



## UNISON Black Members Newsletter



UNISON Branch Office: 01443 863279

[Caerphillyunison@caerphilly.gov.uk](mailto:Caerphillyunison@caerphilly.gov.uk)

**Black members in UNISON work to improve equality in the workplace and challenge racism and discrimination.**

Black members have many of the same concerns as other members regarding access to employment, pay, promotion and training. However, racist discrimination can deepen the impact of problems faced in the workplace.

UNISON's Black members' group (known as a self-organised group) campaigns for equality in the workplace and the wider community.

Joining UNISON helps you play an active and important role in every aspect of achieving equality in your workplace.

Speak to your local representative if you would like support or advice.

In dealing with discrimination we support workers not just in formal procedures but by developing effective responses to deeply rooted patterns of discrimination.

Many Black members take an active role in both assessment and promotion of equality in the workplace.

Challenging racism in the workplace is crucial to UNISON's work because no workplace where racism is allowed to flourish can ever be effectively organised.

Equality legislation provides trade unions with the means to hold employers to account, but the principles of equality can only become a reality in our workplaces if we organise around them and place them on the bargaining agenda with employers.

There is a whole spectrum of activity that members can be involved in from becoming a workplace contact to sitting on one of UNISON's national committees.

Joining UNISON is the first step but all members can get involved in working for a fair workplace.

UNISON is committed to increasing its representation and participation of Black people within the union.



## A 'Hello' from our CAERPHILLY UNISON Black Members Officer

My name is Evelyn Williams and I am currently employed as a Social Worker for Caerphilly County Borough Council. I have worked within this role for the past 19 years and throughout this time I have worked with people from a diverse range of backgrounds and cultures.

As a black worker I have experienced racism within the workplace, ranging from the subtle to the direct and know how isolating this can feel when you are in the minority and do not know who to trust or who you can turn to. Having experienced racism throughout my life, I would have hoped that for my children who are all mixed race things would have changed however unfortunately they too have faced adversity. Moving to the Welsh Valley's in 2002 things became even harder and was a shock for us to face but needless to say we challenged and took affirmative action and are still here and are now valued members of the community.

In joining Unison I found that I had a voice and was listened to. I was very surprised to find out how much Unison actively does to change working practices for employees and how much they actively challenge social injustice not only for people within the UK but actively challenging social injustice across the world, viewing them as our neighbours.

Challenging attitudes and behaviour requires confidence and courage and a belief that you can make a change. I have always held this belief and is one of the main reasons why I became a Social Worker. As I have become older and I would like to think wiser, I have had the confidence to become an activist outside of the workplace in making change happen. The current climate within the political arena has set back many hard fought for rights and allowed those rights to once again be trampled upon and we are now seeing a different rhetoric espousing which is allowing discrimination and injustice to flourish, dividing communities and individuals within them .

By taking on the role of Black Officer within Unison, I hope to bring BAME people and anyone who views themselves as coming from an ethnic/minority background together so they have a safe place to express any issues they may have within their working lives. I would also hope that providing this opportunity would also allow for friendships to flourish where people can share a sense of humour as this often is what gets us through the daily struggles of life.

Finally I would like to say how excited I am to be taking on this role and to reassure of my commitment to providing support to those individuals that are impacted by racism and discrimination in the workplace and to get this addressed in a timely manner and to ensure they do not experience any repercussions and or retribution.

Evelyn Williams. (Eve to those who know me well).



## **Black History Month**

For UNISON, Black History Month is a time to acknowledge and celebrate achievements of Black people throughout history.

Black History and Black British History in particular, is often marginalised.

So Black History Month is a key time to acknowledge achievements and provide an opportunity to discuss wider issues affecting the Black community.

## **UNISON's support for Black History Month**

UNISON has long campaigned and is proud to support Black History Month. But our commitment to inclusion and equality lasts a lot longer than four weeks each year. It goes deep into the heart of our union and helps to explain why we are the UK's leading public service union.

[Challenging Racism in the Workplace](#) is toolkit designed by UNISON in the wake of the MacPhearson Inquiry into the death of Stephen Lawrence.

It is vital to our work. The guidance and its associated training courses offer a range of resources, ideas and checklists for the incorporation of anti-racist work, which includes the Race Discrimination Claims Protocol formulated in 2010 by UNISON.

UNISON's continued affiliation with Black Mental Health UK, Show Racism the Red Card, African Caribbean Leukaemia Trust, UK Black Pride, one of the main sponsors at the Notting Hill Carnival, Stand Up to Racism and Protecting Public Services through our Champions Campaign are all part of the drive to deliver equality for all

As a trade union, UNISON recognises all members and activists work and contributions to improve the working lives and defend the rights of our members; but we must ensure that we also remember our legacy of not only what we do in our trade union and the labour movement but also of our different cultures and diversity across the globe. Today UNISON rightly remembers and celebrates those who have helped forge the legacy and hopefully will inspire us to continue to strive for achievements that benefit us and our members.

