

EQUALITY NEWS

Race Equality First



“Working with you
to make equality a reality”

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blog:

[www.REFCardiff
VG.wordpress.
com](http://www.REFCardiffVG.wordpress.com)



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Race Equality First

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you would like this
newsletter in an
alternative format.

NHS records being used by the Home office to help track down illegal immigrants

Adapted from James Ball The Guardian 13th July

The Home Office has been given access to the NHS records of more than 6,900 people since 2010 as part of its efforts to track down illegal immigrants. By making use of an exemption in the rules to access patients' non-clinical records, it allows officials to see where people have made use of the health service and when, but not the details of the clinical conditions or medical attention they received.

Katherine Murphy, chief executive of the Patients Association argues that “There is the very real danger that some patients may put off seeking medical help for fear of their details being leaked. Furthermore, children may suffer if parents are reluctant to take them for treatment when they are ill. The health and welfare of patients must always be the priority and we must not introduce policies which could undermine the core principles of our health service.”

The Immigration Act 2014

The Immigration Act received royal assent on 14 May 2014.
The Bill aims to:

- Identify illegal immigrants
- Make deportation easier
- Make living in the UK harder
- Introduce fees for healthcare for some groups of migrants (<https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/immigration-bill>)

This act will heavily impact on the lives of migrants, leading to further discrimination of vulnerable groups. Making landlords responsible for checking immigration status could lead to further discrimination against ethnic minorities, foreign nationals and those who do not speak English, which could cause further poverty and homelessness amongst these groups.

Racism complaints rarely upheld by Police

Adapted from Rob Evans The Guardian 15th June

The credibility of the police's repeated promises to rid the force of racist officers faces renewed criticism after new figures revealed that only 1% of complaints by the public for racist behaviour are upheld.

Members of the public lodged 7,963 allegations of racism against police officers in England and Wales over an eight-year period, according to the figures, of which 77 were upheld when the police investigated them. Three officers have been dismissed as a result.

The figures, collated through freedom of information requests by Channel 4 for a Dispatches programme, covering 2005 to 2012, show that 16 officers attracted five or more allegations of racist conduct from the public, while another 43 officers had four allegations, although none have been upheld by the police's internal investigations.

These figures show that the Met only upheld 0.4% of complaints from the public about racist conduct. Following criticism from the IPCC, Scotland Yard admitted last July that the way they dealt with the complaints was "letting down the public" and vowed to reform and learn.

According to the Dispatches programme, police have paid out compensation to complainants on more occasions than they upheld complaints, with The Met paying compensation on 45 occasions, but only upholding complaints 13 times.

Mike Cunningham, from the Association of Chief Police Officers, told the programme that the police "need to be very robust" about enhancing public confidence in their internal investigation procedures of complaints and getting rid of racist officers.

Dame Anne Owers, the chair of the Independent Police Complaints Commission (IPCC) watchdog suggested that complaints did not appear to be investigated rigorously by the police if the complainant did not have video or audio evidence.

Immigration, a worry for voters

Lucy Fisher New Statesman 27th June

Race and immigration is now seen as the most important issue facing Britain, according to the latest poll by The Economist/Ipsos.

It is the first time in almost six years that the controversial subject has topped the chart for the biggest challenges facing the UK. The poll reflects growing optimism about the continued recovery, signalled by a drop in unemployment this month to just 6.6 per cent, the lowest rate since 2009.

The fears surrounding race and immigration are likely to play to the favour of Ukip, the anti-EU party that wants severe controls placed on immigration, in the run up to next May's general election.

The poll revealed that the people more likely to mention the issue include those aged 55+ (47 per cent) and those who live in the South East of England outside of London (55 per cent), compared with those aged 18-34 and those who live in the capital (both 28 per cent).

Among the others issues cited as important, 28% of voters mentioned unemployment and 24% mentioned the NHS.

