



Equality Matters

Communication Workers Union - South West Region Equality & Diversity Newsletter

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Disabled work seekers avoid job consultants

Recruiters rate the support they provide to disabled candidates more highly than disabled candidates do themselves, a report shows.

The survey looking into the experience of disabled job candidates was conducted by The Clear Company, an organisation specialising in recruitment best practice. It revealed a huge gap in perceptions between job applicants and recruiters of the service disabled candidates receive. For example, 90% of recruitment consultants were confident that they offered support to disabled job applicants compared with only 13% of the disabled applicants themselves.

The survey found 74% of disabled job candidates were reluctant to reveal that they suffered from a disability, fearing this information would undermine their application. While 74% were reluctant to tell the recruiter of their disability, 52% actually went ahead and omitted to tell the recruiter that information.

This is perhaps not surprising given that 71% of disabled candidates said they encountered negative assumptions from recruitment consultants after declaring that they suffered from a disability.

Presumably partly because disabled candidates so frequently experienced problems with recruitment consultants, they preferred other methods of finding work, in particular job hunting via internet job boards, company websites, newspaper ads, word of mouth and JobCentre Plus.

Kate Headley, development director at The Clear Company, said: "Disabled people are experiencing unacceptable levels of poor treatment and discrimination resulting from a lack of recruiter knowledge, confidence and capability. We want agencies to start working more closely with their employer clients to give disabled candidates the same opportunities as other people.

Emma Harvey, employment partner and head of the recruitment group at the law firm DWF, said: "It frustrates me when people say there isn't a business case for accommodating inclusive practices into the recruitment process. There are 10 million people in the UK with a disability. Together they are a voice with the power to positively influence the perceptions of some of the biggest global brands."

Labour Research Department November 2011

CWU Black Workers Conference

Newly appointed Shadow Business Secretary Chuka Ummuna called for a political system that reflects the make-up of society. Addressing the conference in Birmingham, he pointed out just 27 out of 650 MPs come from black and ethnic minority (BME) groups. "If there were to be proper representation, there would have to be double that number," said Chuka. "Labour has a good record but it mustn't be complacent, there is a long way to go."

CWU senior deputy general secretary Tony Kearns highlighted how the government's cuts agenda was hitting BME communities hardest. "Some 32% of BME people earn their wage in the public sector compared to 29% amongst the white population," said Tony. He highlighted how David Cameron's speech in Munich earlier in the year against multiculturalism was helping to legitimise the arguments of far-right groups like the English Defence League (EDL). At lunch time conference delegates were taken to a counter-demonstration to an EDL event in Birmingham. At the demonstration, Tony said "We are proud to stand with the people here. We have to oppose those who oppose multiculturalism," said Tony.

CWU national equality officer Linda Roy recalled how the BME communities had been demonised during the riots in August. She accused the government and media of playing the blame game, looking to ethnic minorities and gang culture for a scapegoat.

In debate on the motions, there was strong support for a call to engage with the police authorities regarding ongoing

deaths in custody, shootings and the impact on the BME community. Proposing the motion, Sylvia Beckett of Capital said "There seem to have been no lessons learned from the shooting in 2005 of the innocent Jean Charles De Menezes." Sylvia accused the media and police of creating a framework, whereby extreme force is seen as "a necessary evil." Colin Bell, from South London, Surrey and North Hampshire, continued the debate with a motion calling on the Government to have "a formal debate, on the need to have a public inquiry into all suspicious deaths in custody."

Amarjite Singh for South East Wales Amal, called for greater BME representation in the Labour Party and in the Westminster, Scottish and Welsh Assemblies. "Politicians from all three parties have pledged support but while words are good, we need actions," said AJ. Winston Richards for the race advisory committee called for some "self empowerment" and for BME people to get active in the political parties.

Motions followed calling for more BME representation at the top table of the union. Mahmood Ali of Birmingham District Amal called for more positive action. "Some areas need to be looked at to ensure our top table reflects the membership," said Mahmood. There was also mention of the fundraising efforts in support of a project to restore water to a school at Libala, Zambia. The project was supported by CWU branches and regions, the CWUHA and the Just a Drop charity. Future projects are expected to be pursued in Africa and Haiti.

