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1. Update on Work and Families Act 2006

Information for parents on the new rights relating to babies born after 1 April 2007 can now be found online at:

www.direct.gov.uk/Parents/Employment/EmploymentArticles/fs/en?CONTENT_ID=10029285&chk=JZIIAc

The consultation on the Regulations to extend the right to request flexible working to carers of adults has closed. The Government appears again to have bowed to pressure from the CBI, and to restrict the definition of 'carer' to a 'near relative' (mother, father, adopter, guardian, parent-in-law, son, son-in-law, daughter, daughter-in-law, brother, brother-in-law, sister, sister-in-law, uncle, aunt or grandparent, relationships of half-blood Partners of the employee or those living at the same address are included). This is a reduction from the original more open-ended proposal of caring for any relative or friend. This right, reduced as it now is, also comes into force on 1 April 2007.

2. International LGBT Workers Forum

Education International (EI) – the worldwide body for education trade unions, has established an electronic network called the International Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender Workers' Forum, which aims to assist affiliated trade unions in their work to end discrimination in the workplace on grounds of sexual orientation and gender identity. To find out more or get involved, email equality@ei-ie.org

3. Growing concerns over faith schools

The well-publicised plans to make faith schools take a quarter of their intake from a different religion were dropped by Alan Johnson on 27th October. It seems that the education secretary caved in to pressure from Roman Catholics, Jews and Muslims to make the U-turn. After Church of England authorities agreed to make the changes voluntarily, he claimed he no longer found it 'necessary or appropriate' to change the law.

A few days later, on November 2nd, an amendment to The Education and Inspections Bill was passed, which increases the scope of the religious discrimination allowed in the School Standards and Framework act 1998, by potentially allowing all non-teaching staff to be subject to a faith test in Voluntary Aided schools and by including head teachers among those teachers (up to 20%) who may be subject to faith and religious conduct tests in voluntary controlled schools. The Government claims to have had 'constructive dialogue with faith communities' but had not consulted the unions most affected. The National Association of Head Teachers are concerned about narrowing down the field of head teachers when there is already a recruitment crisis, and the NUT was outraged at the lack of consultation. With the ever-growing number of faith schools, UCU

has to be concerned about the knock-on effects of these changes for post-school education, and contacted the NUT to express our support.

4. College and University Support Network

You will have read about this elsewhere, but you can't have too much of a good thing! On November 2nd, the College and University Support Network (CUSN) was launched in partnership with UCU. It will offer a range of free services, including round-the-clock telephone counselling, a website of factsheets, money advice and needs-based grants and loans. CUSN has developed out of the Teachers Support Network, but is specifically devoted to the needs of staff in post-school education. The helpline is **08000 32 99 52** and the website address is www.cusn.info

5. Undeterred: Older People at Work

Siobhan Wall is an artist, curator and writer. She lives in Amsterdam and writes for a number of international art journals including Framework in Finland and Eyemazing in The Netherlands. She has exhibited mainly in Britain and her images were selected for the New Contemporaries at the ICA and the Whitechapel Open. She is currently focusing on a project which will explore how older people think about work, following the implementation of the Age Discrimination Act. Her quiet, unintrusive images are inspired by the photographers Lee Friedlander (At Work) and Lili Almog (Perfect Intimacy) both of whom have shot portraits of people in their workplaces.

Siobhan Wall is inviting people over the age of sixty to be photographed at work. As a former senior lecturer, she is particularly interested in meeting older members of the UCU. The project is supported by Age Concern and many of the photographs will be included in 'Undeterred', an exhibition about what it means to work past retirement age.

If you are interested in participating, please contact Siobhan at imagefound@yahoo.com

6. Cancer discrimination at work

The Disability Rights Commission (DRC) have conducted a survey on the impact of the change in the law in December 2005, which meant that people with cancer are automatically covered by the Disability Discrimination Act. It appears that many employers are still discriminating however. Between December 2005 and August 2006, the DRC helpline took 174 calls from workers with cancer experiencing discrimination. 71 of these calls were from women with breast cancer. 20% of callers reported having been dismissed, 13% were facing disciplinary action. If you think this could be an issue in your workplace, please contact the Equality Unit.

7. LGBT History Month – February 2007

The TUC is urging all affiliates to get involved in making the third LGBT History Month more high-profile. Ideas for events in colleges and universities need to be in the early planning stages now. For more information go to: www.lgbthistorymonth.org.uk

8. DRC Guidance for post-16.

Guidance on the Disability Equality Duty for post-16 institutions across Great Britain is now available to download from the following link.

www.drc.org.uk/employers_and_service_provider/disability_equality_duty

9. 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