

# Equalities Matters Newsletter

A newsletter about equalities news, stories and upcoming events

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June 2008

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## EU Court ruling supports equality for carers in work

In what could well be a ground-breaking development in equality law, a judge of the European Court of Justice has ruled that the European law establishing equal treatment at work covers employees who are caring for disabled relatives.

A British woman, Sharon Coleman claimed in a European Court that she was forced to leave her job in March 2005 because her employers would not allow her as much flexibility in her work as she needed to look after her disabled son. She claimed that whenever she asked for time off to care for her son, her manager had commented that her child was always sick, and accused her of trying to use her child's condition to get out of work. A British employment tribunal had referred the case to the European Court for a ruling on whether laws protecting disabled and older workers from discrimination also covered their carers. The initial stage ruling is quite clear that they do.

The Advocate General of the Court agreed that Ms Coleman had suffered "discrimination by association".

A panel of European judges will make a final ruling later in the year. If the initial stage ruling is upheld, it would mean that it would not only be unlawful to discriminate against an employee because of their age or disability, but also to discriminate against an employee because they are associated with someone who is old or disabled. This is akin to the UK race law under which it is unlawful to discriminate against a person because of their race, but also unlawful to discriminate against them because there are associated with someone of a particular race.

If upheld, would mean that no one should have to choose between their job and caring for a disabled or elderly relative. It should prompt organisations to review their employment policies and practices to ensure they do not discriminate against carers.

## Phenomenal women recognised

As part of 2008 International Women's Day, over 730 women attended an event on 15<sup>th</sup> March. They heard inspirational speeches from Sarah Franklin - International Racing driver; Baroness Haleh Afshar – the people's peer and Professor at the University of York. There were performances from singers Stephanie Jones & Marcia Mayers from Black Women in the Arts, and dancers and a Phenomenal Women's Fashion parade.

28 Haringey women received "Unsung Women's awards" for their unpaid work in the community. It was humbling to hear the commitment so many women make to ensure the smooth running of our local communities. Their dedication to their neighbours and neighbourhoods is amazing. They are truly Phenomenal Women.

**For more information contact  
Equalities on 020 8489 2585**

# Up-coming legislation

## **Children and Young Persons Bill:**

A bill to reform the statutory framework for the care system. It seeks to ensure that children and young people receive high quality care and support and to focus the delivery of services on the needs of the child. It aims to provide a platform for equality for children in care by enabling them to achieve the same aspirations as other children. It is not known when the Bill will become law.

## **Criminal Justice and Immigration Bill:**

Amongst other things, a bill to create new powers to tackle anti-social behaviour including a new offence to deal with violent pornography. It also addresses imbalances in the process for overturning convictions. A Government amendment to the bill will create a new offence of incitement to hatred against people on the grounds of their sexual orientation. It is not known when the Bill will become law.

## **Proposed Equality Bill:**

The Government says it remains committed to introducing a single Equality Bill "within the lifetime of this parliament", to replace all existing equalities legislation. A Government response to the Discrimination Law Review consultation which closed in September 2007 is still awaited. That review recommended Single Equality legislation.

## **The Human Fertilisation and Embryology Bill:**

Bans selection of the sex of a child on non-medical grounds; retains 'the welfare of the child' requirement when providing fertility treatment, but removes 'the need for a father' criteria (currently the welfare of the child criteria includes the child's need for a father; includes provision to recognise same-sex couples as legal parents where a child is conceived in their relationship through the use of donated sperm, eggs or embryos (currently only the partner who has given birth to the child is recognised as a legal parent. For both partners to be recognised, they must formally

apply for and be granted adoption of the child). It is not known when the Bill will become law.

## **The Forced Marriage (Civil Protection) Act:**

Scheduled to be implemented in the autumn. It will give the courts powers to make Forced Marriage Protection Orders to stop someone from forcing another person into marriage. Where a forced marriage has taken place, the courts would also be able to protect the victim, and help remove them from that situation.