CWU LGBT Conference 2011



At the Conference Labour MP Chris Bryant highlighted gains under the previous Labour Government,

such as equalising the age of consent and gay adoption. The Rhondda Valley MP said that his one regret was that the Labour Government did not push ahead with gay marriage.

General Secretary Billy Hayes welcomed the advances in pushing forward with the LGBT agenda in society. "Despite the opposition I do believe we are getting lesbian and gay equality in marriage laws," said Billy. Highlighting homophobic bullying in schools and wider society as a major cause of concern, Billy said: "We need to look at our own workplaces in terms of homophobic bullying."

TUC policy advisor for disability and LGBT rights, Peter Purton told of good and bad things resulting from the Coalition Government. Among the positives were the continued work of the equalities office, important work on transgender issues and the move to push LGBT rights in the area of foreign policy. On the negative side was the relaxation of the need to monitor equality duties in the public sector. "The effect of the cuts on our communities will be more dramatic per capita than on any other area," said Peter. "The funding for organisations working on hate crime and domestic violence are being cut."

Director of Pride Sports Sue Englefield declared that sport as a sector had not

embraced LGBT people. She pointed out there is a stereotype peddled in popular culture that women footballers are lesbians, recalling a couple of years ago looking at homophobia on the internet and finding a Facebook page full of homophobic comments from young girls.

Chair of the LGBT advisory committee Dave Daniel commented on homophobic attacks around the country and homophobic chanting against Brighton and Hove Albion football supporters. Dave also paid tribute to Bradford City Football Club for its pro-active approach to wipe out homophobia. CWU national equalities officer Linda Roy highlighted how the situation for LGBT people in Africa has gone from bad to worse, with homosexual acts now criminalised in 38 countries. Linda urged an intensification of the campaign for tolerance toward homosexuality.

Merlin Reader of the LGBT advisory committee quoted the case of Joseph Kaute, who claimed asylum in the UK because he was arrested and beaten for being a homosexual in Cameroon. He was then sent back, after the Borders Agency argued he was not in need of protection. There was a vivid contribution from Vickie Cornelius calling for the union to withdraw its support from Labour MP Joe Benton, due to his supporting Early Day Motion 2081 calling for "public employees to be able to discriminate against members of the LGBT community on religious grounds." Vicki claimed this position was out of line with union policy. "I'm paying your wages and don't like your performance at work, Joe Benton," said Vicki.

Tax & benefit changes hit single mothers



Age is the most widely experienced form of discrimination in Europe, according to research commissioned by charity Age UK. Nearly two thirds (64%) of people of all ages interviewed for the research in the UK and a further 44% across Europe judged age discrimination as a serious problem.

The European Social Survey (ESS) data analysed for Age UK by the University of Kent shows that, despite heightened awareness of ageism as an issue, more subtle forms of prejudice continue to be experienced by older people – for example the perception that older people are passive, needy and frail.

In the UK, older people are more likely to report experiencing lack of respect, such as being ignored and patronised, than being subjected to more blatant forms of discrimination, such as being insulted or abused.

The report says these subtler types of prejudice are as damaging as overt discrimination as they make it difficult for older people to feel empowered and able to assert their preferences and choices.

It reveals that in the UK people believe youth ends as early as 35 and old age starts at 59, whereas in Greece people stay “young” until 52 and are not thought of as “old” until their 68th birthday. British people are more likely than the average European to believe it is important not to be prejudiced towards other age groups, and they are more likely than other Europeans to see the

elderly as friendly. However, they also see them as less competent. Everywhere people aged 70 or over were seen as the age group least likely to be envied.

Despite changes to UK legislation that will lead to more older people in the workplace, age discrimination in employment continues to be prevalent.

Across Europe, the majority of people interviewed said they would find it easier to accept a suitably qualified 30-year-old as a boss than a 70-year-old with exactly the same qualifications. People over 50 felt extremely concerned that employers would always prefer to hire a person in their 20s rather than an older person. In the UK nearly 50% of those interviewed cited this as a problem. The study has been published just as the government consults on whether to ban ageism from the provision of goods and services.