Amnesty International Website Blocked for Immigration Detainees

Adapted from Colin Yeo Free Movement.org 9 July 2014

The latest unannounced official HMIP report on Haslar immigration detention centre reveals that the centre staff had blocked the websites for Bail for Immigration Detainees (BID) and Amnesty International. Key websites were blocked, though there was access to the internet. There seems to be a discretion to block websites at each detention centre.

Minorities Less Likely to get a University Place

Adapted from Richard Garner The Independent 23rd July

Black and ethnic minority students face discrimination in seeking a university place, according to an LSE study. Around 71% of applications from white British students to the most elite universities resulted in an offer compared with just 49% of Bangladeshi and 52% of Pakistani students.

Applications from poorer students, men and young people from comprehensive schools were also less likely to receive an offer.

Why older gay people fear being forced back into the closet

Adapted from Channel 4.com 17th June (<http://www.channel4.com/news/lesbian-gay-bisexual-old-age-care-homes-abuse-video>)

The prospect of going into care is a terrifying one for some gay men and women, because they know friends so badly treated by residents and staff that they have gone back into the closet. They're worried about losing their independence. They're worried they could soon be surrounded once again by people who don't respect or understand their identity. Part of the problem they claim, is a lack of training, but they say it is also about the attitudes of their own peers who still struggle to accept what was once illegal.

Opening Doors manager Stacey Halls said: "Many younger LGBT people simply aren't very aware of the immense difficulty that many older LGBT people have and continue to face as a result of decades of discrimination.

"We have members who have been imprisoned, subjected to aversion therapies to 'cure' them, lost friends and partners to violent acts, lost custody of their children and forced to remain secretive and hidden in most areas of their lives – all because of their sexuality or gender identity."

**Have you been
a victim of discrimination,
harassment or a hate crime?**

If so, call our Casework Officer
between 9am and 5pm
Monday to Thursday and 9am to
4.30pm on Fridays on 02920 486207

Discrimination Casework

Casework Trends

It has been an interesting few months for the Casework Service. The majority of advice provided has continued to be primarily discrimination advice relating to Employment. Our Casework officer Lucy has been busy preparing for two forthcoming Employment tribunals which both involve racial discrimination in the workplace. We have also provided advice in relation to Disability and Age discrimination and assisted Transgender clients to challenge unfair treatment and discriminatory attitudes. REF continue to provide advice and support in Hate Crime cases attend and refer cases to the monthly housing hate crime MARAC which is attended by South Wales Police and Victim Support

Client A - Employment Discrimination

Client A was employed through a recruitment agency on a temporary contract as a Bilingual Teaching Assistant working with children with special needs in a Primary school in Cardiff. Client A had been working at the school for a period of nine months and after completing a successful classroom trial she was congratulated by the head teacher and told that she had impressed them during the trial and would be starting in a new position at the school which involved working on a one to one basis with children within the next few days.

Client A was given a start date and informed of what her duties would include in the new role. One day after completing the classroom trial successfully, Client A was contacted via the recruitment agency and informed that she was no longer suitable and would no longer be required for the position. Client A was informed by the agency that parents of the child she would be working with had complained that they did not want a person of Somali origin working directly with their child as they were a Somali family and feared that details relating to the child's condition would reach the Somali community.

This left Client A bemused and upset and she felt that this decision had been arbitrary and had been made purely on the basis of her race as opposed to her abilities and she was offered no further explanation as to why she would no longer be required.

REF have written to the head teacher directly who has admitted the schools incompetence in the dissatisfactory way that this situation was dealt with. REF acknowledged that client A was a temporary worker, however she had been at the school consistently for a nine month period and it is clear that the way that she was treated following the trial was manifestly unfair and discriminatory.

It has since come to light that there was in fact no complaint made about Client A and our correspondence has highlighted a significant breakdown of communication between the school and the recruitment agency. The school are looking to make an apology and offer further explanation to Client A and REF continue to represent Client A's best interests and correspond with the school and agency on her behalf.

