

IDS Diversity at Work

IDS Diversity at Work aims to provide timely, accurate and high quality information on workplace diversity, equal opportunities and discrimination law. It will help increase your understanding of and compliance with the law, and supply the information and the tools you need to realise the benefits of good practice.

Issue 28 – October 2006

News

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- CRE head to chair new equality commission
- EAT rejects first religious bias appeal
- Eleventh-hour delay to pension aspects of age law
- Government action plan to implement WWC
- NHS warned over failure to fulfil race duty
- Ethnic minority women face high penalty at work
- Equality agencies fail to use their 'teeth', says report

Plus news in brief: *Gay snub – Managers' pay gap – Work on at Standard Life – Redundancy calculator – Culture change – Police diversity – More women QCs – Teleworking – Solicitors' sexuality – Dads' working patterns – Barriers to work – HIV in equality schemes*

Legislation

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Guide to the Equality Act 2006

The Equality Act 2006, which recently received Royal Assent, will transform the institutional framework supporting the anti-discrimination legislation with the creation of a single equality commission and, in a move which the Equal Opportunities Commission describes as the biggest change to sex equality legislation in 30 years, will also introduce a gender equality duty on public authorities to ensure that in all their functions they pay due regard to the need to promote equality of opportunity between men and women. In addition, the Act will change the definition of 'religion or belief' and extend the bar on discrimination on the ground of religion or belief outside the workplace to cover areas such as goods, facilities and services. The Act contains enabling provisions to similarly extend the bar on discrimination on the ground of sexual orientation. We look in detail at the key elements of the new legislation.

Case Watch – Tribunals

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Sex discrimination:

Water humiliation led to sex bias
Rejected because pregnant

Perspective

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Employers need to monitor staff sexual orientation

Many organisations have been reluctant to monitor the sexual orientation make-up of their workforce, believing that to do so would be intrusive. However, Stephen Frost, Director of Workplace Programmes for gay equality group Stonewall, argues that this reveals a basic misunderstanding of what sexual orientation is. With examples from the likes of Barclays, JPMorgan and Staffordshire Police, he shows how valuable such information can be and how it can help organisations become more gay friendly.

Legislation Monitor

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Upcoming legislation

We give the heads-up on forthcoming legislative changes of relevance to diversity and discrimination law practitioners. Key highlights include outlawing of unjustifiable age discrimination in the workplace from 1 October; the introduction of a disability equality duty on public authorities from December; new work and family rights over the next six months; and the establishment of a new Commission for Equality and Human Rights from October 2007.

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