

[REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]

9 June 2020

[REDACTED]

Tesco Extra

Beckton,

London E6 7ER

Dear [REDACTED]

I am writing to seek your help in resolving an incident which has taken place within the workplace. It is a problem that is causing me huge concern and that has remained largely unresolved to date hence why I am now escalating to a formal complaint. I hope in doing so the issue can be adequately dealt with for the best interest of everyone concerned.

On Sunday 31<sup>st</sup> May 2020 I was made aware by a colleague that a racist comment had been made to 4/5 young black girls by our line manager [REDACTED]. I will detail the incident as follows;

The particular group of black girls I am referencing were new temporary workers and they were packing customers shopping just outside of Dot.com in the far-right corner. [REDACTED] went over to the group and was calling out a "name". She continued to call out the wrong name until it prompted one of the girls to look up and say, 'sorry are you talking to me' [REDACTED] said 'yes'. The girl said, 'sorry that is not my name' [REDACTED] said 'oh, I don't know, you all look the same'. The girls were in such a state of shock they just stayed silent.

It is important to note that at this point, [REDACTED] was looking directly at the group of only black girls while making this comment.

I was informed of this incident whilst on my journey home after the shift it did not sit well with me. I thought about it all evening and made some enquiries, namely Equality Act 2010 whereby race is a protected characteristic. In addition, everyone I spoke with expressed genuine shock at how anyone could still openly use such a derogatory phrase.

The next day Monday 1<sup>st</sup> June 2020. I went into work genuinely upset about the situation which had taken place. I confronted one of our Dot.com Team leaders. I expressed my concern for what I had heard the previous day. She explained that she was present when the incident above took place and [REDACTED] manager [REDACTED] Senior Manager of Dot.com had already been informed. I was relieved to hear that the complaint had in fact been raised.

Around an hour or so later on the same day I was approached by that same Team leader and [REDACTED] the Dot.com driver's manager. I was pulled aside to explain what I had heard in regards to the incident. I explained multiple times that I was not there personally but this is what I heard. That was all I heard about the matter on that day. The victims of this incident were not scheduled to work on this day.

The next day Tuesday 2<sup>nd</sup> June 2020. I came into work and spoke to one of the girls who the comment was made to she, verified the exact story outlined above and also added that she was worried to make the complaint or even comment back as she was new to the job and she was worried she may lose her position. This is also her first job as she is only 19 years old. This frustrated me further to know how young the girls were and how apparent institutional racism is still very much alive today. It appears that [REDACTED] has taken advantage of her position as manager and the obvious power imbalance the systems create. I would argue that her view is that she can most likely get away with saying what she likes as she is in a position of power and given the current climate there are not many jobs around either.

Moreover, I was so disturbed by what I just heard I went over to another colleague of mine and explained the additional information I had received, we are both 22 and 23 years old and felt an overwhelming responsibility to safeguard the girls from any further discrimination within the workplace. We felt it was our duty to speak out in order for them to gain understanding into the fact that racism is unacceptable in the work place and society as a whole.

No one should have to feel that standing up to racism could cost them their livelihood. The same team leader as mentioned previously saw us looking visibly upset and came over to us. We explained why and she comforted us and contacted [REDACTED] via mobile. A couple of hours later 4 of us were called into a meeting with [REDACTED] and [REDACTED]. They brought in 2 of the girls who the comment was made to and 2 of us who heard it and decided to come forward with the complaint.

The meeting was highly unapologetic and unproductive. I am happy to share the details if needs be. The girls who experienced the racial abuse verified what happened word for word and explained that derogatory comments have been said throughout their years in education and been left unchallenged thus leaving them in a position of feeling speaking out is pointless.

I continually explained to the girls that I respect their wishes if they do not want to go ahead with the complaint if they are not comfortable. Just to confirm I have spoken to 3 of the girls who were there, and they have given permission in order for me to support them further and they are happy to be named and questioned in relation to this matter. To provide a clearer picture of [REDACTED] apparent lack of insight into her behaviours and disregard for the upset caused, I will add now that in the meeting [REDACTED] appeared to be smirking and holding back laughter to the point where our other colleague questioned her about her presentation.

I left the meeting feeling as if it had been brushed under the carpet and tried to be passed off as a misinterpreted comment. Unfortunately saying 'you all look the same' to black people cannot be misinterpreted. This is a derogatory term dragged into current times and is widely known that it is unacceptable to say and quite frankly is not true. Black People do not look the same.

At the end of my shift on this day I spoke to [REDACTED] regarding what would be done as a course of action towards [REDACTED]. He explained that she would 'watch a training video'. Considering that during the meeting she was laughing and arguing back and using phrases like 'I date black men' to justify herself I cannot see how a training video is sufficient?

As a result of this incident it has got many people talking and it has been brought to my attention that this is not the first comment [REDACTED] has made. She has apparently told Asian people to 'bleach their skin'. This was reported a couple of years back with no action taken. Two of the new temporary Dot.com workers experienced [REDACTED] calling them by their middle names with no permission and when continually corrected [REDACTED] said well 'this is easier for me so I am going to call you that' (these are two black girls). I have been told that recently someone smashed a jar of curry sauce while packing and [REDACTED] said 'Err are going to smell like an Indian person now.' There were also some people speaking in another language and [REDACTED] said 'Stop speaking in your language.' She then proceeded to imitate what the language sounded like.

Furthermore, just yesterday Monday 8<sup>th</sup> June 2020 one of the temporary Dot.com workers was with [REDACTED] resigning her contract and she signed her name using the alphabet and [REDACTED] said 'Oh you are using the English alphabet' she said 'Yes, that is what we use in my country' [REDACTED] said 'Oh, I didn't think they did in China,' she said 'I am Vietnamese'. [REDACTED] did not apologise and laughed saying 'Oh, you learn something new everyday.' You cannot just assume! Not when you are in a position of power. I cannot stand by and let people feel powerless against institutional racism. [REDACTED] is abusing her power and especially now in the current climate I would have expected Tesco's to stand up and implement zero tolerance against racism.

I raised this matter informally, but haven't been satisfied with the outcome.

Today I have got the permission from all involved that they are happy to be named and interviewed. The reason I have chosen to leave the names out is just because I do not have every one's full name and I would not want to make a mistake. I can gather this information if needs be upon request.

Kind regards,

Chontay Nathan