## Welsh Black Influential People



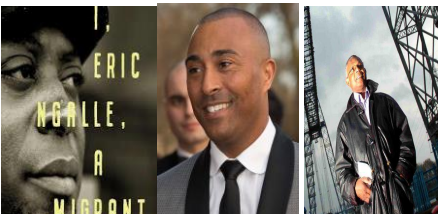
**Patti Flynn** is a Cardiff singer who grew up in Sophia Street, Cardiff Bay.

Born in 1937, she was the youngest of seven. Her father, Wilmott George Young, came to Cardiff in the 1920s from Jamaica. Both he and her brother, Jocelyn, served as merchant seamen during the Second World War and lost their lives. A further brother, Arthur, served in the RAF and died when his Lancaster bomber crashed in 1944.

She went on to form a career as a jazz singer, author, radio actress and was co-founder of the Butetown Bay Jazz Festival.

She has [recently spoken out on behalf of the Windrush generation calling it a “disgusting” scandal](#). Patti is a patron of Black History Wales.

### **So many more– do you recognise these?**

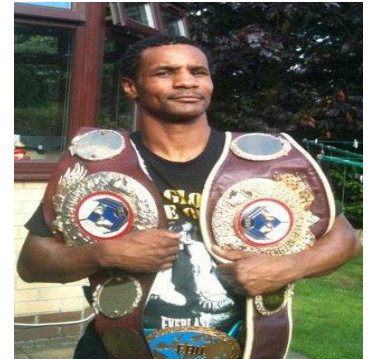


**Vaughan Gething** is an Welsh Labour politician serving as Cabinet Secretary for Health and Social Services since 2016, and has served as Member of the National Assembly (AM) for Cardiff South and Penarth since 2011.

Gething was born in Zambia in 1974, where his father (whom Gething describes as "a white Welsh economic migrant") was working as a vet. His mother is a black Zambian. When he was two he moved to Dorset, England with his family, which includes three brothers and a sister. He studied at Beaminster Comprehensive and Sixth Form followed by Aberystwyth University and at the Cardiff Law School, University of Wales. Gething became president of Aberystwyth University Guild of Students and the first mixed-race president of the NUS Wales.

Having completed his training as a solicitor in Cardiff in 2001, with the trade union solicitors Thompsons, Gething chose to specialise in employment law. He became a partner in Thompsons in 2007.

In 2008, at the age of 34, Gething became the youngest President of Wales TUC, also becoming the first black person in the role.



**Steve Robinson**, from Cardiff, was dubbed "[The Cinderella Man](#)" after the fairytale story behind his world boxing title triumph in April 1993. Robinson was working as a storeman in Debenhams at the time when he was offered a fight at just 48 hours notice against England's John Davison for the WBO featherweight title.

Against the odds, he won a points decision and brought the world title back to Wales.

He went on to successfully defend his belt seven times, before losing to Prince Naseem Hamed in the eighth round during a 1995 contest at Cardiff Arms Park.

Robinson retired in 2002 after a loss to Steve Conway, explaining: "I don't want to end it this way but there you are – it's happened. I've seen the great heights and I've some fantastic memories but I've beaten better men than Steve Conway and I just think it's time to call it a day."

He has gone on to become a boxing trainer.

## Challenging Prejudice - UNISON Supporting Public Services

When times are tough we need good local public services more than ever.

They help people back into work, help give our children the best start in life and help care for our sick and elderly.

People have come from all over the world to help deliver public services to all of us and they have made the UK their home. Our world-class public services are there for everyone. We rely on people of all different races, religion and backgrounds to deliver them.

Public services help support our communities. So we must stand together, opposing cuts and opposing racists who want to use fear to set us against each other.

### What People Sometimes Say

***“The UK is being swamped”*** - People routinely overestimate the number of migrants – only 11.3% of people in the UK were born elsewhere.

***“It’s gone too far the other way”*** - Black and minority ethnic people in the UK are some of the most disadvantaged groups in the workplace, still experiencing discrimination in recruitment, pay, career progression, disciplinary action and redundancies.

***“We are overcrowded”*** - There is more land devoted to golf courses in England than to housing – twice as much.

***“What about White people?”*** - Yes it is everybody’s struggle to bring fairness and equality to the whole of society – together. No more ‘them’ and ‘us’. That is what trade union solidarity is all about.

***“It’s political correctness gone mad”*** - Only if you identify with the perpetrator – try the opposite view.

## Members Competition and UNISON Event

Now you have read the magazine and hopefully challenged typical stereotypes you are ready to be further enlightened at our latest UNISON roadshow.

Join us at lunchtime on 31<sup>st</sup> October in The Chamber of Ty Penallta Restaurant for a short documentary concerning the historical background of the Windrush Scandal. Lunch vouchers will be provided so please spend 20 minutes of your time to watch, listen and learn!

And if that’s not enough we’re spoiling you even further with a Members Competition to win a £50 voucher for Turtle Bay in Cardiff.

Simply answer the question below: Our Black Members Officer, Eve Williams has now been in post for a year. Where does Eve’s descendants originate from? Email or message us the answer on Facebook or Instagram.

Competition closes November 4<sup>th</sup> See you all soon.....

