplace racism is routinely reduced to either a series of random one-off events and/ or the implicit attitudes and unconscious biases of the individual.

In short, the *Racism at Work* survey reminds us that racism remains an integral feature of workplace culture and everyday working life for a substantial number of people in this country. We must recognise this and attend to the fact that racist ideas and racial inequality in the labour market rely on a series of everyday workplace practices for their reproduction.

Recommendations

Having reviewed both the quantitative and qualitative evidence gathered by the 2016-2017 TUC *Racism at Work* survey, we put forward a number of recommendations for government, employers, the TUC and individual trade unions.

For Government, this includes:

- setting-up an annual review which measures whether progress is being made in terms of addressing racial inequality in the labour market;
- Investigate the role played by racism and other forms of discrimination and harassment in sustaining racial inequality and precarious forms of work;
- Ensure that anonymised application forms are used across all sectors of the labour market;
- Introduce new legislation ensuring that the procurement of government and public sector contracts are subject to Equality Impact Assessments;
- Commission a wide-ranging review into whether employers are fulfilling their equality duties and how employers respond to instances of racism in the workplace.
- Take positive action measures to tackle structural racism by properly resourcing the Equality and Human Rights Commission (EHRC) to conduct sector-based annual reviews, while also giving the EHRC the authority impose action plans aimed at improving employer performance in relation to the recruitment, retention and promotion of ethnic minority workers;

- Ensure that employment tribunal committees are diverse, while also reinstating the authority of employment tribunals to make wider recommendations;
- Immediately review the implementation of the '[Code of practice on the English language requirement for public sector workers](#)' and introduce new legislation guaranteeing employees the legal right to have their 'language proficiency' assessed free of charge by an independent expert, while also ensuring that employees are given the opportunity to receive additional learning support if necessary;
- Change the Protection from Harassment Act to ensure that employers are responsible for protecting their workers against racism by third parties, such as clients, contractors and customers.
- Audit small companies to ensure that complaints of discrimination and inequality are dealt with in a sensitive and timely manner, while also supporting small companies and businesses employing more than fifty people to carryout and publish a pay audit in relation to ethnicity.

For employers, we put forward the following recommendations focusing on employer leadership, responsibility and accountability:

- Ensure that a senior figure within the organisation, who is either trained or demonstrates a requisite level of experience or understanding, is made responsible for ensuring that the company has an equality and diversity policy in place and that this policy is shared with all staff, external stakeholders, contractors, clients and customers;
- Ensure that senior leadership figures sign a policy agreement that guarantees equality and diversity practitioners have the time, space and resources required to fulfil their role, particularly in terms of having time to investigate and respond to reports of racism;
- Ensure that equality and diversity training is made mandatory for all managerial staff;
- Ensure that senior management figures and all employees in leadership positions are clear about their organisation's policies on racism, equality and diversity, and acknowledge their responsibility to ensure that these policies are put into practice at all times;
- Consider appointing a senior ethnic minority figure in the organisation to represent more junior employees that experience/witness harassment and bullying in order to prevent 'speaking out' against racism having a career limiting impact;
- Ensure that senior organisational leaders and Human Resources staff work in a constructive, collaborative and transparent manner with trade unions, employee network groups and diversity and inclusion specialists;
- Work with trade unions to establish targets and develop positive action measures to address racism and racial inequalities within the workforce;
- Ensure that equality and diversity audits/ assessments do not simply focus on measuring the demographic composition of the workforce, but also examine whether there is structural inequality in terms of pay, bonuses and levels and rates of recruitment and promotion;
- Make sure that there is a simple method for ethnic minority workers to report racism at work, and make sure that ethnic minority workers feel confident that complaints will be taken seriously, acted on and dealt with satisfactorily;

- Establish structures, roles and processes that unequivocally communicate that all reports of racism will be taken seriously and will be handled in a sensitive and timely manner, acting in ways which protect staff who are subject to racism;
- Establish and sponsor ethnic minority employee networks which create 'safe spaces' and offer support to people who have experienced racism;
- Ensure that training and the promotion of equality and diversity includes a discussion of the continued persistence of racism and racial inequality in the labour market, why the Race Relations Act was amended in 1968 to outlaw discrimination in employment, and why such legislation and equality duties are required today. This should take place within a broader discussion of Britain's colonial and multiracial history, with emphasis placed on how this informs the expression and experience of racism today;
- Employee training should also make a clear distinction between racism and prejudice, rather than succumbing to the challenge presented by White resentment and claims of 'reverse racism';
- Ensure that procurement agreements with clients and external contractors should also include a commitment to opposing racism and treating staff with dignity and respect.

Finally, we propose that the Trade Union Congress and individual trade unions:

- Undertake an unflinching inventory of what individual trade unions and trade union branches are, or are not doing, to challenge workplace racism;
- Ensure that all trade union members are made aware of relevant points of contact, including Black and Minority Ethnic and broader equality and diversity points of contact above branch level;
- Ensure that all complaints of racial discrimination are taken seriously and are acted on and dealt with satisfactorily, including reports against management and/or union officials;
- Ensure that all trade union equality and diversity officers have a satisfactory understanding of racism, as well as being suitably experienced, trained and/ or qualified;
- Ensure that any help and support extended to a person(s) experiencing workplace racism enables said person(s) to respond in a manner that feels appropriate to them;
- Undertake renewed effort to educate trade union members on how to record evidence of workplace racism;
- Advise trade union members on the risks associated with trying to report and challenge racism as an individual worker, outlining how trade union members can guard against those risks either by being a trade union member and/or part of Black and Minority Ethnic employee networks;
- Develop a protocol for dealing with instances and cases where both the victim and the perpetrator of racism are members of the same union;
- Recognise the impact that racism and xenophobia outside the workplace can have, especially on people's ability to do their job;
- Ensure that trade unionists and workers more generally either develop or are made aware of the types of support available to them from trade unions and the TUC more broadly;
- Carefully examine decision-making processes to ensure that there are no attitudinal, political or bureaucratic barriers in place preventing the full

- participation of ethnic minority members in the unions as either activists and/or elected/appointed representatives;
- Consult ethnic minority workers in relation to bargaining issues that are relevant to their workplace experience, as well as how the union's mainstream negotiating agenda impacts on their working lives;
 - Negotiate with employers to develop a clear-cut equal opportunity policy which must include a zero-tolerance approach to racism.

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Section 1: Brexit, Trump and the contemporary politics of racism

The various forms of workplace racism documented in this report do not come from nowhere. Indeed, as many of the personal statements provided by survey participants show, broader political developments and media discourses have shaped the forms of racism that people continue to encounter in their everyday working lives. Not only this, some of the personal statements quoted throughout this report evidence a series of connections between the ways that people experience racism *inside* and *outside* of their place of work. In light of this, any meaningful discussion of the nature, extent and scale of workplace racism cannot be divorced from an assessment of the broader political context.

There is also a political reason for taking stock of the broader politics of racism in Britain. Attempts to downplay the pernicious ‘genteel’ racism of the middle class and the political elite while focussing on working class racism is an age-old political ploy.² More specifically, it is a deliberate attempt to obscure any connection being made between working class racism, political discourse and the violence of state and institutional racism. For example, the Conservative Minister for Europe, [Sir Alan Duncan](#), recently described Brexit as working class ‘tantrum’ over immigration. This is a longstanding and well-honed attempt by a member of the political establishment to frame working class people as irrational and/ or infantile. By framing Brexit as a uniquely working class phenomenon, Sir Duncan, like other academics, politicians and media commentators, do three things: first, they obscure the fact that the political crisis that is Brexit is of the political elites own making; second, they surreptitiously refuse to acknowledge the depth of racism and anti-immigrant sentiment that resides within the middle class, as well as concealing the fact that a considerable number of middle class people voted to leave the EU; and three, the media and the political elite are able to obscure their role in stoking the flames of racism and anti-immigrant, not just during the EU Referendum campaign, but all the way back to heydays of the British Empire. In short, we must address the fact that racism and anti-immigrant sentiment in this country is a cross-class phenomenon which has long played an important role in the creation and maintenance of hegemony. This means we cannot deny the fact that sections of the working class subscribe to the kinds of racist-nationalist populism discussed here. However, as [Gargi Bhattacharyya](#) puts it, we cannot be distracted from questions of power, nor can we afford to be distracted from attending to the violence of state racism, and the ‘the continuities between violent state racisms and other modes of state violence and coercion’.

To this end. The discussion below provides a short overview of the politics of racism in this country in recent times, demonstrating how recent political developments and media discourses have shaped how people experience racism at work. As the discussion here demonstrates, both political and media discourse have contributed to the creation and reproduction of a broader hostile environment from which the workplace cannot be readily detached. That said, it should also be noted that we are not suggesting that the evidence presented throughout this report is either unique to the current moment or somehow simply the result of Brexit and the election of Donald Trump as President of the United States (US). On the contrary, this report places

² See Ashe, S., Virdee, S. & Brown, L. (2016) [‘Striking back against racist violence in the East End of London, 1968–1970’](#); *Race & Class* 58(1), pp. 34-54.

emphasis on demonstrating that the historical roots of contemporary workplace racism goes back much further than that.

The contemporary politics of racism in Britain: a short overview

The 2016 EU referendum campaign was marked by a right-wing nostalgia for the days when the British Empire ruled over approximately one-quarter of the world's population. Both during and since the EU Referendum, we have heard a series of pro-Leave politicians attempt to accentuate the positives of Britain now being able to freely strike new trade deals with our 'kith and kin' in the 'Commonwealth'.³ Not only this, Whitehall officials even coined the term '[Empire 2.0](#)' to describe their vision of Britain's economic future once we finally leave the EU. Indeed, repeated references have been made to '[our friends](#)' in Australia, Canada, New Zealand and South Africa. Each of which are White settler colonies which came into existence through the violent replacement and subjugation of indigenous peoples.⁴

In recent times, we have again bore witness to the kinds of racism which was once used to justify colonialism, imperialism and slavery and that this continues to be perpetuated in the most powerful echelons of the British establishment. For example, former Conservative Foreign Secretary, [Boris Johnson](#), thought it was appropriate to recite Rudyard Kipling's colonial inspired poem *The Road to Mandalay* during his visit to Myanmar (Burma) in January 2017. This was not an aberration. [Johnson](#) has long history of similar 'gaffes' which include describing people from the Congo as having

³ For further discussion, see Ashe, S. (2016) '[UKIP, Brexit and Postcolonial Melancholy](#)', *Discover Society*.

⁴ This type of imperial nostalgia within the Conservative party can be traced back to the [Anti-Common Market League](#) (AML). Found in 1961, the AML advocated 'for British free trade interests, and maintaining connections with White Commonwealth countries'. By tracing this type of White nationalism within the Conservative Party, we are also reminded of the ideological links between the Conservative Party and the far right. For example, we are reminded that not only did Nigel Farage leave the Conservative Party to become a founding member of UKIP in 1992, but that [Neil Hamilton](#), elected as UKIP Group Leader in 2016 following his election to the National Assembly for Wales, has met with the pro-Apartheid, White supremacist Springbok Club in 1998 while he was the Conservative Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Corporate Affairs. What is more, we are also reminded of the Conservative Party's links to the Monday Club. Until 2001, this political pressure group was formally endorsed by the Conservative Party. Since 1961, the Monday Club has brought together supporters of 'White Rhodesia' and South Africa, as well as having direct links to Britain's neo-fascist, neo-Nazi National Front. In May 2017, the Conservative [MP Jacob Rees-Mogg](#), touted as a future leader of the Conservative Party, was a guest of honour at the annual dinner of the Traditional Britain Group (TBG). The TBG was founded by [Lord Sudely](#), a former president of the Monday Club, who has previously spoken out in praise of Adolf Hitler. Other guests of the TBG include [Richard Spencer](#), a neo-Nazi president of a White supremacist think tank in the United States and a [University Lecturer](#) who supports the view that Black people have lower IQs than White people. This anti-EU and anti-immigration group also 'likes' the Facebook page of far right politicians such as the leader of the French Front National, Marine Le Pen. The TGB has also called for Black people such as Doreen Lawrence, the mother of Stephen Lawrence, to be 'requested to return to their natural homelands'. More recently, [Rees-Mogg](#) met with Steve Bannon, Chairman of the far right news outlet Brietbart. Bannon played a pivotal role in Donald Trump's presidential election campaign, before serving a brief stint as Trump's White House Chief Strategist. Appearing on the [BBC's flagship Andrew Marr Show](#), Rees-Mogg dismissed this meeting as an exchange of ideas with a 'well-informed' person with whom he does not agree on everything. During the interview, Rees-Mogg also dismissed Trump's Islamophobic retweeting of the far right street-protest group Britain First to his 44 million followers. In fact, Rees-Mogg claimed that Twitter is a 'trivial medium'. In September 2016, [Rees-Mogg](#) also said that he would 'almost certainly vote for Trump if I was American'. In short, these connections remind us that racism is not simply something that exists on the fringes of mainstream party politics.

'watermelon smiles'; referring to citizens of the Commonwealth as 'flag-waving piccaninnies'; comparing the Conservative Party with 'Papau New Guinea-style orgies of cannibalism and chief-killing'; and referring to Barack Obama as being 'part-Kenyan' with an ancestral dislike for the United Kingdom after the former US President had removed a bust of Winston Churchill, a political hero of Johnson's, from the Oval Office in the White House. Here we might also remember [Churchill's](#) own personal belief in the superiority of the White man who had conquered 'the primitive, dark-skinned natives' in return for 'bringing them the benefits of civilisation'. Johnson also keeps good company among the living. [Prince Philip](#), for example, also has demonstrated a tendency to make similar comments. And like Johnson, these are comments are not 'gaffes' or 'one-offs'. They are evidence of an enduring imperial mentality in this country. Indeed, as the discussion below will show, many of the people who took the TUC's *Racism at Work* survey have been subject to similar forms of racism by their managers, colleagues, customers and service users.

During the EU Referendum campaign, politicians and commentators from across the political spectrum also argued that the future of the welfare state could be secured by leaving the EU and by further shoring up Britain's borders. Some Brexiteers even advocated an Australian 'points-based' immigration system, noting Australia's '[admirable record of taking in 'genuine refugees'](#)'. Of course, they failed to mention the human rights abuses and state violence inherent to the Australian system of border controls, detention and deportation.⁵ Not only this, Brexiteers declared no intention of restoring the British Nationality Act 1948 which gave '[our friends](#)' and '[our extended family](#)' throughout Empire the right to enter, settle and work in Britain. These rights have been systematically withdrawn by successive governments ever since the Conservative Party introduced the 1962 Immigration Act. As well as talking tough on '[people-smugglers, illegal immigration \[and the\] subversion of our borders](#)', Nigel Farage and his fellow Conservative Brexiteers also sought to ensure that anyone who did make it to Britain's shores had to have a certain amount of money in the bank so that they would not 'exploit', or be a 'burden' to, the welfare state. [Boris Johnson](#) even argued that leaving the EU would mean that the £350m that is sent to Brussels each week could be earmarked to fund the NHS. Lumping together the future of the NHS and debates around immigration control, these narratives also ran parallel to the way in which politicians responded to the Syrian refugee crisis. More specifically, these narratives further cemented racialised and nationalistic notions of 'deserving' and 'undeserving poor' at the core of British political discourse.

The real life impact of the distinction made between 'deserving' and 'undeserving poor' has been further evidenced by what has recently come to be known as the 'Windrush Scandal'. Indeed, recent events have brought renewed attention to [Theresa May's](#) time as Home Secretary, where the current Prime Minister devised a number of policy measures designed to create a 'very hostile environment' for people migrating to Britain. In recent weeks, we have been reminded how decades of government immigration policy, nationality laws and political and media discourse have created and maintained a hostile environment in which so called 'coloured migration' has been routinely framed as undesirable.⁶ What is more, the Windrush Scandal has revealed the way in which considerable numbers of people have been detained, deported, denied healthcare, had benefits withdrawn and been made

⁵ see Ashe, S. (2016) '[UKIP, Brexit and Postcolonial Melancholy](#)', *Discover Society*.

⁶ For further discussion, see de Noronha, L. (2018) '[The 'Windrush generation' and 'illegal immigrants' are both our kin](#)', *Verso Books*.

homeless, as well as being denied the ability to undertake paid employment. All of this is the result of the policies measures introduced by the current government and their predecessors. And in the grand scheme of things it may seem like a minor point, but it is also worth bearing in mind that the Home Office and various public sector institutions, such as the Border & Immigration Agency and Immigration Removal Centres, employ a significant number of people to put government policy into practice. This is the broader political context which shapes the way civil servants and other public sectors relate to their colleagues and the other people they encounter when they go to work. Alongside the desire create a hostile environment, the everyday reality and consequences of the entrenched political language of toughness when it comes to immigration control was recently revealed when a [Home Office employee](#) was filmed saying:

What you got to understand, yeah, you take the piss out of the system, the system is going to take the piss out of you. We are not here to make life easy for you. It's a challenging environment we have got to make for people. It's working because it's pissing you off. Am I right? There you go. That's my aim at the end of the day, to make it a challenging environment for you. It's pissing you off. You're telling me it's pissed you off. There you go, I've done my job.

The EU Referendum campaign also consolidated, if not legitimised, mainstream islamophobia.⁷ For example, Nigel Farage and UKIP ran a campaign which connected freedom of movement in the EU to debates regarding Turkey becoming a member of the EU, terror attacks in France and Belgium, and sexual assaults in Germany.⁸ Islamophobia was the glue that held all of these things together. More specifically, islamophobia provided an overarching narrative which suggested that British sovereignty, Christian normativity and Britain's borders were under threat. Indeed, on the eve of the EU Referendum vote, the Farage-led Leave.eu campaign went a step further by releasing their 'Breaking point' poster.⁹ In doing so, Leave.eu mimicked Nazi propaganda, suggesting that a large number of Middle Eastern refugees (code for Muslim refugees) were gathering at Europe's borders. Not only this, the Leave.eu campaign sought to make political gain from a series of sexual assaults in Germany by claiming that refugees from the Middle East posed a sexual threat to women both in Britain and across Europe. Not only this, islamophobia has become so engrained in British politics that [Lady Sayeeda Warsi](#), a former Conservative Party Chair, has called for an inquiry to be held into anti-Muslim racism within the Conservative Party, recently claimed that there are '[almost weekly](#)' islamophobic incidents inside her Party. Indeed a recent article published in [The Mirror](#) catalogues a series of Islamophobic incidents involving Conservative Party members and elected officials, including anti-Muslim campaign leaflets. More recently, Boris Johnson wrote a derogatory and inflammatory article in *The Telegraph* comparing Muslim who wear a Burka to 'letterboxes'. As Naaz Rashid points out,

⁷ For a more detailed discussion of these themes, see Virdee, S. & McGeever, B. (2017) 'Racism, Crisis, Brexit', *Ethnic and Racial Studies*, available at: <http://www.tandfonline.com/doi/pdf/10.1080/01419870.2017.1361544?needAccess=true>.

⁸ For further insight into the way in which Turkey was framed as posing as security threat to both Britain and the EU, see <https://www.theguardian.com/politics/2016/may/21/vote-leave-prejudice-turkey-eu-security-threat>.

⁹ Stewart, H. & Mason, R. (2016) '[Nigel Farage's anti-migrant poster reported to police](#)', *The Guardian*.

Some responses to Johnson's article in *The Telegraph*, while critical of the tone of his interventions, have nonetheless welcomed those comments as an opportunity to reopen perennial debates about veiling.

In fact, in the midst of widespread condemnation of Johnson's article, a journalist writing for [The Spectator](#) went as far as to suggest that 'there is not enough Islamophobia in the Tory Party'. What the above discussion reveals is that such gendered forms of anti-Muslim racism are not the sole preserve of the far right. Such ideas and narratives have found a home in both mainstream politics and media. And as sections 5 and 6 will show, such forms of gendered islamophobia underpin how a considerable number of Muslim people experience workplace racism.

On the other side of the Atlantic, [Donald Trump](#) applauded the fact that Britain was leaving the EU, claiming that Brexit would make Britain great again. In fact, 'making America great' became a familiar slogan during both [Trump's](#) presidential election campaign and his first few months in office. We have also witnessed the way in which Trump's racist populism has been laced with anti-immigrant sentiment. For example, the US President has made repeated calls for a wall to be built along America's border with Mexico. Trump has also recently used the term '[violent animals](#)' when referring to 'undocumented immigrants'. Again, it is this type of rhetoric which has long fed into, if not legitimised, the kinds of racism which TUC survey participants have reported encountering at work. On top of this, Trump's first few months in office also saw him associate all Muslim people with terrorism when attempting to ban Muslim people from entering the United States. At the same time, the President of the United States has refused to condemn a gathering of '[neo-confederates, neo-Nazis and Identarian militias](#)'. In fact, Trump commented that this particular gathering was attended by 'some very fine people'.¹⁰ In fact, Nigel Farage's Leave.EU and Donald Trump's presidential election campaign both sought to mobilise far right support.¹¹ Not only this, in November 2017, [Trump](#) brought an islamophobic British far right group into mainstream media and political discussion when he retweeted anti-Muslim videos posted by the Deputy Leader of Britain First. These are just a few examples of the different ways in which the far right have been brought into, if not legitimised by, mainstream politics in recent years. Indeed, as the discussion below suggests, this has also contributed to racism and support for the far right becoming far more open and more explicit in terms of its expression in workplaces in Britain.

Alongside Islamophobia, antisemitism has also revealed itself both in recent comments made by [Nigel Farage](#) and during far right protests in the US.¹² For example, [Farage](#) recently suggested that rather than worrying about Russian interference in American political affairs, American's should be more concerned about the alleged depth of political influence exerted by the so called 'Jewish lobby'. As the discussion in Section 5 will show, Farage made use of the same historically informed antisemitic representations of Jewish people as a homogenous self-

¹⁰ See Winter, A (2017) '[Brexit and Trump: On Racism, the Far Right and Violence](#)'. Bath: IPR. It is also worth noting the speed, frequency and vigour with which the President of the United States has condemned Colin Kaepernick and other National Football League players in the United States (US) for trying to highlight the structural and institutional nature of racism in the US by taking a knee during the American national anthem.

¹¹ See Winter, A (2017) '[Brexit and Trump: On Racism, the Far Right and Violence](#)'. Bath: IPR.

¹² For a more detailed discussion of this, see Winter, A. (2017) '[Charlottesville, far-right rallies, racism and relating to power](#)', *Open Democracy*.

interested and conspiratorial political force also shapes the way in which Jewish people experience workplace racism in Britain. Sadly, the politics of antisemitism in British politics is not limited to the role played by the former UKIP leader. In 2016, there was no fewer than three separate inquiries and reports investigating antisemitism in the Labour Party.¹³ Not only this, antisemitic abuse, harassment and violence were also among the spike in racist incidents and 'hate crimes' following the EU referendum.¹⁴ Recent attempts to catalogue the nature of antisemitism has noted [swastikas](#) being drawn on walls near synagogues and [signs](#) bearing the message 'Beware of Jews'. It is in light of this and the ongoing debates and tensions within the Labour Party with regard to the adoption of the [International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance's](#) (IHRA) definition and examples of antisemitism, which has included [trade union leaders](#) calling for the Party to adopt the full IHRA definition of antisemitism, that we must develop a strong grasp of the historical rooted ideas and images which underpin antisemitism, especially when a considerable number of TUC survey participants have reported experiencing antisemitism and encountering racist graffiti in their place of work.

In recent years, mainstream politics has also become a home for xenophobia. Indeed, the expansion of the EU, first in 2004 and then again in 2007, and the right to freedom of movement that EU membership entails, has once again brought anti-Eastern European sentiment into mainstream politics (see Section 9 for a historical overview anti-Eastern European sentiment in Britain). In 2016, [Amber Rudd](#), who until the aforementioned Windrush scandal had served as Theresa's May's Home Secretary, used her Conservative Party Conference speech to say that she wanted to make it more difficult for companies to recruit migrant workers and to ensure migrant workers "were not taking jobs British workers could do". Sadly, this type of rhetoric is all too familiar. During their time in office, the New Labour governments of Tony Blair and Gordon Brown had initially premised their immigration policies on the economic need to recruit more workers to fill shortages in the labour market. In truth, freedom of movement saw White European workers become 'desirable' in the eyes of the State, while people racialised as non-White were simultaneously subject to stricter and stricter immigration controls. Against a rising tide of anti-immigrant sentiment, perpetuated by an increasingly vitriolic media, mainstream politicians, the British National Party and UKIP (both of whom were making electoral inroads in Conservative and Labour constituencies), [Gordon Brown](#) used his 2007 Labour Party Conference to call for 'British Jobs for British Workers'.¹⁵ In one fell swoop, Brown attempted to appease rising anti-immigrant sentiment by militarising our borders and

¹³ These include: Jan Royall's investigation into allegations of antisemitism in relation to Oxford University Labour Club, [The Shami Chakrabarti Inquiry](#), and a [Home Affairs Select Committee](#) report.

¹⁴ For example, the [Community Security Trust](#) reported that there was a total of 767 antisemitic attacks in the first six months of 2017, 74% of which occurred in Greater London and Greater Manchester where the majority of Britain's Jewish population live. This is a rise of some 30% compared to the same period in 2016 (i.e. just before EU Referendum).

¹⁵ Brown also used his speech to argue that:

In July [2007] I announced a new unified border force. And already the first elements are in place - a stronger uniformed presence at ports, customs officers targeting illegal immigration, stronger security checks at passport control, by next year ID cards for foreign nationals and we will start to count people in and out...And we will move forward with our new Australian-style points-based approach to immigration. So Britain will continue to benefit from skilled workers from abroad and they will understand their responsibilities to earn the right to settle in Britain...But let me be clear any newcomer to Britain who is caught selling drugs or using guns will be thrown out. No-one who sells drugs to our children or uses guns has the right to stay in our country.

criminalising people looking to migrate to Britain. Notably Brown also spoke in favour of an 'Australian-style points-based approach to immigration', while again failing to mention the violence and barbarity that the Australian system entails.¹⁶ This was a moment where there was near political consensus that expansion of the EU would result in Britain being 'swamped' by people from Eastern Europe who would steal jobs, homes and overburden public services. It is also important to note that Brown's 2007 speech was also part of a broader political retreat from multiculturalism and a return to the politics of assimilation.

Between 2001 and 2011, we also bore witness to much political discussion in relation to perceived internal and external threats to Britishness, particularly in terms of the kinds of backlash we saw in relation to 9-11 and the 'War on Terror', fears around '[sleepwalking to segregation](#)' and a perceived lack of '[community cohesion](#)'. All of which contributed to the widely shared view that English national identity had to be rehabilitated.¹⁷ Events such as the urban disorders in towns in the North West of England in 2001 and the 2005 bombings in London were used to suggest that multiculturalism had failed. All too often, these narratives positioned ethnic minority people as being at odds with what was imagined to be [British liberal values](#). Indeed, the turn to assimilation can be traced all the way from the Blair government's through to [Prime Minister David Cameron's](#) 2011 call for a 'Muscular Liberalism'. Such arguments were, and still are, very much salient in terms of how anti-Muslim racism is articulated. Indeed, as evidence gathered by the TUC *Racism at Work* survey shows, the demand that ethnic minority workers conform to 'Britishness' is suggestive of the types of everyday political demands encountered by many survey participants in their place of work. More specifically, the *Racism at Work* survey reveals that workplaces up and down the country play a crucial role in reinforcing the idea that the White British majority have the right to set the coordinates of (un-)acceptable ethnic and racial difference. In fact, the *Racism at Work* survey shows that this was particularly prevalent in terms of demanding that ethnic minority workers only speak English at work. Again, the way in which this issue takes root in the everyday politics of the workplace is firmly connected to the broader politics of assimilation. For example, [UKIP's 2015 General Election manifesto](#) stated that UKIP are 'committed to promoting the English language as a common ingredient that will bind our society together', further noting that once Britain leaves the EU it will be able to

...make the most of all our links with the Commonwealth, with North America, Australasia, much of Africa, the Indian subcontinent and all the other countries where English is the first or second language.

It is important to note that not only did Britain forcibly impose the English language on its colonies, it is the same assimilatory logic which underpins the recently instituted legislation brought forward by the Conservative Government as part of the 2016 Immigration Act (see Section 12). This approach to the language question can also be traced back to New Labour's time in office, where the budgets for translation and transcription services were systematically cut.¹⁸

¹⁶ For further discussion, see Ashe, S. (2016) '[UKIP, Brexit and Postcolonial Melancholy](#)'. *Discover Society*.

¹⁷ For a discussion of policy developments during New Labour's time in office, see Back, L., Keith, M., Khan, A., Shukra, K and Solomos, J. (2002) '[New Labour White Heart: Politics, Multiculturalism and the Return of Assimilation](#)', *The Political Quarterly* 73(4), pp. 445-454.

¹⁸ See Back, L., Keith, M., Khan, A., Shukra, K and Solomos, J. (2002) '[New Labour White Heart: Politics, Multiculturalism and the Return of Assimilation](#)', *The Political Quarterly* 73(4), pp. 445-454.

So far the discussion shows that many of the media and political narratives that have come to define the contemporary politics of racism in this country are far from new. In fact, it could be argued that they are the most recent manifestations of the kind of things that we have heard many times before. On the fiftieth anniversary of Enoch Powell's infamous 1968 '[rivers of blood](#)' speech, this is perhaps most pernicious in terms of the way in which terms such as 'White working class' and the 'left behind' have become integral to mainstream political and media discourse, particularly during the EU Referendum and Trump's presidential campaign,¹⁹ but also in terms of the way in which the political elite responded to the electoral inroads made by the British National Party (2002-2009), the subsequent rise of UKIP and the emergence of islamophobic street mobilisations such as the English Defence League. On both sides of the Atlantic, Brexit and Trump have, in the main, been framed as being the product of a populist 'White working class revolt' underpinned by economic and cultural anxiety. Moreover, it is commonly argued that both Brexit and Trump are a response to decades of economic dispossession, the loss of relatively secure, well-paid employment and the replacement of post-war welfare capitalism with neoliberalism and, more recently, austerity. It is also claimed that support for Brexit and Trump are reactions to the political censure imposed by political correctness which has been said to have stigmatised the 'White working class's' 'legitimate' concerns in relation to immigration and multiculturalism. Such narratives also allege that Brexit and Trump are the product of the libertarian middle class political establishment which sits in Westminster believing that they could abandon 'the White working class' and still get their votes.²⁰

These narratives are in need of urgent redress, especially given that a considerable number of people self-identifying as White British used the TUC *Racism at Work* survey to articulate similar arguments (see Section 8). Not only do such narratives deny that the working class in this country has always been multiracial and multi-ethnic since its very formation, these narratives also gloss over the fact that neoliberalism, globalisation, deindustrialisation and austerity have had a profound impact on the lives of all working class people. For example, more often than not, neoliberalism, globalisation, deindustrialisation and austerity have had a disproportionate impact on working class people from an ethnic minority background. Current political-economic orthodoxy has also destroyed their homes, communities, cultures and traditions of collective solidarity. 'Left behind' and 'white working class' narratives obscure the fact that racism has very real material consequences. Racism shapes class experience, class position, class relations and class formation. Racism fragments and divides the working class. We will explore these themes further in Section 8 when discussing the prevalence of White resentment and how this findings expression in terms of opposition to 'positive discrimination', 'political correctness' and equality and diversity initiatives at work.