Discrimination Casework

Client B – Employment Discrimination

Client B works as a Chef at a local university. He has been working in this position for three years and is of Black, African origin. Client B describes the kitchen environment as one where he would regularly be subject to racial abuse and harassment in the form of offensive language which he was regularly told by white colleagues to perceive this as merely banter and not to take offence.

Client B was working during a busy lunchtime period in the kitchen when staff realised that they had run out of some of the menu options; the stress of the situation sparked a dispute between Client B and another Chef. A racist comment was made by the other Chef to Client B. The other Chef physically lashed out and a fight broke out between them in the kitchen.



Client B was dismissed for gross misconduct without investigation, despite him not being the aggressor in this situation. The other Chef who is of White, British origin received no disciplinary action whatsoever following the incident. Client B complained of Unfair Dismissal and he was swiftly reinstated in his role as a Chef by the university after they recognised shortcomings in their disciplinary procedure.

REF are pursuing a Racial Discrimination case to Employment Tribunal against the university on behalf of Client B. Despite the fact that Client B has now been reinstated in his role, no steps have been taken to address the issue of racial discrimination prevalent in the kitchen environment and no action taken to discipline the perpetrators of it. REF intend to highlight the differential treatment of Client B clearly present when compared to his white colleagues.

REF also intend to rely on two statements from other members of staff who witnessed the direct verbal racial abuse used against Client B prior to the incident which led to his unfair dismissal.

Number of Individuals Advised (April 2014 ~ Present)

Casework Area	Cardiff	Vale of Glamorgan	Out of Area (Web)	Total
Employment	14	0	3	17
Housing	3	0	1	4
Public Services	5	1	0	6
Education	1	0	0	1
Police	0	0	1	1
Involving Hate Crime	3	0	2	5
Immigration Enquiries	1	1	0	2
Total	27	2	7	36

The impact of employment tribunal fees on claimants

The introduction and increase of employment tribunal fees since July 2013 has seen a dramatic decrease in claims. This emphasises the significant barrier to accessing justice that individuals now face. In recent weeks some of REF's Casework clients have had to pay hearing fees to allow their claims to continue. The aim of the fee introduction was to stop 'frivolous claims' from being made. As opposed to this REF believes that the fees are preventing those with genuine cases of discrimination from challenging the unfair treatment that they have received. REF have signed up to the Three Courts Walk on 25th September 2014 to promote the provision of legal advice and access to justice throughout Wales.

The New Labour pressure group recently analysed that the introduction of fees has led to a sharp fall in the number of discrimination cases. Around 1,200 women made a sex discrimination claim in the first three months of 2014 – barely a fifth of the 6,000 cases taken during the same period in 2013. Other types of discrimination cases are down too – sexual orientation and race discrimination cases are down 60 per cent, while disability discrimination cases are down 46 per cent.

Next LGBT coffee morning 18th September 2014 (10:00 AM)

Race Equality First are currently funded by the Vale Council to host a monthly coffee morning for the LGBT community, the last one, which was held on 14th August at Cafe No 5 on High Street in Barry was a success.

The next scheduled Coffee morning will be held on 18th September 2014 at the same venue. The coffee mornings provide a safe and relaxed environment, allowing those from the LGBT community an opportunity to discuss any issues or concerns that they may have and make new friends.

The REF Equality Forums

Our Training, Policy and Campaigns Officers have been busy setting up 6 forums in Cardiff and the Vale of Glamorgan where REF can offer support, advice and referral services to community people.








The forums will allow REF to develop community engagement and hear the views and concerns of individuals living in Cardiff and the Vale. We can offer support, advice and referral services to attendees as well as address discrimination and voice the views and experiences of local people.

