

# TUDA News

July 2007

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## TUDA AGM

All TUDA members said they had a very good time, and if you missed the AGM it was a shame, because it was excellent as usual.

**Phil Madelin** spoke about Access to Work scheme and **Richard Rieser** spoke about the new European Disability Work he has done.

Both spoke telling us lots of things we did not already know.

## Just a thought from the TUDA newsletter editor

In an attempt to try to save TUDA money and speed up the provision of information, if you have e-mail (and we understand not everyone does), would any TUDA members like to have all future newsletters via e-mail? Please let us know!

E-mail your editor Richard Cook on [findcook@hotmail.com](mailto:findcook@hotmail.com)

Thanks to those who signed up after reading recent newsletters.

**NB: Views expressed in this Newsletter are not necessarily those of all the trade unions represented on our Executive but reflect the opinion and policies of most of them.**

Our website [www.tuda.org.uk](http://www.tuda.org.uk) also has lots of news and information

**TO CONTACT** the newsletter editor, Richard Cook is at 141 Vale Road, Northfleet, Kent DA11 8BX or at [findcook@hotmail.com](mailto:findcook@hotmail.com). Please tell us of any issues you feel we should cover. We encourage people to submit both information and articles for inclusion so get writing if you can

**TUDA Secretary** Alan Martin, Membership Secretary Sherrell Martin and Co-Chairs Ju Gosling & Caroline Gooding can be contacted via our box number, BM TUDA, London WC1N 3XX. Email: [mail@tuda.org.uk](mailto:mail@tuda.org.uk)

**What TUDA would like to see, in the Green Paper on Single Equality Act: Discrimination Law Review A Framework for Fairness: Proposals for a Single Equality Bill for Great Britain**

The Green Paper for producing a Single Equality Act (SEA) was published on 12 June (available on the DCLG website). The deadline for responding is 4 September 2007.

The SEA will bring together all existing equality laws. The process was launched more than 2 years ago – but this is the first public consultation. A measly three months over the summer! Could it be that they aren't really interested in our views? Never mind – let's let them know what we think about it is – and more importantly what sort of a law we need to finally tackle the discrimination and social exclusion of disabled people – along with women, lesbians and gays, people from religious and ethnic minorities etc.

The Green Paper is a long and depressing read – 180 pages of smugness and reasons why business says nothing needs to change! Read the Disability Rights Commission's comments on it – on their website. In sum Bert Massie, Chair of DRC sends out a clear warning: 'What the Green Paper proposes ignores most of the recommendations that have been made over the last year to improve the rights of disabled people. It proposes to virtually destroy the Disability Equality Duty. My approach to this Green Paper is that it does to disability rights what a bulldozer does to a building. Although there are a few new rights proposed on some other strands, on disability this is an appalling Green Paper. If it goes through as it is it will do enormous damage to disabled people and will unravel a lot of successes of the last 10 years. I hope the government will think twice.'

The Government have a manifesto commitment to produce a SEA. It was supposed to look at the poor enforcement of the current law- and make changes to improve it. We want all discrimination cases to be heard in equality tribunals (as part of the employment tribunal service). This would make it much easier to bring cases – no fees to take a case and much less risk of having to pay the legal expenses of the other side if you lose. The procedures are much easier too!

The Green Paper opposes this.

It says nothing about the need to move away from the present ridiculously complicated medical model definition of disability – to a social model definition. It says nothing about making sure disabled people volunteering; air travel and ferries are protected from discrimination. It says nothing at all about education. We could go on!

Tell them what sort of a law we need

TUDA would like to see:

- \* Stronger enforcement mechanisms: equality tribunals, group and representative actions and effective sanctions.
- \* Extended and strengthened duty to promote equality: which applies to all strands; retains the general duty's application to all functions and the requirement on most authorities to produce public equality schemes; explicitly applies to public procurement and requires action by inspection bodies.
- \* A clear statement in the Act of its purpose: not merely eliminating discrimination but enhancing dignity and participation and achieving substantive equality through positive action where required. Such a clause would improve public understanding and guide courts, tribunals, and everyone else dealing with the legislation as to how it should be applied and interpreted.
- \* Banning all disability discrimination: ships, planes, volunteers and armed services.
- \* Stronger protection against education discrimination.
- \* A simpler, better definition of disability.
- \* Protection for those discriminated against because they are associated with or perceived to be a disabled person (this would benefit carers, people working with HIV positive people and many others) and a fairer approach to disability discrimination per se (protecting anyone discriminated against on grounds of impairment).
- \* Protection against genetic discrimination.
- Clear protection against multiple-discrimination.

