

# Embracing Diversity

## EMPLOYER FORUM ON DIVERSITY

### Minutes of the Employer Forum Meeting Held on 06 July 2005 at the Bolholt Hotel, Walshaw, Bury

#### Present

Robert	Alcock	Eurest Catering	Lucy	O'Hara	DWF Horizons
Joanne	Alcock	Village Hotels	Joanne	Pearce	DWF Horizons
Nigel	Barlow	Edric Audio Visual	Graham	Parry	Cormar Carpets
John	Beech	Jobcentre Plus	Lucy	Thompson	Jobcentre Plus
Fred	Bowen	Bury EST	Tracey	Webb	Bury MBC
Tess	Chidgey	Cormar Carpets	Carol	Watts	Inland Revenue
Mike	Collinson	Bury Primary Care Trust	Peter	Rabbits	ACAS
Alan	Costello	Early Years Development Children's Partnership	Bill	Robinson	RAF Careers
Gerrard	Curran	Chamber Link	Jennifer	Robinson	Greater Manchester Police
Karen	Davies	Southern Cross	Lee	Salad	Bury EST
Huw	Davies	Bury EST	Catherine	Shawarby	Southern Cross
Paul	Foster	Chamber of Commerce	Lynda	Smethurst	Bury EST
Rod	Goodwin	Bury EST			
Leanne	Gray	Bury EST			
Ingrid	Hitchon	Molygran	Andy	Walkden	Bury MBC Home working
Karen	Holness	RAF Careers	Catherine	Wall	Bury EST
<b>Apologies</b>					
Jonathan	Butterworth	Bolholt Hotel	Victoria	Proudlock	Manchester United
Patrick	Connellan	Cormar Carpets	Sarah	Kay	L'Oreal Golden
Barbara	Forber	Inland Revenue	Steve	Mason	Greater Manchester Police
Cath	Hignett	NHS Trust	Steven	Walters	Metrolink
Stuart	Reich	BCR Chemicals	Bill	Robinson	Armed Forces Careers
Beverley	Unsworth	Cameron House	Susan	Rose	Tesco stores
			Caroline	Schofield	Bury MBC
Alicja	Kinsey	Senior Hargreaves	Alison	Todd	Bury College
Michelle	Lomax	PACE	Andy	Walkden	Homeworking Bury MBC
			Peter	Weidenbaum	Trumeter Ltd
Lutha	Magloire	Army careers	Anthony	Wharton	Archlight Bending
Caroline	Schofield	Bury MBC	Carol	Woodhams	Mcr Met University
Andrew	Murray	Fairways Lodge Hotel	Beverley	Unsworth	Cameron House

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## MINUTES

### 1. WELCOME TO MEMBERS

Fred Bowen welcomed delegates, new delegates and invited guests to the meeting. Steve Mason HR manager for Greater Manchester Police had informed Bury EST that he was leaving the police to take up a new position as HR manager for the Cambridgeshire Fire and Rescue Service. Steve would be working in Cambridgeshire for some of the time and also working from home and he had expressed his wish to remain a member of the employer forum. Steve has been a member for two and a half years and during this period had made a considerable contribution to the forum and the Embracing Diversity project. His future involvement would be most welcome.

### 2. MINUTES FROM LAST MEETING

Fred asked for approval for the minutes of the meeting held on Wednesday, 13 April 2005. These minutes were approved as a true and accurate record.

### 3. MATTERS ARISING

There were no matters arising from the minutes.

### 4. BURY EST Project and Business progress to date

**Huw Davies ( Manager Bury EST)**

Huw was pleased to present a draft of the employer information pack. Although this had taken some considerable time to produce it was a very detailed and comprehensive pack and he would welcome any comments and feedback from employers on the contents. The pack was still awaiting the further inclusion of a section on legislation - this would follow soon.

Huw reported on Bury EST's recent attendance at the European Union Supported Employment conference that was held in Barcelona. Bury EST had been invited to present in two workshops, one of which gave the opportunity to share the results and best practice of the retention project and a workshop which looked at the employers perspectives of supported employment. Both workshops had been well received by delegates and many European partners had requested further information.

Huw thanked Karen Davies, Regional Manager for Southern Cross care establishments, and Steve Mason, Greater Manchester Police for their attendance and contribution to the EUSE conference and workshops.