¹⁹ See Bhambra, G. (2016) '[Class Analysis in the Age of Trump \(and Brexit\): The Pernicious New Politics of Identity](#)', *The Sociological Review*.

²⁰ Indeed, the publication of the [Casey Review](#) and the accompanying media coverage gave further impetus to the kind of alarmist rhetoric which accompanies much of the discussion that invokes the term 'White working class', while simultaneously offering well-worn dog-whistle narratives responsibilising Pakistani and Bangladeshi communities and people of Muslim faith with regard to questions of 'integration' and the alleged failure of multiculturalism. We must also note that the Casey Review also contributed to the racialization of Muslim women in problematic ways. See Bassel, L. (2016) '[The Casey Review on Opportunity and Integration: Re-inventing the Wheel](#)', *Discover Society*; and Hirsch, S. (2016) '[From Powell to Casey: The Mythical White working Class](#)', *Discover Society*.

Brexit, Trump and their impact on workplace racism

For many of the 5,191 people who took part in the TUC's 2016-2017 *Racism at Work* survey, Brexit and the election of President Trump has made their situation at work considerably worse.

It is common practice to make racist jokes and pass racist comments on a daily basis. Racist political views are expressed especially with the recent Brexit and Donald Trump vote. And people have openly expressed their disregard for what they describe as "foreigners" (Black/Black British Female, Administrator)²¹

Constant low level racism, mainly since Brexit (White British Female, Transport)

Since the Brexit fiasco, casual racism is an hourly occurrence. EDL membership is glossed over and the 70's 'send them back' culture seems endemic (White European Male, Civil Service)

It is almost back to the 1950s in terms of blatant institutional racism (Male, Any other White background, Academic)

From patients as well - questions about where I come from and my immigration status prior to the Brexit referendum and after the result a patient stating that they look forward to the day all the foreigners who had come here from 1960 were going to be sent back to their countries as they had voted to move out of the EU (African Male, NHS)

Regular racist, sexist, xenophobic comments, physical intimidation and insensitivity to myself and other EU colleagues before and post-Brexit (White European Female, Customer Service)

Brexit has made people feel they now have the right to speak openly about how they don't want other people in the workplace or around them (Caribbean Male, Transport)

In the context of Brexit and Trump, the above quotations clearly suggest that racist ideas have been legitimised and that people subscribing to those ideas have been emboldened. Worryingly the TUC's 2016-2017 *Racism at Work* survey also gathered a significant number of personal statements reporting that it was the far right, or at the very least, people expressing support and sympathy for racist, fascist, Nazi and right-wing populist ideas, which have been encouraged.

I often hear racist jokes and see Britain First materials (Pakistani Female, Teacher)²²

²¹ This survey and the categories provided were devised by the TUC. For a full list of the categories available to participants, see Appendix B. It should be noted that while survey participants self-identified with these categories, they have done so within a limited set of options. This approach often displays two limitations: 1) It does not capture the range and multiple categories that survey participants might have identified with; and 2) It employs and reproduces racially exclusive categories.

²² For further information on organisations such as Britain First, the EDL and the BNP, see: <http://hopenothis.org.uk/research/the-hate-files/britain-first/>.

Had my T-shirts cut up and had Nazi signs written on them (Irish Male)

In my workplace a colleague openly displayed a swastika tattoo. Management took no action against him when a complaint was made (White British Male, Transport)

Colleagues propagating English Defence League, Britain First and UKIP literature views which are bigoted against Arabs and Muslims (Male, any other Ethnic Group, Transport)

BNP magazine left on my workstation on 2 occasions (White British Male, Transport)

...a lot of political talk about refugees and support of UKIP and sharing posts by Britain First on social media (Asian/ Asian British Male, Manager)

The quotations above provide some brief insights into the different ways in which broader political developments have shaped people's experiences racism at work, particularly the way in which Brexit and Trump have made racism 'cool and funny' once again. Not only this, the statements provided by survey participants challenge the disingenuous notion that progress has been made, thus we have move beyond the kind of 'in your face' racism of yesteryear. To put it another way: references to 'going back' to the 1950s, 1960s and 1970s are far from being an accident, when over one in ten TUC survey participants racialised as non-White reported that they had experienced racist violence in the workplace. Indeed, these references remind us, once again, that most of the issues discussed throughout this report are far from new.

Summary

In this section we have provided an introductory overview of the way in which broader politics of racism have had an impact on workplace racism. In doing so, we have tried to outlined the general ways in which Brexit and Trump have legitimised and normalised racism, xenophobia and anti-immigrant sentiment. We have also started to trace some of the ways in which historically encoded forms of racial thinking continue to inform contemporary politics. This includes documenting the way in which the return to the politics of assimilation has consolidated a certain kind of racial-national hierarchy which demands that all ethnic and racial minority groups assimilate into a White vision of 'Britishness'. Indeed, as the evidence presented throughout this report will show, British workplaces play an integral role in the process of nation-making and reproduction of a particular ideological vision of the country. In carrying out this role, workplaces country continue to reinforce the cultural dominance and political control of Whiteness, thus setting the parameters of who and what belongs, and under what conditions.

In short, the discussion above and the evidence presented throughout this report, serves as a warning that any attempts to address the entrenched nature of workplace racism and racial inequality in the labour market will be limited if we simultaneously fail to attend to the broader politics of racism, including violence state racism.

Section 2: The nature and prevalence of contemporary workplace racism and xenophobia – a statistical overview

In this section, we present the main quantitative findings from the TUC's 2016-2017 *Racism at Work* survey. In doing so, we offer some introductory insights into the nature and scale of contemporary workplace racism. When looking at these findings it is important to bear in mind that the survey sample is comprised of people who volunteered to take part in the survey. It should also be noted that the findings presented throughout this report are drawn from a non-representative sample (See Appendix B).

When filling out the *survey*, participants were asked the following questions (See Appendix C for a copy of the full survey questionnaire):

Question 12. Have you experienced racial harassment at work in any of the following ways in the last 5 years? Please select as many as apply.

- Been bullied at work for reasons related to your race
- Racist remarks directed at you or made in your presence (e.g. verbal abuse, racist jokes or banter)
- Racist literature or music distributed in the workplace or racist material being shared on social media
- Physical violence, threats and intimidation
- Being subjected to ignorant and insensitive questioning about your culture or religion
- Being excluded from workplace related social events or being subjected to racism at workplace organised social events or informal gatherings
- Other

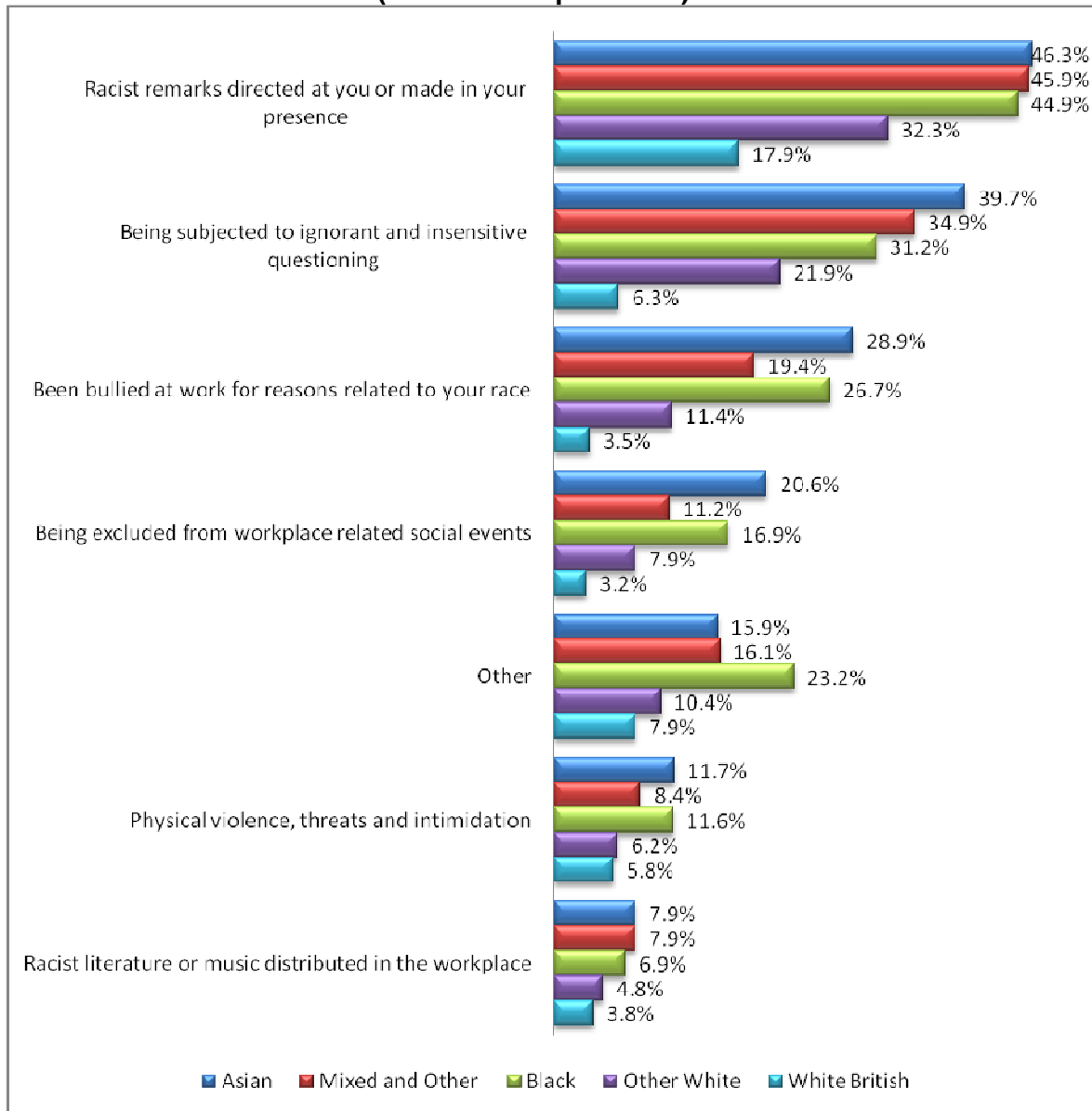
Question 15. Have you experienced any of the following types of racial discrimination at work in the last 5 years? Please select as many as apply.

- Request for training turned down
- Been passed over for or denied promotion
- Been denied development/acting-up opportunities
- Unfairly disciplined
- Given an unfair performance assessment
- Being subjected to excessive surveillance and scrutiny by colleagues, supervisors and managers
- Not given adequate hours
- Not offered overtime
- Kept on temporary or fixed term contract
- Being questioned on your ability to speak English
- Treated as an intellectual inferior

Overall, 65% of all ethnic minority survey participants reported that they had experienced racial harassment at work in the last five years, while almost half (49.1%) stated that they had been treated unfairly by their employer because of their race. Over 70% of employees self-identifying as Asian and Black and 47.9% of White

Other respondents reported that they had experienced racial harassment. Around 60% of Asian and Black workers, 40% of people self-identifying as belonging to a Mixed background, and 28.4% of White Other participants reported that they had been treated unfairly.

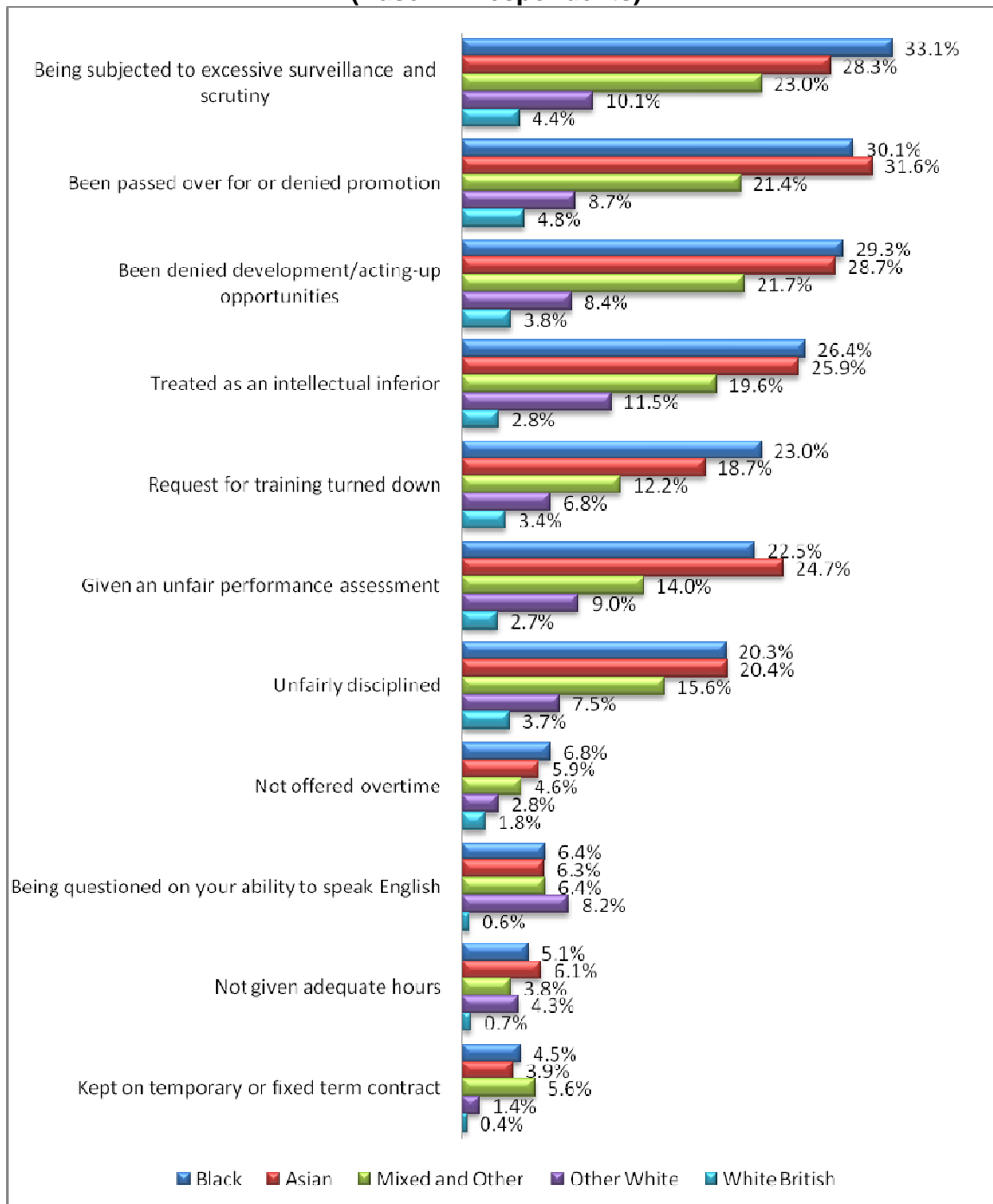
**Figure 2a: Types of racial harassment at work by ethnicity
(Base: All respondents)**



Employees on non-permanent contracts were also more likely to report both racial harassment and unfair treatment by their employer (the difference between employees on permanent and non-permanent contract was almost an additional 10 percentage points). Although there was no significant difference in terms of unfair treatment, participants working less than 16 hours a week were more likely to report that they had experienced racial harassment at work than those who worked full-time (around 7 percentage points). Employees working in small companies with fewer

than 100 employees were both more likely to report that they had experienced racial harassment (63.2% compared to 50.6%), as well as being and more likely to report unfair treatment by their employer than participants working for companies employing more than 1,000 people (41% compared to 32.4%).

**Figure 2b: Types of unfair racially motivated treatment at work by ethnicity
(Base: All respondents)**



Among those survey participants reporting that they had experienced racial harassment, over 40% of Black, Asian and Mixed heritage and 24.1% of White Other employees reported their manager as being the main perpetrator(s). On average, 39% of Black, Asian and Mixed heritage and 50.6% of White Other survey participants reported their colleague(s) as being the main perpetrator(s) of workplace racism, with 6% of Black, Asian and Mixed heritage and 23.5% of White Other workers identifying customers, clients and service users as being the main perpetrator(s). In fact, a number of survey participants were informed that the 'Customer is always right' when reporting racism to their employer:

Despite claims by employers that employees wellbeing is taken seriously, unfortunately in customer-facing workplaces the 'customer is always right' attitude always prevails. Because if we start being heavy handed and evicting all the customers who make comments then we won't have a successful business – apparently (White European Female, Customer Services)

Around half of all Black and Asian employees also reported that they had witnessed racial discrimination or harassment towards clients, service users and fellow colleagues.²³

More than two-thirds of participants from a Black, Asian and Mixed background and over one-quarter of White Other participants reported that they had been subjected to ignorant and intensive questioning about their culture or religion. Approximately 17% of ethnic minority respondents reported that they had been excluded from work-related social events. In comparison to White Other respondents (10%), Black, Asian and Mixed heritage participants were more likely to be subjected to excessive surveillance and scrutiny by colleagues, supervisors and managers (30%). 22% of Black, Asian and Mixed heritage participants and 9% of White Other respondents also reported that they had been given an unfair performance assessment. 25% of Black, Asian and Mixed heritage participants and 11.5% of White Other respondents stated that they had been treated as intellectually inferior. In comparison to 29% of Black, Asian and Mixed heritage participants, just 8.7% of White Other participants reported that they had been passed over for or denied promotion. Furthermore, 8.4% of White Other respondents reported that they had been denied development/ 'acting up' opportunities in comparison to 28% of Black, Asian and Mixed heritage participants. In comparison to Black, Asian and Mixed heritage participants (20%), White Other workers (6.8%) were also less likely to have their request for training turned down. In comparison to Black, Asian and Mixed heritage participants (19%), White Other workers (7.5%) were also less likely to report that they had been unfairly disciplined.

6% of Black, Asian and Mixed heritage participants and 8.2% of White Other respondents reported being questioned on their ability to speak English. Other forms

²³ In our report on the [2015 Race at Work](#) survey, we highlighted that

The comments provided by ethnic minority employees also revealed that there was much variation in the way that managers handled racism from customers, clients and service users. In some cases, White British respondents provided examples of their managers clearly communicating that racism was unacceptable and would not be tolerated...However, ethnic minority employees suggested that this was not always the case. Managerial indifference towards racism was often underpinned by the notion that 'the customer is always right'. This is particularly prevalent in the retail and service sectors.

of workplace racism included not being offered overtime (6%), not being given adequate hours (5%) and being kept on temporary or fixed term contracts (4%). Most of the above types of unfair treatment by an employer were generally more prevalent among people employed on non-permanent contracts. Alongside the TUC's research on racial inequality, low working hours and permanent/ non-permanent contract work,²⁴ these statistics further confirm that racism plays an important role in how many people experience precarity and structural disadvantage, and how this shapes both their class experience and their class position.

Some 46% of all Black, Asian and Mixed heritage and 32% of all the White Other participants reported that they had been subjected to racist remarks, such as verbal abuse and racist jokes. Around 7% of Black, Asian and Mixed heritage employees reported that they had encountered racist literature and racist music in the workplace. More disturbing is the fact that over one in ten Asian, Black, Mixed heritage and Other respondents, and 6% of White Other survey participants reported that they had experienced racist violence at work.

Summary

The statistics presented in this section provide a brief overview of the different ways people continue to experience workplace racism. While these findings may point towards what some people will refer to as unconscious, implicit, subtle and covert forms of racism, the statistics presented here remind us that there is nothing subtle or covert about racist violence and racial abuse. What is more, the 2003 Criminal Justice Act stipulates that many of the different forms of racism reported here are in fact hate crimes.

In the remainder of this report we will offer a qualitative analysis of the personal statements provided by survey respondents, thus providing further insights into the historical, structural, institutional and ideological nature of contemporary workplace racism.

²⁴ For further discussion of this issue, see the TUC's (2015) report, [Living on the margins: Black workers and casualisation](#).

Section 3: Structural racism, institutional racism and power

In this section, we explore the structural and institutional nature of workplace racism. In terms of the former, this is essential because of talk of racism is all too often dismissed as identity politics, with critics claiming that identity politics diverts focus away from class and the politics of redistribution. This type of argument divorces class relations and class exploitation from racism and other forms of discrimination, thus obscuring the role that racism plays in reproducing structural inequality. In recent times, the discussion of racism has often been limited to a discussion of individual biases, implicit attitudes and personal prejudices. In doing so, racism is regularly referred to as discrete one-off events and something that can be eradicated by unconscious bias training and implicit attitude testing. This ignores the way in which racism too readily becomes established as normal behaviour within an institution or organisation, often underpinning everyday workplace practices. The discussion below also draws attention to institutional racism in an effort to raise questions about the effectiveness of existing public sector legislation. This section concludes by demonstrating that attempts talk about workplace racism often means confronting organisational and institutional structures where power typically lies in the hands of White men.

Structural racism

Racism is a system of domination and oppression with a historical basis. It divides and organises society in ways which structurally disadvantage certain ethnic minority groups on the basis of their ascribed race/ ethnicity. Racism, alongside other modes of discrimination, can determine who gets hired, trained, promoted, retained, demoted and fired. Thus, racism contributes to the maintenance of an economic system which creates and reproduces racial and ethnic inequality.²⁵

The TUC's 2016-2017 *Racism at Work* survey provides us with an opportunity to explore the way in which the workplace plays a key role in sustaining and reproducing structural racism. Indeed, the quotations below provide insight into the way that racism makes working life even more precarious for many people.

Refused additional hours, and new member of staff appointed to do same work on a full-time contract. Given work that is not valued (African Female, Equality Manager)

BME staff are expected to work twice or three times harder than their White counterparts and still receive lower pay. BME staff almost always overlooked for promotion (Asian/ Asian British Female, Manager)

²⁵ In recent years, both the TUC and the [Centre on Dynamics of Ethnicity](#) (University of Manchester) have produced a wealth of evidence which testifies to the enduring nature of structural racism in the labour market. For more information, see the following TUC reports: [Living on the Margin: Black workers and Casualization](#) (2015); [Black Qualified and Unemployed](#) (2016); [Insecure Work and Ethnicity](#) (2017). See also the vast body of research that has been produced over several decades by the [Runnymede Trust](#).²⁵ For further information on the longstanding nature of racial inequality in the labour market, see Nazroo, J. & Kapadia, D. (2013) '[Have ethnic inequalities in employment persisted between 1991 and 2011?](#)' Centre on Dynamics of Ethnicity; and Nazroo, J. & Kapadia, D. (2013) '[Ethnic inequalities in labour market participation?](#)' Centre on Dynamics of Ethnicity.

Pay rise denied. Excuses given to justify circumventing requirement for pay rise within grade after so many years. I am the lowest paid in the team though have been here longer than others (more than 10 years) (African Female)

Denied a management position for which I was excellently qualified. A newly qualified White English doctor was given the opportunity (Asian/ Asian British Female, Doctor)

Got passed over several times for promotion even though most qualified. Ended up in a downgraded position after they pulled my original contract and had to settle for whatever job was available (African Female, Customer Service)

I was demoted as result of my service review along with the only other Black worker in the department. Dropped two grades while others increased by two grades. Challenged but got nowhere (African Female, Social Worker)

We had an African gentlemen and he was bullied to the point that one day he just did not return to work (Female, any other White background, Customer Advisor)

As well as possessing relevant experience and/ or qualifications, workplace racism also sees people racialised as non-White being excluded from various social events and networking opportunities which are often important in terms of facilitating career advancement.

Exclusion from outings because they assumed 'don't drink due to religion', 'they would not want to go' (African Female, Customer Service)

It is more the subtle types of exclusion like not being invited out to work lunches (Black/ Black British Female, Lecturer)

Called monkey by colleagues. Colleagues make monkey sounds...Excluded from social events by colleagues (Asian/ Asian British Female, Personal Assistant)

Inappropriate songs being sung by employees. Excluded from certain corporate events (Black/ Black British Female, Youth Worker)

The statistics provided in Section Two demonstrates that the quotations above are not random one-off events. For example, around 14% of all ethnic minority respondents reported that they felt compelled to leave their job as a direct result of workplace racism. Moreover, even though the survey sample is not representative, it is noteworthy that non-White survey participants reported being denied career development/ 'acting up' opportunities, as well as 'not being offered overtime' and not being given an adequate number of working hours. Alongside, being stuck in precarious temporary or fixed term contract work, being forced into leaving a job in search of alternative employment, being subjected to excessive surveillance and scrutiny by colleagues, supervisors and managers, and unfair treatment in performance review processes, are just some of the routine ways in which racial inequality in the labour market is maintained. Indeed, the prevalence of these practices raises an important question: why do these practices still occur on such a

scale almost fifty years after the Race Relations Amendment Act outlawed racial discrimination in employment and sixteen years after the introduction of the public sector equality duty?

Institutional racism in the public sector

The public sector is still, to this day, a racist institution. It is worse in some areas than others, but across the board nothing has changed since the Macpherson enquiry. Equality assessments are nought but a tick box exercise (Female, mixed heritage background, Administrator)

Public, political and media attention to 'institutional racism' was arguably at its most prominent following the publication of the [Scarman Report](#) in response to the urban disorder that occurred during the 1980s and then again after the release of the [Macpherson Report](#) following the racist murder of Stephen Lawrence in 1993.²⁶ Indeed, the recent 25th anniversary of Stephen Lawrence's murder has renewed discussion on the way in which racism can become an established form of normal behaviour within institutions and organisations. This has included debates as to whether or not any 'progress' has been made since Sir William Macpherson published his report in February 1999.

As well as discussing the institutional nature of racism, the Macpherson Report also proposed that racism could also take the form of 'unwitting' and 'unintentional' prejudice. This proposal has profoundly shaped the way which racism has frequently been reduced to the biases and prejudices of individuals. It has also played a key role in the way in which many employers have responded to workplace racism through the introduction of unconscious bias and/ or implicit attitude training. However, we have to bear in mind that the bias and attitudes of the individual do not just come from nowhere. The biases and attitudes of the individual are, in part, reinforced by institutional racism, which can take the form of policies and practices, as well as everyday institutional/ organisational culture.

In direct response to the findings of the McPherson Report, the '[race public sector equality duty](#)' was written into law in 2001. Previously separate race, gender and disability equality duties were then later brought together by the [Equality Act 2010](#). Yet as the above quotation implies, institutional racism in the public sector persists in spite of the aforementioned legislation. In light of recent media and political discussion, the following statements attest to the fact that racism remains firmly entrenched in our public sector institutions. Moreover, the quotations below draw attention to the fact that there is still a lack of equality and diversity within particular areas of the public sector.

The NHS is rife with racial discrimination (Asian/ Asian Female, Doctor)

[Name of Local Authority] does not recruit the percentage of Black staff comparable to the community it serves. Disproportionate number of demotions, passed over for promotion, very low numbers of Black senior managers working in the authority (African Female, Social Worker)

²⁶ Puwar, N. (2001) '[The Racialized Somatic Norm and the Senior Civil Service](#)', *Sociology* 35(3), pp. 651-670.

As one of the largest employers in the City, the council has a very poor record of recruiting and retaining Black staff. Many of my Black colleagues left the authority because their post [was] deleted/ downgraded and [they were] overlooked for promotion. I attend meetings and training and find I am the only Black worker, which I find appalling from a city with the longest established Black community in the country. Black staff are invisible, Race and discrimination does not have a high priority, with managers maintaining 'all OK' (African Female, Social Worker)

...in my organisation it is institutional racism that really impacts on BME workers. Individually I have been targeted by individual managers [and] been put on performance monitoring that lasted 18 months when it was supposed to be completed in 3 months...Being told by my manager that attending BME events that I am entitled to attend would have an impact on my career. Been constantly overlooked for development and advancement in my career...I could go on and give lots more examples (Asian/ Asian British Male, Social Worker)

Institutional racism and White privilege is widespread. Some of those who engage in the practice of institutional racism have no idea what the effects are and are ignorant of how this racist behaviour is manifested...White privilege is a given in educational institutions in Britain (Black/ Black British Male, Teacher)

In most primary schools coloured male staff are not hired as teachers and coloured female staff are only hired as teaching assistants and often where White candidates are not available. As a male Asian teacher I am aware that unlike my colleagues I am kept on temporary agency contracts and these are never renewed from year-to-year. I also have opted for teaching modern foreign languages because then I am seen as a foreigner in a positive light (the Spanish man) as opposed to a 'male Pakistani'...The racism has become institutional as the ethnic diversity of children and staff is insulted by White head teachers holding assemblies lecturing children about British values and insisting that Britain is 'Great' compared to other countries and our values are better than those of other cultures - although there is nothing inherently British in the values being stressed...and it is ironic when a head teacher upholds that respect for others is a British value not shared by other cultures (Asian/ Asian British Male, Teacher)

These quotations further evidence the economic impact of institutional racism in terms of the reproducing racial inequality in recruitment, retention, demotion and promotion within and across public sector institutions where senior positions of authority are typically held by White men. For example, the above statements point towards the institutional nature of Whiteness across the education system in this country.²⁷ The last of the above statements provides insight into the everyday ways in which the public sector is integral to the reproduction of a sense of Britishness based on Whiteness. In light of Roger Kline's (2014) report on the '[The 'snowy White peaks' of the NHS](#)', the suggestion that some local authorities fail to recruit in ways which reflect the local population, raises further questions about the ability of local

²⁷ In recent years, public discussions and campaigns such as '[Why isn't my professor black?](#)' and '[Why is my Curriculum White?](#)' have drawn attention to institutional Whiteness in Higher Education. See also Kalwant Bhopal's work on the '[Race Equality Charter](#)' for a more detailed discussion of racial inequality and the effectiveness of the 2010 Equalities Act in Higher Education.

authorities to provide public services which meet the needs of the local communities they serve.²⁸ Given that 66% of the people who took the 2016-2017 *Racism at Work* survey were public sector workers, the evidence gathered by this survey raises serious questions regarding the implementation and enforcement of the [2010 Equality Act](#).

Reporting racism, confronting power

In 2017, the [Guardian](#) reported that

From a list of just over 1,000 of the UK's top political, financial, judicial, cultural and security figures...only 36 (3.4%) were from ethnic minorities...Just seven (0.7%) were [Black, Asian and minority ethnic] women.

Moreover, the [Chartered Management Institute](#) also released a report in 2017 which highlighted that 'there was a deafening silence when it comes to reporting on the numbers of black, Asian and minority ethnic managers and leaders'. Similarly, a recent survey conducted by [Acevo](#) has found that there is a 'shamefully small' number of 'Black and Minority Ethnic' leaders in the charity sector. As we show throughout this report, talking about race and racism at work typically means confronting workplace structures where power tends to rest in the hands of White men.

