

# TUDA News

MARCH 2007

## **Third union signs up to TUDA's Trade Union Charter**

The University and College Union (UCU) has recently signed up to the TUDA Trade Union Charter for Disability Equality and work has now begun on its implementation in consultation with the union's equality committee and disabled members.

The University and College Union represents further and higher education lecturers, managers, researchers and many academic-related staff such as librarians, administrators and computing professionals across the UK. The union was formed by the amalgamation of the Association of University Teachers and NATFHE - The University & College Lecturers' Union on 1 June 2006 and now has approximately 120,000 members

Caroline Gooding, TUDA's Co Chair said: ≥This is great – very positive news and an encouraging sign that the newly merged union will aim to give their disabled members the best possible service and enable the fullest participation. Let's hope when AMICUS and TGWU merge they will do the same. ≥

UCU is the third union to sign up (after BECTU and PCS). We need TUDA activists in other unions to push for them to sign up too.

### ***Inside this issue***

**Page 1**            **TUDA Charter**

**Page 2**            **Access denied**

**Pages 3 – 8**      **TUC Disability Committee reports**

Page 8 9 Liberty Festival & Disability Equality Duty

Page 10 How to join TUDA

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

## **TO CONTACT TUDA**

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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.

### **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 the last newsletter.**

**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.**

## **Access denied?**

On 1<sup>st</sup> October, 2006, Civil Servants working in 12 central Government Departments were due to have their rights to claim financial support from the JobCentrePlus Access to Work scheme unilaterally removed. In the event it was 11, with the Department of Constitutional Affairs granted a stay of execution until 1<sup>st</sup> April this year.

At a time when the Department of Work and Pensions and the Disability Rights Commission were encouraging public sector bodies to get it right on involvement of disabled people in the preparation of Disability Equality Schemes, it was particularly notable that no disabled Civil Servants or their unions were involved in discussions on this fundamental change to adjustment funding. The Council of Civil Service Unions expressed significant concerns about the change – not least because many of the more expensive Access to Work commitments, such as funding home to workplace travel and personal care at work, have already been ruled by Tribunals to fall outside the scope of the reasonable adjustment duty placed on employers by the DDA.

Having registered their protest at the move, CCSU's attention has now shifted towards trying to prevent any further areas of the public services being treated in the same way. The key focus is on an evaluation of the impact of the changes already made – and CCSU has secured agreement from DWP that this evaluation will include qualitative surveying – actually talking to people who might have been adversely affected by the withdrawal of Access to Work funds. The difficulties are not to be underestimated, however: identifying staff or potential staff who have not been given all that they might have got under A2W will not be easy. But through alliances with organisations such as TUDA and charities representing those most likely to face restrictions on adjustments, CCSU hopes that the evidence will be forthcoming.

## **TUC Disability Committee**

**Richard Cook reporting from the Disability Committee meeting held on Thursday 18 January 2007 at 11am in Congress House, Great Russell Street, London WC1B 3LS**

**Peter = Peter Purton. Sara = Sara Veale.**

**Minutes of the meeting** of 12 October 2006 for accuracy

**DC 1 Matters arising** from the minutes. Flash photography update with the NUJ was mentioned but nothing to report as yet. The Chair will raise this important matter with the General Council.

**Item 9 The new Commission on Equality and Human Rights**

I said that Amicus represents members in the Commission for Racial Equality and we would hope that the TUC would involve our national officer. Sara Veale said that until recently we have had very good discussions with all CRE reps.

**Co-option to the Committee** (oral report) We have been told of a nomination but nothing received as yet. The committee decided to agree this person could attend the next meeting.

**TUC disability conference**

**DC 2/1**

**Chair.** I said I thought what we did worked well. Suggested retaining our chair because this is an important thing we must continue to do. A female must also act as chair at the disability conference.

**Topic:** Peter said we must decide our topic. I suggested that the subject of the informal session is the single Equality Act and Commission for Equality and Human Rights (powers and funding) It was decided to make the subject a little narrower but still basically the same subject, because what I had asked for was felt to be just too big. Another delegate wanted supported employment, also welfare reform. Also I said, apart from the single Equality Act, I thought that supported employment is a subject we must also discuss. My suggestion for the informal session and supported employment was also unanimously adopted.