## **Amendment to the Children and Young Person's Bill:**

An amendment that will place a duty on local authorities in respect of parents caring for disabled children. The new duty will oblige local authorities to provide short breaks for carers of disabled children in order to allow them respite from their caring responsibilities. This specific provision is part of the Aiming High for Disabled Children

## Adults with learning disabilities have Human Rights too

**Adults with learning disabilities are particularly vulnerable to breaches of their human rights, says a Parliamentary report published in Joint Committee on Human Rights. The report, 'A Life Like Any Other? Human Rights of**

**Adults with Learning' was published in March and recommends that the Government promotes awareness and a positive approach to the human rights of adults with learning disabilities. It also recommends**

**that the Government introduces a positive duty on public authorities to promote respect for human rights. The report is available from the Parliamentary publications website.**

# Gay people still fear widespread discrimination, new poll finds

**A major YouGov poll of lesbian and gay people, commissioned by Stonewall, has found that a majority of gay people still believe they will be discriminated against when accessing public services. The poll found that over 30% expect to be treated worse than a heterosexual when enrolling their child in primary or secondary school. 90% think they would face barriers from becoming a foster parent.**

Asked about their own experiences and expectations of discrimination when it came to work, education, politics, crime and the criminal justice system, housing and healthcare, the survey found that: 20% expect worse treatment when applying for social housing; 60% expect to face barriers to becoming a magistrate; 20% expect to be treated worse than a heterosexual when reporting any crime to the police; over 30% think

they would be treated worse by police if suspected of committing a crime, a figure which rises to 41 per cent in London; nearly 25% think they would be treated worse if they appeared before a judge for committing a criminal offence and nearly 20% still suffer bullying at work for being gay.

The polling is published in a new report, *Serves You Right*.

Ben Summerskill of Stonewall said: 'This pioneering research highlights the

one remaining gap at the heart of Britain's legislative equality framework. There is not yet a duty on public bodies requiring them to promote equality for gay people in a way that already exists for gender, ethnicity and disability. We'll now be pressing the government to honour its outstanding manifesto pledge to introduce such a duty.'

For further information contact: Gary Nunn, Stonewall Communications Officer, (020 7593 1856 / 07985 439 660) or Ben Summerskill, Chief Executive (020 7593 1853 / 07949 108798). Out of hours media enquiries 07985 439 660. To download a copy of the report please visit the [publications page of Stonewall website](#).

## Forced marriage helpline launched

A new national helpline for victims of forced marriage and honour-based violence has been set up.

Called the 'Honour Network', the helpline is run by the charity Karma Nirvana, which helps survivors of honour crimes and forced marriages. The phone line is staffed by survivors who understand what the victims are going through.

The new phone line was created by the Forced Marriage Unit, a joint operation of the Foreign and Commonwealth Office and the Home Office.

**Helpline: 0800 5999 247**

## Exclusion of Black pupils buck trends in schools exclusions

**The number of pupils permanently excluded from schools has fallen over the last decade from 12,461 in 1996/97 to 9,130 in 2005/06. However, throughout this period, proportionately more Black Caribbean and mixed heritage pupils have been permanently excluded than White British pupils. In 2005/06, the figure was more than twice as many White British pupils. The trend was the same for fixed-term exclusions.**

**The report by Ofsted recommends a good practice package to help school reduce exclusions. These include**

**promoting respect for the individual and a systemic caring and consistent approach to behaviour management; the courage and the willingness to discuss difficult issues; empowering pupils to take control of their lives and look after each other and; securing diverse role models for pupils.**

**The report, *Reducing Exclusion of Black Pupils from Secondary Schools: Examples of Good Practice* was published by Ofsted in March 2008 and is available on their website.**

# Equality Impact Assessment: Youth Offending Unit restructure

**An equalities impact assessment was completed in February on a proposed new structure for the Youth Offending Service. The key findings, conclusions and planned improvements are:**

There is a high representation of Black & Ethnic staff, spread across the grade range Sc 1 to PO4-7; a high representation of women, spread across the grade range Sc 1 to PO4-7; 28% male, spread across grade group SC1-5 and PO4-7; more disabled staff than the average across the Council; an age profile of between 16–44 broadly in equal proportions. Breakdown by religion and sexuality were not provided.

Overall, the restructure as proposed will produce no perceptible change in the existing equalities profile of the Team and no negative impact on any of the existing diversity strands within the Team. Implications for service delivery are not expected to be adverse for any group of service users.

From April 2008, the team will be implementing the Council's new equalities monitoring form which now has provision for data collection on religion and sexuality.

