

## Contents

1. **National Deaf Children's Society youth consultation**
  2. **Pro choice majority – what you can do**
  3. **Sexual orientation and religion or belief cases - latest**
  4. **Equal pay website – appeal for stories**
  5. **Get in touch**
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### 1. National Deaf Children's Society youth consultation

Members of UCU are being asked to support the National Deaf Children's Society in encouraging young people aged 9-18 who have any type of deafness to take part in a major consultation.

The NDCS will also be asking parents and the professionals who support young deaf people what their views are, so parents, carers or professionals can register online too. The questionnaire will be online from the start of October. You can access it via this link [www.ndcs.org.uk/youthconsultation](http://www.ndcs.org.uk/youthconsultation)

If you want to contact the NDCS you can do so via email at [youthconsultation@ndcs.org.uk](mailto:youthconsultation@ndcs.org.uk), telephone on 020 7490 8656 or text phone: 020 7490 8656

### 2. Pro choice majority – what you can do

Abortion Rights has launched new 'speak out' campaign website to break the silencing taboo about being pro-choice or having an abortion and to lobby for liberalisation of the abortion law. Already, hundreds of people have taken five minutes to add their message of support. You can add your message on [www.prochoicemajority.org.uk](http://www.prochoicemajority.org.uk)

Abortion Rights' opinion poll, published on International Women's Day, shows that a massive three quarters of people in Britain still support a woman's right to choose an abortion. Yet the tiny minority, who want to see abortion criminalised, still dominate the debate and silence the pro-choice majority.

If you too are impatient for change, please **join Abortion Rights today** and help build a pro-choice movement to take women's rights forward and put a stop to cruel attacks on women's hard fought for rights.

### 3. Sexual orientation and religion or belief cases

A significant Employment Tribunal case on the overlap between religion or belief and sexual orientation discrimination law is *Mr T Apelogun-Gabriels v London Borough of Lambeth* (2301976/05 (5016/62) Feb 2006): The complainant, a Christian, was dismissed for distributing 'Biblical extracts' to members of work-based prayer group and 'interested parties'. He used a search mechanism on a CD of the Bible to locate, download and printout a range of quotes which his employers, the London Borough of Lambeth, considered homophobic, and distributed the literature across the workplace.

The Tribunal said that the "material ... on any view was totally hostile to those of a homosexual sexual orientation" and the fact that the employer provided a prayer room showed that it did not seek to discriminate on grounds of religion or belief.

The tribunal concluded that a non-Christian who distributed similar literature would have been treated in a similar fashion and that it was the complainant's conduct in distributing homophobic literature which was the reason for his dismissal, not his religious beliefs.

This is an important case on the dividing line between religion or belief and sexual orientation discrimination. It makes clear that tribunals will be reluctant to give latitude to homophobic actions apparently based on the religious beliefs of the perpetrators. It is an example of the delicate balancing act between religion or belief and sexual orientation discrimination. Equal opportunities policies should take account of both. However, clashes between the two will cause difficulties. Many trade union representatives and employers will be inclined to treat any homophobic behaviour with the utmost seriousness and will examine with scepticism claims that it is protected by the religion or belief Regulations. The outcome of Apelogun-Gabriels should encourage them that that is the right approach, but situations may arise in which the finding the right balance between the two is more difficult.

The full report is available at <http://www.tuc.org.uk/extras/SORBreport.pdf>

#### 4. Equal pay website – appeal for stories

A new website documenting the struggle for equal pay in the workplace is being created as part of the European year of Equal Opportunities. This new resource, a joint partnership between the Trades Union Congress and London Metropolitan University's TUC Library Collections will be completed by December 2007.

The website will incorporate oral history interviews, featuring women and their union representatives talking about their campaigns for equal pay, digitised images and documents from the TUC Library Collection and essays written by prominent historians and experts.

Do you have an interesting anecdote or personal tale about fighting for equal pay in the workplace? If so, log onto [www.unionhistory.info/equalpay](http://www.unionhistory.info/equalpay) and contribute to the growing archive of personal experiences, documenting for future generations how the world of work has changed in our lifetime, the role of trade union campaigns, negotiations and legal action in re-valuing women's work.

For further information contact:

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#### 5. Get in touch

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

**Administrative matters:**

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