**Speakers:** I thought both must be high profile, perhaps a politician and disability campaigner. Bert Massie & Trevor Phillips or Jane Campbell & Margaret Prosser were suggested by delegates. I thought that was a very good suggestion. They will be contacted.

**The time not used discussing motions.** As a result of us asking and attempting to prevent the problems experienced over recent years, we will reduce speakers to only three. We will also reduce the time for the chair's report; reduce the time taken by the general secretary; and everything will be much more focused. We discussed this year's

conference extensively. Peter explained we would have to decide certain things at the next meeting.

**Other speakers** Peter suggested that Richard Reiser who is on our committee could speak on the new UN Convention on the rights of disabled people. The future of supported employment could probably be Phil Davis as speaker. Vanessa Macolgan could talk about the discrimination law review - she is a very good speaker, a political person who also knows about disability. These people will all be approached.

**Social:** I said there should be a conference social and trade union solicitors firms should be approached for sponsorship by the TUC office, if this is not possible then the cost of the social should be reflected in the delegation fee.

I am not in agreement with lay members of the TUC disability committee being tasked with raising funds from affiliates.

Sara Veale said we can't charge because it is free. We voted and I was the only person who voted to have a social, to every one else's amusement, but I can live with that.

### **Disability Equality Duty**

**DC 2/2**

Every public sector body should already have a Disability Equality Duty, not be thinking about it, as it became law on 4 December. Importantly it must also be done with collaboration with disabled people.

We agreed to do a short and simple survey for the 2007 conference. I said it would be helpful if a briefing on best practice with regards to the disability equality duty were prepared as an outcome of the survey, because I am on Kent County Council and my local Gravesend DED and need the best advice possible. Peter said advice was published at conference last May.

### **Central Government/ATW update**

**DC 2/3**

Stating latest news and what stance to take. They are conducting a qualitative analysis over the next 3-6 months. It is true there are no plans now to extend this to the rest of the public sector. It is not true that there is no intention that this will happen, because it will in fact happen once they have had their evaluation. So it will not go away, potentially a threat to disabled civil service workers in the public sector. We are shaping up to get quite a comprehensive survey into the effect of this change.

**ODI**

**DC 2/4**

**What further ODI news to date, agree invite 26 April 07. Good news attending disability conference.**

This committee had all been invited but some had not been able to take part in the meeting. The meeting place used, no expense was spared and it was a beautiful venue. But delegates left feeling disappointed. Independent living was mentioned quite a lot and was a key issue.

### **DRC response on Reasonable Adjustments DC 2/5**

Two letters from the Disability Rights Commission (DRC) in response to a letter from the TUC following motions at our conference. They had offered to meet with us to improve the advice on our website and elsewhere.

### **UN Disability Convention**

**DC 26**

Richard Reiser has written an account and explanation of the new UN convention. The government is going to sign and ratify this convention. The TUC thinks it is 80-90% of what we asked for. A remarkable achievement.

### **DRC training on the DDA**

**DC 2/7**

Peter asked unions if they wanted to send their officers to get trained on the DDA. He had a response back from quite a few unions, which amounted to about 5-600 officials. The DRC offered a one-day session for maximum of only 40 places on 20 April. So the TUC have set this up in Congress House.

I said: Amicus have already registered an interest in our regional equality officers attending this training and would welcome further information from the TUC about the arrangements. These are unions must sort out who will benefit most and this is definitely the last chance

saloon. We must send Peter a priority list. But unfortunately with only 40 places rationing will have to take place,

### **Doing Work Differently**

**DC 2/8**

Radar came to the TUC to ask for our support for a project devised to give practical advice to employers and disabled people on reasonable adjustments in the workplace and the TUC had a meeting and thought it was a very good thing. This means that we are going in as partner. Some members felt that this committee should have been consulted before this commitment was made. This was why the committee decided not to work with the employers forum last year. Peter said the TUC had committed money to this already. As a result - and this is entirely my own view - I said I strongly disagree with the opposition for one simple reason: will this mean that we would not do any work on this particular subject if we do not get involved with Radar? If we don't then I think we are not serving disabled people in the way that we should. That worries me considerably. The TUC should work with other organisations just to see where it goes sometimes.

