



Equalities: a changing workplace?

A view from UNISON

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Summary

- UNISON and equality
- Equality legislation
- Equality Act
- Wider context
- Public spending cuts
- UNISON response

UNISON and Equality

“We will seek to ensure that discriminatory acts are not committed against any person regardless of race, gender, sexuality, gender identity, disability, age, creed or social class”

(Rule A3)

UNISON and Equality

- Policy
- UNISON structures
- UNISON Campaigns
- The Equality Act
- Delivering Equality

Equality Act

- Important step forward
- But need to ensure its applied in practice
- Act says Government and public bodies must give “due regard” to impact on women of all their policies and services.
- ConDem changes
- UNISON response

NHS Cuts

- NHS in England to make £15-20 billion “efficiency savings” by 2015
- Place serious financial demands on hospitals
- 54,000 NHS jobs cut so far/ Extra 4,000 a month
- Trusts announcing staffing cuts of 10-20%
- Women hardest hit
- Voluntary redundancies/ leaving posts unfilled but compulsory job losses increasingly likely
- 45% of NHS workers say not enough staff for them to do their jobs properly (Annual NHS Personnel Survey)
- Scale of job losses threatens quality of patient care

NHS Services Under Threat

- “Access to healthcare is shrinking, rationing is back and can only increase. Waiting times are up, growing numbers of beds are being lost and wards mothballed . . . Some specialist facilities for the old, terminally ill and those with drug, alcohol or mental health problems have closed” *The Guardian 30.3.11*
- “Doctors are increasingly frustrated that treatments they were able to provide in the past are being rationed on what seems an arbitrary basis” *B.M.A.*
- “A number of hospitals have stopped procedures such as hernia, varicose veins, tonsillectomies, others are delaying admissions and have growing waiting lists for knee and hip operations. ” *Dave Prentis Unison*

Local Government Cuts

- Funding will drop by £3.4bn
- LGA say funding gap will be £6.5bn in 2011/12
- 140,000 redundancies
- 7,000 job losses at Birmingham City Council
- 2,000 at Manchester City Council
- Poorest councils will be forced to cut frontline services – including sure start centres and children's services

Equality Impact

- Women will bear brunt of second wave of unemployment caused by cuts
- Female unemployment already up 346,000 since recession started
- Job cuts in public sector will fall hardest on women workers (twice as many women than men)
- No EIA conducted on impact of June budget cuts

Fawcett Society Case

- Of £8.1bn savings in budget, £5.7bn borne by women (72%)
- Budget cuts having “grossly disproportionate and devastating effect on women”
- Refused permission to challenge budget
- Judge ruled application unarguable and academic

UNISON Response

- Raise membership awareness
- Info and training for officers and reps
- Branch, regional and national campaigns
- Ensure EIA applies to every public sector employer and every programme of savings