

**GMB**

**U N I O N**

# **NO PLACE FOR RACISM**

**GMB Guidance for Shop Stewards in Response  
to Nationwide Violent Racist Attacks**

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**[gmb.org.uk](https://gmb.org.uk)**



## Introduction

GMB is fundamentally opposed to racism and absolutely condemns the ongoing racist violence, fuelled and orchestrated by the far right. This organised criminality is designed to create and maintain division in our communities, workplaces and society as a whole.

By spreading hate and distrust amongst communities, the far right seek to destroy our solidarity and leave us divided and weakened in our struggle to protect the rights and dignity of all workers.

Wherever you work, this affects you, because action that divides us outside the workplace, divides us inside the workplace. But GMB reps can play a role in healing that division.

Wherever you work, GMB must be able to genuinely embrace all workers from all walks of life, unite them around our common cause and, through organising and campaigning, achieve their protection, progression and dignity at work.

GMB's Zero Tolerance Policy clearly spells out the obligations of all members to respect and uphold the rights and dignity of others and GMB reps must be the champions of our members rights and dignity.

In all workplaces, GMB reps should be leading the way on championing and defending the right for workers regardless of their backgrounds to be treated fairly in safe working environments.

## Workplace Unity

This current wave of targeted racist violence and abuse has the potential to damage and undermine the essential work GMB Reps do in every workplace, regardless of the race and ethnic density of the workers, because it divides us mentally as well as physically.

No worker wants to work in a hostile environment, where they know they're not wanted, welcomed or safe. If we allow our workplaces to become spaces where only a certain type of worker feels safe, rather than every worker feeling safe, then the far right will be succeeding with their hate and break agenda.

GMB Reps establish workplace unity through their regular engagement with members and developing relationships based on trust and confidence. This allows reps to build an understanding of the collective concerns and issues, organise and campaign on those issues and ensure that our members' rights are protected, and their concerns are progressed.

## The Role of GMB Reps

What are the key issues for members in the current situation?

- Wellbeing/Health & Safety
- Equality – Tackling Race, Ethnicity & Religion/Faith Discrimination

The current wave of hate and violence is targeted at primarily at Black, Asian and

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Muslim people and those thought to be asylum seekers, but make no mistake: any person from a Global Majority background (a collective term for people of Indigenous, African, Asian, or Latin American descent, who constitute approximately 85 percent of the global population) or perceived to be foreign may be, or fear they will be, a target of abuse.

Members from these backgrounds are very likely to be feeling vulnerable, frightened and possibly isolated in travelling to, being at and going home from work.

### **Reps can:**

- Reach out to members sensitively and sensibly to see if they feel safe.
- Encourage members to look out for each other and to check on each other and to let you know if they think anyone is at risk.
- Make the appropriate representations on behalf of those individual members who are feeling vulnerable or threatened and seek to secure safe arrangements or adjustments.
- Raise the wellbeing of members as a collective issue under the current crisis, and remember the health and safety of workers is a duty and responsibility of employers by law and every viable risk should be assessed, removed or at the very least significantly reduced.
- Incidents of racial and religion/faith-based abuse are highly likely to increase in the workplace. Ensure the employer is monitoring, logging and appropriately acting on race/religion related incidents or concerns raised within the workplace and sharing them with reps so they can be jointly addressed. Check for and act on any increases in incidents or patterns that become apparent.
- Don't allow the employer to dismiss the mental and psychological impact on those affected. Fear, anxiety and worry will be taking its toll and remember members will not only be worrying about their own safety but of that of their family, friends and community.
- Make sure the GMB's principles and values of safety, dignity and unity for all at work and in our communities is well publicised in the workplace so everyone knows what we stand for. Do this by sharing the provided poster in your workplace.
- Be accessible, be approachable, be a listener, be understanding, be active and be a champion of workplace equality – this fundamentally helps members feel safer and makes work better!

### **Other Key Issues for GMB Reps**

#### **Incidents that take place out of work**

Members may disclose incidents that have taken place outside of work. Racial and religious abuse is unlawful and should be reported to the police as a Hate Crime, but reps must also be sensitive to the fear and distrust that some communities may have of the police. Therefore, although members should be compassionately encouraged and supported to report such incidents, they should not be forced but instead signposted to the appropriate supporting agencies.

## Do we get involved in counter rallies and demonstrations?

As trade unionists, we have always been involved in peaceful and positive demonstrations, however in the current crisis we must be mindful of safety when attending or encouraging members to attend demonstrations. This is particularly true of spontaneous events. When considering attending or supporting a demonstration, reps should consider:

- Has an adequate risk assessment has been undertaken? Is there a clearly designated GMB Leader that members are aware of and can go to if trouble arises?
- Is there a clear (indicated with GMB merchandise) GMB rallying point for members, established away from the demo in case of trouble, and has this been communicated prior to the event?
- Have we considered actions and support in case of injury or arrest?

## Signposting to Additional Support

### Reporting a Crime and Emergency Services

Call 999 if you are reporting a crime that is in progress or if someone is in immediate danger. Visit <https://gmb.li/uvnTC1> or scan the QR code below to report crimes online, or by calling 101 if they are not an emergency.



You can also call 101 to give information to the police or make an enquiry.

Call 999 or the police anti-terrorist hotline on 0800 789 321 to report an immediate terrorist threat. You can also report a possible terrorist threat online at <https://gmb.li/8Yli2N> or by scanning the QR code below.



If you want to report the crime or incident, but you or your member don't want to talk to the police, you can contact a third party reporting centre. They can report it to the police for you.

When you report through a third-party reporting centre, your details will be kept anonymous. You don't have to have any contact with the police if you don't want to. If the case goes to court, they can even go to court for you.

Visit <https://gmb.li/OcXZwi> or scan below to read more about third party reporting and find an organisation that can support you and your member.

