



TUC LGBT Equality Newsletter

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LGBT Equality in the workplace is a new guide for union negotiators that will be published shortly and will be freely available from the equality section of the TUC website, www.tuc.org.uk.

The text brings together information on the changed legal situation following the Civil Partnership Act, along with advice on good practice on a range of negotiating issues, and also on issues that have often been hidden from sight, such as same-sex domestic violence.

At the same time, the booklet includes updated material on the legal position of, and negotiating issues for, trans workers.

In order to provide a completely comprehensive text the advice on monitoring sexual orientation and gender identity, first published separately in January 2005, has been included too.

Please make sure that your unions make good use of it.

Campaigning for Trans Equality

The news for trans equality is less good. Anyone who was a delegate at the 2005 LGBT Conference will have heard that trans people currently have no protection against discrimination in goods and services, and this issue was excluded from the campaigning carried out by the TUC, Stonewall, Labour Campaign for Lesbian and Gay Rights and others to win the amendment to the Equality Bill to include such protection for sexual orientation. A campaign was run by Press for Change to reverse this exclusion, but Government proved obdurate, ministers advancing the same arguments as they had originally called on to exclude sexual orientation. A final effort to introduce an amendment to this

LGBT News from the TUC

New Workplace advice

legislation was made by Lynne Jones MP, but this was defeated (January) and the bill has now been enacted. Ministers have promised that this issue will be addressed in the forthcoming Single Equality legislation: the initial Green Paper is expected in the next few months, we will have to look at it carefully to check if it contains everything we need.

... and consulting on the SO regulation

Meanwhile, consultation has now begun on the contents of the new regulation to implement the commitment to outlaw goods and services discrimination on grounds of sexual orientation. The consultation runs until 5 June and the consultation paper is on the DTI website:

<http://womenandequalityunit.gov.uk>. The new regulation will come into force in October 2006, as previously promised. The TUC will of course respond, and the TUC LGBT Committee will discuss it at its meeting in April.

Joint Stonewall/TUC leaflet

The TUC has sponsored a new edition of Stonewall's advice on the sexual orientation employment regulations, with improvements to the text and added information about joining a union. This will be available for distribution very soon and is ideal for workplaces, community organisations, advice agencies etc. Unions and regional groups may wish to discuss how they can use this simply-written leaflet to recruit. It is free: watch for announcements on how to obtain bulk orders.

International News

Big Success of 6 February Conference

The TUC conference *Stamping out Homophobia – all over the World* was a great success. 175 delegates registered, and the speakers, including a Department for International Development minister, and Kursad Kahramanoglou of the International Lesbian and Gay Association (once of UNISON), made sure the discussion was well-informed and forward-looking. Look out for the full conference report that will be placed on the TUC website when transcription is completed. It is also intended that campaigning material is produced so that practical follow-up work can be carried out. The message from the conference was clear: as we campaign for our own rights in this country, we can also contribute practically to

supporting the work of LGBT communities and their allies who often face an even more challenging task elsewhere in the world – and we can do so effectively through trade union links.

.. and the theme resumes on 30 June

The TUC LGBT Committee has decided to build on the success of the International Conference by devoting the *informal session* of the forthcoming TUC LGBT Conference (Congress House, 29-30 June 2006) to international solidarity.

The conference will also feature a unique presentation of a new DVD animation of workplace scenarios designed to inform about discrimination faced by LGBT workers.

J-Flag: the work goes on

Meanwhile, the urgent need for solidarity with the Jamaican LGBT organisation J-Flag has not gone away. The situation of our sisters and brothers in the island continues to be serious, with recent police activity indicating no sign of a change in attitude. The need for **money for J-Flag** remains critical. So far you have raised nearly £2,000 in all, for which many thanks, but much more could be raised if all readers ask their unions to help, or if specific fund-raising activities are organised.

- Cheques raised for J-Flag should be made payable to the "TUC" and sent c/o Peter Purton, Congress House, Great Russell Street, London WC1B 3LS, clearly identified as a J-Flag donation. The TUC will forward the donations in lump sums (to minimise the cost of bank charges).

Asylum News ...

Patrick Williams, the Black rep on the TUC LGBT Committee, has been involved in supporting Jamaican asylum seeker Alton Dorkin. He reports that when Alton went to the authorities in order to regularise his position, his case was rejected by the Home Office, he was placed on the "fast track" for removal and sent to the Heathrow detention centre. At the appeal hearing Patrick was called as a witness, and spoke in his TUC role. The judge has released Alton and he has been removed from the "fast track." There will be a further hearing to determine the final outcome.

