Race Equality in the workplace

Racial discrimination in recruitment

- Government (DWP) research shows racial discrimination in recruitment (October 2009)
- Three fictional applicants were created, all well qualified, one with an Asian Muslim name. one with an African name and the third with a White British name.

Racial discrimination in recruitment

- Three applications were sent to 987 actual job vacancies giving a total of 2,961 applications.
- For every nine sent by white applicants, an equally good applicant with an ethnic minority name had to send sixteen to obtain a positive response.
- The research shows that some employers are discriminating when it comes to choosing staff

Race discrimination in the workplace

- Despite over 40years of equality legislation BME workers are still concentrated in lower grades of many organisations and seldom reach the top.

- Over 40% of BME workforce employed in the public sector (concern about disproportionate impact of government spending cuts on black communities)

- Disproportionate levels of complaints of racial harassment and victimisation

Race discrimination in the workplace

- Continuing problems of under-representation of black workers at senior level

- Fewer than 1% of local authority chief executives are from BME groups(2008 Audit Commission report)

- Only 8% of senior staff positions in NHS held by non-white backgrounds (2009 report, by the NHS Institute for Innovation and Improvement)

Race discrimination in the workplace

- A recent report published by Race for Opportunity (June 2010) found:

- BME people find that many professions in Britain are closed to them

- They rule out careers in professions such as journalism, banking, politics and the law-because of perceptions of racism

Defining Racism

The Mcpherson report defines Institutional racism as:

'The collective failure of an organisation to provide an appropriate and professional service to people because of their colour, culture or ethnic origin. It can be seen or detected in processes, attitudes and behaviour which amount to discrimination through unwitting prejudice, ignorance, thoughtlessness and racist stereotyping which disadvantage minority ethnic people'.

Defining racism

- The former Home Secretary, Jack Straw made reference to institutional racism when he spoke about the Stephen Lawrence inquiry in the House Commons in 1999:

- "Any long established white dominated organisation is liable to have procedures, practices and a culture which tend to exclude non-white people. The police service

Defining racism

- in this respect is little different from other parts of the criminal justice system, or from government departments' and many other institutions.'

- The absence of anti-racist policy and procedures internally and when dealing with external bodies increases the likelihood of institutional racism.

Government Policy on Race Equality

- Prior to the election the Conservative Party published an Equality manifesto
- The Liberal Party published a specific document on race equality
- Neither documents made many commitments on dealing with race discrimination in employment

Equality Act 2010

- Government policy review paper proposes to lighten the bureaucratic "burden" on public bodies by removing some of the "specific duties" such as:

- The requirement to publish details of consultation and involvement of stakeholders

- The requirement to publish equality analysis of how decisions have reached

Equality Act

- The requirement for public bodies to set out how the plan to measure progress on reaching their equality objectives

- Potentially some public bodies may need to set ONE equality objective every four years.

- The new regulations will have a negative impact on vulnerable communities

- The regulations will weaken the duties and lead to an increase in court action to challenge the decisions of public bodies

Way forward

- To find ways to re-invigorate an anti-racist approach in the trade union movement and the workplace
- Race equality and anti-discrimination should be at the heart of trade union activity
- Encourage employers to adopt Positive Action to address under-representation of black workers at all levels
- Black communities including public sector workers, trade unions, community third sector organisations and people who use services should come together to defend both jobs and services