The [2015 Race at Work](#) survey found that many employers were reported to have made an effort to promote equality and diversity in the workplace. Many of the people who took part in the TUC's 2016-2017 *Racism at Work* survey made similar comments. However, like the 2015 *Race at Work* survey, it was again far more common for participants to say that they had encountered organisational and institutional indifference when trying to challenge racism at work. This was most prevalent at the managerial level, with non-White ethnic minority employees reporting that they had experienced racial harassment being almost twice as likely as their White counterparts to say that their manager was the main perpetrator(s).

The [2015 Race at Work](#) survey also drew attention to the fact a considerable number of survey participants felt as if they were banging their heads against a 'brick wall' when trying to challenge racism experienced at the hands of their manager(s).²⁹ Similarly, when asked to rate their employer's response to their reports of racism on a scale of one-to-ten (0 being the least satisfied and 10 being the most satisfied), the TUC survey's non-White respondents were least satisfied with their manager's response (see Figure 3a). Moreover, just 8% of survey participants who had reported a racist incident to their employer stated that their complaint was 'taken seriously', with around 19% stating that their complaint was ignored. The precarious status of

²⁸ This issue was previously raised by Roger Kline in his 2014 report on [The 'snowy White peaks' of the NHS](#), where Kline argued that

...there remains a very significant gap between the composition of Trust Boards and national NHS bodies, and the rest of the workforce and the local population to whom services are provided. Research evidence suggests this may well adversely impact on the provision of services across [London] and denies the NHS the potential contribution a diverse leadership could make.

²⁹ For further discussion of the experience of confronting a 'brick wall', see Ahmed, S. (2012) *On Being Included: Racism and Diversity in Institutional Life*. London: Duke University Press.

many ethnic minority workers is further compounded by that fact that employer responses to racism were most negative towards non-White employees on non-permanent contracts. Among non-permanent, non-White employees, 25% of women and 19% of men said that their complaint was ignored, while 15% said that they were subsequently forced out of their job. Refusing to listen and forcing people to leave their jobs not only enables employers to erase talk of workplace racism from the organisations memory, such practices also can allow employers to maintain their reputation as equality and diversity practitioners.

The [2015 Race at Work](#) survey also found that some attempts to challenge workplace racism by going up the 'chain of command' were successful. What is more, survey participants felt unable to 'speak out' or directly challenge racism because this often meant addressing the racist views and actions of a more senior colleague. Similarly, the *Race at Work* survey also found that attempts to go higher up the 'chain of command' were often met with indifference. A considerable number of survey participants also reported there was a lack of consistency across their organisation's managerial structures when it came to responding to workplace racism. Not only does the TUC's 2016-2017 *Racism at Work* survey support these findings, the TUC survey also found that 15% of all respondents reporting a racist incident to their employer had said that their complaint was 'investigated but no further action was taken'. The first quotation below is an example of the way in which a number of workers were less inclined to report further instances of racism if an earlier complaint was met with indifference.

First time I informed by employer but second time I didn't tell them as they didn't seem to care the first time (African Female, Manager)

I worked at [name of employer] for a year and half. Through all the time working for the company, my life has been hell...Colleagues working in the same department have racially abuse me; bullying, discrimination and physically attacking me on so many occasions...Sadly I thought [my employer] was one of the best companies to work for, but clearly I was wrong. I reported every single moment that occurred to my managers at work but nothing was done (Black/Black British Male)

Managers clique together...Many staff leave as the injustice is not recognised and the stress is too great and the counter claims are very stressful (Black/Black British Female, Coordinator)

If more than one manager and multiple colleagues are involved, where do I go? If a number one governor is happy to join in 'the banter', what chance do I have of stopping it? (Male, mixed heritage background, Prison Officer)

The more senior the person committing the act of discrimination, the less likely anything will be done about it. This is manifestly unfair and I've seen it happen time and time again both with sexism and racism (Asian/Asian British Female, Quality Assurance)

My manager is homophobic and racist and would make my life a living nightmare if I raised this (White British Female, Administration)

It can be a very stressful experience, being bullied by your manager and the manager lying about it; it all becomes her word against mine, in which case the Manager is always believed (Black/Black British Female, Support Worker)

There are departmental anti-discrimination policies in place and they are taken seriously by senior management, but not by everyone further down the management chain (Irish Male, Manager)

HR did not conduct a fair investigation but instead were interested in protecting themselves (Asian/ Asian British Female, Manager)

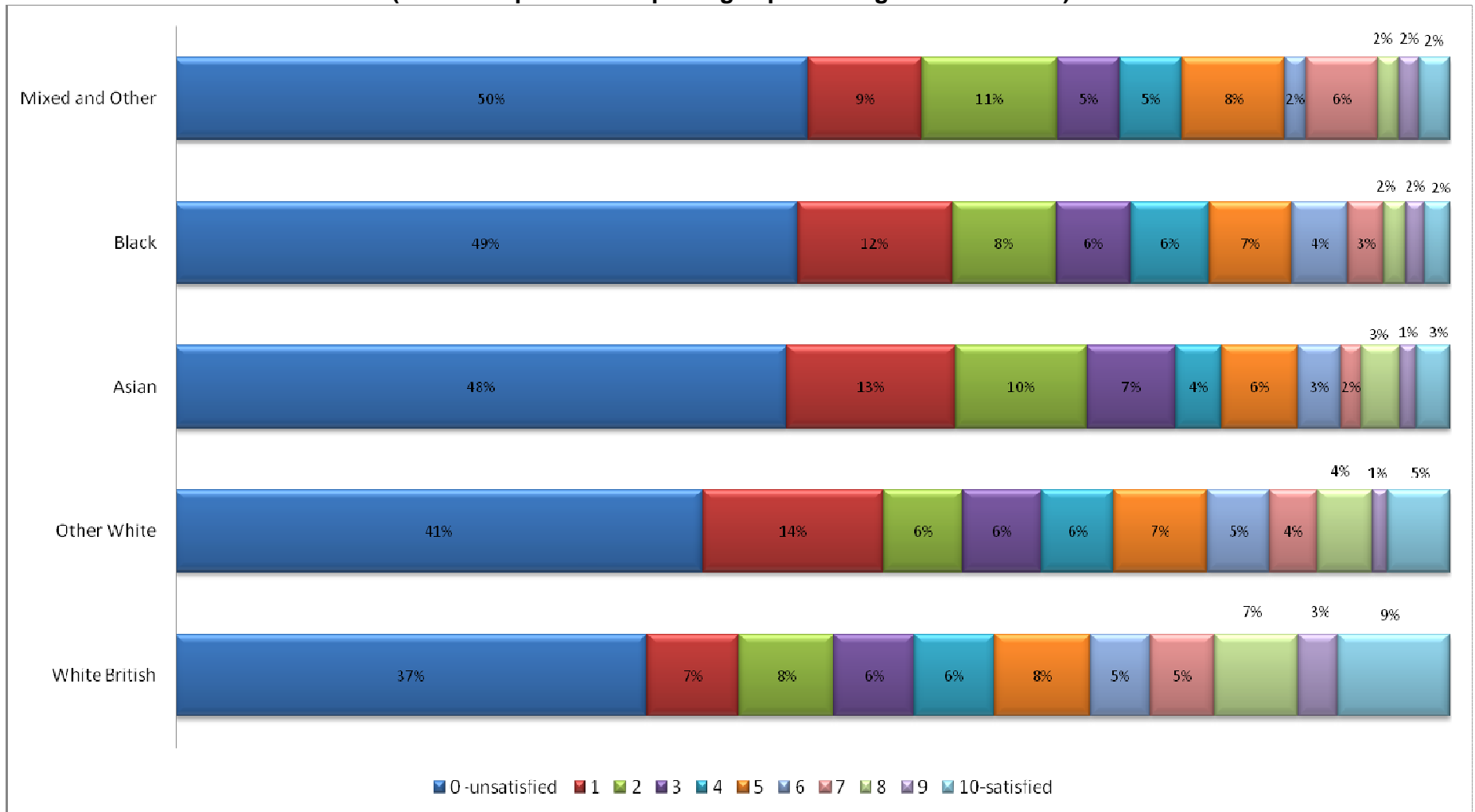
The final quotation here is one example of the way in which many survey participants reported that employers were more interested in protecting their reputations as opposed to properly investigating and responding to reports of workplace racism. As one the examples above illustrates, a failure to respond to a grievance raised by an employee means that managers can be complicit in the reproduction and legitimisation of workplace racism. If workplace racism is to be taken seriously, senior managers and chief executives must ensure that a zero-tolerance approach to workplace racism filters right down through, and is consistently applied, across managerial structures. In light of the above evidence, we recommend that managerial responses to reports of workplace racism (and other forms of discrimination and prejudice) should form part of the managerial performance review process (see Section 12).

Summary

The TUC's 2016-2017 *Racism at Work* survey is the latest piece of research to confirm that workplace racism has very real economic consequences. Racism can determine who gets hired, trained, promoted, retained, demoted and dismissed. The evidence presented above also further demonstrates that it is wrong to dismiss talk of racism and racial inequality as merely either a 'cultural concern' or as a 'matter of identity'. The structuring role of racism is such that it shapes the class position, class experience and class relations between workers and employers. Racism plays an important role in explaining why people racialised as non-White are more likely to find themselves in low-paid, non-permanent, low hour jobs.³⁰ Moreover, the discussion of institutional racism raises serious questions about the adherence to existing public sector equality duties, while the discussion of power draws further attention to the hegemonic nature of Whiteness in the private sector.

³⁰ For example, see the TUC's 2017 report on [Insecure work and Ethnicity](#).

**Figure 3a: Level of satisfaction with employer responses to reports of racism by ethnicity
(Base: Respondents reporting experiencing racism at work)**



Section 4: Empire and the historical rootedness of contemporary workplace racism

In this section, we focus specifically on the historical and ideological legacies of colonialism, slavery and scientific racism, thus highlighting historically engrained forms of racial thinking which underpin the expression and experience of workplace racism in twenty-first century Britain.

Racial Hierarchy and the distinction between 'personhood' and 'subpersonhood'

The belief in a racial hierarchy based around notions of superiority and inferiority were integral features of colonialism, imperialism and slavery. Central to this was the distinction made between 'personhood' and 'subpersonhood'.³¹ The former was based on the belief that only White European Men could be considered 'fully human'. In contrast, people racialised as non-White were thought to be either not quite human and/or more akin to animals. Moreover, people categorised as 'subpersons' were also considered to belong to places characterised as 'dirty', 'wild', 'savage', 'uncivilised' and 'backwards'. More specifically, persons consigned to the category of 'subpersonhood' were also deemed incapable of acquiring the same state of reason and intelligence which had supposedly been achieved by White European men. Not only this, people racialised as non-White were also characterised as being 'child-like', and being 'happy and grateful in their subservience'.³² These ideas were used to justify the violence of colonial domination and enslavement.

During this period women were also thought to be lacking, and incapable of acquiring, the levels of logic and rationality demonstrated by their male counterparts. Thus, women were deemed naturally inferior to men. Similarly, working class people were also considered to be a 'breed apart'.³³ More specifically, working class people and their culture were also labelled degenerate. In a similar manner to Britain's colonial outposts, the places where working class people lived were also framed as being 'dirty' and 'uncivilised'.³⁴ Like the people who populated the lands colonised by Britain, working class people were also said to be in need of policing and social control. Ali Rattansi neatly summarises the dominant forms of social and political thinking of this period when he states that sections of the working class, racialised others, women and homosexuals were simultaneously characterised as being child-like, deviant and inferior in ways that overlapped.³⁵ It was such forms of thinking which underpinned and justified the concentration of social and political power handed to straight, White, middle and upper class men. Racism, sexism, homophobia and class domination were written into law, denying the aforementioned groups of people equal rights and the forms of autonomy and freedom that would underpin citizenship during the Eighteenth Century. These were the ideas determined the place that that the aforementioned groups would occupy in the world.

³¹ For a more detailed discussion, see Puwar, N. (2004) [*Space Invaders: Race, Gender and Bodies Out of Place*](#). London: Bloomsbury.

³² Rattansi, A. (2007) *Racism: a very short introduction*. Oxford: Oxford University Press. P.52.

³³ See Rattansi (2007), pp.46-47.

³⁴ See Rattansi (2007), pp.46-47.

³⁵ See Rattansi (2007), pp.46-47.

Not only were people racialised as non-White deemed not ready for enfranchisement, they were simultaneously deemed as only being fit to serve the interests of British colonisers. These ideas remain widespread. Indeed, as we noted in Section 2, this type of colonial racism is also pervasive among sections of the economic and political elite in this country. Indeed, the kinds of racial thinking that were once staple features of imperialism, colonialism and slavery continue to inform the articulation and experience of workplace racism in twenty-first century Britain.

More recently, I have experienced direct racial/prejudiced remarks towards myself from a colleague for instance he came to work with a book to do with slavery, and then proceeded to tell me how Afro-Caribbean people were preferred as slaves, in comparison to Africans because they were physically stronger and ran faster (African Female, Public Sector)

...Another question – how did you manage to sleep on the tree, as you people live in jungle? (African, Private sector)

African men [told] to sit and eat separately as one man asked ‘why are we being treated this way’. The depot manager said ‘if I wanted to see monkey’s eat I’d go to a zoo’ (Black/ Black British Male, Engineer)

Touching my hair, called me ‘Harambe’ (the gorilla) (Black/ Black British Female)

White employees referring to black employees in a derogatory manner, using references to monkey’s and eating bananas (White British Female, Charity Worker)

A black colleague was going to her birth place (Zimbabwe) to care for her parents. The notice for the meal to wish her bon voyage said she was ‘going to live with goats and monkeys’ (Black/ Black British Female, Midwife)

Colleagues swearing at me, calling me ‘f*****g African’...asking me ‘to go back to Africa to jump on the tree or eat some bananas’ with my monkey friends (Black/ Black British Male, Public Sector)

I witnessed an academic supposedly cracking a joke about the commemorative ‘abolition of slavery’ £2 coin. He said he was disappointed abolition had happened as he now had to wash his own clothes (Male, mixed heritage background, Administrator)

I was referred to as a slave, it was a very unpleasant experience (Black/ Black British Female, Artist)

A manager asking a black person if they had seen automatic doors in the ‘jungle’...implied a Black African chef would have only experienced cooking people or mud (White British Male, Assistant Manager)

The quotations above demonstrate the historically rooted ideas and imagery that continue to inform how many people experience workplace racism. Explicit and overt

references to people racialised as non-White being 'Monkeys' and living among other animals reminds us of the way in which imperial and colonial racism continues to dehumanise ethnic minority people. References to cannibalism, 'the jungle', living in and sleeping on trees and the supposed absence of automatic doors also evidence the way in which Black people are still positioned as belonging to places long characterised as 'wild', 'savage', 'uncivilised' and 'backwards'. The references to slavery are also revealing that they continue to play a role in positioning people racialised as Black in a relationship of servitude to their White counterparts. Not only this, the above examples also remind us that so called 'banter' and 'play acting' perform an important social function that not only do they contribute to the reproduction of longstanding notions of racial hierarchy, they also are conduits for White amusement and pleasure. To put it another way, racist 'banter' is a social point where power is exercised and represented.

Notions of 'intellectual inferiority' and 'competence'

The [2014 European Social Survey](#) found that 18% of British people agree that 'some races or ethnic groups are born less intelligent'. The 2016-2017 *Racism at Work* survey also attests to the widespread nature of such a belief, with one-in-four non-White survey respondents reported that they had been treated as an intellectual inferior at work. The entrenched nature of this particular form of imperial, scientific racial thinking was also evident in the personal statements provided by survey participants.

We are all equal and being black does not make us less intelligent. We deserve to be treated with dignity and respect in the workplace where we all spend most of our day (Black/ Black British Female, Academic)

Denied training. Treated as intellectually inferior (Female, mixed heritage background, Probation Officer)

People of ethnic minority [backgrounds] not being classed in the same intellect of those non-ethnic even though more experienced & higher performing (Asian/ Asian British Male, Civil Servant)

Director has tendency to overlook all black staff in her department – Black staff treated as intellectually inferior (African Female, Manager)

I have witnessed BME colleagues being treated as intellectually inferior...being treated with excessive harshness in response to administrative or other errors they have made, being subject to excessive and unfair scrutiny, and being treated as a prize to be fought over by White managers eager to demonstrate their inclusiveness and anti-racism (White British Male, Community Engagement Officer)

The examples above further show that cruder and explicit forms of racism typically associated with yesteryear have not withered and died even though such ideas have been widely discredited. At the same time, people subscribing to such ideas have found less explicit ways of expressing their views. Indeed, it could be argued that the

shift to more implicit and subtle forms of racism is evident in racialised notions of 'competence', which alongside notions of experience and expertise, provides a more discrete way of expressing the historically rooted notion of 'intellectual inferiority'.

Casual remark by my line manager about having been employed to fulfil a quota (Female, mixed heritage background, Administrator)

Bullying at work because of colour, more qualified staff being passed over for promotion, the inappropriate use of the Performance Improvement Plan (Black/ British Male, Clerk)

Less regard for Black employees, low expectations, limited opportunities (Black/ Black British Female, Youth Worker)

Black colleagues not being promoted yet White colleagues getting promoted in less than 6 months (Female, any other ethnic group, Lecturer)

Refusal to accept my expertise (Female, mixed heritage background, Academic Developer)

The first quotation is indicative of the way that several survey respondents reported being undermined. Here it is alleged that ethnic minority workers are included, not on merit, but as a result of 'quota filling' and 'positive discrimination'. In addition to being more likely to be over-qualified, ethnic minority workers are also overlooked for promotion when more experienced than their White colleagues. The quotations above also remind us of the historical continuities in racial thinking which can result in 'low expectations' being placed on ethnic minority workers. Such instances demonstrate that there is a direct line between the ideological construction of the intellectually inferior 'subperson' all the way through to notions of competence and 'low expectations'. What is more notions of 'intellectual inferiority' and competence have real material consequences. Such notions provide the foundation upon which ethnic minority people are denied training and opportunities to raise their level of income, as well as leading to people racialised as non-White being subjected to excessive surveillance and unfair performance reviews which can also limit opportunities for career progression.

Summary

In this section we have started to explore the legacy of imperialism, colonialism and slavery in shaping forms of racial thinking that continue to find expression in workplaces around Britain. The discussion above has shown that there is a direct lineage between the notion of 'intellectual superiority' that once underpinned the distinction between 'persons' and 'subpersons' and the tendency to place 'low expectations' on ethnic minority workers who are frequently referred to as being incompetent. This particular issue offers insight into the way in which racism has both remained the same, while also mutating over time, particularly in the ways that racism finds expression. These ideas continue to have very real material consequences by virtue of the fact that they still play an important role in determining who gets hired, fired, trained and promoted.

Section 5: Racism and Religion – Islamophobia & Antisemitism

In this section we draw attention to islamophobia and antisemitism in the workplace. In doing so, the discussion below seeks to draw attention to the way in which different religious groups are represented as constituting a distinct racial group, as well as highlighting some of the similarities and continuities in racial thinking which islamophobia and antisemitism share.³⁶ Moreover, the discussion below also draws attention to some of the more common examples of islamophobic and antisemitic stereotyping in the hope of facilitating a more constructive discussion of the nature of workplace racism. As we noted in Section 1, this is essential given the ongoing debates over the depths of anti-Muslim and anti-Jewish racism inside the Conservative and Labour parties, respectively.

Islamophobia

Islamophobia is the suspicion, dislike or hatred of Muslim individuals or groups, viewing their real or assumed 'Islamicness' as a negative trait. It therefore reflects a racial and not just a theological logic, and can take a number of forms including attitudes, behaviours, discourse and imagery.³⁷

Building on the previous section, Islamophobia, like other forms of racism, also has deep historical roots in colonialism and empire. In 1997, Runnymede Trust published a report titled [Islamophobia: A Challenge for Us All](#). This was the first policy report in Britain to recognise the nature and scale of anti-Muslim racism in this country. This report reminded us of the historically homogenous representation of Muslim people, Islam and the Middle East as being 'backwards', 'uncivilised' and allegedly incapable of change, as well as being supposedly inferior to 'Western civilisation', particularly in terms of being routinely portrayed as 'aggressive', 'threatening', 'barbaric', 'violent', 'irrational' and 'primitive'. To mark the twentieth anniversary of the original report, the Runnymede Trust have recently published [Islamophobia: Still a challenge for us all](#). In this report, data from the Office of National Statistics is used to draw attention to the nature of structural disadvantage currently faced by Muslim people in this country. This includes Muslim people encountering 'some of the lowest employment rates and earnings of any group in Britain'. Furthermore, the report highlights that while '10% of the British population' are in 'higher managerial, administrative and professional' occupations, just '6% of British Muslims fall into this category'. What is more, recent [research](#) conducted on behalf of the government also notes that in comparison to the overall population, Muslim people aged 16-74 years are less likely to be in full-time employment.

A considerable number of survey participants used the TUC's 2016-2017 *Racism at Work* survey to share their encounters with islamophobia at work.

During a terrorist attack, 'if Muslims can't live and go by the laws of this country they should go back to their country' (Pakistani Male, Teacher)

³⁶ For a more detailed discussion, see Renton, J. & Gidley, B. (2016) (eds.) *Antisemitism and Islamophobia in Europe: A Shared Story?* London: Palgrave Macmillan. P.5

³⁷ Meer, N. (2014) *Key Concepts in Race and Ethnicity*. London: Sage. P.69.

On a weekly basis I was accused of being a terrorist. It was implied I was supporting terrorist organisations. Pork was nearly rubbed into my face. Wires were placed on my rucksack (Male, mixed heritage background, Security Guard)

Muslims linked to terror. Destructive religion (Pakistani Male, Customer Service)

Jokes about race, religion and cultural traditions are a common feature among a select few. The silent majority approve of it out of fear. In particular, during religious periods such as Ramadan and Eid, I face insensitive questioning regarding basic practices such as fasting. Apparently, it's backward and I'm not living in the Middle East and should therefore refrain. Racialising is frequent (Asian/ Asian British Male, Administrator)

Once I couldn't attend an evening work event due to the event being held in Ramadan. I was called a 'Fucker' for failing to attend by a senior White male. I am also frequently subjected to insensitive questioning regarding my race and religion and am constantly asked to be an ambassador for Muslims and defend my faith against accusations of disloyalty or terrorism. When I raise issues relating to race, I am ignored and told that the problems all relate to class, not race (Asian/ Asian British Female, Lecturer)

I am a trade union rep and have supported a member who has been the victim of a racist incident in the workplace. The member in question was a Muslim and the comments said directly to her was about all Muslim men being paedophiles (White British Male, Librarian)

Have seen Racist Literature posted on staff notice boards which I reported to Managers who immediately took them down, but the worst indirect racists comments always come from colleagues. This always happens when there is a horrific incident anywhere in the world (i.e. after the Paris bloodshed). People at work talk to each other in such a fashion so I can hear them & say things like 'Muslim terrorists' or they go around saying 'Islam is a peaceful religion but look what so & so done in the name of Islam'. Yet none of these incidents have anything to with Muslims living in UK & nothing to do with Islam. Then these same colleagues behave arrogantly towards me. They'll deliberately walk around with their shoes on in the prayer room or start playing music & say things like 'I don't give shit'!!!...It's a never ending battle, sometimes you report these things & sometimes management do take action, but sometimes management just look at you as if to say 'it's him again always jumping on every opportunity & being sensitive'. I just want to go to work & do my job – I don't preach!! And I always behave in a professional manner. But it's really disturbing that every time an incident happens around the world I have to go through this for 2-3 months at a time (Asian/ Asian British Male, Transport)

The examples cited above draw attention to the way in which Muslim people are subjected to anti-Muslim racism in ways that draw upon longstanding Islamophobic narratives, particularly the categorisation of Islam and Muslim people as being

'aggressive', 'threatening', 'barbaric', 'violent', 'backwards', 'irrational', and historically supportive of terrorism. Indeed, as the final quotation notes, this can be so routine that some people 'have to go through this for 2-3 months at a time'. Moreover, one of the above quotations also highlights the burden many Muslim people face at work in terms of being pressurised into the having to defend their 'faith against accusations of disloyalty or terrorism'.³⁸ Indeed, in the midst of the ongoing moral panic around so called 'Islamist extremism', Muslim people have repeatedly been represented as fanatical, as well as demonstrating a lack loyalty to Britain.³⁹ As the discussion below will show, a supposed lack of loyalty to the state also underpins antisemitic stereotypes. The first of the above quotation also demonstrates the way in which Islam and Muslim people are positioned as belonging elsewhere, if not being antithetical to 'the laws of this country'. So much so that such ways of thinking was a defining feature of the [2016 Casey Review](#) which has in turn framed much of the Government's [2018 Integrated Communities Strategy Green Paper](#).⁴⁰

Moreover, the statements cited above also draw attention to the lack of recognition, respect and understanding towards different religious practices and traditions such as Eid, Ramadan and prayer. These examples provide insight into the way in which other faiths occupy a subordinate position in relation to the idea that Britain is a Christian, rather than a multifaith country. The nature of these quotations is such that they remind us of the broader politics of assimilation and White privilege outlined in Section One. More specifically, they give insight into the types of coercive responses which attempt to (re-)establish the parameters of religious and racialised difference, whilst maintaining the cultural and political dominance of Whiteness and Christianity. One of the above quotations also draws attention to the idea that 'all Muslim men' are 'paedophiles'.⁴¹ As will show in the following section, this quotation is an example of how men racialised as non-White are regularly depicted in hypersexualised ways, particularly in terms of being said to pose a sexual threat to White women and children. In a crucial intervention in relation to recent events in Rochdale and Rotherham, [Waqas Tufail](#) has shown that political and media coverage of the sexual exploitation of young women has reinforced colonial racism: namely, the suggestion

³⁸ This notion also underpins the way in which it is demanded that Muslim people must come out and condemn such attacks. This is yet more evidence of the nature of White privilege. To put it another way: while it is demanded that all Muslim people must condemn such violence, there was not a similar clamour for all White people to openly and explicitly repudiate terrorism and far right extremism following the assassination of the West Yorkshire MP, Jo Cox in June 2016. Neither has there been such calls whenever organisations such as English Defence League mobilise on our streets or when Britain First attack or try to invade mosques. For a more detailed discussion of this issue, see Winter, A. (2016) '[Island retreat: on hate, violence and the murder of Jo Cox](#)', *Open Democracy*.

³⁹ The notion that racialised 'others' are somehow disloyal is an issue that emerges time and again in relation to sport. For example, in 1990 Norman Tebbit, a former Conservative cabinet minister, infamously coined the term 'cricket test' as means of assessing whether people of Caribbean and South Asian heritage were loyal to Britain. More recently, this argument has underpinned discussion as to whether footballers of African descent should opt to play for England, the Ivory Coast or Nigeria. It is important to note that such questions usually emerge in a climate characterised by broader panic in relation to immigration and the alleged collapse of multiculturalism and 'community cohesion'.

⁴⁰ For further discussion of the way in which *The Casey Review* has shaped the [2018 Integrated Communities Strategy Green Paper](#), see Holmwood, J., Bhambra, G. & Scott, S. (eds) [Integrated Communities: A Response to the Government's Strategy Green Paper](#). Discover Society.

⁴¹ This particular workplace encounter must be located in an appreciation of the broader historical and current political context because the ideas underpinning this suggestion are not accidental, nor do they happen to be the views of a rogue individual. Claims such as this have been routinely chanted by groups such as Britain First and the English Defence League.

that Muslim men are 'perverted sexual deviants'. As Tufail explains, examples, such as the one quoted above, conjure up the historically embedded notion of

...the dark Muslim male, sexually charged, violent, refusing to integrate and serving as an embodiment of a backward religion and dangerous inferior culture'.

The quotations above also draw further attention to the way in which attempts to talk about racism are often dismissed as a form of identity politics which divert attention away class and the politics of redistribution. Not only this, the examples presented here also remind us of the way in which events outside the workplace can shape how ethnic minority people experience workplace racism.

Antisemitism

Antisemitism describes the suspicion, dislike or hatred of Jewish individuals or groups. This can be attitudinal or structural, and proceeds from a real or assumed 'Jewishness'. It therefore reflects a racial and not just theological character (as in anti-Judaism), and can take a number of forms spanning behaviours, discourses and state policies.⁴²

Research conducted by the [Institute for Jewish Policy Research](#) (IJPR) in 2016-2017 has drawn attention to the pervasiveness of antisemitic attitudes in Britain. The IPJR found that 10% of adults could be characterised as being antisemitic, with 30% of British adults supporting at least one antisemitic idea, with a further 15% expressing support for two or more antisemitic ideas. The researcher's concluded that while strong support for antisemitic ideas was rare, the number of people expressing a weak attachment to such ideas was both pervasive and 'impactful' in terms of being both offensive and upsetting to the point that antisemitism impacts on people's 'perceptions, sense of comfort and safety, and ultimately the quality of life for Jews in Britain'. In addition to this research, the [Community Security Trust's](#) (CST) have used their recent annual report to draw attention to 1,382 self-reported antisemitic incidents in 2017. This is the highest number of self-reported incidents recorded in a calendar year since the CST started gathering such data in 1984. In 2016, the CST recorded 56 self-reported work-related antisemitic incidents. During the first six months of 2018, the [CST](#) recorded 727 antisemitic incidents, nine of which occurred in the workplace. In addition to the evidence gathered by the CST, the IJPR and the ongoing crisis in the Labour Party over definitions and examples of antisemitism, the TUC's 2016-2017 *Racism at Work* survey further suggests that it is imperative that we ascertain a strong grasp of the historically rooted nature of antisemitism.

European history has long been scarred by antisemitism, with Jewish people being routinely racialised in classed terms. For example, antisemitism has long depicted Jewish people as being financiers, bankers, retailers and manufacturers who are disproportionately wealthy and 'good with money'. Antisemitism has also shown a

⁴² Meer, N. (2014) *Key Concepts in Race and Ethnicity*. London: Sage. P.8.

tendency to caricature Jewish people as being in control of international finance, politics and the media. Indeed, this type of antisemitic thinking is central to the racialisation of Jewish people as an international cosmopolitan elite. This type of racist thinking often runs parallel to the suggestion that Jewish people have generated wealth by exploiting peasants and so called 'ordinary working class people'. At the same time, antisemites have shown a tendency to blame Jewish people for economic stagnation and decline. These narratives obscure the fact that Jewish people have also long been a constituent part of the working class and therefore subject to class exploitation, poverty and deprivation.