Age UK charity director Michelle Mitchell said: “The research shows the disturbing levels of age discrimination in the UK and Europe. The UK government must not lose any time in pressing ahead with the ban on harmful age discrimination and ensure that older people have equal access to goods and services in the public and private sector.”

She added: “As well as strong laws we need a change in attitudes. It is time to stop treating older people as second class citizens. We need to look beyond someone’s age at their individual strengths and strive for a society which enables older people to remain active and independent.”

Women missing in politics

Women are vastly underrepresented in positions of power and influence in politics, leading to a democratic deficit that undermines the legitimacy of decisions made in parliament, the devolved assemblies and local government, according to a new campaign.

A child born in the UK today will be drawing her pension before she has an equal voice in government, campaigners say. *Counting women in* is supported by a wide range of organisations, including the women's campaign group the Fawcett Society and voting reformers Unlock Democracy. The campaign says decisions of national importance are being made with the perspectives of one half of the country seemingly being ignored.

Following the 2010 general election, just one in five MPs are women — only a 4% rise since the 1997 election and there are currently more millionaires than women in David Cameron's coalition Cabinet. And of the 119 most senior members of the government, just 20 are women. The campaign has called on Cameron to make good his commitment for one-third of his ministers to be women by the end of his first term in parliament. Adding a global perspective, Nan Sloane, director of the Centre for Women and Democracy, said: "The UK lags behind more than 40 other countries for women's representation in politics." Rwanda, Iraq and Mexico all score better than the UK, for example, she says. The campaign is at: www.countingwomenin.org/

Dyslexia and fear of bullying

Fear of discrimination by managers and bullying by colleagues is preventing many people from disclosing the fact that they have dyslexia, reveals an online survey of union learning reps.

The survey carried out by the TUC's learning and skills organisation Unionlearn found there was widespread lack of understanding of dyslexia at work. However, two-thirds of those surveyed said that their employer was prepared to make adjustments for workers with dyslexia.

Eight out of 10 reps said that they were aware of colleagues with dyslexia, but only a third (33.6%) said they had received training in supporting them. Over half of reps (54.6%) said that workers with dyslexia had experienced barriers to training.

Unionlearn has responded to the findings by launching an online information toolkit for reps and will be publishing a series of documents to help them understand dyslexia and to negotiate dyslexia-friendly policies. The campaign is aimed at helping reps set up dyslexia awareness events, arrange assessments and direct colleagues to expert help.

The British Dyslexia Association estimates that 10% of the population are affected by dyslexia to some degree, and that 4% of the population are severely affected. Further information about dyslexia is available from the British Dyslexia Association at: www.bdadyslexia.org.uk and Dyslexia Action at: www.dyslexiaaction.org.uk

Fa'afafine soccer victory

Jonny Saelua, a center back for American Samoa's men's team played a key role in American Samoa's 2-1 victory against Tonga in a 2014 World Cup qualifier this month. It was American Samoa's first victory in international soccer and Saelua apparently became the first transgender player to compete on a World Cup stage.

Saelua is part of the fa'afafine, biological males who identify themselves as a third sex in Polynesian culture. Fa'afafine means "to be a woman" in Samoan. The fa'afafine are culturally accepted," he said. "They have a role in Samoan society. They are the caretakers of the elders because their brothers and sisters get married, but the fa'afafine traditionally don't." In an immensely popular sport that is still encountering episodes of racism, it is noteworthy that Saelua has been easily accepted by her teammates.

"I just go out and play soccer as a soccer player," Saelua said. "Not as transgender, not as a boy and not as a girl. Just as a soccer player. "I hope I can inspire people." "Not only transgender but anybody who feels different in their society or community. If there's something you love to do, go out and don't let anybody stop you from chasing after your dreams."

Article from New York Times, November 2011.



The poster features a purple header with the CWU logo and the text 'HELPLINE' in yellow. Below this, a yellow rounded rectangle contains the word 'HARASSMENT' in white. The phone number '0800 107 1909' is displayed in large purple font. At the bottom, the email address 'or email cwu.dignityandrespect@firstassist.co.uk' is written in a smaller purple font.