The following forums will be held monthly with individuals living in Cardiff & the Vale:

LGBT Group
Carers Forum
50 Plus Forum
Taxi Drivers Forum
Youth Forum
Cardiff & Vale Residents Forum

To participate in any of our forums, please email us at info@raceequalityfirst.org.uk or call us on 029 2048 6207.

Some of our current cases across the equality strands

	<h3>Race</h3>
<p>REF has provided advice and support to a service user at a local hospital who has made a formal complaint about racially abusive comments that were made to him by a medical practitioner whilst he was undergoing treatment. REF continues to assist the service user to pursue his complaint.</p>	
	<h3>Age</h3>
<p>REF is assisting an employee who received unfair treatment in the workplace after discriminatory comments were made by a colleague about his age and inability to carry out his duties. REF is assisting him to raise a formal grievance with his employer.</p>	
	<h3>Disability</h3>
<p>REF is assisting a client with a complaint against South Wales Police for the unlawful treatment he received during his arrest and subsequent incarceration. The client alleges that the police failed to make reasonable adjustments to accommodate his disability whilst he was incarcerated for 22 hours. The complaint is being investigated.</p>	
	<h3>Gender Reassignment</h3>
<p>REF received a report of discrimination on the basis of Gender Reassignment and Disability in relation to the introduction of bedroom tax. REF assisted by liaising with medical practitioners, council departments and the housing provider to resolve the issue.</p>	
	<h3>Pregnancy & Maternity</h3>
<p>REF assisted an employee who raised a formal grievance with her employer after derogatory comments were made about her after she had been on sick leave for two days prior to going on maternity leave. The company did not respond or communicate with her and failed to deal with her grievance before she went on Maternity leave. Upon returning to work her request for part time hours was rejected and she believed the decision to reject her request to be based on the earlier grievance. This was a very distressing time for the employee and REF provided her with advice and clerical assistance.</p>	
	<h3>Religion and Belief</h3>
<p>REF is assisting an employee to make a formal complaint to his employer after he requested time off on Friday's for Muslim prayer. His request was subsequently rejected and offensive and discriminatory comments were made by his manager about the nature of his request. The complaint is currently being investigated.</p>	
	<h3>Sexual Orientation</h3>
<p>REF supported a bisexual woman who was experiencing discrimination in relation to child proceedings. After various assumptions had been made about her sexual orientation, REF liaised with her Solicitor in relation to highlighting key facts to address lack of understanding of the bisexual community and of bisexual issues.</p>	

MEEA project launched by the Commissioner



The Minority Ethnic Elders Advocacy Project (MEEA) was officially launched by The Older Peoples Commissioner for Wales Sarah Rochira at the India Centre in Cardiff. The event was hugely successful with well over 200 delegates, with many minority ethnic elders in attendance.

Julie Morgan AM was also one of the guest speakers and endorsed the project and championed the project at First Minister questions. On the day entertainment punctuated the proceedings which included a sublime sitar performance, hypnotic belly dancers, a very happy rendition of Pharell Williams Happy by a soulful singer.

The launch finished with an amazing performance by Age Alive, an elderly multicultural choir group from Newport. The rapturous response from the audience was the perfect way to end the launch and the feedback received afterwards was overwhelmingly positive.

The project has started to build momentum with 177 beneficiaries recruited to date across the partnership. The project has continued to work with and build relationships with local community groups and organisations. These community groups and others have been instrumental in generating beneficiaries and promoting the project.



Advocacy and support have been provided to over 50 beneficiaries across the partnership ranging from issues with domiciliary care, accessing GP services, disability adaptations, and welfare benefits. It is expected that these figures will increase as the project continues to raise its profile.

If you would like further information then please get in touch with the Project Co-ordinator Rez Jamal rez.jamal@racequalityfirst.org.uk or the Advocacy officer roon.adam@raceequalityfirst.org.uk

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Race Equality First Training

Race Equality First delivers a number of training courses and workshops that aim to raise awareness of equality issues. Our core courses detailed below can be tailored to meet the needs of a wide range of audiences including those working in the public, private and third sectors as well as service users and community groups.