The antisemitic association of Jewish people with cosmopolitanism and internationalism has also seen Jewish people reported as being a 'manipulative' and 'sinister' influence behind left-wing movements in Europe. For example, Jewish people have been framed as the 'masterminds' behind the Bolsheviks and the Russian Revolution of 1917.⁴³ Today, it is commonplace for far right conspiracy theories to use the term 'cultural Marxism' to allege that political correctness and egalitarian positions in relation to race, gender and sexuality are part of a Jewish-Communist plot which seeks to destroy 'Christian values' and 'Western civilization'. Antisemitic thinking has also reinforced the idea that Jewish people murdered Christ, while also accusing Jewish people of subjecting Christians to sacrificial rituals.⁴⁴

Like other forms of racism, antisemitism is also rooted in scientific racism. For example, scientific racism helped to consolidate the idea that Jewish people constituted a discrete and homogeneous racialised group. Indeed, the categorisation of Jewish people as 'subpersons' was central to this. What is more, the dehumanisation of Jewish people is also similar to other forms of racism in that Jewish people share a history of being characterised as being 'dirty' and/ or associated with disease and infection. This has seen Jewish people racialised as 'venomous', 'parasitic' and akin to 'lice' and 'pests'. Not only this, just as European nation-states were being imagined in terms of 'blood and soil', antisemitism also saw Jewish people caricatured as 'weeds' which allegedly threatening health of the national soil and its 'people'. It was this type of dehumanisation which underpinned the Nazi's 'Final Solution' and attempts to exterminate Jewish people as a racialised group. Like other forms of racism, antisemitism can take a number of contradictory forms. For example, the construction of Jewish people as a distinct racialised group also underpins the notion that Jewish people are both inherently incompatible with, and incapable of assimilating into, the imagined culture of European nation-state long as imagined as being White and Christian. Yet at the same time, antisemitism often sees Jewish people depicted as a 'threat' precisely because they are said to be able to assimilate 'unnoticed' into Western culture.

Like other forms of racism, Britain has a long history of antisemitism.⁴⁵ In fact, antisemitic accusations regarding the ritual murder of Christians can be traced back

⁴³ For a more detailed discussion of this and the Bolshevik encounter with antisemitism, see McGeever, B. (2017), '[The Bolsheviks and Antisemitism](#)', *Jacobin*.

⁴⁴ This particular antisemitic narrative recently came to international prominence when the [head of Russia's Orthodox Church](#) launched an investigation into whether the last Czar of Russia, Nicholas II, and his family were victims of 'a ritual murder carried out by angry Jews in 1918'.

⁴⁵ See Holmes, T. (2011) 'Readmission of Jews to Britain in 1656', available at <http://www.bbc.co.uk/religion/religions/judaism/history/350.shtml>.

to 1144. In 1216, King Edward I banished Jewish people from England. As a result Jewish people were not permitted to return to Britain until 1656. Two centuries later, the Trade Union Congress passed resolutions in 1892, 1894 and 1895 in favour of imposing immigration controls on Jewish people coming to Britain, a large number of whom were coming to these shores in search of refuge after fleeing violent and murderous pogroms in Europe.⁴⁶ Of course, the TUC's policies with regard to immigration and racism have changed quite considerably since the 1890s.⁴⁷

In 1901, a Conservative MP from an East London constituency formed the British Brother's League (BBL). The BBL recruited some 45,000 members and organised mass protest rallies in opposition to Jewish immigration and settlement. Four years later, it was a Conservative government that would introduce the 1905 Alien's Act in an attempt to restrict the number of Jewish migrants coming to Britain from Eastern Europe.⁴⁸ On 4th October 1936, Oswald Mosley sought to lead the British Union of Fascist's on an antisemitic demonstration through Cable Street in the East London. As Mosley and his antisemitic sympathisers sought to march through an area where many Jewish people lived and worked, they were met by a large anti-fascist coalition of trade union, Labour and Communist Party members. Many of whom were Jewish.

The majority of accounts of workplace antisemitism captured by the TUC's *Racism at Work* survey were short and did not provide a lot of detail. This is exactly why we need to be attentive to the sort of antisemitic tropes and images outlined above. We need to know what antisemitism looks, sounds and feel like if it is to be effectively opposed. What is more, the brevity of participants' personal statements may also be further evidence of the fact that reliving personal experiences of racism can be painful and traumatic.

Have experienced occasional needling about my Jewish heritage (White British Male, Medic)

Jewish jokes, excluded from social events because I'm Jewish and inappropriate remarks by management (White British Male, Civil Servant)

I was on the receiving end of Jewish jokes that my work colleagues thought were just banter (Male, any other White background)

My treatment by one of my managers changed once she found out I was Jewish. She wasn't as polite to me as she was to other staff members (White British Male, Sales)

Generally racist comments about others: blacks, Asians, Jews...Colleagues being offensive towards service users...especially Jews and Blacks. It's never direct, but 'jokes' and 'banter' though some of it does have a particularly nasty undertone (White British Female, Transport)

⁴⁶ See Holmes, C. (1979) *Anti-Semitism in British Society 1876-1939*. London: Edward Arnold.

⁴⁷ For a historical overview, see Virdee, S. (2014) *Racism, Class and the Racialized Outsider*. Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan.

⁴⁸ See Solomos, J. (2003) *Race and Racism in Britain – Third Edition*. Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan.

Posts on Facebook, jokes about other races, ignorant comments along the lines of 'Jewish people are.../African people are...' (Asian/ Asian British, Private Sector)

A Jewish colleague was the butt of many racist remarks and though this in itself was not the only reason that he finally left our workplace, it was a contributory factor (White British Male, Library Assistant)⁴⁹

A colleague called me 'a New York Jew' (Female, any other White background, Academic)

I was once referred to as a man who looks like a Jewish clerk (Asian/ Asian British Male)

When training for a new position, the person I was shadowing stated that Jewish people should not be trusted. He was quite serious about this (White British Female, Pensions Officer)

Racist remarks made by patients on a regular basis. I'm the only Jew on staff and have had many negative questions and odd theories put to me (White European Female, Nursing Assistant)

We have a Hasidic Jewish community and untrue stereotypes and basic ignorant comments are the norm (Female, mixed heritage background, Midwife)

Unsolicited comments were made about how Jewish people are off work over Christmas (when the workplace is closed to all staff) so shouldn't be allowed to book leave for Jewish holy days (White European Female, Laboratory Assistant)

While these personal statements are brief, we can still gain a number of important insights into the various forms which contemporary antisemitism takes. First, the reference to one participant supposedly looking like a 'New York Jew' has a number of potential antisemitic connotations. For example, this may be a reference to the person's skin colour, hair (often referred to as 'Jewfro') and the purported shape of the individual's nose. This example may also be a stereotypical antisemitic representation of the survey participant's behaviour, which has potentially been racialised as 'neurotic' and 'aggressive'. Second, and relatedly, it is more than likely that the suggestion that one of the survey participants 'looks like a Jewish clerk' is an antisemitic reference to the stereotype of the 'crooked Jew'. The history of this stereotype is such that it can even be traced back to William Shakespeare's play, *The Merchant of Venice* and Charles Dickens' novel *Oliver Twist* – both which are

⁴⁹ As the quotations above show, many of the people that used the *Racism at Work* survey to report antisemitism self-identified as 'White'. The survey did not provide the options for participants to provide a religious identification, if appropriate. Therefore, we are unable to quantify the number of Jewish (and indeed, Muslim) people reporting whether they had experienced and/ or witnessed racism at work. At the same time, it is important to point out that not all Jewish people self-identify as 'White'.

widely regarded and uncritically taught as national treasures in this country.⁵⁰ What is more, this particular antisemitic stereotype may also be a reference to notion that that Jewish people are inherently 'frugal', 'thrifty' and 'greedy'. Third, the suggestion that 'Jewish people are not to be trusted' potentially echoes the historically rooted antisemitic stereotypes outlined above, particularly those which racialise Jewish people as 'manipulative', 'controlling' and 'disloyal'. Fourth, the reference to 'odd theories' may also be a reference to the various conspiracy theories outlined above. Fifth, the suggestion that 'untrue stereotypes and basic ignorant comments' in relation to a local 'Hasidic Jewish community' may be a reference to the kind of antisemitic imagery which has often been used to portray Hasidic Jews as being both 'dirty' and 'backwards'. This type of racist narrative is reminiscent of the racialisation of other groups during colonialism, empire and slavery (see Sections 4 and 5). Finally, the suggestion that Jewish people 'shouldn't be allowed to book leave for Jewish holy days' is another reminder that the British workplace calendar still centres around the Christian calendar. To put it another: the suggestion that Jewish people 'shouldn't be allowed to book leave for Jewish holy days' is a strategic political claim whereby members of the dominant ethnic and racial groups not only claim that they are on the receiving of unfair treatment, such claims are also an attempt to re-establish the parameters of what they consider to be acceptable ethnic and racial difference. Finally, the above examples further evidence the way in which racism can shape the power dynamics of the employee-employer/ manager relationship. Like other forms of racism, not only can antisemitism result in bullying, it can also lead to exclusion from networking events, as well as impacting on people's working lives to the point where they feel compelled leave their jobs.⁵¹ The above reference to antisemitic posts on social media also suggests that we need to think about the impact that racism expressed outside the workplace can have on ethnic minority colleagues at work. The importance of this issue is further highlighted by the fact that the [CST](#) has recently reported that 22% of the 727 antisemitic incidents recorded in first six months of 2018 involved social media. This is a 4% increase in the number of social media related incidents recorded in the first six months of 2017.

Summary

In this section we have provided a brief outline of the relationship between racism and religion, focussing on the historically informed ways in which Jewish and Muslim people experience racism at work. From as early as the fifteenth century, the notion of European 'civilisation' was formed in direct contrast to what lay beyond its borders. In no small part, Europe gained a sense of self-identity through direct comparisons with, and by drawing clear distinctions in relation to, both Jewish people and Judaism, and Muslim people and Islam. Islam and Judaism were deemed to be antithetical to the idea of a White Christian Europe. Associated with 'political and cultural subversion', it was believed that Jewish and Muslim people were a 'morally

⁵⁰ [Dickens](#) would later express regret in relation to his antisemitic portrayal of the character of Fagin.

⁵¹ When analysing the [2015 Race at Work](#) survey we also reported similar experiences of antisemitism which also show that some people do not feel comfortable opposing workplace antisemitism because it means confronting a hierarchical power structure.

corruptive, degenerative and fanatical enemy'.⁵² However, in drawing out these continuities, we are not crudely suggesting that you can simply lump antisemitism and islamophobia together and say that there are two versions of the same thing. Instead, we have tried to give a general sense of the way in which certain types of racist thinking has been mobilised in relation to different racialised groups. Moreover, part of the reason for bringing workplace antisemitism and islamophobia into dialogue with one another is motivated by the way in which many of the survey participants were able to share their own personal experiences of racism, while also being attentive to the types of racism faced by their co-workers. This kind of empathy and solidarity needs to a founding principle of how workers collectively organise in their efforts to challenge racism at work and racial inequality in the labour market.

Relatedly, it is important that we make a brief comment in relation to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, especially given the fact that we have recently witnessed sections of the media and the British political elite commemorate the one hundredth anniversary of the 1917 Balfour Declaration, while eschewing the way in which the [Balfour Declaration](#) drew upon the kinds of anti-Jewish and anti-Muslim racism outlined above. Although there is insufficient space here to provide a detailed analysis of the history of this conflict, we do want to draw attention to the fact that many survey participants noted that the Israeli-Palestinian conflict can be a divisive issue in the workplace.

Over the years I've countered antisemitic comments from Christians and Muslims (this goes beyond a critique of Israel); Islamophobic comments from Christians and Jews (White British Female, Social Worker)

There is a great tradition of fundraising in my office but when one colleague planned an event to support a charity working with children in Palestine she was targeted and accused of being antisemitic and bullied until she cancelled the event (Irish Female, Probation Officer)

The above quotations further remind us that our understanding of contemporary workplace racism cannot be limited to events which occur inside Britain's borders. We must be attentive to the way in which the broader international political context shapes workplace racism. And in being attentive to this, we require an anti-racist politics that can hold together an understanding of both the history and contemporary manifestations of antisemitism and islamophobia. We need an anti-racist politics which can critique the laws and policies of the Israeli state without slipping into the kinds of antisemitic ideas and imagery discussed above. Equally, we need an antiracist politics which allows criticism for the Israeli state without dismissing these criticisms as being antisemitic as a matter of course.⁵³ A failure to develop such a politics will only limit the struggle for equality and social justice, both in the workplace and beyond.

⁵² For a more detailed discussion of the evolution of anti-Muslim and anti-Jewish racism, see Renton, J. & Gidley, B. (2016) (eds.) *Antisemitism and Islamophobia in Europe: A Shared Story?* London: Palgrave Macmillan. P.5

⁵³ For a useful discussion of this issue, see Feldman, D. (2016) '[Will Britain's new definition of antisemitism help Jewish people? I'm sceptical](#)', *The Guardian*.

Section 6: Racism, gender, sexuality and the need to think intersectionally

In this section, we focus on the gendered ways in which ethnic minority women encounter workplace racism. In doing so, we further explore the historically rooted forms of imperial thinking. To this end, we try to show the way in which colonialism helped to constitute gendered forms of racial thinking which continue to be undergird workplace racism.

A [recent survey](#) conducted by the TUC found that of the 1,003 'Black and Minority Ethnic' (BME) workers polled, the combined experience of racism and sexism in the workplace had a profound impact on BME women.⁵⁴ Moreover, the [Fawcett Society](#) has recently reported that Black African women have seen virtually no progress in terms of closing the gender pay gap with White British men since the 1990s, while Pakistani and Bangladeshi women currently experience the largest aggregate gender pay gap with White British men (26.2%).⁵⁵ [Recent research](#) conducted on behalf of government has also reported that racism had restricted Muslim women's opportunities for 'social mobility'. Similarly, the TUC's 2016-2017 *Racism at Work* survey found that while men and women were equally likely to report racial discrimination, women in most racialised groups were slightly more likely than men (3-8%) to report experiencing unequal treatment because of their race. However, these differences are difficult to interpret due to the non-representative nature of the survey sample. Nevertheless, the personal statements provided by survey participants allows us to build upon the statistical findings presented earlier, enabling us to explore the gendered ways in which women and men experience racist discrimination and unfair treatment.

Sexuality and White norms

During colonisation, White middle-class English women were represented as 'chaste'/'frail' and therefore 'in need of protection' from the alleged 'sexually predatory' nature of 'colonial natives'.⁵⁶ The hypersexualised ideas and images that were once used to racialise particular groups of men continue to inform the racist representation of non-White men in the workplaces in twenty-first Britain century. More specifically, the following quotations document the way in which Black men continue to be caricatured as either objects of sexual pleasure, posing a sexual threat to women and/or through the longstanding racist stereotypes in relation to their genitalia.

⁵⁴ For example:

- 57% of BME women reported that racist bullying and harassment had affected their mental health;
- 41% stated that their experience of racist discrimination and harassment had made them want to leave their jobs but they were unable to do so for financial reasons; while
- 37% actually left their job as a result of experiencing racist violence.

⁵⁵ The Fawcett Society has recently calculated the 'gender pay gap' in terms of the difference in 'average hourly earnings between women and men', noting that the gender pay gap between White British Men and Black African women employed on a full-time basis was 21.4% in the 1990s and 19.6% today. When part-time workers are included this figure rises to 24%.

⁵⁶ Rattansi, A. (2007) *Racism: a very short introduction*. Oxford: Oxford University Press. P.47.

Comments were made about black men favouring White women and how the majority of black men are only good for sexual pleasures (African Female, Manager)

Being told to ensure the office door is closed 'because one time this black guy just walked in and all the women were really shaken up by it' (Pakistani Female, Digital Communications)

Employee at staff party implying that black men posed a bigger threat to women than White men did (White British Male, Manager)

Silly remarks about 'black [penises]' (Caribbean Female, Journalist)

During the eighteenth century, portraying women as being 'child-like' was also key to denying women access to the economic, political, cultural and social privileges that were reserved for White European Men. Thus, not only were women denied equal rights, autonomy and freedom, women were also deemed unsuitable for enfranchisement. In fact, the process of colonisation also was characterised by 'sexually charged images of passive, child-like women encountering upright, handsome White males', so much so that women racialised as non-White were considered to be both sexually available and desirable.⁵⁷ These ideas continue to shape how women racialised as non-White experience racism at work.

Have witnessed managers tell a black female manager that she couldn't live in China due to the lack of black dick there, and also being talked about in a degrading and sexualised manner (White European, no gender provided)

Saying that particular body shapes or hair types are better. Light skinned blacks are not proper blacks and are better looking (Black/ Black British Female, Secretary)

[In reference to] me organising a trip to see family back home...'it's so dangerous there I would never go there. Will you be safe?'...When I said I wouldn't camp in a cold field for team building [I was told] 'well back in the day you wouldn't have been in the field anyway you would have been in the house (I'm light skinned)...When going on a team night out [I was told that] 'I've got a black girls bum haven't I?' 'I can dance like a black girl' (Black/ Black British Female,)

The above references to Black women's bodies, particularly their buttocks, must be understood in relation to the historically informed ways that Black women's bodies have been depicted as objects of fascination and sexual desire, as well as through notions of 'the grotesque' (i.e. 'Light skinned blacks...are better looking').⁵⁸ It is also important to note that the reference to being in the 'house' rather than the 'field' in

⁵⁷ Rattansi, A. (2007) *Racism: a very short introduction*. Oxford: Oxford University Press. Pp.46-47.

⁵⁸ For a more in depth discussion, see Tate, S. (2015) *Black Women's Bodies and The Nation*. London: Palgrave Mcmillan.

the last of the above examples, is another explicit reminder that many Black women, and men, worked inside the houses, and at the servitude, of White colonial 'masters'.

The Racism at Work survey also collected a whole swathe of examples whereby ethnic minority women were expected, if not coerced into conforming to White aesthetic norms.⁵⁹ This was most evident in relation to workplace encounters centring on Black women's hair.⁶⁰

Hairstyles for black women – pressure put on them to conform to 'White' stereotype for 'neatness' (Male, mixed heritage background, Transport)

One colleague once said to me after I tried to explain that dreadlocks are a cultural hairstyle therefore it's rude to say they are 'disgusting' - 'oh, you are not one of those people that harp on about cultural appropriation' (Female, mixed heritage background, no occupation provided)

People constantly wanting to touch my Afro Hair (African Female, Customer Service)

After getting my hair done over the weekend, my manager asked if she could touch my hair. And when I later pointed out how this might have been unacceptable, she justified herself by saying 'I only asked to feel it because it's fake'. On another occasion the same person made a flippant remark about how a '5'8 black woman, that's scary'. My current line manager alleged that she perceived me as being 'threatening' and 'intimidating' because I often ask questions in meetings (Female, 30-49 years, Arts)

I have been touched and petted like an animal by complete strangers in the workplace. Made to feel like a curiosity (Black/ Black British Female, Customer Service)

⁵⁹ It is important to note that the current government have already been made aware of this issue. In January 2017, the [Petitions and Women and Equalities Committee](#) heard evidence that a 'black woman applying for work at Harrods' had been told that 'she would not get the role unless she chemically straightened her hair'.

⁶⁰ At the time of writing the issue of Black women's hair has attracted considerable media and public attention. For example, see BBC (2017) '[Lupita Nyong'o accuses Grazia of removing her hair](#)' and Channel 4 News (2017) '[Black women's hair debate](#)'. In the context of this discussion, the comedian [Russell Howard](#) has also been condemned for suggesting that it is 'insane' to suggest that White people need advice on how to avoid offending Black and Asian colleagues at work. Howard was responding to the publication of [Business in the Community's](#) (BITC) new booklet titled 'Let's talk about race', with [Howard](#) stating that 'you will not believe this – a booklet has been made telling White people how to talk to ethnic minorities, and it contains helpful advice that nobody would ever f*****g need'. In fact, Howard went on to mock that the fact that some people needed advice when it comes to touching Black women's hair, suggesting that the problem does not exist. Not only is Howard's intervention an example of the way in which common and everyday gendered experiences of racism are readily dismissed. The nature of his intervention is also an example of the way in which talking about racism can often become a source of White amusement. For further insight into the types of responses to the publication of the BITC booklet and the types of difficulties encountered when trying to talk about the different ways people experience racism at work, see Good Morning Britain (2017) '[Do White People Need Instructions on How to Talk About Race in the Workplace?](#)'. For a more detailed discussion, see Tate, S. (2007) '[Black Beauty: Shade, hair and anti-racist aesthetics](#)', *Ethnic and Racial Studies*, 30(2), pp.300-319.

I've received comments about my hair, which I wear natural (without relaxer), and have [been] touched without my permission. I'm assumed to be [...] 'diva-ish' for the same attitude my White counterparts display. [They are] assertive and no-nonsense (Caribbean Female, Support Worker)

Rude questions about my skin, beauty regime and my dreadlocks. People touching my skin/dreadlocks without my permission. Rude comments made about the texture of my hair. When I wore a wrap on my head, I was told that I looked like a pirate (Asian/ Asian British Female, Probation Officer)

Having my hair (box braids) repeatedly pulled, quite hard because my colleagues are fascinated by it. [They] just can't help themselves and didn't realize it was painful. When not being aggressive [they] can't understand why they just can't stroke my hair because they've never had a close up view. Been called a golliwog by my boss. She also once walked up to me out of the blue and tipped a cup of water on my head, to see what will happen to my hair...I have now been labelled as aggressive [for] shouting at some of my colleagues for some of the behaviours mentioned above. My colleagues felt my response was inappropriate (Black/ Black British Female, Scientist)

Been told I need to put a blonde wig on and put blue contacts in order to get a promotion (Asian/ Asian British Female, Midwife)

The suggestion that dreadlocks are 'disgusting' and 'unruly' are examples of the way in which Black women physically embody the characterisation of colonised territories, particularly in terms of being labelled 'dirty' and 'wild' (see Section 4). This logic also underpins the use of the term 'golliwog' which has historically seen Black people framed as being 'ugly'. The quotations above also reveal the way in which it is often demanded that Black women conform to 'White' stereotypes of 'neatness', which is framed as being natural and normal, while Black women's hair is considered to be 'fake' and 'unnatural'. Such portrayals position Black women in stark contrast to the kinds of White western notions of beauty and femininity which are typically associated with 'paleness', blond hair, blue eyes, 'straightness' and 'neatness'.

The way in which the legacy of Britain's colonial project shapes Black women's everyday working lives is further evidenced by the way in which White colleagues consider it appropriate to touch a Black women's hair without their consent. It was the same type of dehumanisation that once allowed the imperial nations of Europe to forcibly remove people racialised as non-White from their homelands and to put them on display in what was termed 'human zoos'.⁶¹ For more than four centuries, people racialised as non-White were put on public display where they were fondled, petted and prodded by White people. Worryingly, the quotations above show that

⁶¹ 'Human zoos' were part and parcel of the era of scientific racism. This was a period in which scientists set out to evidence and justify their belief in the 'supremacy' of Whiteness. 'Human zoos' were so much a part of Europe's recent history that many of them remained open for several years after the Second World War. In such places people racialised as non-White, so called 'subpersons', were locked up, shackled in cages, put on display and made to perform like animals. For example, one exhibition catalogue described Saartjie Baartman, who was brought from South Africa and put on display in London, as having the 'buttocks of a mandrill [monkey]'. For a detailed history on 'human zoos', see Nicholas Bancel *et al.*'s (2009) *Human Zoos: Science and Spectacle in the Age of Empire*. Liverpool: Liverpool University Press.

some White people still gaze upon Black women as passive objects of curiosity to be 'petted' and 'stroked'.

As many of the above quotations have already shown, the depiction of Black women and men as being 'angry' is a common racist stereotype. However, it was mostly Black women who used the TUC's *Racism at Work* survey to report being referred to as 'angry' and 'aggressive'.

It was assumed that I didn't understand some concepts, so they would be repeated to me slowly. I was bullied and when I complained, it was me who was placed in the wrong and not the bully. The bully was treated as though they were the victim and I the bully. I was told that I was being aggressive when I am not...My direct line manager who was the bully would completely dismiss the work I carried out during the week and change my work schedule and focus weekly. I just carried on with it. One week she brought back work that she changed herself, word-by-word, and asked me why I did it the way I did. I said it was her who changed it and not me...she got angry and called me aggressive. She then proceeded to mobilise support against me and my so called aggressiveness (Black/ Black British Male, Communications)

All the while they echoed racist stereotypes about black women and hinted that I was volatile, unpredictable and could blow up at any time despite my never having done that while in that role. This went on for 3 years. (Black/ Black British Female, Administrator)

Being warned that my passion and enthusiasm could be judged as aggression – 'don't be seen as the Angry Black Woman!' (Female, mixed heritage background, Public Sector)

Labelled as an 'aggressive black woman' and heard about other Black women being labelled as such (African Female, Manager)

Only Black female in my section. My colleagues always making jokes that I'm aggressive (Black/ Black British Female, IT)

Comments made about me and my expected response based on my culture. Being told I am aggressive but if a White person says the same thing in the same voice, they are asserting themselves (Caribbean Female, Nurse)

Accused of being aggressive, passive aggressive and hostile. Accused of storming into the headteacher's office, clicking my fingers and intimidating her, which didn't happen. Told I was unapproachable and prickly despite having excellent, friendly working relationships with most of my colleagues (Female, any other Black Background, Teacher)

The above examples draw attention to the racialised distinction that associates Whiteness with reason, rationality, 'assertiveness', as well as 'acceptable' emotions such as 'enthusiasm' and 'passion', while simultaneously associating people racialised as non-White with irrationality and supposedly illegitimate forms of

emotional expression such as 'anger' and 'hostility'.⁶² Again, these quotations further demonstrate the ways in which Black women are imagined as physically embodying the notion of Britain's colonial territories as being 'wild' and 'uncivilised'. What is more, the above examples provide insight into the type of coercive and repressive practices which sustain White dominance and racial inequality at work. Asking questions in meetings, challenging racism, being assertive, showing 'passion' and demonstrating 'enthusiasm' disturb the 'natural order' imposed by racism. To put it another way, the racist stereotype of angry Black women and men simply requires the behaviour of Black women and men to be interpreted as challenging White supremacy and the subordinate position to which people racialised as Black have been subjected for several centuries. The above examples also provide insight into the ways which responses to racism are often delegitimised because the responses of Black women and men have been deemed to be inappropriate and/ or unacceptable. These types of response are typical examples of what Sara Ahmed refers to as 'becoming the problem'.⁶³ That is, it is the person who has decided to 'speak out' and/ or challenge racism, rather than racism itself, that is identified as being problematic. Therefore, rather than deal with racism, some managers find it easier to delegitimise, rebuke and 'silence' the person making the complaint.

Gender & anti-Muslim racism

As we saw in the previous section, gender has also played a critical historical role in shaping contemporary Islamophobia. Indeed, Islam has historically been portrayed as being unequivocally patriarchal. As such, the depiction of Islam fundamentally forcing all Muslim women to wear hijabs, niqabs and burkas denies Muslim women of any sense of agency. Not only this, the image of the Muslim woman wearing a hijab, niqab or burka has become a modern-day 'folk devil'. So much so, that [several governments in Europe](#) have sought to legislatively prohibit women from wearing headscarves and veils. In the process of bringing such bans into existence, Islam has typically been imagined as posing a direct threat to the liberty and freedom of women. At the same time, Europe's own history of patriarchal domination is ignored. What is more, such ideas have informed the notion that not only did White women of the West need protecting, the West's colonial project in the Middle East has often been portrayed as being as a 'civilising mission' in which White men are saving 'brown women from brown men'.⁶⁴

In her critical work on the government's *Preventing Violent Extremism* programme, Naaz Rashid has argued that it is imperative that we think of Muslim women, not only as Muslims but as 'Women who are Muslim'.⁶⁵ Following Rashid, not only do some the statements below shine a light on the gendered ways that Muslim women encounter workplace racism, they also highlight the ways in which some women had

⁶² For further discussion of the nature of everyday working life in the British Civil Service during the 1990s, see Puwar, N. (2001) '[The Racialised Somatic Norm and the Senior Civil Service](#)', *Sociology* 35 (1), pp. 651-670.

⁶³ For a further discussion on 'becoming the problem', see Ahmed, S. (2012) *On Being Included: Racism and Diversity in Institutional Life*. London: Duke University Press.

⁶⁴ See Spivak, G. C. (1978) *Can the Subaltern Speak?* in Nelson, C. & Grossberg, L. (eds.) *Marxism and the Interpretation of Culture*. Chicago: University of Illinois Press.

⁶⁵ See Rashid, N. (2016) 'Just a Girl: Thinking Intersectionally about 'the Muslim Girl' and Writing against Culture', *Young* 24(3), pp.255-269.

their entire subjective identities reduced to their faith. These examples demonstrate the way in which contemporary islamophobia often prevents Muslim women from being anything other than Muslim.

Being Asian and Muslim, I have heard a lot of verbal abuse about my culture and faith in my presence especially with regards to the call to prayer being a nuisance...Ignorant questions about where I purchase my clothing from, especially my headscarf (Asian/ Asian British Female)

Often get stupid questions re: Ramadan, hijab, people conflating Islam with extremism, common thinking is such that it is accepted that people say 'Islamic extremism' and I find that problematic as that is my faith and we would never say Christian extremism exists. The BBC doesn't help this in its reporting etc. (Bangladeshi Female, Journalist)

Once a family of Muslim women came into our restaurant and they were each wearing the Niqab. My colleague said 'they're so ignorant. If we were rude in their country we would be bombed or something' (White British Male, Waiter)

I wear a hijab & my manager likened the hijab to being a symbol of radicalisation. I am a practising Muslim and my Manager asked if I was giving up alcohol for Lent. My Manager said after Nadiya Hussain won the Bake Off that it was nice to see a Muslim women in a hijab be empowered for a change (Asian/ Asian British, Family Services)

It feels that incidents have become more frequent and 'permissible' lately. This is based purely on the way it is represented in the media, the appointment of the Conservative Government and parties such as UKIP. Stories I hear from my female friends who wear the hijab who are told to 'go back home' or 'we fought for freedom so you do not have to wear that thing on your head' and so on, and so on (Caribbean Female)

A student was told by a member of staff she shouldn't be allowed to wear her hijab as it should be against infection control. Another case, a Midwife's shape was referred to as being a n*****r shape (Female, mixed heritage background)

I work at law firms: insinuation I am a terrorist because I wear a hijab. Comments made about 'people like her' in my presence by other staff as though I am not there to make it appear as though I may be a terrorist. Aggressive and inappropriate behaviour as though I am stupid and don't quite understand English (Indian Female)

Been addressed by only my religion other than my name. Having been asked insulting questions about my religion and wearing a hijab. People trying to take my hijab off (White British Female, Nurse)

As the statements above demonstrate, both the racist remarks and ignorant and insensitive questioning which Muslim women experience at work are shaped by broader political and media narratives. Muslim women and men embody their faith in different ways. For example, Muslim women do so by wearing hijabs, niqabs and

Burkas. As the quotations above show, such practices are used as a basis for constructing notions of racial difference. They are used as vehicles for the expression of racism. Like the discussion of antisemitism in the previous section, one of the above quotations provides another example of the specific, and indeed gendered, ways in which people from different racialised groups are, at different times and in different circumstances, referred to as 'dirty' and 'infectious'.