The assessment was carried out by Laris Bucknor-Fisher, using the Council's framework for equalities impact assessment of proposals for organisational change. It involved an analysis of current equalities profile of the team and consultation with staff.

## Haringey DV bids succeed

A record 8 Domestic Violence projects have been successful in their bids for grants from the New Initiative Development Fund 07/08. The bids were co-ordinated by the Council's voluntary sector and the Equalities teams.

The projects will include amongst others, a counselling and advice helpline for Greek Cypriot women, information and awareness sessions for Muslim women, advice for survivors of domestic violence who are in same-sex relationships and advice surgeries for Asian women in Haringey.

For more information about the bids and the projects they will support, please contact Deirdre Cregan on 0208 849 2581 or by e-mail at [Cregan.deirdre@haringey.gov.uk](mailto:Cregan.deirdre@haringey.gov.uk)

## Trevor Phillips in Haringey

**Local boy done well, Trevor Phillips, Chair of the Commission for Equality and Human Rights was the guest speaker at a Policy Conversation session, an internal forum co-chaired by the Leader, Councillor George Meehan and Chief Executive Dr Ita O'Donovan in March.**

**He said the Commission and the Government share a vision of a modern Britain where opportunity to life's chances and how a person is treated are not determined primarily by the person's background, who or what they are. He said the Commission had made a good start and was working hard on develop its agenda and**

**that it would be consulting widely and on an ongoing basis in this process.**

**In his inspirational speech, Trevor sketched out the some of the equalities and human rights challenges facing modern Britain, on which the new commission is working to provide a lead. Among them are:**

- **The increasing use of DNA and the impact this might have on Human Rights;**
- **The changing demography of Britain caused by globalisation and migration and the challenges this poses for equality and cohesion;**

- **Dealing with and supporting young people especially those who have come as refugees or asylum seekers from violent environment caused by civic strife, some of whom have deeply embedded social problems.**
- **Carers' rights especially in light of aging population.**

**Trevor who was brought up in Wood Green and attended a local school received a warm welcome from the Leader.**

**The Chief Executive, Dr Ita O'Donovan described the session as inspiring and thought provoking.**

# No evidence of bias against UK applicants for social housing

**An interim research report released on 9 April by the Commission for Equality and Human Rights (CEHR) and the Local Government Association (LGA) found no evidence that social housing allocation favours foreign migrants over UK citizens.**

The study found among other things that:

- Although new migrants to the UK over the last five years make up around three per cent of the total UK population less than two per cent of them are in social housing.
- 90 per cent of those in social housing are UK born.
- Most new migrants over the last five years, particularly from the new European Union member states such as Poland, have not been eligible to claim entitlement to social housing.
- There is no evidence in the research thus far of any abuse of the system including 'queue jumping' to the significant detriment of any group, including white families.
- More than 60 per cent of new migrants to the UK over the last five years are housed in private rented accommodation.
- In an LGA survey of housing managers, two out of three said that they attributed the shortage of social housing in their area to high house prices. Only 6 per cent cite new migrants as the reason for shortages.

The report says that perceptions that migrants displace UK-born social

housing applicants may arise from the fact that much of the private rented housing which is now home to many newly arrived immigrants is former social housing stock, which Local residents may believe is still 'owned by the council' even though it is now in the private sector.

The research was commissioned from the IPPR by CEHR and the LGA to help establish whether the allocation system is prone to any systemic bias and to examine the often cited and widespread perception that recent migrants are given preferential access to social housing.

Trevor Phillips, Chair of the Equality and Human Rights Commission, says of the report: 'I welcome these findings as they are an indication that the system is, broadly speaking, working fairly for all groups. What's clear is that there is a gap between supply and demand of social housing of which the presence of immigrants is a relatively small element, but often a highly visible one.'

Sir Simon Milton, Chairman of the LGA says: 'Despite the difficult situation brought on by an ever increasing demand for social housing, local authorities are working tirelessly to ensure that people are given equal access to limited housing stock.'

The second phase of the research will involve speaking to local authorities in detail about their social housing allocation policies following which the full results will be published later this year.

