



**The Professional Trades Union for Prison,
Correctional & Secure Psychiatric Workers**

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General Secretary: Steve Gillan

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POA Circular 061/2021

For information: England & Wales, Northern Ireland, Scotland, Special Hospitals, IRCs

14th July 2021

Dear Colleagues

SOCIAL MEDIA AND RACIST COMMENTS

As you are aware the POA in the past have put out guidance surrounding the use of social media. Most employers have also put guidance out as to what is acceptable and not acceptable. The vast majority of POA members are decent and intelligent individuals who use social media platforms in an intelligent manner, but sadly there are a small number of individuals who do not use it appropriately and believe they have complete immunity and can post what they wish. The POA have continually advised by Circular and indeed by our own official Twitter page and Facebook page that we will not tolerate any racist comments and those found to have done so will be dealt with under our Rules and Constitution.

Racism has no place in society let alone the workplace or indeed in this trade union. Our black members must feel safe at work and supported in the POA and as General Secretary I will continue to speak out and deal with individuals who breach our Rules and Constitution through our Conduct Committee. If anyone is in any doubt about that, I can inform you the POA have already expelled a member recently under our Rules and Constitution for racist material shared on social media.

I have also written to the Professional Footballers' Association (PFA) which I attach offering solidarity to their members, after the shameful and vile abuse that they suffered on social media after the England v Italy final. The vast majority of POA members will be equally appalled at the abuse fellow trade union members suffered that belonged to the PFA.

I believe the majority of POA members want a decent, fair and equal society where racism is eradicated, and I will never look the other way or ignore it when the ugly head of racism, which is a poison is brought to my attention within the POA. This union has a rich and proud history, and everyone is welcome to join, apart from

those who are racist or found to be racist as there will be no hiding place. Other organisations may take them, but they will not be welcome in the POA.

I will also be working with all employers where we are the recognised trade union and other affiliated trade unions to the TUC and GFTU, along with politicians to eradicate this poison from society and the workplace. I am sure the majority of decent POA members will welcome the stance that I am taking to make the POA a trade union that has zero tolerance to racist behaviour. Please use social media in a sensible and safe manner.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Steve Gillan', with a small horizontal line at the end.

STEVE GILLAN
General Secretary

ENCLOSURE



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Our Ref: GS/007/21

13th July 2021

Dear Maheta Molango

STAND AGAINST RACISM

The POA, are the Professional Trade Union that represents over 30,000, Correctional and Secure Psychiatric Workers along with our retired member's. I am writing to you to offer solidarity against the vile and disgusting social media comments after the football match between England and Italy which were directed at your members. Those comments against Marcus Rashford, Bukayo Saka and Jadon Sancho were horrendous and have no place in society or the workplace.

I know that genuine football fans worldwide will be appalled by the actions of a hard core who continue to target and racially attack black football players. The POA stand with your members and with the PFA to drive racism out of society, the workplace and indeed football. I firmly believe that at every opportunity the trade union movement must act as one against racism so that black footballers and black workers in the workplace and in society are treated with equality, fairness and respect. Racism is an evil that must be condemned and called out every time it raises its ugly head. It is a poison within society, and we must never ignore it until it is eradicated.

I would be grateful if you could pass on our best wishes to Marcus, Bukayo and Jadon as they are not alone, and we fully support them in their workplace and the POA will continue to support the tremendous work that the PFA do in tackling racism. Trade Unions can defeat this together.

Yours Sincerely

STEVE GILLAN
General Secretary

Cc Frances O'Grady TUC General Secretary
Bobby Barnes Deputy Chief Executive PFA
Nick Cusack Assistant Chief Executive PFA
Oshor Williams Assistant Director of Education PFA