



# BLACK LIVES MATTER GUIDE



# WHAT IS BLACK LIVES MATTER & WHY IS IT IMPORTANT?

Black Lives Matter is a movement which originated in 2013 after George Zimmerman was acquitted for the killing of Trayvon Martin, a Black teenager. Three activists; Alicia Garza, Opal Tometi and Patrisse Cullors started Black Lives Matter with a simple hashtag (#BlackLivesMatter) and soon people started taking to the streets to protest against racial oppression and injustice.

Since 2013, more incidents have taken place which have led to calls for the protection of Black lives and the end of systemic racism. Black Lives Matter is now a global movement aimed at building "local power to intervene in violence inflicted on Black communities by the state and vigilantes".

**When someone tells you they experienced something racist, *believe them.***

**BLACKLIVESMATTER**

Michael Brown, Eric Garner, Breonna Taylor and George Floyd are just a few of the people who have been brutally killed in the last few years and their names are now synonymous with the movement.

Although these were American citizens we must wake up to the racial realities here in the UK. Racial inequalities are present in our healthcare, education, criminal justice system.

We must also work to address racial disparities with our own party by increasing the representation of elected officials from Black backgrounds, better engaging with Black communities and ensuring that diversity and inclusion remain at the heart of what we do.

We hope that this short guide will give you some ideas on the part you can play in helping us build and safeguard a safe space for our Black members and supporters.

# SUPPORTING BLACK LIVES MATTER

## 1. KEEP DOING THE WORK

In the aftermath of George Floyd's murder there was renewed interest in the issues around racial injustice. Individuals, organisations and corporations made promises to "do better" and to educate themselves on the issues. Reading lists were circulated and as a party we released [our own](#). This increased engagement was great, but we are a long way from ending racial inequality.

If you or your local party made a commitment to educate yourself on the issues facing Black people in this country, keep going. Keep reading, keep listening and continue to hold yourself to account. Racism has existed for hundreds of years and dismantling the attitudes and systems that have upheld it will take time.

## 2. USE YOUR PRIVILEGE

White privilege refers to the unearned advantages enjoyed by white people simply because they are white.

White privilege includes but is not limited to the privilege of:

- Learning about your history in school
- Generally having a good relationship with the police
- Enjoying dominant representation in the media
- Escaping negative stereotypes based on your race

If you are white recognise that you are benefitting from a system that oppresses non-white people. **This doesn't mean that your life hasn't been hard, but the colour of your skin isn't one of the things making it hard.**

You can use your privilege to amplify the voices of Black people around you, challenge negative attitudes and help teach other people about the privilege they enjoy.

### 3. DEPRIORITISE YOUR COMFORT

Conversations about race can be difficult, but that doesn't mean we shouldn't have them.

In order to be an effective ally you have to get comfortable being uncomfortable. Hearing about someone's experiences might be tough for you but think about how distressing it is for the person who has to deal with racial inequality on a daily basis.

Also recognise that you might be called

out for something you (unintentionally) said or did. If you are, don't get defensive but use that as an opportunity to learn.

Realise that racism doesn't always involve physical violence or the utterance of a racial slur. It can be a passing comment, an invalidation or a microaggression. Work to detect these in your daily actions and conversations. Finally, if someone says something you know to be wrong, call it out.



**STOP ANOTHER  
WINDRUSH SCANDAL.**

### 4. DON'T OVERWHELM BLACK MEMBERS, FRIENDS & COLLEAGUES

Understand that images of Black people being tackled, beaten and murdered can be traumatic for Black people. As a non-Black person your immediate reaction might be to ask a Black person for their opinion or view on the latest atrocity but be aware that another conversation about race might be the last thing that person needs. **Give people the room to grieve and reflect.**

If someone chooses to engage in a conversation, listen. When someone tells you they experienced something racist, believe them; don't invalidate their experiences or question they're understanding of a situation.



**ABOLISH**

**SUSPICION-LESS  
STOP AND SEARCH  
POWERS.**

## **5. FAMILIARISE YOURSELF WITH WHAT THE PARTY IS DOING**

Since the murder of George Floyd our MPs have been working hard to hold the government to account. We have spoken out against the disproportionate impact of Covid-19 on ethnic minority communities, called for an end to the hostile environment and are working to avoid another Windrush scandal.

We're also campaigning to end suspicionless Stop and Search, calling for a review of the national curriculum and are putting forward new party policy to combat racism. Please keep an eye out for future campaigns.



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