**More information about the research can be obtained from Mags Patten - EHRC Director of External affairs – 020 3117 0240 or Richard Stokoe – LGA Head of News - 020 7664 3333**

# Haringey community cohesion forum launched

**A new community cohesion forum for Haringey was officially launched on 3<sup>rd</sup> March by Haringey Council leader Cllr George Meehan.**

The forum brings together representatives of a wide and diverse range of groups across the borough and aims to promote good relations between all communities in Haringey.

"We are proud of our diversity and our record of good relations between different groups," said Cllr Meehan. "But all of us need to keep working to maintain community cohesion. "This is not just about different racial, ethnic and religious groups, but about relations between people of different ages, different areas and different sexes and sexualities, and between those who are ill and disabled and those who are not.

"It is about forging a sense of common belonging that bridges the differences between us, and that will be the focus of this new forum."

Frank Hont, a member of the Government's recent Commission on Community Cohesion was the guest speaker.

**To find out more about the community cohesion forum contact Inno Amadi on 0208 489 2580 or at [inno.amadi@haringey.gov.uk](mailto:inno.amadi@haringey.gov.uk)**

# Government strengthens support for disabled people

**The government has recently launched a cross-departmental Independent Living Strategy which aims to make more choice and control available to disabled people on how their needs are met. It will also introduce measures to tackle barriers which prevent disabled people from accessing appropriate health, housing, transport and employment opportunities.**

On the whole, the strategy is designed to make a real impact on the lives of disabled people and has a commitment to work in partnership with disabled groups to monitor its impact year-on-year.

In partnership with Westminster Briefing, the House Magazine will be hosting a seminar on 9 July 2008 at which delegates will consider how the strategy should be implemented, its implications and the way forward to achieving its goals fully and in partnership with disabled people themselves.

Launching the strategy, the Secretary of State for Work and Pension said, "Disabled people should have choice and control over how they live their as

everyone else", and about the way the strategy will be delivered, Ivan Lewis, Minister for Care Services said: "User-led organisations are key to achieving independent living for disabled people. The announcement is a step in a more self-sufficient for disabled people to lead their own lives with the availability of advocacy support if it is needed."

The strategy was developed in partnership with disabled people from the outset to ensure it reflects their real life experiences and drawn from their expertise.

**More information on Independent Living Strategy can be obtained from the Department of Work and Pension website**

# Minister hints at change to help victims of domestic violence

In a written answer to a parliamentary question on March 10<sup>th</sup>, Vernon Coaker, a Home Office Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State raised hopes of a Government re-think on the 'no recourse to public funds' rule which prevents many ethnic minority women from accessing protection from domestic violence. Mr.Vernon Coaker said the Government would soon be announcing a new scheme where victims of domestic violence who have no recourse to public funds may be able to have their housing and living costs met and linked to indefinite stay status.

This would will remove a major obstacle to protection for many ethnic minority women fleeing domestic violence. Southall Black Sisters and other pressure groups have been campaigning for this change since the Domestic Violence Rule was introduced in 2002.

Under that rule, a woman who is a spouse or long term partner of a British national or someone who is settled here can apply to stay in the UK permanently if the relationship with her husband or partner breaks down during the two-year probationary period and she can prove that domestic violence was the cause. However, under the 'no recourse to public funds' rule, the woman will be unable to access safety and protection provided with public funds. The effect of the rule is to trap women in a cycle of domestic violence or force them into destitution.

## Consultation Training

**Haringey's 'Making Public Consultation Work' training course is designed to help staff to conduct consultations effectively and efficiently and the course highlights the vital role of equalities in consultation work.**

**We recently decided to pilot a more hands on approach to equalities considerations so that participants in the course**

**could see direct applications. The feedback was very encouraging.**

**The next course takes place on 17 and 18 June - book through OD&L.**

**For help with consultations go to ToolKIT on Harinet or call Janette Wallace Gedge on ext. 2914 or Pat O'Meachair on ext. 2641.**

# February's Faith Quiz

What do you know about Judaism?

## Test your knowledge on our faith quiz

**In each issue of Equalities Matters we will have a quiz on one of the world's Faith groups. In this issue, the questions are on Judaism.**

**Due to problems with the last issue of this publication, we are re-running this quiz on Judaism. The winner will receive a £25 HMV voucher and be published in the next issue of Equalities Matters.**

**1. Judaism began with the Covenant between God and:**

- a) Issac
- b) Jacob
- c) Abraham
- d) Moses

**2. What is Judaism's name for God?**

- a) Allah
- b) Jah
- c) Abasi
- d) Yahweh

**3. What does the word Kosher mean?**

- a) Objectionable?