What is more, many of the Muslim women who took part in the *Racism at Work* survey self-identified as 'Asian/ Asian British'. Indeed, it is likely that some of the survey participants will have self-identified as 'British', 'Asian-British' and/or 'British-Asian'. Like other forms of racism phrases such as 'in their country' and 'go home' position Muslim women as belonging elsewhere. They strip Muslim women of their Britishness. Although such phrases are not unique to women who are Muslim, these phrases are unique to Muslim women in terms of their racist association with terrorism and extremism. It is also common place for such phrases to be accompanied by judgements about those places where Muslim women are said to belong (i.e. 'we would be bombed or something'). These statements reinforce colonial forms of racial thinking by suggesting that so called 'Islamic countries' are 'barbaric', 'violent', 'irrational' and 'uncivilised'. What is more, a number of Muslim women also shared their experiences of workplace situations in which it was demanded that they condemn terrorism, while also having to explain, if not justify, their faith and religious practices. Such instances are not only another example of the type of burden placed on racialised minority people, they also further reinforce the historically imagined superiority of 'Western civilisation'. They are also typical of the way in which broader media and political discourse reserve terms such as 'terrorist' and 'extremist' for Muslim people and so called 'Muslim countries'.⁶⁶ Indeed, the quotations above also remind us of the historical representation of Muslim women as being oppressed by their faith. However, it is important to note that such statements are not part of a wider feminist critique of patriarchy. Instead, they bolster the idea that Islam and the oppression of women is alien to Britishness. Moreover, the suggestion that 'we fought for freedom so you do not have to wear that thing on your head' also reminds us of the historical positioning of Britain's role on the global stage as that of a liberating force for good. Indeed, in recent times, politicians have used such narratives to justify the war in Iraq and the invasion of Afghanistan.

Finally, the above statements also reveal that Muslim are also subjected to coercive forms of racist violence at work. Indeed, these examples, echo the forms of violence encountered by Black women when colleagues touch their hair (often forcibly) without their consent. The examples provided here also show that the racialization of Muslim people as 'fanatical' and 'irrational' is in some ways similar to the racist notion of the 'angry black woman/man' and the aesthetic judgements imposed on Black women. When we bring these two particular examples together, we can see that different groups of women experience racism in similar but different ways and that many women racialised as non-White empathise with ways in which other women experience workplace racism. Again, this kind of empathy and solidarity

⁶⁶ There are terms which are rarely, if ever, used by politicians, the media and our work colleagues to describe acts of violence and terror by people and government's which are premised upon Whiteness and the hegemony of Christianity. It is in this political and cultural climate that islamophobia is all too often positioned as being a reasonable, if not natural, response to terrorist attacks.

needs to be a founding principle of how workers organise in an effort to collectively challenge racism at work.

Stepping out of place and the White male power structure

In the discussion above, we highlighted how notions of 'intellectual inferiority' and 'competence' were barriers to career progression. However, when looking at the gendered aspects of racism, the TUC *Racism at Work* survey reveals that even in instances where ethnic minority women have been able to overcome these barriers, White colleagues did not respect the authority of ethnic minority women who had been promoted to supervisory, managerial and leadership roles.

A Black female Team Leader being attacked by subordinate colleagues and fellow Team leaders, judging her ability to do her job without basis, frequent gossip and isolation. On one occasion all the Team Leaders had made an error but as always the black female gets to be the scapegoat (African Female, Team Leader)

They took away my autonomy and accused me of not taking initiative commensurate with my role as a manager. They did secret deals with a junior colleague for her development, which allowed her to take on bits of my work behind my back, and then accused me of not being a team player when I objected. They overturned my decisions in my work areas and humiliated me, justifying their actions as being designed to help me. They set me up to fail time and again: delayed authorisation of my outputs to deliberately make me miss deadlines, making me look incompetent, and denied my role in successful activities (Black/ Black British Female, Administrator)

A colleague was being constantly undermined by a subordinate who would bypass the management structure to report directly to my colleague's manager (Black/ Black British Male, Carer)

Personally, I have seen people make false accusations of feeling bullied by myself after having an informal discussion on conduct, whereas this doesn't happen to my White colleagues. Another black female manager also faced the same problem when asking her staff to keep quiet....Disciplinarys are part of management's job, but people make it impossible especially when it's a black female manager. It's as if they are saying, 'you are black, who do you think you are to tell us what to do.' It's a triple whammy when you are a woman, black and a leader (African Female, Team Leader)

Not only do these examples provide further insight into the different ways in which ethnic minority employees are assumed to be 'incompetent', the quotations above hint at the different strategies that are deployed to ensure that White privilege is preserved. Moreover, these statements also spotlight the way in which ethnic minority women can be simultaneously gendered and racialised. As Nirmal Puwar has put it, ethnic minority workers, especially women in positions of seniority, are 'bodies out of place', because they have historically been located in positions which

are subordinate to their White male counterparts.⁶⁷ The fact that ethnic minority women find themselves in positions of authority disturbs the image of workplace hierarchy where authority and power very much remains concentrated in the hands of White men.

Thinking intersectionally

The remit of this report was to provide a detailed examination of the nature, extent and scale of racism in the workplace. However, we cannot escape the fact that a significant number of survey participants used their personal statements to report sexism, homophobia, transphobia, disablism and class domination. What is more, the personal statements quoted below remind us that our identities are complex and multifaceted and that we live out multiple aspects of their identities when they go to work.

Asked if I was wearing knickers at a social event (Indian Female, Urban Planning)

With the exception of insensitive questioning...Racism often occurs in ways that are so subtle, meaning that they are deeply embedded in culture and also really hard to address with the suggestion that you are being too sensitive. I have also experience the above with a combination of workplace misogyny and sexism (Black/ British Female, Event Producer)

The more senior the person committing the act of discrimination, the less likely anything will be done about it. This is manifestly unfair and I've seen it happen time and time again both with sexism and racism (Asian/ Asian British, Quality Assurance)

There was a work colleague who was openly racist and commented about race, class, disabled people, transgender people and anyone who was not heterosexual. She was allowed to continue in her role despite repeated attempts by myself and a few others highlighting her behaviour. We were told that due to cultural differences (she was from an Eastern European country) there was nothing that could be done. She was left in her role for eight years until she decided to leave (Asian/ Asian British Female, Team Assistant)

Was subjected to severe stress, external stress factors (Orlando and Brexit) were discounted. As a gay mixed heritage man, these exacerbated my work stress. My employer was insensitive to the particularities of these events as they related to my protected characteristics (Male, mixed heritage background, Business Development Manager)⁶⁸

Ignorant remarks about a transgender colleague (White European Male, Administrator)

⁶⁷ Puwar, N. (2004) *Space Invaders: Race, Gender and Bodies Out of Place*. London: Bloomsbury.

⁶⁸ On 12 June 2016, 49 people were murdered in a terrorist attack at a LGBTQ night club in Orlando, Florida.

I have witnessed contractors verbally abusing a transgender woman at a rural station (White British Male, Transport)

Sexism is still rife in past workplaces (White European Female, Lecturer)

Across the organization where I work I have regularly encountered racism and homophobia (White British Female, Support Worker)

Horrible use of racial slurs (as well as homophobia and other bigotry). Mainly from customers but also from some colleagues (White British Male, Care Worker)

The above quotations reveal that workers are not just vulnerable to racism. Many survey participants and their co-workers, like those quoted here, are vulnerable to various and multiple forms of oppression. What is more, the survey participants quoted here remind us that workplace hegemony continues to be White, patriarchal, heteronormative, ableist and classed. More than this, the quotations cited here remind us that we cannot simply think of racism, or any other form of discrimination and oppression for that matter, as existing in a silo. The personal statements provided by the people who took part in the 2016-2017 *Racist at Work* survey reminds us that not only do we need to think intersectionally about questions of domination and oppression at work, we need to work together in order to expose and resist the structural and institutional nature of multiple forms of oppression.

Summary

In this section, we have explored the ways in which gender and sexuality shapes workplace racism. As we have shown, gender was a fundamental component of colonial politics. In the process of doing so, we have tried to show that Britain's imperial past continues to shape how ethnic minority people continue to experience workplace racism. Moreover, the discussion above also stresses the need to think intersectionally about the way in which workers are vulnerable to multiple forms of discrimination and oppression. Here we might draw on the writings of Kimberlé Crenshaw and Hazel Carby to argue that both the workplace experiences and structural location of ethnic minority people cannot always be explained through reference to a single source of oppression.⁶⁹ Therefore, we must be attentive to the multiple and cumulative effects of racism, sexism, homophobia, transphobia, disablism and class domination.

⁶⁹ See Crenshaw, K. (1988) '[Race, reform and retrenchment: transformation and legitimation in anti-discrimination law](#)', *Harvard Law Review*, 101, pp. 1331-1387; and, Carby, H. (1982) "Women listen!" Black feminism and the boundaries of sisterhood', in Centre for Contemporary Cultural Studies, [The Empire Strikes Back](#). Birmingham: Hutchinson.

Section 7: Racism, xenophobia and probationary Whiteness

In this section we provide an overview of the contemporary nature of the anti-Irish racism, sectarianism, and anti-Roma, Gypsy and Traveller racism. The discussion below also draws attention to the forms of xenophobia experienced by survey participants who described themselves as White European. In doing so, the analysis presented in this section shines a light on the contingent and probationary nature of Whiteness.

By this we mean that Whiteness is neither a biologically determined or homogenous identity. Whiteness is socially constructed and has evolved over time. At different historical moments, certain groups have been excluded from dominant White identities, particularly European-ness and nationalistic constructions of Whiteness such as Britishness. As the discussion of antisemitism has already shown, racist ideas and practices have never been limited to just skin colour. Indeed, the discussion below will further show different cultural practices and behaviours have been associated with and used to define Irish people and Roma, Gypsy and Traveller communities as distinct racialised groups, thus excluding these communities from the dominant White group.

The discussion below also considers the forms of discrimination and prejudice encountered by White European survey participants. We suggest that such encounters might be considered a form xenophobia rather than racism per se. Instead, we suggest that xenophobia is thought of as a fear of, or prejudice towards, 'foreigners'. This means that White European people living and working in Britain do not access White privilege in the same way as White British people do. While racism and xenophobia might be thought as two distinct things, the personal statements quoted below demonstrates that racism and xenophobia are often expressed and experienced in overlapping ways.

Anti-Irish racism

As we have seen in the previous sections of this report, it would be erroneous to think of racism in a simple colour-coded way. And like other forms of racism that have already been discussed, the origins of anti-Irish racism can be traced back to Britain's colonial past and its imperial relationship with Ireland. What is more, like antisemitism and islamophobia, anti-Irish racism has its own specific relationship with religion.

Whereas, Anglo-Saxon Britishness, underpinned by Protestantism, was also associated with being 'masculine, superior, freedom-loving and capable of self-government', people categorised as belonging to the 'Celtic race' were characterised as 'feminine, childish, addicted to violence and authoritarian control'.⁷⁰ Under British colonial rule, 'Irish-ness' was also associated with drunkenness, 'faction-fighting' and

⁷⁰ For further discussion, see Virdee, S. (2014) *Racism, Class and the Racialized Outsider*. Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan. Pp.34-37.

disorderly conduct.⁷¹ In fact, media representations of Irish people revolved around physical caricatures which

...emphasise[d] the prognathous features of the Irish labouring class: a bulge in the lower part of the face, the chin prominent, the mouth big, the forehead receding, a short nose, often upturned and with yawning nostrils: the simianising of the Irish.⁷²

Such classed depictions of Irish people echo the type of racial thinking discussed in previous sections, particularly in terms of the dehumanisation of people racialised as 'primitive', more akin to 'monkeys' and allegedly lacking in the forms of civility and rationality demonstrated by the dominant White majority. Not only was it argued that Irish culture was biologically determined, Irish people were also racialised as comprising a distinct, alien, degenerative and supposedly inferior race. During the nineteenth century, this played a key role in mediating the relationship between British workers, employers and the state, while also underpinning the exclusion of Irish Catholic workers from particular areas of employment, as well as anti-Irish riots.⁷³ As the discussion below will show, such forms of racial thinking continue to shape how some people experience workplace racism today.

Although Irish people were exempt from immigration controls introduced in the 1960s, anti-Irish Catholic racism was still prevalent during the late-1960s and 1970s.⁷⁴ The idea that Irish people were prone to 'faction-fighting', violence and disorder was often used as an explanation for 'The troubles' in North of Ireland. The 1960s also saw Irish migrants to Britain characterised as 'welfare fraudsters' who were prone to alcoholism and criminal behaviour. The notion that both Irish and Black people were intellectually inferior could also be found in the fields of psychology and psychiatry during the 1970s, with some practitioners drawing upon this idea to explain why both groups were structurally disadvantaged. Not only this, some psychiatrists even suggested that Irish people experienced mental health problems as a direct result of 'Irish culture'.⁷⁵

Qualitative analysis of TUC's 2016-2017 *Racism at Work* survey reveals that Irish people continue to be caricatured and referred to in ways that draw upon the forms of racial thinking outlined above.

On an almost daily basis I hear comments regarding people's race or nationality. My background is Irish catholic. Whilst raised in Glasgow, I don't

⁷¹ Hickman, M. (2008) '[The Irish in Britain: Racism, incorporation and identity](#)', *Irish Studies Review*, 3 (10), pp. 16-19.

⁷² Saville, J. (1987) *1848: The British State and the Christian Movement*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, p.38., cited in Virdee, S. (2014) *Racism, Class and the Racialized Outsider*. Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan. P.35.

⁷³ Virdee, S. (2014) *Racism, Class and the Racialized Outsider*. Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan. P.36.

⁷⁴ See Hickman, M. (2008) '[The Irish in Britain: Racism, incorporation and identity](#)', *Irish Studies Review*, 3 (10), pp. 16-19. For further discussion on the contemporary nature of anti-Irish Catholic Racism, see McBride, M (2019) '[Is anti-Irish racism still a problem? You can bank on it](#)', *Discover Society*, Issue 66.

⁷⁵ See Hickman, M. (2008) '[The Irish in Britain: Racism, incorporation and identity](#)', *Irish Studies Review*, 3 (10), pp. 16-19.

have things directed at me until my background is raised where I hear sectarian comments or something along the lines of the Irish being thick (Irish Male, Energy Sector)

Being an Irish man living in Scotland, I have found sectarianism, racism and bigotry in my workplace. People with extreme political views on Northern Ireland seem to want to tell me about their beliefs which I find extremely offensive as I do not want to talk about Northern Irish politics...I had a train driver ask me about where I was from...He couldn't help himself from telling me about his trips to Portadown for National Front meetings. He also talked about the Eastern Europeans in Northern Ireland and how they are trouble...During my first week in [name of employer] I was asked to see my manager in his office. He had another colleague in there. The other colleague asked me where I was coming from in Ireland and I told him that it wasn't his business (as I knew where this conversation was going!) but he wished to continue. He started to take the piss out of my accent and other types of Irish accents. Then he made a shotgun gesture pointing down at his foot about what he thinks should be done to Irish Catholics. I reported it but it didn't get too far and a manager made threats about my future job security. He said it was banter and I should get used to it...I still can't just get used to it as I have never been exposed to so much of it. Just recently I was having a break late on and Scotland were playing England. A train driver made a comment about the one black man on the Scottish team. 'How did he get to play for Scotland?' (Irish Male, Transport)

Anti-Irish humour is relatively benign compared to other forms, but still happens, (e.g. 'you must love potatoes', occasional IRA-related jokes). More egregiously racist comments made in my presence but not directed at me specifically include use of the term 'p**i bastard', comments about all Hungarians being criminals, and general anti-immigrant sentiments (Irish Male, Manger)

The statements above further demonstrate the way in which ideas of race sit alongside religion and national identity, revealing the way in which this can structure the relationship between employees and managers, as well as being a source of division among workers. The first quotation illustrates how inclusion as part of the White majority is fragile and temporary. It is conditional on national and religious difference being obscured. Moreover, the quotations above also reveal that the political situation in the North of Ireland continues to divide workers. In light of this, we should be mindful that this situation might be exacerbated by the '[Northern Ireland border question](#)' brought about by Brexit.⁷⁶ As Section 1 has already noted, Brexit is a political crisis profoundly shaped by Britain's imperial past, including its colonial relationship with the island of Ireland. In being mindful of this, and the impact this may yet have in workplaces across the country, we should also remind ourselves that not only are minority White workers often subjected to direct and explicit intimidation, anti-Irish stereotypes, which have their origin in the Irish potato

⁷⁶ The seriousness of this warning should not be underestimated as a recent [UNESCO](#) report has suggested that 'it is possible that a hard border could materialise due to a no-deal Brexit, triggering a return to violence in Northern Ireland'. Indeed, the [Police Service of Northern Ireland](#) have already begun making provisions which will see almost 1,000 police officers from England and Scotland trained 'for deployment in Northern Ireland in case of disorder from a no-deal Brexit'.

famine of the 1840s, continue to be a source of amusement for some people. Finally, the quotation referring to 'the one black man on the Scottish team' is yet another example of the broader way in which national identities such as Scottishness, Englishness and Britishness continue to be racialised as White.

Roma, Gypsy and Traveller racism

In a manner similar to other groups, it is often alleged that Roma, Gypsy and Traveller people do not experience racism either because they do not constitute a 'proper' racialised group,⁷⁷ and/ or because they are 'White'.⁷⁸ However, Roma, Gypsy and Traveller communities have been subjected to processes of racialisation which has both homogenised and assigned a range of negative characteristics to these groups. Moreover, the history of racism in Europe also tell us that Roma, Gypsy and Traveller people have long been cast as less White and racially inferior.⁷⁹

[Historical research](#) also suggests that Romani people originated from the Punjab region of Northern India. It has also been suggested that Romani people were called 'gypsies' because it was thought that Romani communities originated from Egypt. Given that Romani people are said to have originated from outside Europe, it is therefore somewhat unsurprising that Romani people have been subjected to some of the historically loaded forms of racism discussed in previous sections of this report, particularly the idea that non-European people are 'subhuman' and 'uncivilised'. History also reminds us that Roma, Gypsy and Traveller people have a shared history of [genocide](#). For example, the Nazis drew on scientific racism, particularly the notions of cultural degeneracy and biological inferiority, as they tried to justify the attempted extermination of these groups.

For several centuries, Roma communities have been racialised as dangerous, demons, thieves, aggressive, violent, anti-social, dirty and intellectually inferior. What is more, it has long been alleged that the supposed moral and cultural degeneracy of Roma, Gypsy and Traveller communities is biologically determined. It has also been suggested that Roma, Gypsy and Traveller people are culturally incompatible with, and /or incapable of acquiring, the imagined cultural habits and traditions associated with European-ness or the dominant national group typically imagined as White. Not only are such ideas similar to the forms of anti-Irish racism outlined above, the discussion below shows that these ideas also overlap with the forms of racism directed at Irish Traveller people.

While noting that Romani people have lived in Britain long before the expansion of the EU in 2004 and 2007, it is also important to acknowledge that Romani people have moved to Western European countries in search of safety, security, human rights and employment after experiencing racism, hostility and violence in other

⁷⁷ Clark, C. (2018) 'Roma, Gypsy and Traveller experiences of racism in Scotland', in Davidson, N., Liinpaa, M., McBride, M. & S. Virdee (eds) *'No Problem Here': Racism and Scottish Society*. Edinburgh: Luath Press.

⁷⁸ Bhopal, K. (2011) "['What about us?' Gypsies, Travellers and 'White racism in secondary schools in England'](#)", *International Studies in Sociology of Education*, 21(4), pp. 315-329.

⁷⁹ See Fox, J. , Moroşanu, L. & Szilassy, E. (2012) '[The Racialization of the New European Migration to the UK](#)', *Sociology*, 46(4), pp. 680-695.

countries. At the same time, recent media and political coverage regularly sees Roma, Gypsy and Traveller people referred in relation to controversial 'illegal sites'. Moreover, Roma, Gypsy and Traveller people have also been stigmatised as 'illegal immigrants' when in fact they came to Britain in search of asylum and refuge.⁸⁰ Racialising media narratives have also associated Roma, Gypsy and Traveller communities and with a whole swathe of crimes including prostitution, child trafficking, the sexual exploitation of children, 'fly-tipping', 'pick-pocketing', credit card fraud and 'barefoot begging'. Indeed, the alleged cultural backwardness of Eastern European Romani and Gypsy people has been reinforced by sensationalist news stories alleging that Romani people live in squalor, spread disease and 'eat the Queen's swans'.⁸¹ Such narratives are immediately and directly counter-posed to the dominant White British group who are racialised as being 'clean' and law-abiding.

The TUC's *Racism at Work* survey captured a considerable number of personal statements highlighting the kinds of racism experienced by Roma, Gypsy and Traveller peoples in workplaces around Britain.

I felt I was subject to 'underlying racist' views and a feeling of not being able to be myself and that I did not belong in the team with one element being due to my Gypsy Roma Traveller background. My line manager showed a huge lack of positive management when she was witness to derogatory comments made by another manager who had said, 'Gypsies and alcoholics, they're all the same aren't they?' (Female Gypsy/ Irish Traveller, Family Worker)

I have a Romani background and frequently hear jokes referring to 'P****s' 'G****s' and travellers. Derogatory comments made about the travelling community and even to the point of the ground's security locking exit and entrance gates on the site 'because the travellers are coming' (Female, any Other White Background, Manager)

Most frequent discrimination overhead involves the Irish traveller community – 'G****s' and 'P****s', and generally comments about criminal behaviour (Female, any other Asian background)

Witnessed former manager/ director making comments about 'p****y robbing bastards' (aka Gypsy, Roma and Traveller families) who were staying nearby and making comments about how they'd know if they had tried to steal the new AC units from outside of the building (as if it was a given they'd try simply by their ethnicity) (White British Female)

Almost all of the above statements reference the persistence of longstanding stereotypes associating Roma, Gypsy and Traveller groups with criminality and anti-social behaviour; thus, further contributing to idea that Roma, Gypsy and Traveller communities are morally and culturally inferior. What is more, the reference to nomadic traditions among Roma, Gypsy and Traveller groups not only reinforces a

⁸⁰ See Fox, J. , Moroşanu, L. & Szilassy, E. (2012), pp. 680-695.

⁸¹ See Fox, J. , Moroşanu, L. & Szilassy, E. (2012), pp. 680-695.

negative caricature, it also repeats the misleading notion that all Roma, Gypsy and Traveller people live in caravans when in fact this is not the case.⁸²

Xenophobia and anti-Eastern European sentiment

Xenophobia towards White European people in Britain is not new. With the exception of Jewish people, White Eastern European people became racially 'desirable' after the Second World War. So much so that the British government instituted the European Volunteer Worker Scheme in 1946 as a way of recruiting Eastern European people to fill shortages in the labour market.⁸³ This was a period in which non-Jewish Eastern European people were considered to be the 'right' kind of White, while antisemitism continued to see Eastern European Jews racialised as the 'wrong' kind of White. In their wisdom, the politicians at the time thought that shared Whiteness meant that Eastern European workers could more readily assimilate into British culture. As we noted in Section 1, popular anti-immigrant sentiment has not only further evidenced the contingent and probationary nature of Whiteness, it has also shaped anti-Eastern European sentiment in the workplace. Moreover, the quotations below demonstrate the ways in which racism and xenophobia can be both expressed and experienced in overlapping ways.

A patient complained about being seen by an Eastern European dentist and wanted to be treated by someone White and English (White British Female)

I constantly live in fear and I have stopped asking to be treated the same as others and to stop singling me out as the only response I receive is an aggressive answer that I need to behave. So after 3 long years I have stopped asking for help and just try to plough through the day and earn my living. Business, instead of using my intelligence, interrogated me, punished me and laughed at me and as I don't want to join masses of unemployed I am learning to grow a thick skin (Female, any other White Background, Customer Advisor)

I am Polish but last year relocated to the UK...Before I moved I secured a job at [name of local authority]. From the day I came in to the office it became apparent that I was not welcome and it was all about me being Polish and being the only foreigner in the office. Within days I was referred as a 'cleaner' or 'she'. Colleagues refused to speak to me or train me. I would spend the entire working day watching walls or surfing the internet as nobody wanted to train me on the easiest of tasks. I had to beg them...I was told the entire office voted for Brexit. Some colleagues who claimed they were from UKIP said they would not speak to me (and they didn't). I was warned not to 'get on the bad side of my colleagues'. Attacks on Polish residents in the town where I live were loudly discussed in the office and laughed at despite my presence...My letters to Human Resources have been read aloud in the office to rally people against me. My managers did nothing to stop it...they said it was just my

⁸² For further discussion, see Clark, C. (2014) '[Glasgow's Ellis Island? The integration and stigmatisation of Govanhill's Roma population](#)', *People, Place and Policy*, 8(1); and Powell, R. (2014) '[Roma integration in the UK](#)', *People, Place and Policy*, 8(1).

⁸³ Kushner, T. (2005) 'Racialization and 'White European' immigration', in Murji, K. & Solomos, J. (eds.) *Racialisation: studies in Theory and Practice*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

imagination and I did not know the British way of living...All meetings designed to improve the atmosphere in the office were spent trying to convince me I was the problem and not the behaviour of my colleagues. I have tried to leave the work twice. After the second time I quit. My manager gave me terrible references calling me 'unstable'. My manager knew from day one that I suffered from depression and post-traumatic stress disorder and that bullying made me relapse. It did not matter...Another colleague (British Muslim) was also subjected to remarks ('wearing rags on her head') and left the office shortly before me. Since the references I have tried to find work in the council twice. I was successful with two interviews but the offers were withdrawn due to references and 'my reputation'. I tried to receive assistance from the [name of union] but they were not helpful either (White European Female, Public Sector)

I wasn't invited a few times for weekly staff meetings and for the Christmas Party. I was told not to speak Polish at work while other colleagues speak their languages. One colleague threatened that [they] would inform the area manager if I speak Polish. She is bullying me, making fun of me in front of others, saying bad things about me to other colleagues behind my back to make them against me. Some have already stopped talking to me. I feel isolated at work (White European Female, Retail)

Comments made about other employees who were European immigrants, implying they are 'lazy' and 'stupid'. Comments are always personalised it's never 'these immigrants are lazy' but there is a correlation between the frequency of negative comments being made and the person being an immigrant. In the case of the one black girl in my workplace, there are more overtly offensive comments particularly about her smell and her being 'stupid' and 'slow'. Again skin colour isn't mentioned but she certainly receives these sort of comments when others don't...European immigrants with poor English were frequently put on business contracts inappropriate for their needs as a customer. This was done in order to meet sales targets, with colleagues assuming that these people would not be able to understand the difference between consumer and business contracts (Male, mixed heritage background)

Colleagues making racist and derogatory comments about other service users; colleagues grudging service to users who are not White and people who are immigrants; colleagues not treating other colleagues as 'one of the team' because they're originally from Eastern Europe; service users making racist and derogatory comments about other service users (White British Female, Administrator)

Witnessed a lot of verbal abuse towards Eastern European colleagues particularly after Brexit. One colleague was called 'a Polish b***h' by a co-worker (White British Female, Project Worker)

The quotations above also demonstrate the forms of exclusion, hostility, bullying and harassment which White Eastern European people encounter from their colleagues, supervisors, managers, human resource departments and company directors, as well as further evidencing the economic, physical and psychological impact of workplace discrimination. Moreover, one of the survey participants also illustrates

that being identified as 'the problem' can also have long-lasting consequences and that challenging discrimination at work can lead to forms of 'reputational damage' which hinder people's ability to find alternative employment. Not only this, the personal statements cited here also evidence the way in which xenophobia shapes customer service provision, while also acting a way to meet sales targets.

Finally, the 2016-2017 *Racism at Work* also recorded examples a small number of examples in which Eastern European people more broadly were racialised as 'gypsies'.

Some colleagues make stupid remarks about me being a Romanian and associate me with gypsies...A few years back I was verbally and physically assaulted at work because I am Eastern European (White European Female, Transport)

Personal statements such as the one cited here also demonstrate that anti-Roma, Gypsy and Traveller racism and anti-Eastern European xenophobia are often expressed and experienced in overlapping ways.

Summary

This section has shown that both Whiteness and national identity are neither homogenous nor stationary, and that different groups encounter and negotiate Whiteness in different ways. Racism and xenophobia ensure that inclusion in Whiteness and access to the privileges which Whiteness bestows is probationary. The material presented in this section also reminds us that access to the economic, political, social, cultural and psychological privileges upon which the idea of European 'civilisation' has long been premised is also conditional and probationary. By thinking about Whiteness in a historical way, we can see that at different periods in British history the boundaries of national identity and belonging have been drawn and redrawn along racialised and religious lines. Rather than being universal or absolute, the privileges of Whiteness are relative and uneven once Whiteness intersects with religion and nation identity. So much so that it is often the case that being White is not enough. You have to be the 'right' kind of White.

Section 8: Racism and its impact

Frankly it's just too painful. It's ruining lives (Black/ Black British Female)

In our report on the [2015 Race at Work](#) survey we sought to challenge the idea put forward by some White British workers which suggested that their colleagues simply let racism 'wash over them'. In doing so, we provided evidence demonstrating the profound impact that racism had on the mental health of a significant number of ethnic minority workers. The evidence gathered by the TUC's 2016-2017 *Racism at Work* draws attention to the impact workplace racism had on people's ability to earn a living, as well as survey participant's physical and mental health. Not only this, the personal statements quoted below highlight the multiple and cumulative impact of workplace racism.