Hate Crime Awareness Training

Our Hate Crime Training course analyses the findings from our ground-breaking All Wales Hate Crime Research Project which ended in October 2013. Race Equality First can provide full and half-day training sessions on hate crime which are designed to raise awareness and equip participants with the confidence and skills to respond to hate crime reports. By the end of our courses, participants will:

- Understand the definition of hate crime and the 5 protected characteristics recognised by UK law;
- Have an awareness of key aspects of UK hate crime legislation and the criminal justice system;
- Understand the impact of hate crime on victims and reasons for under-reporting;
- Know what to do when people report incidents of hate crime;
- Understand the roles of the different agencies and appreciate the importance of good practice in responding to reports of hate crime.

"Not knowing or having any preconceived ideas of the subject I found it extremely informative. The whole course was very useful".

Cultural Awareness and Community Engagement

"I would like to thank the trainers. They both gave me great understanding of equality in all aspects"

This course is aimed at providing participants with an opportunity to gain a wider knowledge and understanding of cultural diversity and distinguishing between culture and faith. The course explores diverse cultures and their history. It also aims to raise awareness of the public sector engagement duties under the Equality Act 2010. It offers practical advice and knowledge on methods to overcome barriers to effective community engagement with diverse communities.

Equality Act 2010 – Challenging Discrimination

The Equality Act 2010 Training Course is designed to introduce the Equality Act 2010 to participants and is suitable for anyone looking to increase their knowledge and awareness of Equality issues. The course will explore the background and need for Equality legislation as well as a comprehensive overview of the Act. Participants will gain knowledge about who the Act affords protection to and the recognised 'Protected Characteristics' under the Act. The course explores the types of discrimination that are covered by the Act and discusses case studies to demonstrate how the equality legislation may apply.

"I wasn't sure exactly how many acts there were until I attended this course. I am grateful this course has improved my understanding of the Act".

"Very interesting and informative".

"Excellent..Thank you!"

Islamophobia Awareness Training

The Islamophobia Awareness Training courses aim to provide participants with knowledge and awareness to recognise and tackle islamophobia and anti-Muslim discrimination. The course explores the causes and impact of islamophobia on individual victims and targeted communities.

Race Equality First Training continued

Anti-Discrimination Workshops for Schools

Race Equality First provides primary and secondary schools in Cardiff with free workshop sessions to raise awareness of issues such as racism, anti-bullying, hate crime, discrimination and promotion of equality and respect. Schools that are interested in participating in these workshops should contact Race Equality First and liaise with the equality officer responsible for schools and lifelong learning to register their interest.



External Training Courses

Race Equality First also delivers a diverse range of training courses around mental health, disability, transgender and other equality related issues.

Race Equality First also welcomes enquiries for bespoke training packages tailored to the needs of any organisation or company. If you are interested in further information about any of Race Equality First's Training Courses and Workshops please contact us on 02920 486 207 or e-mail info@raceequalityfirst.org.uk to request our Training Brochure.

What's coming up?

MEEA Stonehenge and Bath Trip 27th August

Depart at 8am, return approx 8pm.

Contact rez.jamal@raceequalityfirst.org.uk for more information

Three Courts Walk 25th September

If you are interested in joining, please sign up here:

http://reachingjusticewales.org.uk/?page_id=761

Fresher's Fayre

REF are having stalls at these events

(Cardiff and Vale college 10 and 11th September and Cardiff University)

Cardiff Half Marathon

Casework Officer Lucy Goodridge is running Cardiff Half Marathon to promote and fundraise for REF on 5th October



@REFCardiffVG



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to make equality a reality"

For further information:

Tel: (029) 2048 6207

Web: www.refweb.org.uk

Email: info@raceequalityfirst.org.uk

Registered Charity Number: 1143830
Company Number: 07663315