- b) Enlightened?
- c) One of us?
- d) Fit and proper for use

**4. Every Jew must eat three meals on a Sabbath, one of which must include:**

- a) Fruits
- b) Wine
- c) Bread
- d) Nuts

**5. What does Bat Mitzvah signify?**

- a) Peace
- b) A return to the faith
- c) The coming of age of a boy
- d) The coming of age of a girl

**6. Awe is a period for:**

- a) Fasting
- b) Feasting
- c) Atonement
- d) Repentance

**7. How long does Awe last?**

- a) 7 days?
- b) 10 days?
- c) 17 days?
- d) 20 days?

**8. What is Halachah?**

- a) A festival?
- b) A high-ranking Rabbi?

- c) A prophet?
- d) A set of rule and practices of Judaism?

**9. Which of the following is kosher?**

- a) Squid?
- b) Lamb?
- c) Prawn?
- d) Pig?

**10. How many mitzvot (commandments) did God give to the Jewish people?**

- a) 276
- b) 319
- c) 512
- d) 613

Send your answers with you name and contact details by Friday 11<sup>th</sup> July 2008 to Inno Amadi, Policy & Performance, 7th Floor, River Park House, London N22 8HQ or by e-mail to [inno.amadi@haringey.gov.uk](mailto:inno.amadi@haringey.gov.uk)

**The rules**

1. Everyone is invited to take part except when your own particular Faith is the subject of the quiz.
2. If more than one person answers all the questions correctly, the first name to come out of a hat will be declared the winners.

# CEHR launches inquiry into the state of Human Rights in Britain

As the Britain Human Right Act approaches its 10<sup>th</sup> anniversary, a recent poll shows that a significant section of the public has an unflattering view of human rights. The poll conducted for the Commission for Equality and Human Rights shows for example, that of those polled, 68% say that the government is more concerned about the human rights of minority groups than those of others; 81% agree that there are problems with human rights in Britain and 56% say that people only talk about human rights when they are trying to get something they are not ordinarily entitled to. 40% have either not heard of human rights or are unable to name any of the rights and don't know if they support the legislation or not.

It is against this background that the CEHR has announced the launch of an independent inquiry into the state of human rights in Britain. The inquiry will aim to identify and examine the key drivers of public perceptions of human rights and whether the Human Rights Act actually leads to

tangible benefits in the way public services are provided.

"Since the Human Rights Act came into force, it has faced many criticisms and some would say it has lacked a powerful advocate. Too many now view it as a charter for miscreants, especially criminals, terrorists and others trying to exploit the system" says Trevor Phillips at the launch of the inquiry in March. He said the Commission had a role to play in separating myth from reality and that embarking on a full, frank and independent assessment would help achieve that.

The inquiry will be chaired by Dame Nuala O'Loan, former Northern Ireland Police Ombudsman and is expected to report in December 2008.

**To find out more about the Human Rights inquiry, please contact the Equality and Human Rights Commission media office on 0203 1170 255**

## Haringey scores on gender equality

**Haringey Council has emerged as one of only a few local authorities in the country that have women in the majority at senior management.**

**Recent employment statistics compiled by the union GMB, highlights Haringey as one of the most women-oriented local authorities in London, with 54.2% of the top 5% earners being women, second only to Lewisham which has 56.8%.**

**GMB praised Haringey for recognising the talents, skills and expertise that women can bring to the workplace and urged the private sector to follow suit.**

## UN Convention on disability comes into force

**The UN has announced that the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities will come into force on 3<sup>rd</sup> May 2008.**

**The UK Government is yet to ratify the Convention and the**

**Equality and Human Rights**

**Commission has called on it to do so without further delay.**

**Baroness Jane Campbell, CEHR the Disability**

**Commissioner said: "Britain deserves to be seen as a beacon around the world for disability rights. In delaying ratification further, Britain will lose this status."**

Please send comments or contributions to [inno.amadi@haringey.gov.uk](mailto:inno.amadi@haringey.gov.uk)



One tonne of recycled paper saves 17 trees, 32,000 litres of water, and enough electricity to heat an average house for 6 months



Haringey Council