Equality Committee Report

Branches present: Worcester & Hereford; Gloucestershire Amal; South West No7; Devon & Somerset; South Devon & Cornwall; Bristol & District Amal; South West Engineering; Romanus Amaefule (RAC). Apologies Gary Williams (Solent) & Kevin Beazer (SW regional sec)

Issues in BT Openreach around attendance patterns and the effect on people with disabilities were raised and that managers appear to be going through the motions on disability related issues. Romanus gave a very detailed report on the Black Workers conference and asked if proportional representation could be included as an "Aim & objective if 2012". This was agreed to be discussed more at the committee AGM.

Tolpuddle and the last joint meeting in July was broadly thought of as a success, however there was some questions of the decision of the main stand to combine all the tee-shirts and merchandise provided by the women's committee into bags and distribute everything as soon as possible. The question of whether the committee could afford their own stand for next year was discussed. The AGM date was agreed for January 13th 2012 in Bristol. *Trevor Matty, Chair, regional equality & diversity committee*



This poster is similar to the one on the left but includes a list of details. The header and 'HELPLINE' text are the same. Below 'HARASSMENT', the text 'The CWU harassment helpline:' is followed by a bulleted list: 'is for anyone who feels unable to speak to anyone locally about a harassment problem', 'offers a 24 hour service for logging calls which will be passed to union HQ for action', and 'can also give direct access to professional counsellors if you need additional emotional support'. At the bottom, it says 'To seek advice, just call FREEPHONE 0800 107 1909' and provides the full address: 'CWU - General Secretary Billy Hayes - 150 The Broadway London SW19 1RX - 020 8971 7200 - www.cwu.org'.

Racism rife & deep-rooted Gender discrimination at work



An investigation into racism in the EU shows that racism remains a deep-rooted problem in a broad range of areas, including employment, housing, education, health, policing, the media and access to goods and services.

The European Network Against Racism (ENAR) *Shadow Report 2009-10* for the UK found many examples of ethnic and religious minorities in the UK experiencing racism.

In the area of employment ethnic minorities have lower rates of employment than the white population — 59.8% against 74.3% respectively.

After white groups, black Caribbeans and Indians have the highest employment rates and Pakistanis and Bangladeshis have the lowest.

Meanwhile, the unemployment rate for ethnic minorities as a whole (12.9%) is almost doubles that of the white population (7.1%).

The research also drew attention to the disproportionate impact of the recession and overall, the report expressed concern that the UK government intends to retreat from intervening in local policies by encouraging greater local participation as well as wanting to cut down on bureaucracy.

Anti-racist NGOs fear this strategy could lead to discrimination of ethnic minority groups.

Half of all Britons believe they have experienced discrimination at work, according to new research.

A survey of 1,973 employees found that more than half (53%)

had felt discriminated against while in work.

The study by HR consultancy Reabur.com found that over two-thirds of respondents (68%) said they had felt discriminated against because of their gender.

The second most common reason was “weight” with 57% saying they had felt discriminated against due to their size.

Meanwhile, nearly a third (31%) of the respondents stated that they had felt discriminated against by their current or previous employer due to their race.

According to the study, around one in eight of respondents (13%) had left a previous role due to feeling discriminated against by their employer or fellow employees.

Other reasons given for feeling discriminated against at work were marital status (29%); political views (27%); sexuality (22%); academic qualifications (19%); and where they live (19%).



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Forced Marriages Affecting the LGBT Community

A Motion to the 2010 LGBT Equality Conference sought to raise awareness of the fact that many young gay women and other LGBT victims are seeking more help on this issue than ever before. The Equality department has been in liaison with both the Foreign and Commonwealth Offices, Forced Marriages Unit and the Albert Kennedy Trust. As a result of this contact a poster is now available to download from the CWU website in the

Equal Opportunities drop-down section, under publications.

The Forced Marriage Unit operates a helpline between the hours of 9am – 5pm, Monday to Friday. The number to call is (+44) (0) 20 7008 0151. For enquiries for outside of office hours, the number to call is (+44) (0) 20 7008 1500. The Unit can also be contacted by email at fmufco.gov.uk