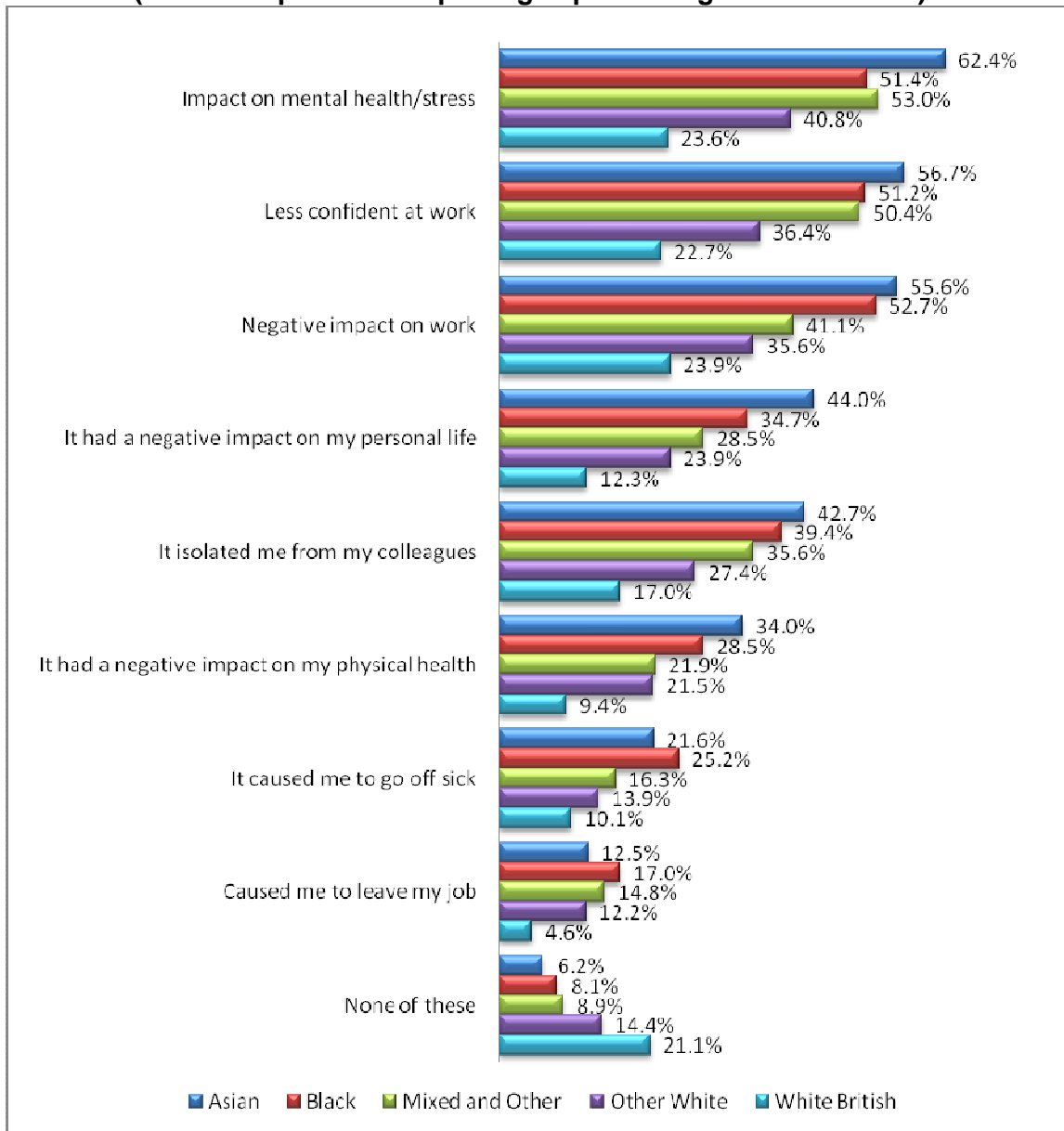
The *Racism at Work* survey reveals that workplace racism has wide-ranging consequences which often go beyond the workplace. For example, over 90% of survey respondents identifying as Asian, Black and Mixed heritage and Other and 85% of White Other participants reported that their experiences of discrimination and harassment at work had a negatively impacted both on their work and their personal lives. Figure 7a also shows that workplace racism can have a number of work-specific consequences. Indeed, over 50% of Black, Asian and Mixed heritage participants and 36.4% of the White Other employees stated that their experiences of discrimination and harassment at work had left them feeling less confident. In comparison to almost 40% of Black, Asian and Mixed heritage respondents, 27.4% of White Other participants reported that they had been left feeling isolated from their colleagues. 50% of Black, Asian and Mixed heritage and just under 35.6% of White Other respondents stated that their experiences had a detrimental impact on their ability to do their job. Many of these impacts were also evident in the personal statements provided by survey participants.

You will think a public service organisation will know better and treat people equally...I am currently seeking a psychiatrist/therapist for treatment and hopefully [I'll] be able to pick myself back again. I feel less valuable (Black/ Black British Female, Consultant)

I felt absolutely helpless. I was eventually referred for counselling as I became suicidal. The experience made me question my abilities and whether my efforts for professional and personal growth will be futile. Fortunately, my family has been very supportive and made me remember my strengths and capabilities (Female, any other ethnic group)

Drawing on our quantitative analysis of the survey (see Section 2), it is reasonable to suggest that being subjected to excessive surveillance and scrutiny by colleagues, supervisors and managers and being dealt with unfairly and more harshly during informal and formal performance review processes also impacts on ethnic minority workers' psychological well-being.

Figure 8a: Impact of racism by ethnicity
(Base: Respondents reporting experiencing racism at work)



In a similar manner to the people who took part in the [2015 Race at Work](#) survey, the quotations below provide insight into the feelings of demoralisation and powerlessness which are often triggered by a lack of support, managerial indifference and racism from managers.

My immediate line manager has been harassing me and bullying me for the past 6 years. She has insulted me, shown inappropriate and intimidating bodily gestures in front of other staff members which has caused me a lot of distress and shock. Disrespectful comments about my ethnic background and demeaning me is common. Dominating me and always looking for faults in every single aspect of my work keeps me always very jittery and restless, more

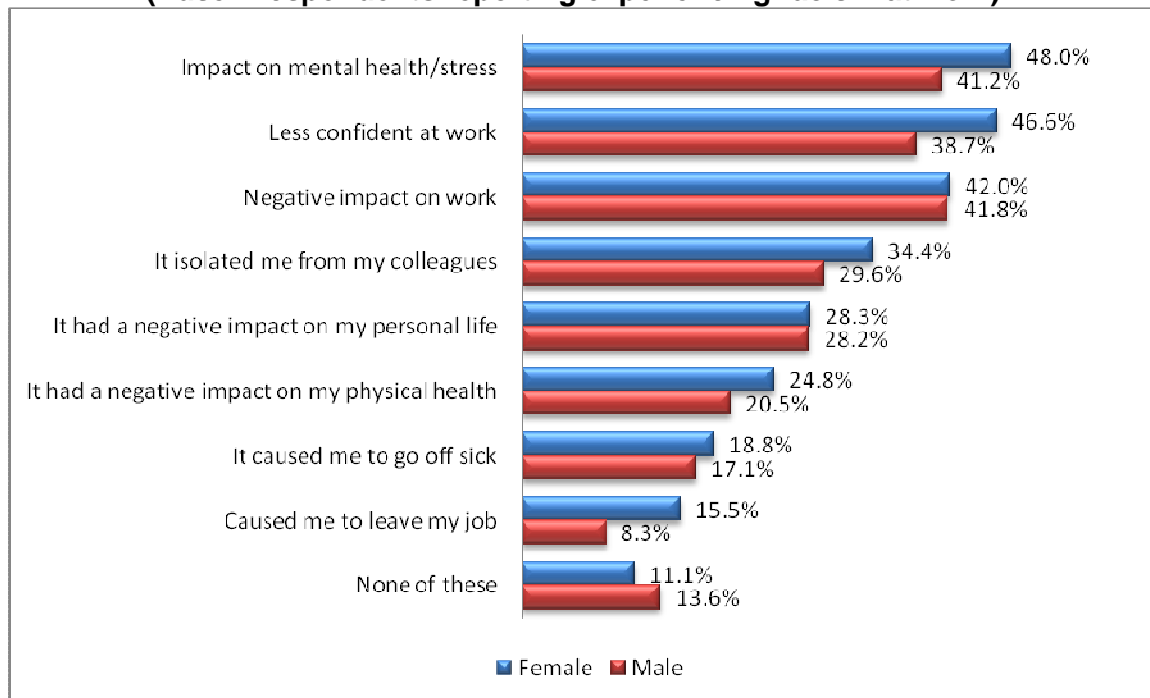
so a very insecure and vulnerable feeling (Asian/ Asian British Female, Physiotherapist)

It hurts. I feel powerless. I do not have a future in the industry (Black/ Black British Male, Journalist)

As an employee in my experience once you enter a work environment and identify that it has racist and oppressive practices, you cannot do anything about it as you are powerless to change it, all you can do is leave (Black/ Black British Female, Public Sector)

This is often subtle when it comes to work and management positions. It is often felt rather than having hard evidence and places you in a very vulnerable, lonely position. It affects you mentally as it is all 'in your head' with no clear cut evidence which is difficult to rationalise (Asian/ Asian British Female)

Figure 8b: impact of racism by gender
(Base: Respondents reporting experiencing racism at work)



In addition to the above, it is also important to note that discussing and challenging workplace racism can place an emotional burden on the shoulders of the people on the receive end of racism. So much so that ethnic minority workers often have to manage and assuage White people's emotions and hostile responses when trying to speak or challenge workplace racism. This includes interactions and conversations being co-opted, if not hijacked, so that the focus of dialogue centres on the thoughts and feelings of White people, especially those who identify as being a member of the White British majority. What is more, the statements below also reveal the way in which attempts to raise the question of racism with colleagues and superiors can

often be refocused so that the behaviour of the complainant, rather than racism, is considered to be the problem.

Colleagues acting differently towards me when I speak about race - they are giving me a wide berth. I don't feel like my colleagues are that comfortable around me. I feel quite isolated as do the other people of colour in my department. I can see its effects on students too (Black/ Black British Female)

Had racist remark sprayed on the door at work. Reported incident to my line manager. Instead of offering to help, he suggested I had upset the local people (Chinese Male, Transport)

The TUC *Racism at Work* survey also suggests that we need to start thinking about workplace racism as a matter of health and safety. For example, 26% of Black, Asian and Mixed heritage workers and 21.5% of White Other participants reported that they had experienced workplace racism also reported that this had a negative impact on their physical health. Moreover, among the survey participants reporting that they had experienced workplace racism, over 60% of Asian, over 50% of Black and Mixed heritage participants and 40.8% of White Other respondents reported that racism had impacted on their mental health. Workplace racism also led to around 21% of Black, Asian and Mixed heritage and 13.9% of White Other participants having to undergo periods of sick leave. The quotations below show that some survey respondents felt compelled to leave their job as a direct result of impact racism had on their emotional and psychological well-being.

I did give up [my job] to protect my mental health as I was suicidal. I'm in a good place now though (Female, mixed heritage background)

My line manager was a known bully. I left having had a breakdown (Female, mixed heritage background, Social Services)

Being an equality and diversity manager I never in my dreams expected to be subjected to discrimination, but I was. I was put under so much stress that my doctor signed me off work for one month (Indian Male, Manager)

One colleague was off with stress for 6 months following an outburst by another team member, and that team member was disciplined (White British Female, NHS)

The situation has led me to severe depression which has made my entire life vulnerable (African Female)

This had happened over a period of two years. This caused me a lot of health issues, emotional issues and I developed anxiety and panic attacks (Asian/ Asian British Male, Social Worker)

I have been complaining about the bullying, discrimination, and racial abuse, nothing was ever done about it...Before I started working at [name of company] I was fit and strong, but all the experiences...have seriously affected my life. I

am currently taking anti-depression medicine...I can't even explain how I feel, except my misery (Black/ Black British Male)

As the quotations above show, the damaging impact of workplace racism can be so profound and so severe that some respondents suffered from stress, anxiety, panic attacks and suicidal feelings. Alongside our work on the [2015 Race at Work](#) survey, the above evidence again demonstrates that racism can have a lasting traumatic impact. So much so that, many people did not want to share or revisit their experiences of racism at work, noting that it was 'Too bad and too personal to put into words' and that are 'unable to speak about it' or that they would 'prefer to forget about it'.

Finally, as we noted in section one, the Brexit campaign and its aftermath have shaped the working lives of ethnic minority survey participants. Alongside the ongoing Windrush scandal, Brexit has further contributed to a hostile and oppressive atmosphere, as well as a sense of uncertainty about what Britain's post-Brexit future holds. For some people, everyday life had become 'unbearable'. Many participants reported that feeling like 'they can't be themselves'. For example, being scared to speak Polish on public transport illustrates the fear and the broader assimilatory pressures imposed by the demand that ethnic minority people conform to the imagined culture of the dominant White British majority.

Life in the UK because of Brexit has become unbearable. Outside of work, I have been also spat at (for having a Polish accent), been told three times that I would be deported by strangers in the street, received threats online for advocating for Remain, seen my country consulate in London being attacked...I am living with other Polish families who have had bricks thrown through their windows. A 4 year old Muslim girl had fake poo smeared on her by a group of ten adult men. The Polish community is aware of at least 3 murders that were motivated by the fact that person was Polish. There is no foreigner in UK that I know who is not scared, expecting deportation or who had not experienced some sort of hate crime. People are scared to the point that they sit at the back of the buses and refuse to speak to their children in Polish on the streets...This is the effect of Brexit and the Leave campaign (White European Female, Public Sector)

I am from foreign origin, living in the UK for the last 10 years. I have lived in England, Scotland and Northern Ireland. Seen xenophobia everywhere, almost every day. I never lived in such isolation before I moved to the UK...I am not anymore myself in everyday life as I am trying to protect myself from being hurt and humiliated (White European Female, Sales Assistant)

As we have argued throughout this report, we are living in a political moment that is having a profound impact on people's physical and emotional well-being. What is more, the quotations above further demonstrate that the impact of the current political climate is just limited to be people's working lives, with many survey participants living in fear as a result of violence, intimidation and harassment outside

the workplace.⁸⁴ We draw attention to the forms of racism that people experience outside of work, including racist media and political narratives and the threat of deportation, as this can also impact on people's ability to do their job,

Summary

At the beginning of this report we drew attention to the following quotation provided by one of the women who took part in the survey.

I've had three workplaces where I've had to bring grievances that were race related (racist in nature)...You can never absolutely prove it...It's insidious. The ignoring you is as bad as the shouting at you...I ended up on anti-depressants and suicidal. It makes you forget who you are, your strengths, your abilities. I'm a skilled intelligent woman who's worked for 35 years and I ended up barely able to send an email. It's like the perpetrators don't realise. Leaves you powerless. I'm having to leave my job and take a £10K wage reduction for a short-term post instead of my permanent one. It's either that or my life. My children/family have insisted. They want me alive (Black/ Black British Female, Children's Services)

This quote demonstrates the multiple, interacting, if not cumulative, effects workplace racism can have. The emotional and psychological effects of workplace racism can and does have a profound impact on the economic circumstances in which ethnic minority workers find themselves. It results in people having to make incredibly difficult, life-defining decisions such as giving up careers, taking cuts in pay and having to seek alternative forms of employment.

Moreover, the voices of ethnic minority workers presented in this section offers insight into the deeply wounding, long-lasting, traumatic and scarring effects of workplace racism.⁸⁵ It is in light of this that we recommend that the emotional, psychological and physical well-being of people experiencing workplace racism should come also under the remit of health and safety officers. What is more, we must also remember that the [Health and Safety at Work Act \(1974\)](#) and the

⁸⁴ For further discussion of the types of racism experienced in public places and the impact that this has had on people's mental health, see the recently published research by the [Institute for Social and Economic Research](#) on 'The prevalence and persistence of ethnic and racial harassment and its impact on health: a longitudinal analysis'.

⁸⁵ The findings from the TUC's 2016-2017 *Racism at Work Survey* reinforce the findings of a recent poll carried out by the TUC. In 2015, the TUC polled 1,738 people, 28% of which said that racism had had a detrimental effect on their physical health, while 48% felt that racism had negatively impact on their mental health. In 2017, the [TUC](#) polled a further 1,003 'BME' workers, generating further evidence of the impact that racism can have on people subjected to racist bullying and harassment. Key statistics from this poll, include:

- Over half (53%) of BME workers who had experienced bullying or harassment saying the experience had affected their mental health;
- 36% of BME workers who had experienced verbal abuse reporting that it had had an impact on their mental health;
- Almost half of 25-to-34 year olds, stating that the experience of being verbally abused in the workplace had impacted on their mental health; and,
- 45% of BME workers who had suffered physical assault saying it had had an impact on their mental health.

[Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations \(1999\)](#) both stipulate that 'Employers must do whatever is 'reasonably practicable' to ensure 'that workers and others are protected from anything that may cause harm, effectively controlling any risks to injury or health that could arise in the workplace'.⁸⁶

In short, we have currently have a set of legal provisions which entitle people to go to work free from both the threat of racist violence and intimidation, as well as the impact racism has been proven to have on people's physical and mental health. It is time that these laws were properly enforced.

⁸⁶ Anti-discrimination statutes are also '*potentially*' implicated in cases related to work stress, notably the [Protection from Harassment Act 1997](#) and the [Equality Act 2010](#). See Chandola, T. (2010) [Stress at Work](#), *British Academy*.

Section 9: Whiteness and the politics of moral equivalence

In this section we take a closer look at the nature of Whiteness. In doing so, we consider how claims of 'reverse racism' and the workplace dynamics of White resentment contribute to a broader 'politics of moral equivalence'.

Some 2,336 people identifying as White British took part in the *Racism at Work* survey. A number of whom were attentive to the forms racism faced by their ethnic minority colleagues.

I have found that the worst racism I've heard was without the presence of any People of Colour. It is usually said by an outspoken racist then others bounce off him and make their remarks. It could be making jokes about women wearing veils while driving past in the van or something on the news and this being ammunition to start a rant about Muslims or immigration. I have tried to say something (just going 'that's racist') and then afterwards they make comments I believe just to get a nibble or they say 'don't say that it's racist' in a mocking way (White British Male, Transport)

Have witnessed very many instances of racist abuse directed against my colleagues. There is also a pattern of discrimination where BME staff are over 4 times more likely to be entered into formal disciplinary procedures than White staff. If they are Black African or Black Caribbean this number rises sharply (White British Male, NHS)

Ignorance is the most common way racism presents itself, that coupled with outright denial of the structural and societal inequalities faced by BME people that leads to discriminatory and racist behaviours and practices in the workplace and acts as a barrier to BME people achieving success and climbing the workplace ladder (White European Male)

Witnessed the one Black employee of the business being regularly singled out for unwarranted criticism and verbal abuse in public (White British Healthcare Assistant, preferred not to state gender)

Inappropriate comments/ racist jokes/ ignorant attitudes said in presence of a group. In my opinion, the perpetrators have felt safe to do so because their 'audience' has been perceived to be White British and therefore not expected to take offence (White British Male, Education)

As a White worker with a commitment to anti-racism I have often had my comments relegated to negative comments (e.g. 'she would say that wouldn't she / she's obsessed'). My partner is Jewish and my grandchildren are of mixed heritage and other White workers assume I agree with their racist opinions until I object. I am then mocked for my attempts to speak out against racism (White British Female, Lecturer)

As the quotations above indicate, racism can operate rather openly, even when challenged. The *Racism at Work* survey suggests that this tends to happen in situations where White workers assume that their fellow White colleagues share their

views. To put it another way: it is often assumed that shared Whiteness provides sanctuary for racist views to be articulated openly and without consequence. In such circumstances, white workers have a responsibility to challenge racism.⁸⁷ The quotations above also provide examples of the types of discursive strategies that are often employed to delegitimise opposition to racism, such as opposition to racism being dismissed as 'irrational' or treated with derision.

While some participants were attentive to racism, many White British respondents sought to downplay the nature and scale of contemporary workplace racism.

Racial surveys designed to deliberately enforce and encourage difference and discrimination of racial harassment. There are policies in place in my work environment to ensure no racial harassment occurs and they are rigorously enforced (White British Male, Engineer)

While I agree that there are still areas of mistrust and fear between races, I feel that racism as it was in the 1960's and 1970's has been largely eradicated. I realise that you will think that this is because I am a White male, but I see and hear much less racism now than at any time in the past (White British Male, Manager)

Brexit in London has ironically improved people's attitudes to each other (White British Male, Marketing)

These quotations echo media, political and public narratives which suggest that 'there is no problem here', 'things are nothing like they used to be' and that 'things have progressed'. Such suggestions stand in sharp contrast to the personal statements presented throughout this report. Indeed, the TUC's *Racism at Work* survey is the latest piece of survey evidence which challenges the idea that equality and diversity policies are 'rigorously enforced'.

The notion of 'reverse racism' – that is, where members of the dominant majority racial group claim to be the victims of racism – was also a prominent feature in many of the personal statements provided by White British survey participants. Almost one-third of White British survey respondents reported that they had experienced racial harassment, while almost 12% declared that they had been subjected to unfair treatment at work because of their race. While racist remarks (17.9%) was the most common form of racism that White British participants claimed to have experienced, almost 8% of White British workers stated that they had experienced some 'other' form of racial harassment and/or unfair treatment at work. Moreover, the number of White British respondents reporting that they had experienced any of the other sixteen forms of racial discrimination and unfair treatment measured by the *Racism at Work* survey did not exceed 6.3%. As Figures 2a and 2b demonstrate (see Section 2), the number of White British participants reporting that they had experienced any of the various forms of racism measured by the survey was lower in comparison to their minority ethnic colleagues.

⁸⁷ See the advice and guidance offered by the [Active Bystander Project](#) for suggestions on how to challenge racism in such situations.

In contrast to 48% of ethnic minority participants who reported experiencing workplace racism, almost 24% of White British workers stated that workplace racism had negatively impacted on their ability to do their job. Moreover, in comparison to 36% of ethnic minority employees reporting that they had experienced workplace racism, some 17% of White British participants also claimed that their experience of racism had resulted in them being isolated from their colleagues. Moreover, whereas 52% of ethnic minority workers who experienced racism said that workplace racism had impacted on their mental health, so too did around 24% White British workers. Not only this 10% of White British respondents claimed that workplace racism had a negative impact on their physical health, in comparison to 26% of ethnic minority survey participants. Finally, 19% of ethnic minority workers who experienced racism said that they felt forced to leave their job in comparison to less than 5% of White British workers. What these percentages reveal is that the forms of discrimination and prejudice encountered by White British workers does not have anywhere near the same breadth and scale of impact as that which is endured by their ethnic minority co-workers.

When it comes to reporting and challenging to workplace racism, White British workers were more likely to have their complaint taken seriously when reporting a racist incident to their employer (10% compared with 6.7% of Black, Asian and Mixed heritage respondents and 8.2% of White Other participants). On the whole, White British workers almost two times more likely than that their ethnic minority counterparts to report that their employer had dealt with their complaint in either a prompt and/ or proper manner. In contrast to survey participants who self-identified as Black, Asian and Mixed heritage, White British respondents were less likely to be:

- Be identified as 'trouble maker' (11% of White British Workers compared to 21% of Black, Asian and Mixed workers);
- Have their grievance ignored (15% of White British Workers compared to 21% of Black, Asian and Mixed workers);
- Be subject to a counter complaint (4% of White British Workers compared to 9.4% of Black, Asian and Mixed workers);
- Be isolated from colleagues (6% of White British Workers compared to 14% of Black, Asian and Mixed workers);
- Be disciplined as a response to their complaint (2% of White British Workers compared to 6.9% of Black, Asian and Mixed workers);
- Be transferred to another department or workplace (2% of White British Workers compared to 6.2% of Black, Asian and Mixed workers); and/ or
- Be forced out their job (3% of White British Workers compared to 6.4% of Black, Asian and Mixed workers).

These statistics are telling. More specifically, they show that when it comes to reporting workplace racism to an employer, White British respondents were less likely to be subjected to the kind of disciplinary and retaliatory practices encountered by the ethnic minority participants. What is more, these statistics reveal that when raising a complaint or grievance relating to workplace racism, White British participants are less likely to experience material penalties such as being forced out of their job. Not only this, the statistics presented here also reveal that White British survey participants are more likely to use workplace grievance procedures, while (on the whole) also being more likely to be satisfied with how their employer handled

their complaint. These are significant insights into both the nature of White privilege and institutional Whiteness, particularly in terms of highlighting the role that Whiteness plays in facilitating the relationship between White British workers and their employer (See Section 9 for further discussion of the relationship between White trade unionists and employers).

In addition to claims of reverse racism, a number of White British survey participants also used the *Racism at Work* survey to voice their opposition to 'positive discrimination', 'political correctness', as well as workplace initiatives promoting equality and diversity. In terms of the later, many White British respondents believed that such initiatives offered their ethnic minority employees either 'preferential treatment' and/ or an unfair advantage in the workplace.

Whilst working in the police force, Black/ Asian colleagues were allowed to get away with poor performance when White colleagues are not. It's quite clear that the reason for this is to retain all Black and Asian colleagues as to make the diversity statistics look better and also for the employer not to be accused of being racist...For example the mentoring scheme. Unfortunately this is being taken too far and sometimes efforts to counter racism are being abused which has led to resentment as sometimes Black and Asian colleagues are perceived to be getting an easy ride (White British Male)

...the race card seems to be misused at times. Managers find it difficult to manage poor performances when the instant counter-allegation is racism. When staff don't do their job, consistently late, not engaging, poor student evaluations, not completing the relevant (and paid for) academic courses despite being given the same time to do so as all other employees. When colleagues have to raise concerns about performance issues (as raised by students and clinical colleagues) they receive a grievance complaint (White British Female, NHS)

I have observed that the White British are often treated unfairly because of positive discrimination...as employers wish to appear to support equal opportunities. Also, there are no protected characteristics that actively protect the White British as a group as effectively as if you were of a minority race, background, ethnicity, or religion (White British Male, Public Transport)

I have seen other colleagues overlooked for promotion due to 'Positive Discrimination' (White British, NHS)

In addition to providing further insight into the types of resentment expressed by White survey respondents, the quotations above also highlight the way in which the juridical language of 'protected characteristics' can also be co-opted in order to make White claims for equal opportunity, as well as allege a lack of White representation.

The [2015 Race at Work](#) survey found that 'we are not comfortable talking about race at work'. In fact, 34% of ethnic minority workers and 42% of White employees said that their colleagues were uncomfortable talking about race. Similarly, the 2016-2017 *Racism at Work* survey also found that White British participants were uncomfortable

talking about race and racism. In fact, many White British respondents expressed antipathy and aversion towards the survey itself.

I'm not saying that it doesn't go on but its people like you stirring up things with questionnaires that don't give the option for positive answers that make it appear worse (White European Male)

Why does your survey assume only black and ethnic minorities are subject to racism? This is what the introduction to this survey suggests. I have seen very little racism but when I have it has often been Asian males being racist towards White English people. Or does that not matter because it does not fit within your agenda? (No biographical information given)

This is a typically positive racist survey. If it's not racism it's sexism. I am NOT a racist but the way the system is biased towards coloured [people] is going to cause it. How about treating EVERYBODY the same and stop encouraging positive racism (White British Male, Transport – original emphasis)

This survey is not a fair reflection on racism as you don't need to be an ethnic minority to suffer from racism. All life's matter (White British Male, Transport)

Survey responses of this kind chime with ongoing political, media and public narratives outlined in Section 1, mainly in that it is the discussion of race and racism (or indeed sexism) rather than racism (and sexism) that are framed as being the problem. Indeed, the statements cited here are just a few examples of the way in which raising the matter of racism is often met by defensive and hostile responses. Moreover, the suggestion that 'All Lives Matter' echoes a narrative that has emerged in response to the formation of [Black Lives Matter](#) in the United States.⁸⁸ Such statements fundamentally, if not purposively, misrepresent and delegitimise attempts to speak about and challenge structural and institutional racism. Indeed, slogans such as 'All Lives Matter' and calls for 'colour-blind' notions of equality obscure questions of power. They create a 'politics of moral equivalence' by suggesting that racism 'cuts both ways'.⁸⁹

In Section 1, we also noted that wider media and political discussions have reinforced the idea that Britain is a White country, while also suggesting that globalisation, neoliberalism and austerity have had a disproportionate impact on the 'White working class'. What is more, being disregarded and abandoned by the political class and the broader erosion of traditional forms of working class formation and representation have also been constituent features of these narratives. Similarly, a number of White British workers used to the 2016-2017 *Racism at Work* survey to make claims, such as suggesting that trade unions, the health service and employment law, either discriminate against or disadvantage people who are White and working class. As the quotations below demonstrate, such narratives of

⁸⁸ Black Lives Matter was formed in 2012 following the fatal shooting of Trayvon Martin, a 17 year old African American man, by George Zimmerman, a neighbourhood watch volunteer, who was later acquitted of second degree murder.

⁸⁹ For further discussion of Black Lives Matter and the 'politics of moral equivalence' in the United States, see Winter, A. (2016) '[Boycotting Beyonce and the Politics of Policing in Post-Race America](#)'.

dispossession and disenfranchisement are usually premised on the notion of 'reverse racism'.

Working class White people are more likely to be discriminated against in most industries (White British Male, Transport)

No wonder the trade union movement is losing credibility, they seem to have forgotten that most working class people in Britain are White (White British Male, Transport)

The patient group I work with is 60-40% White working class. I have seen these guys being denied 'perks' because they may have been offhand to staff. The regime under which I work is punitive and the mostly Nigerian staff I work with can be the harshest when meting out restrictions on patients (White British Female, Nurse)

The most common racial discrimination I have seen has been directed towards White, British, Working Class, Straight, Male's because there is very little recourse to stop this. I have observed also and believe this is a result of political correctness, and that people for fear of being called racist fail to act/ criticise/ take action against any minority workers, where if you were White British you'd be in the office! Employers appear to fear...not being equal opportunity supporters and actively discriminate against [the] White British at recruitment and promotion...I believe [the] 'System' is broken. I feel current UK legislation is very much in favour of employers, and unfair treatment whether it be from employers, employees, or members of the public. The only 'protected characteristics' which are taken seriously by employers/ police/ trade unions/ legal teams are those of minority groups, and to a lesser extent White British Women. As I have said before, if you are a White, British, Working Class, Straight, Male, 'they' (insert whatever group you like) can pretty much treat you how they like and get away with it! (White British Male, Transport)

As we argued in Section 6, it is important that we think intersectionally when thinking about the nature of workplace hegemony. Similarly, many of the personal statements provided by White British Survey participants, such as those cited here, demonstrate that White resentment can also be expressed in gendered, heteronormative and classed ways. More specifically, these quotations are indicative of the way in which some White male workers interpret current social arrangements as threatening Whiteness, masculinity and heteronormativity.⁹⁰ What is more, these findings suggest that perhaps White anti-racists need to make a concerted effort to explain to

⁹⁰ The [2015 Race at Work](#) survey similarly gathered a body personal statements in which it was argued that the promotion of equality, diversity and inclusion disadvantages White heterosexual men:

They pay lip service to equality, diversity and fairness. In my organisation, you do best if you are any or some of these: female, young, not of UK White ethnicity, LGBT. Old White men like me are not rated. This is the civil service, by the way (White British male, 55+ years old, Civil Service)

They practice discrimination against White British males. That is the UK Civil Service for you (White British male, 35-44 years old, Civil Service)

their White co-workers that the forms of disadvantage which they encounter are the result of them being working class rather than being White, male and heterosexual.

Summary

In this section we examined the survey responses given by respondents self-identifying as White British. We believe that doing so is important in light of the sheer number of personal statements asserting 'reverse racism', particularly as these views are being expressed in a broader political context where it is frequently argued that we live in a 'post-race society' and hear suggestions such as 'All Lives Matter' (see Section 1). Close analysis of the personal statements provided by survey participants shows that whereas ethnic minority survey participants were more likely to share their own personal and direct experiences of racism, White British respondents tended to report examples of racism in the 'third-person'. In fact, only a small number of White British participants provided concrete examples alleging that they first-hand experience of racism at work.

