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## BFAWU LGBTQ+ Members Network September 2025

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### Foodworkers and Allied Trades Support Trans Rights

It was agreed that the discussion held during the Womens Network Meeting to hold a Foodworker and Allied Trades Support Trans Rights meeting was a great idea, it would show our Trans members that as a union we continue to support them and that they are safe in the BFAWU.

It would be also be a good idea to throw a big topic like the Supreme Court Ruling and subsequent EHRC guidelines to the wider membership and discuss it, though we should bare in mind that it might be controversial for some members so the conversation would need to be chaired carefully, but we should collate opinions of all members should they wish to contribute. We should be clear from the outset of the meeting and repeated throughout it if necessary, that the BFAWU support our trans members and will continue to do so, the community counts on us, and they should be supported and respected by all.

An email is due to go out at the beginning of October with the monthly Palestine and Far right meeting links and dates on, which gives an ideal opportunity to get a message out about this meeting too.

### Equality Calendar

An update on the Equality, Diversity and Inclusion calendar 2026 was given, the design would mean that branches could print it out in black and white, printed copies would be reasonably cheap as there would be one photo on the front cover and text on the other pages. Awareness days, weeks and months are indicated on there as well as religious events from across a huge spectrum of religions, that should cover all members beliefs.

The idea is that we would link Social media posts, blogs and Foodworker Articles with the different events, days, weeks and months so that we can raise awareness and build inclusivity for the beautiful diversity of our union.

### Branch Updates

Suma have celebrated Pride week during the last week of August, they raised funds for a new Queer Cooperative space in Huddersfield, a café run by the LGBTQ+ Community, cakes were baked and sold, the Suma BFAWU branch donated money as well as Suma as the employer. They do something similar for International Womens Day, it raises the profile of the union locally and does good too, they structure the events so that there is literature about the organisation funds are being raised for as well as the union too, with opportunities to sign up and become a member and support different charities this way. Previously for the Pride week, the branch has supported a Grassroots organisation that has supported LGBTQ+ Asylum seekers, though this year with the new café being opened that was chosen as the organisation to raise money for. There was a suggestion about a motion to conference to encourage all branches to do something similar as it is so positive.

The branch at Suma has done this for over 20 years in different ways, it brings union and non-union members together, is an organising opportunity, showcases that the union is about more than just workplace issues and raises money for charity too. It was agreed that we should have something in the next Foodworker about this so that other branches can see what Suma are doing.

### The impact of the Far Right

The LGBTQ+ community is scared about the rise in antisocial and aggressive behaviour being fed and empowered by Farage, Reform and Robinson and others. There was a feeling that people generally don't appreciate the impact of the language and behaviour of the populist far right, especially if they don't have BAME, LGBTQ+ or migrant people in their close circles and we need to be better at promoting the truth and realities behind the straplines that are being used. The most recent announcement of forcing those with Leave to Remain Status to reapply could literally collapse the whole economy, the food industry, NHS, education, hospitality and other sectors rely on people who have come over to the UK to support our economy. People who came over for a whole host of reasons, from fleeing war and persecution, or just trying to forge out a better life for themselves and their families, all believing the UK was a safe place to come to, that communities, workplaces and event the streets were places they could live and work without fear and that has significantly changed in the last few years.



We have so many migrant members in the union that must feel so scared at the moment, and as a union we need to ensure that when they are so fearful of everything around them, that we are their safe space, that they can trust that we as a union will support them and not join in the hateful rhetoric.

There was a recognition that there will sadly be people in the BFAWU as in other unions that would vote reform tomorrow if there was a general election and that we need to make sure people understand there isn't any answers in Reforms Policies to improve people's lives and that they have actually consistently voted against anything in Parliament that could do so, regardless of what they are saying publicly.

When the National Front was gaining popularity, people were ashamed to admit they supported them, similar with EDL and other far right groups, now though people are emboldened, attacking gay couples in the street, making Trans people feel uncomfortable for being their true selves and are happy to declare publicly that they support Reform or Robinson.

We were reminded of Rule 1.1 and that the challenges are getting harder, recruiting new members for the union and ensuring people understand what a union is and the importance of solidarity and collectivism. To help get the messages out, we should be running engagement events, have a survey for non-members to fill in to find out why they haven't joined the union, and briefing documents to support reps respond to frequent comments about why someone hasn't joined the union, or when they talk about reform.

Engaging in difficult discussions is also going to be something we have to do more of if we are going to change hearts and minds, the TUC anti-racism resources will be a good tool to use for reps.

## **AOB**

An open, all members, online meeting was suggested after the success of the Q&A session at conference, this may encourage people to engage with the different networks and campaigns of the union.