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Huw announced that he was hopeful of the final successful round of the invest to save bid for ethnic minorities and employment. This would secure the future of the employer forum for the next two years. Bury EST would be recruiting two new members of staff. These would be Placement Officers.

## 5. EMBRACING DIVERSITY – Diversity presentation Age Discrimination

A number of members had been contacted to express their views on the subject to be considered for this meeting. There had been a majority of support for new legislation on age discrimination.

Fred reminded members that this legislation would be introduced towards the end of 2006 and we were now entering a period of consultation on the detail of the Act. There was only a code of good practice in place currently but the introduction of the legislation would involve employers in reviewing and updating their policies accordingly.

For this subject Fred welcomed and invited Joanne Pearce and Lucy O'Hara to give a presentation to members. Joanne was an associate and Lucy a solicitor from the company Davies Wallis and Foyster (DWF Horizons) specialising in Human Resource management and employment law. The company has offices in Manchester, Liverpool and Warrington.

Joanne commenced with the presentation and introduced her colleague, Lucy who would be offering her expertise to a section of the presentation.

Joanne explained that by October 2006 the Equal Treatment framework would probably be in place.

During the presentation Joanne drew members' attention to several important factors:

- DWF had researched that 74% of Human Resource jobs advertised discriminated on age.
- Use of words such as 'young and lively' would not be acceptable
- Specifying a number of years experience would not be acceptable
- Adverts need to be more thoughtful in content and where they are placed, for instance using young people's magazines.
- The legislation in the UK will go much further than other countries and will apply to 'old and 'young' alike.
- Awarding loyalty for a number of years service would no longer be acceptable.
- Organisations and companies should ensure to include age in their diversity policies
- How are you going to deal with age issues with regard to employees who could be discriminating? As an employer you could be vicariously responsible for their actions.
- Training for staff is vital to ensure they know what your policies and procedures are and what their responsibilities are.
- You should be progressively introducing improvements to your recruitment practices now.
- If your current retirement age is below 65 years you may need to begin negotiations with employees now. The likely retirement age will be 65 years.
- Review any recently made decisions – was there an element of ageism involved?



**A copy of the presentation is included for your information.**

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## 6. DELEGATES QUESTIONS AND DISCUSSION

A number of delegates asked quite a large number of questions the following are just a sample and a selection of debated issues that came out of group discussion:

**Q. Joanne Alcock (Village Hotel)** – the company offers a bonus to employees at the age of 21 years – will this still be legal?

**A.** You would be advised to offer the bonus based on skills achievement – not age.

It will be interesting to see how the Government deals with the National Minimum Wage and the different levels awarded to age groups.

Areas of employment such as the care industry and bar work will still be exempt

Employment tribunals will enforce the regulations.

Positive discrimination – would be legal in some areas where there is a need to bring young people into the workforce – case law shows it is becoming more acceptable.

Burden of proof falls to the employer to prove they did not intend to discriminate – employers will be on the back foot so to speak.

It was advised to adopt a system of regular reviews and monitor working practices. This would make it easier to manage employees.

When it comes to employers using the word 'experience' in terms of years they could be looking for the amount of skills that could have been achieved over a number of years.

Huw reminded members to check their employer packs for internet addresses and information on useful Government sites. Two sites of particular interest would be:

① **[www.agepositive.gov.uk](http://www.agepositive.gov.uk) and [www.dti.gov.uk](http://www.dti.gov.uk)**

Fred drew attention to the 'Be Ready' campaign that was displayed at the meeting. A number of copies had been requested for distribution to forum members and these would be available soon. You could also request a free copy of the 'Be Ready' personal organiser. These items both contain lots of useful information. The organizers are limited in supply.

① **Members can order their copies by telephoning: 0845 715 2000 or email: [apg@isky.co.uk](mailto:apg@isky.co.uk)**

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## **7. DATE AND TIME OF NEXT MEETING**

Fred expressed his thanks to everyone who had attended and in particular to the speakers; Joanne Pearce and Lucy O'Hara from DWF Horizons.

**The next employer forum meeting would be held on Thursday 13 October 2005**

This meeting would be a breakfast meeting with arrival at 08.30 for a 9.00 start and close at 11.00.

**There was also a change of venue for this meeting to the Village Hotel at Heap Bridge, Bury.**

Further details and directions will be forwarded closer to the date.

**CLOSE**