Now, we are in no way suggesting that the type of workplace interactions described in the above quotations are not unpleasant and/ or upsetting for the individuals involved. It is, however, our view that we must make a distinction between racism and the forms of racial prejudice and bias which White British survey participants have highlighted using this survey. To categorise these incidents as racism would be highly problematic. To suggest that White people experience racism would obscure the historical, structural and institutional dimensions of racism. Not only this, the type of incidents outlined above do not contribute to the reproduction and maintenance of structures and institutions which systematically disadvantage people because of they are White. To suggest otherwise would create a 'politics of moral equivalence' which would draw our attention away from the structural and institutional realities in which the racialised nature of power is exercised and experienced.⁹¹

The material presented in this section also demonstrates just how difficult it can be to talk about racism when many White people react in a defensive manner, especially by denying its existence. This is often the case when invoking the term 'White privilege'. As we argued in Section 1, we are in no way suggesting that people who are White and working class do not experience inequality, domination and exploitation. Instead, it is our contention that such experiences are driven by class rather than Whiteness. Therefore, it is important to bear in mind that when the term White privilege is used, it is generally being employed to note that members of the dominant White group are unburdened of the consequences of racism and the organisation of society in ways that structurally disadvantage certain minority groups on the basis of their race/ ethnicity. At the same time, the evidence presented throughout this report so far also shows that White privilege includes feeling entitled to set the parameters and police the boundaries of 'acceptable' forms of multiculturalism and racial difference on others. As we have seen earlier, this includes the demand that racialised others assimilate to 'White culture' in the workplace.

⁹¹ For further discussion of the 'politics of moral equivalence', see Song, M. (2014) '[Challenging a culture of racial equivalence](#)', *Discover Society*.

It is also our view that equality, diversity and anti-racist work are not attempts to oppress and subjugate White, straight men, but rather they are an attempt to address the injustice and structuring power of racism, sexism, homophobia and transphobia. Moreover, it could be argued that the forms of resentment and discomfort that White employees reported when taking the *Racism at Work* survey is, at least in part, underpinned by the fact that White employees rarely, if at all, have to acknowledge or confront the structural and institutional nature of racism and other modes of inequality and oppression in the workplace.

Therefore, it is our view that White resentment and claims of reverse racism should not be used to reconfigure the aims and objectives of equality and diversity work. Doing so would only serve to legitimise the idea that various forms of diversity work and anti-racist practice are 'the problem'. We believe that further dialogue and educational work should be focused on the historical, structural and institutional nature of racism and racial inequality in Britain. It should emphasise why the Race Relations Act was amended in 1968 to outlaw discrimination in employment, and why such legislation, alongside public sector equality duties, are still very much required today. We believe that such conversations should take place within a broader inclusive discussion of Britain's imperial and multiracial history.

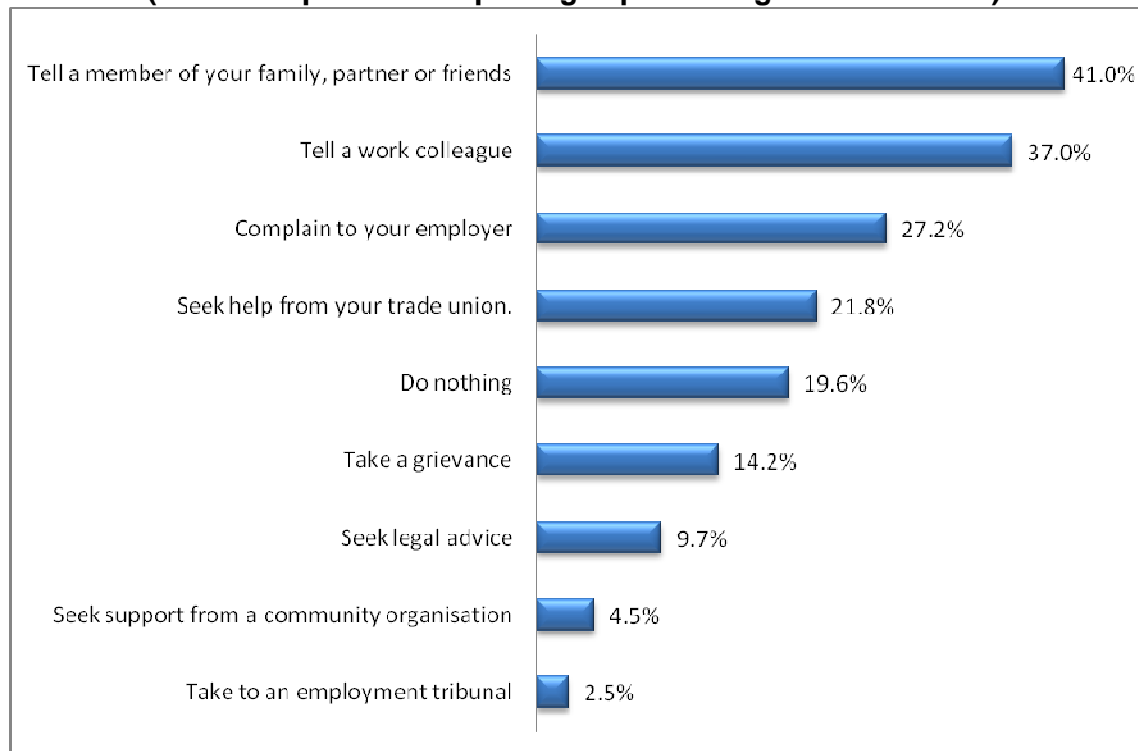
Section 10: Challenging and talking about racism at work

In this section, we highlight the challenges and difficulties encountered when trying to talk about and oppose workplace racism. In doing so, we draw attention to a number of practices which sustain and reproduce structural inequality and institutional Whiteness.

Employee and employer responses to workplace racism

The TUC's 2016-2017 *Racism at Work* survey draws attention to the fact that survey participants responded to workplace racism in a variety of ways (see figures 10a and 10b). 41% of employees who experienced racism at work discussed it with their friends or family, while 52% of Asian and Black employees, 45% of Mixed heritage respondents and 46.4% of White Other participants reported that they had told a friend or a relative. Telling a friend or relative was also the most common response to racism among Asian and Black women. 5.8% of Black, Asian and Mixed heritage respondents and 2.7% of White Other employees also sought help from a community organisation.

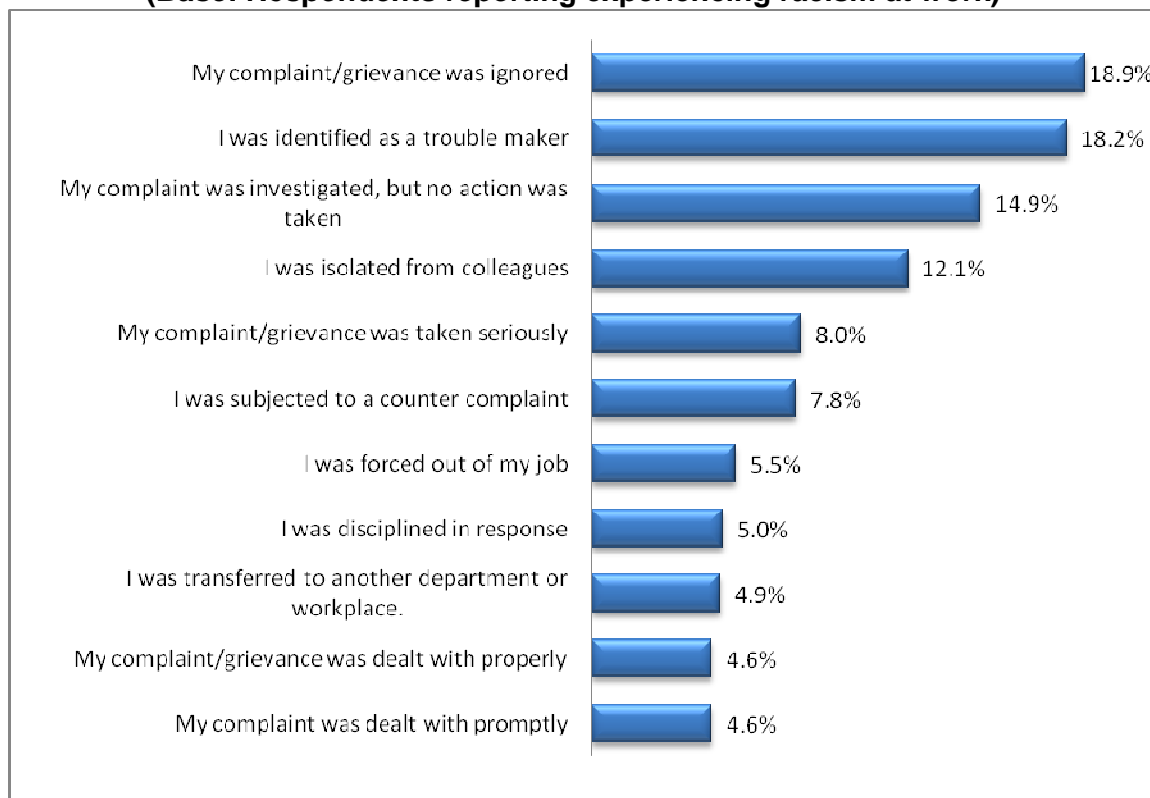
Figure 10a: Types of employee responses to racism
(Base: Respondents reporting experiencing racism at work)



The discussion above has already noted that workplace racism left many participants feeling isolated from their colleagues. It is, therefore, unsurprising that less than one-in-four Black, Asian and Mixed heritage and around one-third of White Other

respondents had discussed workplace racism with a colleague(s). While just over one-quarter of all minority employees reported racist incidents to their employer, a mere 22% of Black, Asian and Mixed heritage and 18.8% of White Other survey participants reported seeking help from a trade union. Figure 10a also reveals that survey participants were also somewhat reluctant to initiate a grievance procedure (14.2% of Black, Asian and Mixed heritage and 10.9% of White Other participants) and/or seek legal advice (9.7% of Black, Asian and Mixed heritage and 8.4% of White Other respondents). Not only this, just 1.9% of White Other and 3% of Black, Asian and Mixed heritage respondents opted to take their case to an employment tribunal. In light of this, we need to question what this says about effectiveness of formal workplace and legal processes and procedures.

**Figure 10b: Employer responses to reports of racism
(Base: Respondents reporting experiencing racism at work)**



Existing employer equality and diversity documents are likely to express a zero-tolerance approach to various forms of prejudice and discrimination, while at the same time outlining various procedures and processes relating to how workplace racism will be 'handled'. However, close examination of the statements provided by survey respondents reveals an altogether different reality. More specifically, the TUC's *Racism at Work* survey draws attention to a variety of practices which penalise and discipline those people who are willing to 'speak out'.

As Figure 10b shows, 19% of employees who reported a racist incident at work stated that their employer had ignored their complaint. What is more, few employers

responded to reports of racial discrimination in an appropriate (4.6%) and/ or timely (4.6%) manner, while just 8% of participants stated that their employer had taken their report seriously. Not only this, 14.9% of survey participants reported that while their employer had investigated their complaint, no further action was taken. These statistics clearly suggest that far too many employers are either still failing to take workplace racism seriously and/ or respond in an effective manner.

Coercive and repressive practices

The *Racism at Work* survey also reveals that minority workers have also been subjected to coercive and repressive practices when trying to draw attention to discrimination and harassment. Indeed, quotations in presented earlier sections of this report have already highlighted that some participants were discouraged from attending 'BME' events because doing so 'would have an impact' on their careers. This is but one example of the types of practices which maintain the hegemony of institutional/ organisational Whiteness. In addition to this, the *Racism at Work* survey also reveals that 21.3% of Black, Asian and Mixed heritage respondents and 15.8% of White Other participants were subsequently identified as a troublemaker after making a complaint. Moreover, 9.4% of Black, Asian and Mixed heritage respondents and 2% of White Other participants reported that they were subject to a counter-complaint. What is more, 6.8% of Black, Asian and Mixed heritage respondents and 2.7% of White Other respondents reported that they had been subject to disciplinary action after raising a complaint. 6.2% of Black, Asian and Mixed heritage respondents and 5.2% of White Other participants reported being transferred to another department, while 6.4% of Black, Asian and Mixed heritage respondents and 5.2% of White Other participants stated that were subsequently been forced out of their job.

Didn't report it as it might make my role untenable (Black/ Black British Male, Manager)

Often you are taking your concerns about racism to a White manager or colleague and they don't want to know or recognise what you are talking about. It's almost as if they are in denial (African Female)

It is very difficult to complain about your superior without retaliation. It should be easier to make a claim because the impact on your health and confidence is tremendous (White European Female, Manager)

I was intimidated when I supported another BME colleague with racism/bullied at work (Asian/ Asian British Female, Manager)

A Black female colleague was regularly bullied and subjected to racist and sexist comments. She complained formally on many occasions. Management did not take her complaints seriously and eventually accused her of vexatious complaining. In the end my colleague was subjected to a formal disciplinary process for her complaints and resigned (Irish Male, Teacher)

The above quotations evidence the way in which intimidation, denial and disavowal of racism operate as informal practices. Raising a complaint is often read as being a challenge to institutional/ organisational culture predicated on certain ideas, namely Whiteness. These quotations also show that the threat of retaliation can put some workers off making a complaint. These informal practices are a constituent feature of everyday culture in many workplace across the country.

The statements provided by ethnic minority survey participants also highlight that the aforementioned informal practices which uphold White domination can be further bolstered by the outcomes of more formal grievance, disciplinary and legal procedures.

Was made to sign a gagging order (Female, mixed heritage background, Social Care)

The grievance went on for a long time; the matter itself for two years. Only on appeal and in giving up some of the desired outcomes (including not needing any action against the manager), was it strongly acknowledged that there had been racism against me. At the same time, I was told separately that my section was up for closure and several colleagues at risk (pending Union discussions) (Indian Female, Education)

I did raise a formal grievance which was dealt with appropriately by the organisation. However, colleagues were aware and I was further isolated (Black/ Black British Female, NHS)

It got to the stage where I was about to accept the company offer to leave. But the terms of settlement agreement was so harsh (in favour of the company) that on the advice of my legal representative I declined (Indian Male, Manager)

The first quotation provides insight into the way in which formal legal processes and 'gagging orders' can be used to silence talk of workplace racism.⁹² More specifically, such orders also limit the cultivation of the type of alternative institutional memories which evidence the pervasive and entrenched nature of racism and racial inequality within specific workplaces and organisations. The second of the above quotations highlights the manner in which the long, drawn out nature of grievance procedures can result in what Sara Ahmed has referred to as 'battle fatigue'.⁹³ Indeed, this can discourage workers racialised as non-White from attempting to speak out against workplace racism. While 5% of survey respondents reported that they had been

⁹² Our analysis of the [2015 Race at Work](#) survey also found that some ethnic minority workers were put off seeking recourse through an employment tribunal as a direct consequence of the disparity in wealth and resources at the which all too often exists between employers and individual employees. For example, one survey participant stated that:

You can't do anything otherwise you are victimised and stitched up and will lose your job. There is the law but who can afford the legal fees and find a solicitor to take your case. Also the general perception is tribunals will rubber stamp the decision in favour of the employer who has resources to hire top lawyers. If you look at employment tribunals, how many are members of ethnic minorities? (Pakistani, male, legal services)

⁹³ For a further discussion of the role of 'battle fatigue', see Ahmed, S. (2012) *On Being Included: Racism and Diversity in Institutional Life*. London: Duke University Press.

'forced out of their job' after they had reported racism to their employer, the quotations below remind us that some survey participants have opted not drawn attention to workplace racism because they are all too aware that doing so can either limit their ability to earn a wage and/ or foreclose opportunities for promotion.

The word 'n****r' was used in my office. When I complained it was dealt with terribly. I have been excluded from promotion and denied opportunities (Black/ Black British Female, Education)

Was not confident to make a report. Feared losing shifts (Black/ Black British Male, Support Worker)

In light of this, the *Racism at Work* survey once again shows that racism has very real material consequences and that the economic circumstances in which many people find themselves (i.e. the need for a job and the need to earn a wage) often results in many people being reluctant challenge discrimination and harassment at work.

Summary

The TUC's 2016-2017 *Racism at Work* survey draws attention to a range of practices which make it very difficult for workers to talk about and challenge workplace racism because this would mean 'stepping out of place' and confronting a system of oppressive procedures and institutions which silence, discipline and obstruct attempts to realise and equality and social justice.

Throughout this report we have seen countless examples of the type of coercive and repressive practices which serve to maintain White hegemony. What is more, the statements in this section further show that the economic circumstances in which ethnic minority workers find themselves prevent many workers from challenging workplace racism, which in turn helps to conceal the true nature and extent of the problem. The recent [Taylor Review of Modern Working Practices](#) similarly found that tribunal fees were a common obstacle to workers asserting their rights. What is more, the *Taylor Review* also argued that workers were 'reluctant to have conversations with their employers in case they suffered a reduction in hours where they had a zero, or low, hours contract'. In essence, the Taylor Review reminds us of unequal relationship that exists between employees and employers. Drawing on the evidence presented in this section, it could be argued that this is a relationship of power facilitated by the state. While tribunal fees may have been abolished, the TUC's *Racism at Work* and BITC's 2015 *Race at Work* surveys both show that the perceived impartiality of the tribunal system continues to put many of ethnic minority workers off attempting to seek justice.

In short, the current set of formal legal arrangements and procedures are such that, employers are able to use both considerable financial settlements and the legal system to effectively 'gag' workers and conceal racism.

Section 11: The role of trade unions

Given that the *Racism at Work* survey was carried out by the TUC, it is important that we use this opportunity to take a close look at what survey respondents had to say about their trade union, as well as the trade union movement more broadly. The discussion below also draw attention to what participants had to say about the relationship between trade union officials and their employers.

The positive role played by trade unions

Our analysis of the [2015 Race at Work](#) survey revealed that ethnic minority workers were generally positive about the advice, support and action undertaken by trade union representatives in response to workplace racism. What is more, positive appraisal was most evident in cases where ethnic minority workers experienced either managerial indifference and/or racism at the hands of a manager. Similarly, many of the ethnic minority workers who took part in the 2016-2017 *Racism at Work* survey were equally positive about the role played by their trade union.

Thanks to the support from my union and all the years of training through the union I was able to report the perpetrators, stand up for myself and get out of a very hostile environment (African Female)

I instigated grievance procedure with union help. Problem resolved (Chinese Male)

Ethnic minority workers also used the *Racism at Work* survey to argue that the trade union movement has an important role to play in nurturing 'trust' and empathy between workers, as well as having an educational role to play in the fight against workplace racism.

Most discrimination happens because of ignorance. We need education and more activities that build trust between people. Unions can encourage people of different ethnic backgrounds to meet and listen to each other's stories (Chinese Male)

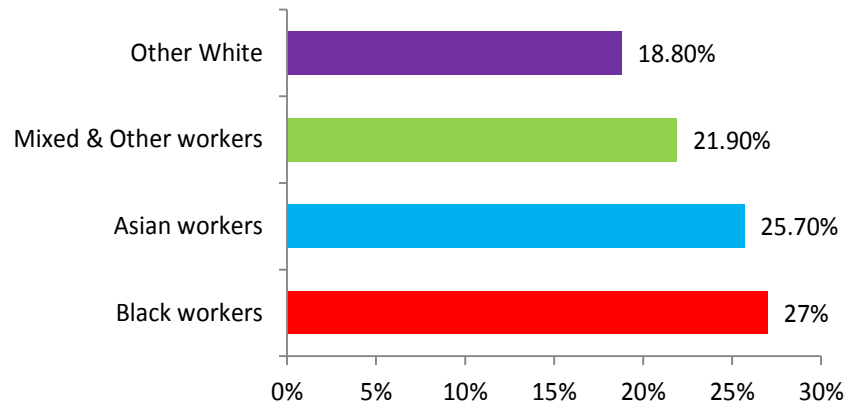
Survey participants also suggested that trade unions need to develop training on 'racial discourse and the history of racism', further adding that training workshops 'need to be regular' and 'must challenge' concepts like 'White privilege' and 'White supremacy'. While the above quotations show that trade unions can, and do, provide an important source of solidarity, the discussion below shows that there is still much work to be done.

Criticisms of the trade union movement

Given that 82.4% of the people who took the *Racism at Work* survey were trade union members, it would be remiss not to examine the criticisms offered by survey participants in relation to trade union movement. This is a necessary task, if the trade union movement are serious about building on the important and vital work that

many trade union members are already doing to address the enduring and systemic nature of workplace racism.

**Figure 11a: Employees seeking help from a trade union by ethnicity
(Base: Minority employees reporting experiencing workplace racism)**



The 2015 [Race at Work](#) survey drew attention to the fact that many ethnic minority workers were critical of their trade union representatives, particularly in terms of the reluctance shown by trade union officers when it came to addressing workplace racism involving a fellow trade union member. It is equally striking that less than one-third of ethnic minority workers who took the *Racism at Work* had sought help from their trade union (see Figure 11a). The personal statements provided by ethnic minority participants reveal that racism and/ or xenophobia at the hands of a trade union member/ official was one of the main reasons for this.

Racism is rife within the trade union movement (Black/ Black British Female, Trade Union Official)

Worst of all the senior management of every union is exclusively White and they ensure it remains that way and make no effort to bring in more ethnic diversity into the profession or to recognise there is a problem of underrepresentation (Asian/ Asian British Male, Education)

You would think that being employed by a union this would not happen. To be honest it does. It is really like 50 years ago when black people could not be a member of a union. Hopefully the TUC would actually look at this particular survey and see racism is prevalent within unions (Black/ Black British Female)

No one takes it seriously and nothing will ever change if after all these years we are still having the same problems and issues. Even in the unions, racism is rampant, so how could things change? (Male, any other ethnic group, NHS)

I have similarly found little support from my trade union...In fact, most of the discriminatory comments and experiences have originated from trade union colleagues during the trade union committee meetings (White European Male, Education)

Racist and homophobic bigotry from colleagues and the union rep (Male, any other ethnic group, Public Transport)

Just before the EU referendum two colleagues were talking and one said, 'When the vote is out, all foreigners need to go'. He is my union rep. He knew what he was saying (White European Female, Public Transport)

Similar comments to my colleagues or being made about my colleagues who are Eastern European by many including representatives of the union (White European, Guard, no gender given)

As most of the comments came from a line manager who is also heavily involved in my union I felt it was pointless to complain to my union (Female, any other White Background, Lecturer)

At congress you are made to feel like you cannot turn to anyone for help as it is separate to the rest of the TUC and no one sees what happens behind closed doors (White European Female)

Racial discrimination is very real in the UK and its effects are very crippling. Unfortunately union officials sometimes connive with perpetrators...I was once intimidated by my own union people (Black/Black British Male, Education)

I found [name of union] to be of no use...In fact, the White male rep was extremely offensive and threatening (Black/ Black British Female, Education)

In addition to experiencing racism at the hands of trade union members/ officials, some survey respondents also reported that some trade union officials had demonstrated a limited understanding of what constitutes racism, while others lacked the experience required to respond to workplace racism in an effective or satisfactory manner.

TU rep didn't have a clue about race/ racism at all (Male, mixed heritage background)

Unfortunately people experiencing racism are not supported adequately by the union and other unions either. There have been three cases known to me personally of BME midwives who sought support from the union but we're very disappointed. Trade unions are not experienced in issues of racism (Indian Female)

Have left the trade union because they did nothing to help me (Asian/ Asian British Male, Civil Service)

When I raised a complaint with a regional union official, I was told 'we know all about it, but cannot do anything...just ignore it' (White European Male, Education)

I had to suffer with stress due to my team leader verbally abusing me at work. Union or management didn't do anything for me. Really gutted (Indian Male, Public Transport)

Ethnic minority workers also reported that trade union officials could be indifferent towards, if not dismissive of their experiences of workplace racism. In addition to this, many survey participants noted that trade union officials had demonstrated a tendency to encourage members to respond to workplace racism using formal legal and procedural approaches, when other responses to racism might have been preferred. This suggests that rather than adopting a 'one-size-fits-all' approach, trade unions need to provide a range of responses, while also empowering the person(s) subjected to racism to respond in a manner most appropriate to them. As one of the quotations below indicate, failure to do so can further disempower people experiencing racism while also turning them away from the trade union movement.

Spoke to the Union who are well aware of the conduct of certain managers. Advised that only a grievance would resolve the matter but it is well known that this has already happened with other Black members of staff who have either asked for reassignment or left the organisation (Black/ Black British Female, Probation Officer)

For example, paid officials and lay officers can be extremely sceptical about incidents of discrimination in our members' various workplaces and are often therefore reluctant to support them. Part of this stems from the fact that the majority of officials and officers come from majority communities and understand discrimination only in a textbook manner and part of this stems from the fact that the organisation, with a large and privileged legal and casework department, attempts to find legal solutions where little or none exist instead of seriously organising under-represented groups and building the necessary power to proactively influence events in our members' various workplaces. In this context the officials and officers are liable to suspect complaining members of being less than genuine and moaning instead of realising that the organisation has failed to seriously engage with these workers in ways which are not focussed on individual legal remedies (Male, mixed heritage background)

The quotation above raises an important question: are trade unions doing enough to 'engage' workers who encounter various and multiple, intersecting forms of discrimination in the workplace? On top of this, the following quotations also draw attention to the fact that some unions do not have officers in place whose role it is to represent, support and advise members in relation to workplace racism and other forms of discrimination.

The union just got rid of the disability and equality post (Male, mixed heritage background)

There is no BAME rep, did not have anyone to speak to, still trying to find one now (Black/ Black British Female, Civil Service)

In addition to there being a lack of trade union officers dedicated to fighting discrimination, survey respondents also reported that ethnic minority trade union members, particularly ethnic minority women, were underrepresented, as a result of racial discrimination where such positions did exist.

I have seen this in my union where black officers do not get the job they have been doing. It's understandable if they do not have the experience, but then to employ someone who is White and with no experience and is of a younger age, yep there is racial discrimination happening (Black/ Black British Female)

There are not enough black and ethnic minority trade union reps in the union and this does not help the problem. The union needs to be representative of their members. Having more black and ethnic minority reps, especially female reps, would help to bring more of these racist colleagues and managers to justice. ...The union needs reps more representative of the people and does not have enough black and ethnic minority people represented at senior levels. So nothing gets done with a lot of issues relating to racism. Change is needed in the unions to eradicate the level of racism in [name of workplace] (Black/ Black British Female, Administrator)

In the discussion above, we drew attention to the fact that in comparison to their White British counterparts, ethnic minority workers identifying as Black, Asian and Mixed heritage & Other were more than twice as likely to state that their manager was the main perpetrator of racism at work. The personal statements provided by survey participants suggests that many ethnic minority workers were reluctant to seek help from a trade union because trade union membership carried a threat of dismissal. Indeed, the quotations below show that some employers remain hostile to the organisation and representation of workers in defence to their legal rights.

Seen systematic removal of Black and Ethnic Minority staff and trade union reps from my previous workplace by use of disciplinary, performance management and bullying until all staff left or were forced to leave (Bangladeshi Male, NHS)

Higher manager causing issues with my involvement as a union rep. Always picks on things and tries to put barriers up for me (Pakistani Female,)

The disciplinary proceeding and discrimination was due to me being a trade union rep (Female, mixed heritage background, Prison Officer)

My role as a union and safety rep has led to me being victimised (Asian/ Asian British Male, Clerk)

I have been intimidated by my supervisors because I am in the union. (Caribbean Female, NHS)

The relationship between the trade unionists and employers

In the previous section, one of the quotations drew attention to the notion of there being a 'conflict of interest' between trade union members and employers. Not only this, we have seen that some employers remain antagonistic towards trade union officials. In addition to this, a number of ethnic minority workers reported that trade union officials had colluded with managers and employers in order to either conceal instances of racism and/ or sustain racist workplace practices.

The trade union reps work hand in hand with the employer and make the racism worse. So who is policing the racist trade union staff? No one. Also the trade union thinks we are animals. They throw Black members a scrap or two over here and think that we should be happy with that. No. It's disgusting and it's wrong (Pakistani Male)

Both employer and union have and still are trying to cover up the issues and concerns I have raised and the union are ignoring requests for legal help and assistance (Male, any other ethnic group, Public Transport)

In addition to colluding with employers, some trade union officers were also said to have demonstrated a conflict of interests when representing fellow trade union members who stand accused of racism at work.

I have never worked for an organisation that is so disorganised and manipulative. I asked for an equality audit 5 years ago and I'm still waiting. I have been given the run around. It does not help when the supervisor who made the racial comment in the workplace was represented by a union rep. There was no statement or comment from the Union or the employer regarding zero tolerance to any other racial situations (Black/ Black British Male, Distribution)

Summary

The TUC's recent [*Is racism real?*](#) report states that trade unions have, for many years, 'consistently campaigned against all forms of racism and discrimination in our workplaces'. And to some extent, the evidence reported here supports this view. However, the evidence presented in this section draws attention to a variety of issues which explain why so few survey participants have sought help from a trade union. Indeed, it is particularly alarming that a considerable number of trade union members have used the TUC's 2016-2017 *Racism at Work* survey to express the forms of racism, White resentment and broader politics of moral equivalence documented in this report. Not only this, a close examination of the biographical details of the trade union members who participated in the *Racism at Work* suggests that these issues are prevalent within particular trade unions. Given the breadth and scale of workplace racism more generally, this must be addressed as a matter of urgency.

To end, we conclude this report by putting forward a series of recommendations for the Trade Union Congress and the trade union movement more generally. In light of

the forms of racism within the trade union highlighted here, we urge the trade union movement to immediately undertake an unswerving review of the nature and scale of racism within individuals trade unions, alongside detailed examination of existing trade union approaches to addressing workplace racism and racial inequality in the labour market.

Section 12: Conclusions and recommendations

Having examined the evidence gathered by the 2016-2017 Racism at Work survey, we conclude by putting forward a series of recommendations for the trade union movement, employers and government.

In May of this year, the United Nation's Special Rapporteur on Racism, [Professor Tendayi Achiume](#), expressed concern at the way in which Brexit has contributed to the growth in 'explicit racial, ethnic and religious intolerance'. At the end of her investigation into racism in Britain, [Achiume](#) noted her concern at the institutional nature of racism in the police and criminal justice system, while also suggesting that Operation Prevent, the Government's counter-terrorism strategy, ought to be suspended. [Achiume](#) also commented that 'The structural socioeconomic exclusion of racial and ethnic minority communities in the United Kingdom is striking'. This comes almost two years after the [United Nation's \(UN\) Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination](#) reported its 'concern' at the:

- (a) the higher rate of unemployment among persons of African and Asian descent;
- (b) occupational segregation, with the concentration of persons belonging to ethnic minorities in insecure and low-paid work; and
- (c) discriminatory recruitment practices of employers.

In light of this, it is important that we locate our recommendations in a short discussion of recent policy developments. In doing so, we must ask whether recent policy developments and proposals will provide the structural, institutional and cultural upheaval required to address the nature and scale of racism documented throughout this report.

Recent policy developments

Published on 28 February 2017, [The McGregor-Smith Review](#) drew attention to the persistence of 'structural, historical bias that favours certain individuals', 'overt racism we associate with the 1970s' and 'more pervasive' forms of 'unconscious bias'. As well as calling for the introduction of further legislation, [Baroness McGregor-Smith](#) also suggested that

The potential benefit to the UK economy from full representation of BME individuals across the labour market, through improved participation and progression, is estimated to be £24 billion a year.

The [Government](#) responded by rejecting McGregor-Smith's call for further legislation, claiming that the 'opportunity to generate a further £24bn to the economy each year should be enough to encourage even the most reluctant Board member that action is needed'. In fact, the Government further argued that

Businesses are best placed to know what support they need to improve diversity and inclusion, so we will work with them to ensure they have the resources they need to fully embed change within their organisations...We

believe that in the first instance, the best method is a business-led, voluntary approach and not legislation as a way of bringing about lasting change...We therefore believe a non-legislative solution is the right approach for now, but will monitor progress and stand ready to act if sufficient progress is not delivered.