## Disability Rights Commission

### BRIEFING

The DRC has very similar proposals, this was worked on by our TUDA Co-Chair Caroline Gooding who also thankfully also works for the DRC. These are available on the DRC website [www.drc-gb.org](http://www.drc-gb.org).



**ROY WEBB** who was a valued  
**TUDA** member and strong  
**UNISON** activist

It is with deep sadness that NCIL announces the

loss of our colleague Roy Webb who died in Kings College hospital, London on 15<sup>th</sup> June following a short illness.

Roy joined NCIL in July 2004 as our head of policy. In this role he responded to consultations on policy issues, contributed to our policy development particularly in the field of independent living, and shared his knowledge and expertise with our own members and individuals and organisations outside NCIL.

Most recently Roy was involved in co-ordinating and contributing to the Our Lives Our Choices campaign to support Lord Ashley's Disabled Persons (Independent Living) Bill. Roy played a pivotal role in starting this campaign and ensuring it received widespread support. This culminated in the successful launch of the campaign on Monday 18<sup>th</sup> June 2007.

Roy was highly valued by our staff and board members alike. The depth of his knowledge and commitment to independent living was an inspiration. Roy never had a bad word to say about anyone and the way in which he used his experiences as a disabled person in a positive way was inspiration to us all. His death is a great loss, not just to NCIL but to the wider disability movement. He is irreplaceable.

We have received many tributes from those who knew Roy. It is our intention to share these through our website. If you wish to add your contribution please contact our office or e-mail it to [info@ncil.org.uk](mailto:info@ncil.org.uk)

### **TUC Disability Committee Meeting held on Thursday 24 April 2007 at 11am in Congress House, Great Russell Street, London WC1B 3LS. Agenda**

The minutes of previous meeting were agreed

Sylvia Simons has resigned; it is far too late in the cycle to consider any co-options. The committee noted this, we agreed that Mike Johnson's nomination will stand at the disability conference despite him being unable to attend due to illness.

TUC Disability Conference 2007 final agenda

Due to the information not being accessible to everyone, everything had to be read out.

Amendments are all in order, but they have not all been accepted yet?  
Probably this will be resolved at next meeting.

Groupings and the order of the business are a good idea.

Many good suggestions were made trying to improve our conference and sometimes these were accepted.

Attitude: we have a range of options, support, and support with reservations, remit means you do not take a decision and you refer it to the disability committee. We have to take a separate view on both the motion and amendment. Or we can oppose.

We decided motion 6 will be supported with reservation and someone from the committee will explain the reservation.

Motion 11 support with qualification. With no agreement yet for the amendment, if it is accepted the recommendation is support, but if it were not accepted we would recommend supporting the amendment but express reservations on the unamended motion.

Motion 20 the office would have problems with terminology and the general sense of the motion. It is not the case we fail to inform unions of what is going on. Lots of debate took place on this subject. Because we felt on reflection that what the motion said was untrue, we asked that it be remitted.

Committee Speakers explanation. Motion 8 Phil Madelin. Motion 11 Mandy Hudson. Motion 14 if necessary Tony Sneddon. Motion 20 if it is not remitted Helen Rose.

Platform speakers: The decision the committee must make is. The General secretary address will be on the second day.

We do of course, want to link up with Jim Murphy's keynote speech and questions to the minister and the debate on welfare reform. Therefore the chairs report although shorter needs to be fitted in first and then Jim Murphy.

I suggested a rather clever speech from the Chair because Jim will obviously hear it. Then hear Jim Murphy and this was felt to be an excellent idea, and this was agreed.

Bert Massy and Kay Carberry for the informal session on the CEHR. I also thought and I said two speakers would not be enough. I suggested Siobhan Endeen as another speaker this however was rejected.

DC 4/2 is a good report.

Other issues. I said comfort breaks must be built in and no flash photography during conference is a good idea, this was agreed.

TUC Disability Conference 2007 Committee.

We went through each paragraph. A good comprehensive report.

DDA training for officials. The first course took place last Friday. It seems to be aimed at just the right level and providing the right information. It

was 6 or 7 hours long. A shame about not making a DVD because unfortunately the Disability Rights commission declined this request. DRC help line report. No other comment: Apart from all unions need to understand the important need for training. To make sure it does deal with disability issues, especially if we want to be an authoritative voice.

Presentation from the Office of Disability Issues officials\*

\*Paul McCourt from the Office for Disability Issues will attend at 1.30pm. We had a good debate with ODI and I expect and hope we said lots of things that made them think a bit differently. A contact list will be sent to us and we were encouraged to use it and talk to these important people.