**This will come back next time when a decision on collaboration will have to be made.**

### **TUC equality structures**

**DC 1/5**

We spoke extensively about the structures.

Sara said General Council is quite happy for there to be two motions each at the TUC disability conference. We need to decide this at least by the next meeting. It is absolutely in your hands if it is your wish to have two motions?

Next meeting 10 March.

**Richard Cook reporting from the Disability Committee meeting held on Wednesday 7 March 2007 in Congress House, Great Russell Street, London WC1B 3LS.**

### **Commission for Equality and Human Rights – discussion with Kay Carberry, Assistant General Secretary, TUC**

Kay said she was appointed at the end of 2006. I am a sort of Trade Union person on the new Commission. This was after a couple of years

where we spent a lot of energy and years lobbying for there to be more than just one trade union person from the TUC. I am there as someone with a trade union label although Jeanie Drake from the CWU is a transitional commissioner. The deputy chair is Margaret Prosser. So we are not doing particularly well, but we are also not doing too badly either. It is also very early days. The first commission meeting took place just before Christmas. It is not going to be properly open for business until 1 October 2007. The period now is a busy one with a lot of activity that does not involve the commissioners. But they are deciding what the first year's workload is going to be. The Disability Rights Commission will obviously go out of existence.

I asked a question: I said my understanding was that there was still going to be differences between the rules of the different groups. But I then heard that every group would be treated with exactly the same rules. Is that still the case? Answer: The law review will decide to have a single equality act of some sort. Don't be afraid it will be the lowest common denominator. That is just not going to happen. What will instead happen will be levelling up.

**Minutes of previous meeting were accepted as true record.**

**Matters arising from the minutes**

**DC 2. 18 Jan 07**

I raised **Item 3** Flash photography. Answer: An expert professor will give a proper opinion on the whole issue. So effectively he will be arbitrating with those unions involved.

**Radar item 23.** Amicus thinks it is foolish to say you want nothing to do with organisations who are for disabled people but not of disabled people. It is a brilliant ideal, but at the moment the idea of just dealing with disabled people's organisations is not realistic. For instance, it could mean not doing any research into certain subjects because of lack of funding - I think disabled people would be losing out by the fact it was never even done. Also, if the TUC endorses a policy, people may say, well the TUC would say that wouldn't they. But if another organisation also endorses the same policy well that gives it so much more credence.

I think we should never have stopped working with the Disability Employment Coalition, because it just seemed to demonstrate poor judgement by us.

We should implicitly trust what the TUC does so much more.

## **TUC Disability Conference 2007**

**DC 3/1**

The speakers for Welfare reform, Ilene McColgan and Phil Davis have all said yes, but nothing from Richard Reiser yet.

We looked at all motions one by one and they were all on a relevant topic and addressed one subject, It was decided that we accept all motions.

The nominations: Section A 14 wanted. 14 received. Section B one nomination. Section C one nomination so no ballot will be needed for any of them. Section D we have had two nominations and a ballot will be needed.

## **Motions for TUC Disability Conference 2008**

**DC 3/2**

Much debate was had about having two motions as was asked for in DC 3/2. I said that Amicus wanted 2 motions. However what was decided was to have one motion and two amendments. This was wrong as it was never asked for, but it was carried.

## **Union survey on implementation of DED**

**DC 3/3**

The plan is to ask 7 questions. This would form a short survey with just yes or no answers. I said; because I sit on bodies that try to sort out the DED for Kent County Council and locally for Gravesend, I wonder how many people are like me? Part of my job is trying to decide what I should be asking for. So could we ask a question such as 'what do you consider the most important achievement so far?' as this would be useful to me?

