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1. Training days – Disability Equality Duty

The joint UCU-UNISON disability equality project is now in full swing. Two very successful training days have now been held, and six more are planned. These are as follows:

22nd September 2006

South Birmingham College

28th September 2006

UNISON NW, Arena Point, Manchester

29th September 2006

UCU Headquarters, Britannia Street, London

9th October 2006

UNISON Northern, Newcastle

16th October 2006

UNISON Yorkshire & Humberside, Leeds

20th October 2006

City of Bristol College

If you want to ensure that your institution is preparing properly to implement the Disability Equality Duty, coming into force in December 2006, these courses will tell you all you need to know. Although primarily focused on FE (the project is funded by the DfES) HE members would no doubt also find them of benefit. Registration forms can be found online at: www.ucu.org.uk/media/docs/n/2/ded_training_aug06_1.doc or email Sian, the project worker at S.Davies@unison.co.uk

2. Age Regulations

The date for implementation, October 1st, is almost upon us. Answers to Frequently Asked Questions about them will appear in the next edition of Equality News, out soon.

Please note that for anyone who will be 65 between 1st October 2006 and 31 March 2007, you may need to take action **now**. If your college or university has decided that it will make use of the default retirement age of 65, they have new duties towards you from October 1st.

If they intend to retire you before 1st April 2007, because you will reach 65 during that period, they must write to you telling you of the intended retirement date, giving you the contractual notice period, and telling you of your right to request to work longer. If you do make such a request in writing, they must arrange a meeting (at which you can be accompanied) to discuss it, and if your request is refused, arrange for an appeal.

If your 65th birthday is actually in October, they should write to you in September, giving you at least four weeks notice of your retirement date, but from 1st October they must still write to you telling you of your right to request to continue working. You can make the request up to four weeks after your contract has been terminated.

From 1st April 2007 the full retirement procedure will apply.

For details of this, see the UCU briefing at:

http://www.ucu.org.uk/media/pdf/9/t/ageregs_guidance_1.pdf and look out for the article in the next Equality News.

3. BME Women in Scotland

UCU member Nicolina Kamena has been funded by the EOC to do research into the employment of BME women in Scotland. Anyone with information on the topic can contact her at:

N.Kamena@hw.ac.uk

4. Lecturers with disabilities

The Learning and Skills Council, in preparing its own Disability Equality Scheme ready for the deadline in December, and in fulfilling its responsibility for promoting equality for disabled staff and students in the FE sector, has launched an initiative to engage with disabled people in the sector.

Disabled FE lecturers who feel able to provide feedback can find more at www.lsc.gov.uk/National/Media/PressReleases/pr374_talk-to-des.htm and e-mail any contributions to Des@lsc.gov.uk

5. Athena project

The Athena Project, which exists to advance and promote the careers of women in science, engineering and technology in HE, is conducting its third survey into the key differences between how men and women progress in their careers, and how they benefit from and enjoy the rewards of those careers. They are looking for responses from male and female scientists, engineers' medics and technologists working in HE.

The survey runs from September 5th to October 20th and is available on <http://www.athenaproject.org.uk/>

6. Knitting Circle website

The Knitting Circle Web Site, previously based at London South Bank University, has now moved. This site is widely recognised in LGBT circles as one of the most important resources in the UK for information and views about LGBT issues. With over 700 pages, it receives about 3000 visits a day. If you want to use this resource, its new address is:

www.knittingcircle.org.uk/index.html

7. Migrants and Refugee Rights demonstration

The Third International Day of Action for Migrants and Refugee Rights will take place on Saturday 7th October 2006. There will be a march in London on that date, assembling at 12 noon – venue and route to be confirmed. The next day, 8th October, there will be a Conference at Queen Mary's College, Mile End Road – starting time to be confirmed. The campaign is against detention without trial, detention centres, deportations, the criminalisation of migrants and refugees, and for full human rights and equality for migrants and refugees.

For further information contact: noborderslondon@riseup.net or ring 020 7580 1552.

8. UAF

With BNP support on the rise, Unite against Fascism needs more support and more funding. It is calling on supporters to make out standing order mandates of £5 a month. To get a standing order form, write to: Unite against Fascism, PO Box 36871, London, WC1X 9XT or phone 020 7833 4916

9. Breaking the sound barrier

This is the name of a campaign being run by the RNID (Royal National Institute for the Deaf). They estimate that 4 million people in the UK experience hearing loss but take no action. The TUC is backing the campaign, believing that many of the 40% of workers over 50 who experience some degree of hearing loss may be suffering unnecessary problems at work because they are too embarrassed to admit their hearing loss to their employer, and obtain the necessary reasonable adjustments to allow them to continue working comfortably.

The RNID has set up a five-minute confidential telephone hearing check, at 0845 600 5555. The cost is that of a local call. RNID are also offering Union members a special offer of £10 (usually £21) for the first year's membership.

Email membership@rnid.org.uk or visit www.rnid.org.uk

10. TUC Disability publications

The TUC has published an excellent new guide – 'Disability and Work.

A trade union guide to the law and good practice.' It is FREE to union branches and members. To order copies, write to: TUC Publications, Congress House, Great Russell Street, London, WC1B 3LS. To see more go to: www.tuc.org.uk/publications

11. HIV in the workplace

Ensuring Positive Futures (EPF) is a coalition of HIV charities, business organisations, trade unions and government bodies. The coalition has launched a new website offering advice and support now that HIV status is covered by the Disability Discrimination Act.

The website includes a toolkit for trade unions, giving advice and guidance on how to support members affected by HIV. The website can be found at www.e-pf.org.uk

12. UCU guidance documents

Some documents are already available on the website.

There is a UCU briefing on the Disability Equality Duty at www.ucu.org.uk/media/pdf/0/t/ded_guidance_1.pdf

A further briefing on the Age Regulations is at www.ucu.org.uk/media/pdf/9/t/ageregs_guidance_1.pdf

A report of a survey undertaken by NATFHE's LGBT group just before the merger, called 'Levels of Outness at Work' can currently be found at: www.natfhe.org.uk/?entityType=Document&id=988

13. The future of ABAPSTAS

ABAPSTAS (The Association of Blind and Partially Sighted Teachers and Students) is a national self-help and campaigning organisation which focuses on education and employment issues. UCU member Mike Foster is Treasurer of ABAPSTAS and would like input from members about what advice is needed to help support visually impaired students and lecturers. Please email any ideas to mike.foster@uce.ac.uk

14. Equality training assistance

An organisation called Skill Boosters has produced a series of training DVD's on moving towards equality in the workplace. There are separate DVD's on Sexual Orientation, Religion or Belief, Diversity Challenge, and Disability Confident. These are really useful and user-friendly materials, but are not specifically focused on education. A CD-Rom called "Accessible Education Matters" is specifically concerned with meeting the obligations of the Disability Discrimination Act in Post-16 education.

To order materials, visit www.skillboosters.com or phone 020 7357 6444.

15. Get in Touch

To contact the Equality Unit for more information about anything in this email, please use the following contacts:

Administrative matters

Pauline Bartlett or Tracie Coals eqadmin@UCU.org.uk, 0207 837 3636 Ext. 3227

Race and Religion or Belief

Chris Nicholas – cnicholas@ucu.org.uk, 0207 837 3636 Ext. 3273

Disability and Age

Charlotte Nielsen – cnielsen@ucu.org.uk 0207 670 9719

Gender and Sexual Orientation

Kate Heasman – kheasman@ucu.org.uk 0207 837 3636 Ext 3225