Incidentally: The ODI will have a stand at our Disability Conference.

Welfare reform. We have held a social policy forum last month on the implications of the reform bill. We are planning to do a response of the froid review of Labour market programs. We need to determine if the new benefit works out in practise, because MPs are passing this bill without knowing what this benefit will be. MPs are being unbelievably docile. Another issue is the revised test of eligibility, meaning the benefit could be partly or completely suspended.

A possible question to Jim Murphy:

He may have been misreported and it may be useful to find out if he was.

At a recent conference, Jim Murphy supposedly said. That disabled people who were unable to get work should not be lifted out of poverty by benefits. They can be lifted out of poverty by pay, but not by benefits. That was a Financial Times storey parleying what he said. I would have thought if ever there was a forum in which he ought to be asked is that what he meant and if it was, would he like to reconsider what he said was not ideal. It is our TUC disability conference.

Peter said I could ask that question and I would. I am really looking forward to doing that. An interesting document indeed.

Response to ODI Consultation: I found this another interesting document. Many good points raised in the report. The committee endorsed this document now it had been tweaked very slightly.

Other business: I said I had received documents from the TUC asking is stress a disability, Also a document from the Disability Rights Commission. I am really glad I read both of them because both documents raised things I had not thought of before, so it was quite a revelation.

Date of next meeting: 23 May 2007 at 9.30 before conference.

# **FW: co-op Funeralcare Sack and Discriminate against Their Disabled Workers with Dismissal and Pay Cuts Of £5k**

## **GMB demands an immediate stop to sackings and cuts**

Co-operative Funeral Care has started sacking some and cutting the pay of other disabled or sick employees. Five members of the Co-ops staff, the majority of them women, have either been given a month's notice by their local co-op managers or are having their pay cut by £5,000 per year because of their disability. This reduces their annual pay as full-time staff to around £14,000.

GMB Congress in Brighton today was told that Co-op Funeral Care has sent letters to these disabled employees saying that they are being sacked or having their pay cut because they are unable to do the same work as their able bodied colleagues. This allegation is outlawed under the Disability Discrimination Act (DDA). GMB has lodged Employment Tribunals.

The first reported sackings and pay cuts have affected co-op staff in Watford, Enfield and Woolwich. The Co-op Funeral Care employs around 2,500 people in 600 funeral homes and GMB fear that this is the start of a new policy that will affect workers in all parts of the UK.

One worker who is disabled as a result of an accident while working for Co-op Funeral Care has been targeted for the £5K pay cut.

**Phil Davies, GMB National Secretary speaking at GMB Congress in Brighton today said, "The Co-ops behaviour is not only illegal but it is scandalous. Not since the AA went after their disabled employees have we seen so blatant and open attack.**

**Co-op Funeral Care must stop these targeted sackings today. They must re-instate all workers without any loss of continuity or service and restore the full pay of all their workers regardless of their level of disability.**

**Years ago the Co-op had an advertising slogan that claimed the company to be "Your caring sharing Co-op". How hollow that sounds today as the co-op attacks its disabled workers.**

**Ends: Contact: Phil Davies, GMB National Secretary**

## **Remploy: It was Michael Portillo who kick-started Remploy's descent**

It was Michael Portillo who kick-started Remploy's descent, when in 1994 he ended a scheme guaranteeing the factories priority for government contracts; thus, imposing the disciplines of government contracts on the company. Remploy's more recent problems stem from its board of directors and senior management; and, their self-serving running of the company for at least the past seven-and-a-half years.

Those running Remploy have no imagination. They merely function as a means to spend the subsidy paid to Remploy. Over the years, they have squandered opportunities, such as the example of the Glastonbury T-shirts. A few years ago Mike Eavis (the Glastonbury Festival site owner) wanted to source the production locally; and so, in collaboration with the trade unions offered one of the Remploy's Cornwall sites a million pound contract for the production of its T-shirts.

Remploy prevaricated about it for a long time; and, when Geoff Martin, an officer of the Battersea and Wandsworth Trades Union Council reminded a Remploy executive of the issue at a meeting; the Remploy board member complained about the cost to the company of £50,000 in set-up costs to take on the T-shirt contract. Geoff, a tough no-nonsense trade union organiser, simply said these words to the windy capitalist: ≥You've got to speculate to accumulate!≤

Remploy is still in the business of prevarication, rather than that of ensuring all its factory order books are full; and, its staff of well-trained and skilled disabled workers are active and productive, it chooses to do nothing.