### **Liz Smith, Director of Unionlearn, attended at at 1.30pm.**

Liz said: I would like to find out the things you feel are important. Unionlearn was established last year putting together what the TUC and unions are doing and taking this up the agenda. It wants to promote union growth, and equality. We think having union involvement is vital, and puts all this on the map. We have clear equality objectives with action plans. Amicus has a clear objective with disability champions. There are now 506 champions at the last count. Reading the figures there are 43% disabled people, 86 employers, 38 % completed the training, 40% are women, 38% public sector and a large proportion are non white and from 24 unions. Small but significant showing what reps can do. In the Northwest region talking about mental health issues at work and dyslexia. All this can be downloaded from our website. Training for disability champions was talked about some more, which led to a comment I thought I would make. This was; your answer was not my understanding and it might be something you might want to take on board. If you wanted disability champion training, if you could get 15 people and got in touch with the person doing the training they could probably do that in a place suitable to you. Liz agreed with that. So I said would it not be a good idea to tell people this making access to the training much clearer.

**DRC training for officials****DC ¾**

Excellent :another 140 places for union officials. We must send another priority list we must tell Peter we want some of this further training.

**I asked about making the DVD as was discussed last meeting.**

**Reasonable adjustments and Access to work****DC 3/5**

Peter would be delighted if unions could supply any evidence because nothing has been received so far despite already asking for information. Just half a dozen examples are all that are needed. Do Amicus have any?

**ODI consultation****DC 3/6**

We are being told they are looking at ways to measure improvements, because their aim is to show this by 2025 and we must welcome this. Amicus should respond. I said: We should encourage unions to encourage individual members to respond as this has been asked for. We could list the headings suggested. But DC 3/6 is excellent because it really says it all.

**Interpreting services-new policy****DC 3/7**

I found this interesting and sensible. Sara said: It is TUC policy to provide BSL signers whether people have asked for it or not. It costs an absolute fortune. We are told by UNISON that using precious BSL resources when they are not needed is wrong because we are depriving other people from having those valuable signers. So the TUC are asking that unless someone has asked for this it would not be provided. But it is not really about the money; it is that we are depriving others who want to have the service. I said; no one has said yet that if we adopt this new policy it is up to us to explain to people how important it is to make sure it is understood that unless it is asked for it will not be provided and explain that this is a new policy.

This was voted on and unanimously accepted and it is now a new TUC policy.

**Other business None**

Date of next meeting: 26 April 2007.

**Liberty- London's Disability Rights  
Festival takes place on**

# Saturday 1 September 2007

Liberty is the UK's largest disability rights festival, with street arts, theatre, music and dance that is aimed at everyone. This one-day event in Trafalgar Square showcases the talents of disabled artists, musicians, dancers and performers. There are also a variety of stalls and displays. Admission is free. Liberty welcomes everyone and on the day of the event a range of facilities and services is available at Trafalgar Square to ensure the event is inclusive and accessible to all.

Liberty is organised by the Mayor of London working together with Deaf and disabled Londoners. Groups contributing to the development of the event include: Attitude is Everything, Shape, People First, Creative Routes, Greater London Deaf Association, Glad, Regard and London Disability Arts Forum. TUDA hopes to have a stall there too. For further details email: [liberty@london.gov.uk](mailto:liberty@london.gov.uk)

Recorded information 020 7983 4277.

Enquiries 020 7983 4100

The TUC is asking unions organising in the public sector to circulate the attached short questionnaire urgently through all appropriate channels, to establish (a) whether public bodies have in place a Disability Equality Scheme, (b) whether disabled people and unions were involved in its preparation. The information gathered will be collated into a report for the TUC Disability Conference in May, so the deadline for responses is 11 May 2007.

As you know, unions believe that the Disability Equality Duty has immense potential to transform the lives of disabled people. This survey will provide a snapshot of how well public bodies have responded in the first months of it being in force.

Your assistance in encouraging a good response from across the union will be much appreciated. We are happy to have responses from any relevant level (branch, region, sector, national).

The Survey will also be distributed in TUC Mail for April.

Please send any responses to me in the first instance so I can collate them.

David

**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) \_\_\_\_\_

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Please make cheques payable to Trade Union Disability Alliance