Prides News

Europride: bigger and better!

1 July 2006: the culmination of this year's two week Europride festival in London is the parade and the rally in Trafalgar Square. Trade unions are becoming increasingly important as promoters of LGBT equality – and we are also increasingly seen as key supporters of Pride. Crudely put, that means we are raising a lot of TUC and union sponsorship money to earn our rightful place at the head of the parade, in the best spots in the Square, and on the speakers' platform. Not only will unions want to use this opportunity for a national high profile, they will also want to continue to take the opportunity to recruit.

Anyone coming to London for the TUC LGBT Conference should consider staying on for the events on 1 July, and joining with their union on the Parade (a much better route this year). And if not a delegate or visitor to conference, come down anyway for the day.

Prides against Prejudice

Continuing the internationalist theme with which the TUC has led the way, Europride is organising an international conference – *Prides against Prejudice* - on 30 June with representatives from European Prides including those whose difficulties in central and eastern Europe and in Russia you may have read about. With the valuable contribution of ILGA and Amnesty International, the whole LGBT movement in Britain is behind this working conference where lessons will be shared and international support generated. Clashing as it does with the second day of the TUC Conference, the LGBT Committee has agreed to send a small delegation. For the majority of us who will not be able to be there in person, it is planned that there will be a campaign pack produced afterwards that can be used to maintain practical solidarity.

Pride everywhere

As in previous years, trade unions have the chance to be represented at many community events across the country. Here is a list of those reported to the TUC so far. It is hoped that regional LGBT groups will take advantage of the financial support and the material produced by the TUC to ensure a good profile at all of these.

20-1 May	Blackpool
27-9 May	Birmingham
24 June	Leicester
1 July	Europride, London
15 July	Oxford
29 July	Nottingham
5 August	Brighton
19 August	Bristol
2 September	Cardiff

Sadly, we have been advised that neither Pride on the Tyne, nor Swansea, are happening this year.

- If you are organising a regional presence at any of these events, please get in touch with Peter Purton in the TUC office, who can arrange money for stalls, and supplies of campaign materials.

Other News

No counting yet

The Office of National Statistics has recently announced some new questions to be asked in the next national census, but has decided not to include a question on sexual orientation. Stonewall had campaigned hard to have this included. There are mixed views in the trade union movement on this issue: on the one hand, it would greatly strengthen our hand to be able to say (for the first time) how many of us there are. On the other, since the census is completed by the "head" of each household, it is likely that many young people still living with their parents who are not out would not get counted, so the numbers would be less than they should. Whatever the view, it is clear that the question will be added sooner or later and unions and regional groups may wish to have an (at this stage, open-ended) debate.

Civil Partnerships

No, not a list of trade unionists getting hitched, more a reminder of the downside. If you are a same sex couples receiving benefit, remember that the rules equalise treatment between married and same sex couples. Previously, people receiving benefits and

living together as lesbians or gays were better off financially because the system did not recognise their relationship. There is advice on this on the TUC website at www.tuc.org/welfare/tuc-10602-fo-cfm.

Regional News

South West

The Annual General Meeting of Unions Out West is going to be held on Saturday 8 April at the Amicus office near Bristol. All unions are being encouraged to send delegates. For further information contact Jeff Grist, jeff.grist@gosw.gsi.gov.uk.

Midlands

The Midlands TUC Regional Council has agreed to create a seat for a LGBT rep, and Yvonne Washbourne has been elected to it.

The regional group is also organising to re-run jointly with ACAS the successful one-day reps' training course on the Sexual Orientation and Religion and Belief regulations first put on in 2004.

The group also intends to be present at the region's Pride events (Birmingham, Leicester and Nottingham).

Northern

The regional group now meets quarterly and has considered an organising campaign to recruit LGBT workers to unions.

Meanwhile, Patrick Williams, elected to the LGBT reserved seat on the Northern Region TUC, has been taking part in the local community organisation (Gay Men Tyneside) and is proud to report that following his consistent pressure, every member of that group is now a paid-up union member.

SERTUC

The South Eastern region has been meeting regularly, although numbers have fallen off from their initial high level. Stephen Capewell has taken on the responsibility of being secretary to the group. After a major recruitment campaign using specially-produced card-sized literature during 2005, directed both at Pride events and at community venues in London, it is planned to resume this activity in 2006,

alongside a presence at as many of the Pride events in the region as volunteers can be found to staff. The region has also been encouraging support for J-Flag.

Contacts

Regional Contacts

Midlands Region:

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Northern Region:

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