Since January 2006, each Remploy factory has had the right to a minimum of one reserved public contract. Up to now: there have been no take-up for this scheme. In effect, the company has ignored the opportunity to tap into a reserve of contracts valued at £250 billion per year, a small per cent of these contracts would ensure an abundance of work for the entire Remploy factory system. Remploy could produce everything from furniture to nurses' uniforms; police and the armed forces uniforms, the transport infrastructure and the building of schools and hospitals and the equipment that goes with them.

On the 21<sup>st</sup> May, the day before they announced which factories were to be closed; Remploy gave the knife it had stuck into our backs a cruel twist when it engaged a Senior Public Procurement Manager. This is bitter irony, coming now.

Every Remploy factory now has a learning centre. Though widely used by the workers for a range of courses. These centres remain largely



under-utilised. These centers could offer income-generating opportunities for the business if offered to outside 3rd party organizations when not being utilized by Remploy staff.

The Remploy Trade Union Consortium is the only group that comes out of this debacle with any dignity. They have, along with their activists and members, tried to sort out the mess created by the board and its scorched earth policies of recent years. We have offered the company an alternative business plan, see link.

[http://www.gmb.org.uk/Shared\\_ASP\\_Files/UploadedFiles/CAFD7485-D440-4A4D-BCD6-26EF1829D7B6\\_MPMANUFACTURINGBRIEF2.pdf](http://www.gmb.org.uk/Shared_ASP_Files/UploadedFiles/CAFD7485-D440-4A4D-BCD6-26EF1829D7B6_MPMANUFACTURINGBRIEF2.pdf)

Remploy has ignored this carefully laid out and feasible action plan, in favor of a reactionary plan to close down half the factories. This decision is in keeping with this treacherous bunch of timid unimaginative no-hopers.

If the factory closures go ahead, around 2,500 disabled people will lose their jobs; and, many of these will never work again and their skills will rust away. The company spin is that they will be employed in mainstream jobs but most disabled workers are at Remploy because mainstream employers have rejected them and continue to reject them as a matter of course.

Written by Se·n McGovern

## **London's Freedom Pass - Statement**

We have added this comment to a statement prepared by the Mayor and to be circulated with TU and celebrity endorsement:

"The TUC in London understands the value of a London-wide free travel Scheme to older and disabled people. We are pleased to add our voice in

Support of the Freedom Pass and to support the Mayor's guarantee for its

Continued funding. Free travel for older and disabled Londoners is the Feature of a modern and progressive city and we should be looking to Secure the future of the Freedom Pass as an integral part of a

London-wide transport strategy, not exposing it to the vagaries of Short-term local politics." Megan Dobney, Regional Secretary, SERTUC

**Megan Dobney** SERTUC Regional Secretary SERTUC: the TUC in London, the South East and Eastern Region Congress House, Great Russell Street London WC1B 3LS

Unite Formally Amicus who had the highest number of votes for their motion at the disability conference held at Great Russell Street in London. This will therefore now be moved by Unite/Amicus once again at the TUC's main meeting in Brighton. This important information will inform you of the TUC's progress with this special motion.

## **By popular request TUDA Merchandise**

**'From the Membership Secretary'**

**The prices for postage and packaging are available on request.  
Address is just before the end of page**

|                             |              |
|-----------------------------|--------------|
| <b>Tee Shirt</b>            | <b>£6.00</b> |
| <b>Calculator</b>           | <b>£2:50</b> |
| <b>Triangle Highlighter</b> | <b>£1.00</b> |
| <b>Lapel Pins</b>           | <b>£1.00</b> |
| <b>Yo-Yo</b>                | <b>£0.75</b> |
| <b>Blue Pens</b>            | <b>£0.50</b> |
| <b>Yellow Pens</b>          | <b>£0:20</b> |
| <b>Badges</b>               | <b>£0.10</b> |
| <b>Mugs</b>                 | <b>£3.00</b> |

### **By Sherrell Martin Membership Secretary**

For a number of years TUDA has had a stall at the TUC disability conference in London. This has always been of value to us in TUDA; we meet up with old friends and make new ones. For the past few years we have sold merchandise on the stall. Unfortunately to the fact TUDA is completely dependent on membership payments and affiliations for its income we are unable to give things away such as pens.

2007 has proved to be a good year at conference for us. We gained 10 new members and sold a reasonable amount of stock, it was definitely

our best year to date. The TUC as ever did not charge us for the stall and this helped greatly so many thanks to them.

As you enjoy your newsletter please ask yourself the following questions.

- \* Is my membership up to date?
- \* Have my access requirements changed?
- \* Would I like the newsletter via email?
- \* Can I get more involved in TUDA?
- \* How about attending TUDA conference and AGM next year, 19/04/08, date to be confirmed.