Leading voices from the world of business agreed with the government's position, arguing that firms '[do not need a whole new set of paperwork and checklists](#)' and that it is '[important that we take a business-led approach to plans, targets and reporting systems, rather than a regulatory one](#)'.

Eight months after *The McGregor-Smith Review* was published, the [Prime Minister](#) officially launched the results of 'an unprecedented audit' of how public services 'treat people from different backgrounds' in a bid 'to reveal racial disparities and help end the burning injustices many people experience across Britain'. In doing so, the Prime Minister argued that:

...when one person works just as hard as another person...but experiences a worse outcome solely on the grounds of their ethnicity, then this is a problem that I believe we have to confront...Britain today in the 21st Century is a diverse multi-ethnic democracy. Diversity is a source of strength and pride for us...[the data we're releasing today]...It's a world first, no country has ever produced a piece of work looking at the lived experience of people of different ethnicities which is as extensive and ambitious as this...The issues are now out in the open and we all have a responsibility to work together to tackle them...So I think the message is very simple; if the disparities can't be explained, they must be changed...we must recognise that we've come a long way in promoting equality and opportunity...we still have a way to go if we're truly going to have a country that does work for everyone.

Two days after the launch of the Race Disparity Audit, the Government published [Sir John Parker's](#) report on the lack of diversity in boardrooms across Britain. In his recommendations, Parker suggested that Britain's largest employers should be given four years to appoint one board director from an ethnic minority group. Responding to Parker's report, the [Government](#) once again 'urged companies to adopt the voluntary measures'.

In March 2018, the [Prime Minister](#) announced that £90 million of funding would be made available to address 'racial disparities in youth unemployment'. However, as others have argued, the Government's proposed programme not only ignores racism, it is also premised on the notion that young ethnic minority people are responsible, at least in part, for the unequal and precarious labour market positions in which they find themselves.⁹⁴ The Government's [Integrated Communities Strategy Green Paper](#) was published in the same month. In the section titled 'Increasing Economic Opportunity', the government put forward a series of recommendations, while also noting various initiatives that are already underway. The proposed recommendations and existing initiatives include:

⁹⁴ For a more detailed critique of the Government's proposed programme for addressing racial inequality in youth unemployment, see Sullivan, W. (2018) '[If Theresa May is serious about tackling racial inequality - it needs to be more than a £90m promise](#)', *Trade Union Congress*.

- Apprenticeships and additional 'Trainee Programme funding';
- '[D]eveloping a simple guide on how to discuss race in the workplace, an online portal of best practice and celebrating success through a list of the top employers for race equality';
- '[E]ducating employers of the benefits of a diverse workforce and on issues like unconscious bias training and nameblind recruitment';
- Encouraging employers to develop mentoring practices;
- A Universal Credit 'Claimant Commitment' which 'clarifies what people are expected to do in return for receiving Universal Credit', which also notes that the Government expects 'more people from ethnic minorities to be subject to work related requirements as a condition of receiving Universal Credit'; and
- '[E]ncouraging join up [sic] with other types of support offered in the Integration Areas, including English language courses and projects designed to widen and deepen social networks'.

These proposals, alongside those aforementioned recommendations that have been put forward in the last year or so, may help some people into employment. However, they will not overturn either the systemic nature of workplace racism or the deep-rooted racial inequality that exists across various sectors of the British labour market. If the entrenched nature of workplace racism and racial inequality in the labour market are to be overhauled in our life time, then substantial, if not radical, structural, institutional and cultural upheaval is required. Moreover, if we are serious about addressing these issues, it is imperative that we critically question the guiding principles underpinning current Government policy, including the [Integrated Communities Strategy Green Paper](#). Not only does this mean putting forward an alternative set of recommendations, a substantial revision of the dominant of ways in which we think and talk about these issues is required.

First, we need to start talking more explicitly about racism. To this end, the Government need to move away from thinking about racial inequality in labour market participation as being the result of a person's ethnicity. Such terms of reference are also evident in the [Integrated Communities Strategy Green Paper](#), which [cites 2016 The Casey Review](#) when stating that 'in some communities, cultural attitudes and behaviours are holding women and girls back from fully participating in society'. Narratives such as this are not part of a broader discussion of the nature of sexism and patriarchy. Instead, they form part of a broader, longstanding, well-established narrative which suggests that Muslim women are more likely to experience poverty and unemployment as a result of 'regressive cultural practices' which are allegedly at odds with 'British values and sometimes our laws'. This type of narrative deflects attention away from the everyday, institutional and structural racism documented throughout this report. Moreover, we must move away from ways of thinking which simultaneously responsiblise ethnic minority people for their current situation and whether or not they will be assimilated into the labour market in the future.

Second, questions of diversity and inclusion must be reframed as an issue of equality rather than being seen as an opportunity to boost economic growth. As the evidence presented in this report suggests, ethnic minority employees are all too often viewed as being either a 'prize' or a 'human resource' whose inclusion can potentially boost profit levels, while maintaining an organisation's reputation as an

equal and diverse employer. In short, we must reframe questions of diversity and inclusion so that our attention focusses not just on the specificities of racial inequality in the labour market, but also on the forms of assimilation and cultural domination to which we have drawn attention to throughout this report.

Third, the time has come to abandon the non-interventionist, non-regulatory approach adopted by the current Government and each of its predecessors. Workplace racism and racial inequality in the labour market will persist as long as successive governments continue to abide by voluntary, non-interventionist, non-regulatory orthodoxy, particularly when it comes to the private sector. Despite protestations that 'we have come a long way' and that 'progress has been made', racism and racial inequality remain deeply-rooted features of everyday working life in this country. Fifty years after the Race Relations Amendment Act (1968) outlawed racial discrimination in employment, both the private *and* the public sector have had more than enough time to deliver 'sufficient progress'. With this in mind, we should be sceptical with regard to the claim that the 'opportunity to generate a further £24bn to the economy each year should be enough to encourage even the most reluctant Board member that action is needed'. For several decades now, the business case in favour for reform has made similar appeals, and yet equality has not been delivered. If indeed there has been progress it has been minimal and far too slow. And what happens once the business case can no longer be made? Will the government of the day regulate employers in order to ensure that they meet their obligations when it comes to racial equality?

Overall, the current Government has not developed a policy programme that holds individual employers to account. Therefore, we must also question how the Government will actually 'monitor progress and stand ready to act if sufficient progress is not delivered' when the [Equality and Human Rights Commission's](#) budget will have been cut from £62m in 2010 to £17.4m by 2020. If sufficient progress is to be delivered the Government must forego its reluctance to intervene in the affairs of the private sector and adopt a mandatory and regulatory approach. This is particularly crucial given that the [EHRC](#) have recently reported that there was an ethnic pay gap of 5.7% in 2016 and that just 3% of employers measure pay gaps in relation to ethnicity.

Fourth, we must critically examine those sectors where the current government, and its predecessors, have been willing to intervene, namely the public sector. More specifically, we must move away from viewing the public sector as a vehicle for pursuing the politics of assimilation. For example, when responding to *The McGregor-Smith Review*, the Government stated that the civil service

...takes its responsibilities as an employer very seriously and we will continue to lead from the front in taking positive action to make...the wider public sector more inclusive.

As we noted earlier, 66% of public sector workers who took the 2016-2017 TUC *Racism at Work* survey reported that they had experienced racism at work. In section 3 we noted that 6% of survey participants had been 'questioned on their ability to speak English'. This finding reinforces our analysis of Business in the Community's (BITC) [2015 Race at Work](#) survey which found that being forced to

speaking only English at work and perceived notions of a lack of language proficiency were just two of the ways in which racism was articulated and experienced, in the workplace, particularly among public sector workers. What is more, both 2015 BITC and 2016-2017 TUC surveys also show that an alleged lack of language proficiency has resulted in discrimination in recruitment, restricted access to training, excessive, if not unnecessary, surveillance and scrutiny by managers, demotion and dismissal.

On 13 October 2016, David Cameron's Conservative Government published a 'Code of practice on the English language requirement for public sector workers' in fulfilment of a pledge made in the Party's [2015 General Election Manifesto](#). This 'Code of practice' was designed to

...ensure that every public sector worker operating in a customer-facing role [NHS workers, police officers, social workers, council employees and teaching staff and assistants] must speak fluent English.

The Conservative's manifesto went on to say that if returned to government, they would also

...require those coming to Britain on a family visa with only basic English to become more fluent over time, with new language tests for those seeking a visa extension.

This pledge sat alongside a proposal to further 'toughen requirements for non-EU spouses to join EU citizens'. The Conservative manifesto also noted that during their previous term in office alongside the Liberal Democrats, the coalition government had 'introduced tough new language tests for migrants and ensured councils reduce spending on translation services'.⁹⁵

Brought into law as part of the 2016 Immigration Bill, the Conservative's '[Code of practice](#)' states that 'Employers must satisfy themselves that an individual has the required level of fluency for the role they will be undertaking'. Given that both the 2015 BITC and 2016-2017 TUC surveys identify managers as one of the main perpetrators of workplace racism, it is concerning that the Government has handed responsibility to public sector managers to determine 'how to comply with this new legal duty'. Even more so, given that recent research carried out in relation to the [NHS](#) and the [Metropolitan Police Service](#) has drawn attention to the inadequacies of equality and diversity training in the public sector, the limitations in terms of how public sector managers respond to workplace racism, and how these inadequacies impact on service provision.⁹⁶ Alongside, our report on the [2015 Race at Work](#)

⁹⁵ This policy initiative is an extension of the assimilatory policies implemented during New Labour's time in Downing Street. See Back, L., Keith, M., Khan, A., Shukra, K and Solomos, J. (2002) '[New Labour White Heart: Politics, Multiculturalism and the Return of Assimilation](#)', *The Political Quarterly* 73(4), pp. 445-454.

⁹⁶ The issue of language proficiency was also a theme running through [The McGregor-Smith Review](#). Indeed, the Review noted that around 30% of employers had said that 'language skills' was the main factor as to why 'Black and Minority Ethnic' (BME) people 'have difficulty in accessing jobs that match their skills' and why 'BME' people do not 'progress as far as their White counterparts in their careers'. The McGregor-Smith Review also notes that almost half of employers said that 'Diversity of languages spoken and cultural awareness [had] led to new market opportunities'. While the very first page of The McGregor-Smith Review states that 'Fully inclusive workplaces... where everybody can

survey, the evidence presented in this report provides further cause for concern given that this 'code of practice' was drafted as part of the 2016 Immigration Bill. By implication, those who speak other languages are framed in and unable to escape the category of 'immigrant'. In effect, this policy undermines the idea that Britain is a multiracial, multicultural and multilingual nation. Moreover, the legal duties to which the public sector is expected to comply, further reinforces the cultural dominance of the White British majority by demanding that people who are not included as members of this group must conform to their cultural demands.

As we noted in Section 1, the politics of assimilation and the language of 'toughness' not only frames government policy, it also shapes people's everyday working lives. It has contributed to the hostile environment which has inflicted much pain and suffering on the people who have recently come to be referred to as the 'Windrush generation'. This has led to forms of hostility which has seen both the 'Windrush generation' and new migrants prohibited from working. Therefore, legislation such as the 'Code of practice on the English language requirement for public sector workers' must be read alongside the racist immigration laws which are currently in place in this country. They must be read as an attempt by recent governments to make both public sector institutions and the people who work there responsible for both border control and the realisation of particular vision of Britishness rooted in this country's imperial past.

Summary

In conclusion, holding steadfast to non-interventionist, non-regulatory orthodoxy is not a neutral act. It is a standpoint which guarantees that racism will remain an integral part of the everyday working life in this country for a long time to come. The sort of piecemeal reforms that we have seen since the introduction of the Race Relations Amendment Act in 1968 cannot be allowed to continue if workplace racism and racial inequality in the labour market are to be eradicated in our life time. Instead, significant, if not radical, structural and institutional upheaval is required. So too is a sustained programme of anti-racist educational work. If we do not undertake this task, what happens when 2068 comes around? Will we still be confronting the same issues that should have been resolved in 1968?

In light of this, and evidence presented in this report, we put forward the following recommendations for government, employers and the trade union movement.⁹⁷

bring their whole self to work' is the 'the target', we must be attentive to the ideas underpinning the arguments above, particularly the way in which racial inequality is framed as a matter of individual levels of language proficiency rather than as a result of discrimination. Moreover, we must also resist the framing of 'diversity of languages spoken and cultural awareness' as an opportunity to create 'new market opportunities'. Such a framing positions cultural difference and people who speak different languages as a resource to be exploited in the pursuit of profit. In light of the forms of discrimination and exclusion highlighted both in this report and our report on the [2015 Race at Work](#) survey, it is critical that this issue is reframed in terms of emphasising that employers have both a legal and moral obligation not to discriminate and to address the enduring nature of racial inequality.

⁹⁷ Please note that the recommendations for both employers and the government are based on those put forward in Ashe, S. D. & Nazroo, J. (2016) [Equality, Diversity and Racism in the Workplace: A Qualitative Analysis of the 2015 Race at Work Survey](#), *Commissioned by Business in the Community*.

Recommendations

For government:

- (1) Demonstrate a commitment to eliminating racial inequality in the labour market by setting-up an annual review which measures progress in this area. Inspections of companies and organisations where racism has been identified as an engrained and persistent feature of workplace culture should also be part of this review.
- (2) Investigate racial and other forms of inequality in relation to pay, bonuses, and levels and rates of recruitment and promotion, paying particular attention to racial inequality in relation to zero-hours, fixed-term and casualised work.
- (3) Ensure that anonymised application forms are used across various sectors of employment (e.g. public, private, voluntary and charity).
- (4) Institute new legislation regarding the procurement of government and public sector contracts to ensure that all tenders are subject to an Equality Impact Assessment as a way of providing incentives for companies to improve their race equality policies and practices. This assessment should examine whether companies: a) have an accessible and transparent equality and diversity policy and accompanying training activities; b) unequivocally express and demonstrate that a zero-tolerance approach to racism is adopted; c) clear evidence of carrying out readily available audit assessments in line with the recommendations for employers set out below; and d) have a plan of action and timeframe for achieving equality and diversity targets upon which progress can be measured and subsequent tenders can be assessed. This legislation should also ensure that the results of employer audit assessments are made publicly available and that companies which do not meet these requirements should not be awarded public contracts.
- (5) Commission a wide-ranging review into whether employers are fulfilling their equality duties and how employers respond to instances of racism in the workplace. Both of these should focus on identifying additional support structures for employees, particularly where they feel unable to report racism in the workplace. This might include providing additional support such as counselling and representation. This research should also focus on whether there is a gap between what equality and diversity documents say that employers do and what employers actually do to promote equality diversity and inclusion, as well as any restrictions placed on equality and diversity practitioners.
- (6) Take positive action measures to tackle structural racism in the labour market by properly resourcing the Equality and Human Rights Commission to conduct sector-based annual reviews which includes an agreed action plan with employers for improving performance in ethnic minority recruitment, retention and promotion. To this end, the EHRC

should be given an adequate level of 'ring-fenced' funding that will enable the EHRC to ensure that employers comply with existing legislation and equality duties. The EHRC should also be given the authority to apply sanctions in cases of non-compliance, particularly in cases of systemic non-compliance.

- (7) Ensure that employment tribunal committees are diverse, as well as reinstating the authority of employment tribunals to make wider recommendations.
- (8) Immediately review the implementation of the ['Code of practice on the English language requirement for public sector workers'](#). We recommend that the government should hold further consultation on how the issue of language proficiency contributes to how racism is experienced at work, particularly in the public sector.
- (9) Introduce legislative provisions in relation to the issue of language proficiency, giving employees the legal right to have their 'language proficiency' assessed free of charge by an independent expert and to ensure that if necessary employees are given the opportunity to receive additional learning support. Furthermore, we strongly recommend that it should be independent 'language proficiency' experts, rather than managers, that should determine the level of 'language proficiency' required for particular job roles.
- (10) Change the 1997 Protection from Harassment Act to ensure that employers are responsible for protecting their workers against racism by third parties, such as clients, contractors and customers.
- (11) Legislate to ensure that companies and businesses employing more than fifty people carry out and publish a pay audit in relation to ethnicity.
- (12) Audit small companies to ensure that complaints of discrimination and inequality are dealt with in a sensitive and timely manner. In doing so, the government should ensure that small and medium-sized employers 'have the resources they need to fully embed change within their organisations' as was noted in the [Government's official response to The McGregor-Smith Review](#).

For employers:

- (1) Ensure that a senior figure within the organisation, who is either trained or demonstrates a requisite level of experience or understanding, is made responsible for ensuring that the company has an anti-racism, equality and diversity policy in place and that this policy is shared with all staff, external stakeholders, contractors, clients and customers. Senior leaders within the organisation/ workplace should also deliver a regular, clear, unequivocal statement indicating that a zero-tolerance approach to

racism will be adopted and that this is visible/ accessible to all employees. Such statements should also clearly dispel both the notion that the 'customer is always right' and the disavowal of casual racism that persists in general workplace culture, particularly the forms racism that are repudiated as 'jokes' or as a form of 'banter'.

- (2) Ensure that senior leadership figures sign a policy agreement that guarantees equality and diversity practitioners have the time, space and resources required to fulfil their role, particularly in terms of having time to investigate and respond to reports of racism. This agreement should also ensure that the role of equality and diversity practitioners is not limited to providing induction training and drafting policy documents.
- (3) Ensure that equality and diversity training is made mandatory for all managerial staff, with managers who have not undertaken such training doing so at the earliest opportunity.
- (4) Ensure that senior management figures and all employees in leadership positions are clear about their organisation's policies on racism, equality and diversity, and acknowledge their responsibility to ensure that these policies are put into practice at all times. Employers should also ensure that managers are properly trained and regularly updated on workplace anti-discrimination policies and procedures.
- (5) Consider appointing a senior ethnic minority figure in the organisation to represent more junior employees that experience/witness harassment and bullying in order to prevent 'speaking out' against racism having a career limiting impact.
- (6) Ensure that senior organisational leaders and human resources staff work in a constructive, collaborative and transparent manner with trade unions, employee network groups and equality and diversity specialists.
- (7) Work with trade unions to establish targets and develop positive action measures to address racism and racial inequalities within the workforce. In doing so, devise a clear set of equality targets aimed at eliminating racial inequality and levels of racial harassment and bullying incidents and complaints. This should include a timeframe and action plan for achieving these targets, with a senior figure at board level being given responsibility for ensuring that these targets are achieved. This should also include heads of units being made accountable through the provision of clear performance indicators. Employee survey results should also be used as a key performance indicator. Ensuring that the company and local workplaces are representative of the workforce and the local population more broadly should also be a key performance indicator.
- (8) Ensure that equality and diversity audits/ assessments do not simply focus on measuring the demographic composition of the workforce, but also examine whether there is structural inequality in terms of pay, bonuses and levels and rates of recruitment and promotion. Equality and

diversity audits should also include information on reports of racism and the nature of racial and other forms of inequality in the workplace/organisation. They should also include input from employees, particularly in terms of recording employee satisfaction levels in relation to equality and diversity training/ activities, employee engagement with line managers, experiences with clients and customers and how employers respond to racism in the workplace, as well as giving employees an opportunity to provide suggestions for improvements in these areas. Employers should also publish data on ethnic minority pay, recruitment, promotion and dismissal; set aspirational equality targets for their organisation; and measure progress against those targets annually.

- (9) Establish structures, roles and processes that unequivocally communicate that all reports of racism will be taken seriously and will be handled in a sensitive and timely manner, acting in ways which protect staff who are subject to racism while ensuring that staff who report racism are not victimised for doing so. Employers should ensure that channels for reporting racism are made simple accessible, straightforward and transparent and that employees are informed of decisions and action taken. Where existing government legislation permits, employers should also develop ways of responding to racism that centre on the experience and outcomes from the point of view of the person(s) who have been subjected to racism. In this regard, employers *should not* transfer the person(s) who have experienced racism unless they have made such a request to do so. Similarly, employees who have experienced racism *should not* be forced to continue working with the person(s) who has been racist towards them.
- (10) Establish and sponsor ethnic minority employee networks which create 'safe spaces' and offer support to people who have experienced racism, as well as enabling such a network to allow employees to collectively address the nature of racism and racial inequality in the organisation and across different work sites.
- (11) Ensure that training and the promotion of equality and diversity includes a discussion of the continued persistence of racism and racial inequality in the labour market, why the Race Relations Act was amended in 1968 to outlaw discrimination in employment, and why such legislation and equality duties are required today. This should take place within a broader inclusive discussion of Britain's multiracial history, with emphasis placed on the history of racism in this country. In accordance, with the 2016 report of the [United Nation's Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination](#), such discussions should also 'contain a balanced account of the history of the British Empire and colonialism, including slavery and other grave human rights violations', with emphasis placed on how this informs the expression and experience of racism today.
- (12) Employee training should also make a clear distinction between racism and prejudice, rather than succumbing to the challenges presented by White resentment and claims of 'reverse racism'. The prevalence of White

resentment and claims of reverse racism should not be used to suggest that the aims and objectives of equality and diversity initiatives should be revised nor should they be used to justify reformulating the work of equality and diversity practitioners in order to address the unease and discomfort expressed by White employees. To do so, would validate the notion that equality and diversity work is 'the problem', rather than racial inequality and racial discrimination, harassment and bullying. Employers should also make a clear statement that any form of prejudice, including forms of prejudice and discrimination between ethnic minority groups, will not be tolerated.

- (13) Ensure that procurement agreements with clients and external contractors include a commitment to opposing racism and treating staff with dignity and respect.

For the Trade Union Congress and trade unions:

- (1) Undertake an unflinching inventory of what individual trade unions and trade union branches are, or are not doing, to challenge workplace racism, addressing issues of prejudice and discrimination in ways that are attentive to various and multiple forms of inequality and oppression.
- (2) Ensure that all trade union members are made aware of relevant points of contact, including Black and Minority Ethnic and broader equality and diversity contacts points of contact above branch level, as well as other sources of advice and support both within individual unions and at the Trade Union Congress.
- (3) Ensure that all complaints of racial discrimination are taken seriously including reports involving workplace management or union officials and make sure complaints are acted on and dealt with satisfactorily.
- (4) Ensure that all trade union equality and diversity officers have a satisfactory understanding of racism, as well as being suitably experienced, trained and/ or qualified.
- (5) Ensure that any help and support extend to a person experiencing workplace racism enables said person to respond in a manner that feels appropriate to them.
- (6) Undertake renewed effort to educate trade union members on how to record evidence of workplace racism.
- (7) Advise trade union members on the risks associated with trying to report and challenge racism as an individual worker, outlining how trade union members can guard against those risks either by being a trade union member and/or part of Black and Minority Ethnic employee networks.

- (8) In the interests of impartiality, individuals trade unions should develop a protocol for dealing with instances and cases where both the victim and the perpetrator of racism are members of the same union.
- (9) In recognition of the impact that racism and xenophobia outside the workplace can have, especially on people's ability to do their job, ensure that trade unionists and workers more generally either develop or are made aware of the types of support available to them from trade unions and the TUC more broadly. Relatedly, greater attention also needs to be paid to the way in which events external to the workplace, including terrorist attacks, can also shape the types of racism people experience at work.
- (10) Trade unions should carefully examine their own democratic processes to ensure that there are no attitudinal, political or bureaucratic barriers in place preventing the full participation of ethnic minority members in unions as either activists and/ or elected/appointed representatives.
- (11) Consult with ethnic minority workers in relation to bargaining issues that are relevant to their workplace experience, as well as how the union's mainstream negotiating agenda impacts on their working lives. This should include an analysis of all collective bargaining agreements in order to ensure that race equality is at the heart of all agreements.
- (12) Negotiate with employers to develop a clear-cut equal opportunity policy that must include zero-tolerance approach to racism.

Appendix A: Overview of the survey sample

5,191 people took part in the TUC's 2016/2017 online *Racism at work* online.

When analysing the evidence presented in this report, it is important to note that the analysis presented below is based on a non-representative survey sample. That is to say, the survey sample is not representative of the general population of Britain as a whole. Therefore, the analysis presented in this document cannot be generalised beyond that of the surveyed population itself. This is a consequence of the convenience rather than probability sampling and the opt-in nature of the survey which is also reflected in the overall demographic profile of the survey participants. Nevertheless, the findings presented throughout this report provide a number of significant insights into the nature and scale of workplace racism in this country.

Due to the small sample sizes within each of the sixteen ethnic minority groups provided in the survey, the original categories have been grouped into four broader ethnic categories groups (Asian, Black, Mixed heritage and White Other) in order to allow us to provide more statistically meaningful comparisons. For the same reasons, these four ethnic minority categories were further re-grouped into two groups (e.g. Non-White ethnic minorities and White Other) in some of the analyses presented above.

Almost half of all participants (45%) described themselves as White British, while 40% of respondents identified themselves as Asian (13.5%), Black (19.1%) and Mixed heritage & Other (7.6%). 14% of participants described themselves as White Other.

Overall, slightly more men took the *Racism at Work* survey (55% male; 45% female). The percentage of male and female respondents varied across different ethnic groups, with the highest percentage of males identifying as White British (61%) and the highest percentage of females identifying as Black (59%).

Nearly half of all the respondents were aged 30-49 years (49%), while 37% of participants were aged 50-65 years. Less than 1% of participants were aged 16-19 years, while just 5% were aged 20-25 years. 7% of survey respondents were aged 26-29 years, with only 1.6% of respondents aged older than 65 years. Due to the low response rate of people in the younger categories, we have regrouped the age categories into three groups: (1) participants aged less than 30 years; (2) participants aged 30-49 years; and (3) participants aged 50 years and above.

25% of survey participants lived in London, with 13% residing in the South East and 12% residing in the South West of England. Very few respondents lived outside England: Scotland (6%), Wales (4%) and Northern Ireland (1%). In most of the presented analyses, the original eleven regions have been re-grouped into five broader categories: (1) Midlands/Yorkshire/East of England; (2) North of England; (3) South of England; (4) London; and (5) Scotland/Wales/Northern Ireland

The vast majority of survey respondents were members of a trade union (82.4%). Moreover, 80% of participants were in permanent employment, while 68% of respondents worked for a large company employing over 1,000 people (68%). 73%

of participants stated that they were currently in full-time employment, while 66% reported that they were employed in the public sector.

Appendix C: Racism at Work Survey Questions

Survey questionnaire devised by the TUC.

Your details

1. Are you:

- Male
- Female
- Prefer not to say

2. How would you describe your ethnic group or background?

- Asian/Asian British
- Bangladeshi
- Chinese
- Indian
- Pakistani
- Any other Asian background
- Black/Black British
- African
- Caribbean
- Any Other Black background
- Gypsy, Irish Traveller, or Roma
- White British
- Irish
- White European
- Any other White background
- Mixed
- Any other ethnic group

3. Are you a member of a trade union?

- Yes
- No

4. If yes, which trade union?

5. What is your age?

- 16-19 years
- 20-25 years
- 26-29 years
- 30-49 years
- 50-65 years
- Over 65

6. In which country/region do you live in?

- Midlands
- North East
- North West
- South West
- Scotland
- Wales
- Yorkshire & Humberside
- London
- East of England
- South East
- Northern Ireland

7. Occupation:

8. Which sector do you work in?

- Public
- Private
- Voluntary

9. Type of employment

- Permanent (employed with no date of contract ending)
- Agency (placed in work through an employment agency)
- Temporary/Fixed term contract
- Part-time
- Zero-hours (contract with no set minimum hours)
- Short hours (contract with guarantee of a minimum number of hours but with hours varying)
- Self-employment
- Other

10. How many hours do you work per week?

- Less than 6 hours
- 6 to 15 hours
- 16 - 30 hours
- 31 to 45 hours
- Irregular hours

11. Approximately how many people are employed by the organisation you work for?

- Less than 20
- Less than 100
- Less than 500

- 1,000 or more

Experience of racial harassment at work

These questions will allow you to tell us whether you have been racially harassed by individuals at work.

12. Have you experienced racial harassment at work in any of the following ways in the last 5 years? Please select as many as apply.

- Been bullied at work for reasons related to your race
- Racist remarks directed at you or made in your presence .e.g. verbal abuse, racist jokes or banter
- Racist literature or music distributed in the workplace or racist material being shared on social media
- Physical violence, threats and intimidation
- Being subjected to ignorant and insensitive questioning about your culture or religion
- Being excluded from workplace related social events or being subjected to racism at workplace organised social events or informal; gatherings
- Other

13. If you have experienced or witnessed any of the above, please provide further information about the incident(s).

14. Which one of the following describes the main perpetrator?

- Managers (including your line manager or another manager)
- Colleague(s)
- Contractors
- Customer(s), client(s), Service user(s)

Experiences of racial discrimination at work

These questions will allow you to tell us if you have been treated differently by your employer because of your race. For example by being denied promotion, access to training or unfairly disciplined.

15. Have you experienced any of the following types of racial discrimination at work in the last 5 years? Please select as many as apply.

- Request for training turned down
- Been passed over for or denied promotion
- Been denied development/acting-up opportunities
- Unfairly disciplined
- Given an unfair performance assessment

- Being subjected to excessive surveillance and scrutiny by colleagues , supervisors and managers
- Not given adequate hours
- Not offered overtime
- Kept on temporary or fixed term contract
- Being questioned on your ability to speak English
- Treated as an intellectual inferior

16. If you have been treated differently by your employer please provide an example.

17. What effects did the racial discrimination /harassment have on you? Please Select as many as apply.

- Negative impact on work
- Impact on mental health/stress
- Less confident at work
- Caused me to leave my job
- It had a negative impact on my physical health
- It had a negative impact on my personal life
- It caused me to go off sick
- It isolated me from my colleagues
- None of these

18. Have you witnessed racial discrimination or harassment towards colleagues, clients or service users in the last 5 years?

- Yes
- No

19. If yes please describe your experience:

Complaints

20. If you experienced racial harassment/discrimination did you? Please select as many as apply.

- Tell a work colleague
- Tell a member of your family, partner or friends
- Seek legal advice
- Seek support from a community organisation
- Seek help from your trade union.
- Complain to your employer
- Take a grievance
- Take to an employment tribunal
- Do nothing

21. If you reported racial harassment/discrimination to your employer what was their response? Please select as many as apply.

- My complaint/grievance was taken seriously
- My complaint/grievance was dealt with properly
- My complaint was dealt with promptly
- My complaint was investigated, but no action was taken
- My complaint/grievance was ignored
- I was identified as a trouble maker
- I was isolated from colleagues
- I was subjected to a counter complaint
- I was disciplined in response
- I was forced out of my job
- I was transferred to another department or workplace.

22. Were you happy with your employer's response? (0 = unsatisfied and 10 = satisfied)

23. Is there anything else you'd like to tell us about your experiences in relation to racial harassment and discrimination?