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## BFAWU LGBTQ+ Members Network January 2025

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### Anti Far Right training

There was a discussion about the Y&H TUC anti far right train the trainer program that was held in November and December 2024, and that the resources could be used inside the BFAWU for bitesize sessions or longer training. Concerns were raised about the far right and the implications of them gaining power locally, regionally and nationally and some of the rhetoric being repeated by reps and activists in the union.

### Communication with members

There was a discussion about whether an LGBTQ newsletter would be useful for branches to put on noticeboards etc., or whether a shorter more frequent journal would reach more people. Structure of the networks was also discussed whether we need a set agenda, or a fluid one put together in the meetings, and visible action points as an outcome so that progress can be made

### How to be an Ally

Ally ship and the importance of being an active bystander was covered, other unions have training in these areas, and it was suggested that we should look to do something similar, encouraging all members to be active bystanders challenging unacceptable rhetoric and behaviour and creating true allies.

### Equality Reps

How do we embed the role into branches and ensure that employers are encouraged to deal with equality reps, ensuring that facilities time is shared out so that the role can be performed in full. How do we ensure the role is not a tick box exercise where people are pigeonholed into the role because they fit a particular demographic and that there is training available.

### Active Branches

Different branches active in different ways: some supporting charities, campaigns to support LGBTQ rights, pride events etc. It was agreed that it was important for local branches to be active in their communities and especially with equality issues and when it comes to Anti fascism. It was reported that the far right was going to Nuneaton on the 1st of March, which needed a strong union presence to push back on and that a group of stoke members were going to London on Saturday for the demo down there. It was also stressed that branches being active in their local trades council is important, to show and give solidarity to others, but also to receive it when it may be needed too.

### Concerning attitudes within the union

It was raised that when we are talking about equality, inclusivity and tackling the far right, that we need to have our own house in order first and foremost. That at previous conferences the behaviour of delegates hasn't always been in line with the union's values. How to deal with the issues inside the union, how do we ensure that people's attitudes are in line with equality and inclusion?

Sometimes comments are made at events that are problematic, what are we doing as a union to tackle this internally as people aren't always comfortable raising a complaint through the process in the rule book. Conference delegate attitudes at times have been shocking and not what would be expected at a trade union conference, let alone a BFAWU one, is there any training in equality and diversity available for activists and reps as this could put people off joining. It was suggested that just like the TUC, a code of conduct for every meeting around behaviour should be introduced.

### Rathbones update

After heading into pay negotiations mid-November, the reps were informed that the site was closing, initially it was to be the whole site affecting just shy of 400 people. After we began applying pressure, through our links with the GFTU and their ability to contact MPs, encourage people to contact the CEO and board, the company came back with a proposal to keep open the 'new build' section of the site which produces morning goods. We raised concerns about the pay rates and shift patterns for the new world and made it clear people would not stay for what they were offering. We negotiated an enhanced redundancy package as members were clear they didn't want to fight to save the factory in a company owned by a Private Equity Firm that is stripping back everything slowly but



surely. We also negotiated pay protection for anyone who stayed with the business, which was less than 40 of the 130+ they needed.

Because so many of the workforce wanted to leave and leave on the 6th January which was the first possible opportunity, there were changes to the ability to leave on that date, those who had jobs were able to leave, they then were phasing others through the month and the last people would be going on the 26th January. Shamefully the company decided they were going to recoup any overused holiday pay people had received, which frustrated the team.