If you want the answer to any of the above do not hesitate contacting me at BM TUDA, London, WC1N 3XX or email me on mail@tuda.org.uk. I look forward to hearing from you.

Sherrell and Alan Martin

In May this year my husband Alan and I went to Salou in Spain for a week. Alan had just had a relapse of his MS and this caused me some trepidation. We had booked passenger assistance at both John Lennon and Reus airports in advance and this was generally good. One small problem we were told to go to gate 14 to meet the staff who would get Alan me and his wheelchair onto the plane. I walked and Alan rolled up and down the airport, no-one could tell us where gate 14 was, it was like being in a Harry Potter film. With just 5 minutes to spare we went down to the lower level where we were met by 2 young men, they told us that the gates had recently been renumbered. They got us onto the plane using a lift, and we arrived in Spain safe and sound. At Reus airport Alan was carried down the steps off the plane using a chair it was scarier than flying.

We had booked a self drive hire car. But we were told this had been cancelled. As we had the confirmation of the booking we were provided with a car, it was bigger in both body and engine size but at no extra cost. Alan was not so sure; he had never driven in Europe, never driven such a large car, and never driven an automatic. After a few minutes he got used to not changing gear and driving on the wrong side of the road. We followed the signs to Salou but then realised that we did not have directions to the hotel. We had booked a sea view so it needed to be close to the beach and so we found it. During the week we had a few further mishaps with the tolls on the motorway and parking in

underground car parks. It was time to go home, we packed and loaded up the car and I went to reception only to be told we had one more day. A quick phone call to our respective employers to explain we had miscalculated and we enjoyed one more day in the sun.

This trip has given us insights into travelling that we had not needed before. John Lennon airport was generally very good even if the staff have forgotten that the gates have been renumbered. We had seats reserved for us on both flights and the cabin crew were very helpful and yes it was Ryan air. Our travel insurance was Atlas and they proved to understand our needs and not overcharge us. Salou was just like Blackpool with good weather and English/Irish pubs. But for someone with mobility problems it proved to be difficult if like us your Hotel was up a steep hill. Thankfully the locals were always willing to help me push Alan in his chair. Overall we found Salou to be a very accessible place such as shops and restaurants; there were a reasonable number of accessible toilets along the promenade. Salou is a great base to use to visit other more interesting places such as Montserrat. The train to Barcelona was fun even if the carriage was about 2 foot higher than the platform. We were advised by the tourist information office to travel to a specific station in Barcelona, but yes, you have guessed it, there was no suitable exit out onto the street.

In October we are going to Prague so watch out for the further adventures of travelling with the Martins.

### **Petition for 1million signatories for Disability Directive across EU.**

This is a petition to get 1million signatories for Disability Directive across EU. People can sign online at <http://www.1million4disability.eu>- we urgently need more UK signatures on the EDF petition for a disability-specific EU Directive. > Please encourage your unions to circulate this and get their representatives and activists to sign up - as it says, signatories don't have to be disabled people themselves.

-----Original Message----- from Richard Rieser

The UK is lagging far behind other countries in collecting signatures. So far over 300,000 have been collected across Europe, but only 5,000 in the UK. Now a big push is needed. Please e-mail the attached to your e-address book and ask them to do likewise. Please send to all contacts you have urging them to sign and getting their friends to sign. Anyone can sign as long as they are European citizens and especially in the UK,

including children.

**I wish to receive more Information about TUDA: -**

Please send post to: Alan Martin at **BM TUDA, London WC1N 3XX ---**

Name \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Position in Trade Union (if applicable) \_\_\_\_\_

E mail: \_\_\_\_\_

Post Address (if applicable) \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_ Post  
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Preferred format : Email - Audio -----

Normal Print 12 point ----- Large Print size -----

BSL Video----- Braille -----  
Membership Fees:

{ Individual Disabled Person ----- £7.00-----  
{ Supporting Subscriber ----- £10.00 -----

|   |       |         |       |
|---|-------|---------|-------|
| {Union Branch                                 | ----- | £25.00  | ----- |
| {Union Region                                 | ----- | £50.00  | ----  |
| {National Unions with 100,000 members or less |       | £100.00 | ---   |
| {Unions with 100,001 to 500,000 members       | ---   | £150.00 | ---   |
| {Unions with over 500,000 members             | ----- | £200.00 | ---   |

NB: We recently raised our subscription rates for national unions in recognition of continued mergers. However, we have held our rates down for smaller unions.

Please make cheques payable to Trade Union Disability Alliance