



IN EACH SEASON, *FIRST EDITION* LOOKS AT ONE OF THE FPA'S constituent organisations. This month's FPA Focus takes a look at the Steel Industry Managers Association (SIMA). John Morgan-Evans spoke to their President, Sue Hamill.

SIMA was started in the late 1960s by a group of middle managers at British Steel as an independent association. Originally, SIMA was administered independently but became a part of the EETPU (a forerunner of Amicus) in the late 1980s. SIMA is now very much a trade union, with all the traditional concerns, from pay and conditions to health and safety, as well as the resources.

SIMA has a 'local centre' and regional structure for representational and democratic purposes, with a biennial delegate conference and a National Committee.

Sue Hamill has worked for Corus (previously British Steel) for all her working life. Corus is one of the three main employers, along with Cap Gemini Ernst & Young and ArvestaPolarit, where SIMA members are employed. Sue says her motivation in her work as a translator is her lifelong interest in languages but that the 'general inability of the English to understand the importance of languages is a frustration'.

Sue joined SIMA at the start of her career in 1970. At the time there was talk of redundancies and she was invited to join by a colleague who had been instrumental in founding the association. 'At the time that was rather worrying for a new member of staff, but I soon realised that in the steel industry that was something that comes up every year', jokes Sue.

She became an active member of the union through involvement as a staff representative in the job evaluation process. She then became involved in her local branch. A two year battle to get translators onto professional grades was also important personally to Sue.

'In the end we won the claim and got our pay backdated. I used the money as a deposit on my first flat – it just goes to show union membership does pay!'

With the decline of the UK steel industry, SIMA has had to run fast to keep its members. Despite this, the association now has a very much higher proportion of managers and professionals in membership than it did during the industrial peak of the 1970s.

Many of SIMA's recruits move into the managerial and professional roles from within the companies and the association is keen to ensure that they are all asked to join. New graduates entering the profession are also sought out by SIMA reps and SIMA has a dedicated slot at the graduate induction events at the larger Corus sites.

'We put a great deal of thought into how to recruit graduates', says Sue. 'A couple of years ago we put a survey out to members asking them what they thought was most valuable in SIMA membership. We got the reply that the legal backup was top of the list.' SIMA will be launching a new website in the spring which it is hoped will reach out to potential members.

Sue says that she finds the work of SIMA at national level highly rewarding. 'Because I worked in British Steel's head office I was more interested in the bigger picture'. Sue has also recently been appointed as a member of the employment tribunal, and is well aware of the difficulties ordinary employees can face when they come up against the legal system, however informal it was originally intended to be.

The future for the steel industry, says Sue, is 'unclear. I'm sure if we went into the Euro it would help. There are now only 28,000 employed by Corus in the UK. The company needs to find a way to turn the corner. Whatever happens, SIMA will remain a powerful influence on the company'.



Sue Hamill

Who cares about social responsibility?

SIMA represents managers and other professionals working mainly in the UK steel industry. Association members receive the full benefits not only of their association membership, but also the benefits of the resources available to them as full members of Amicus, the second-largest trade union in Britain. SIMA is administered by the National Secretary, Gordon Hopwood and the elected national officers and National Committee, backed up by a team of regional full-time officials.

For further information on joining SIMA, please contact join@industrymanagers.org.uk
www.industrymanagers.org.uk

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First word

The National Secretary writes



In recent years trade union membership across all unions has slowly begun to grow from the low point of under 7 million members. The recent increases however have been mainly due to recruitment among part-time women employees. And the most recent research also shows:

- The proportion of white collar workers in unions (30%) is greater than that of blue-collar(29%);
- Union density among men is down from 31% to 30%;
- Union density increases with age. 4 in 10(38%) of employees in their forties are union members, only 1 in 5(19%) of 20 year olds is in a union;
- Welsh employees are the most likely to be in a union(40%) whilst in the south-east and the east its least likely (23%);
- half of all professional employees and 43% of all associate professionals will be union members...the highest percentages of all occupational groupings.

So if we were to roll all this together it seems that the greatest recruitment potential lies amongst the 40+, part-time, female professional living in Wales. Somewhere to book our holidays perhaps?

But the point of reviewing these statistics with you is to remind all of us, that if we are to promote trade unionism, then we need to take a very honest look at how well and where we are organised and successful today. We need to MAP our own workplace to identify how well we are organised in size, density and potential and from there reach out for that new member.

We all should want our union to grow, the stronger we are in membership, the greater the prospect of 'delivering the goods' for all our members.

There are new members to be gained from workplaces already unionised and there are workplaces similar to these that can be organised. Our union is popular and respected, even by those who do not see themselves joining.

Have you mapped your workplace? Would you like to? Can we give you some help? Contact one of the FPA team at Hayes Court and we'll take it from there.

Michael Murdoch

Michael Murdoch
National Secretary

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PLUS ++++++

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Stress Doubles Heart Risk

NEW RESEARCH CONDUCTED IN FINLAND shows that employees subject to workplace stress could be doubling their risk of heart disease.

The study, recently published by the British Medical Association, looks at 850 employees in a metals company over 25 years.

Employees were questioned about their work and the stresses involved. Employees were graded according to an 'effort-reward imbalance model' – those with the highest ratio between the work achieved and their perceived reward were scored highest. Rewards included salaries, social status, career development and job security.

The study found that those with the highest effort-reward ratio were twice as likely to suffer from coronary illness as those with the lowest.

Professor Mika Kivimaki, who led the study at the University of Helsinki, said that 'the evidence from industrial employees suggests that attention should be paid to the prevention of work stress'.



Stress, cited most often as a risk, by region:
 South East 60.5% South West 60%
 London 59% Wales 57%

- One in three of the European workforce reports problems with stress. This year's European Health and Safety Week, held in October, focussed on the problem of stress in the workplace.
- November 6 was National Stress Awareness Day. New evidence gathered by the TUC shows that stress continues to be a major issue for health and safety reps.
- The TUC's survey of reps in Wales showed that stress has become the number one health and safety concern. Eighty per cent reported

that workload was the main cause while nearly half also cited change and staff cuts as a source of stress.

- The TUC's stress MOT – a tool to stop you blowing a gasket at work – was downloaded over 5,000 times by the end of the week.
- An Amicus survey of 2,000 union health and safety reps from across the economy found half believed stress was a bigger problem than five years ago and a similar number said the situation was now worse than 12 months ago.

- Meanwhile, Health and Safety Executive statistics revealed that 40 million days were lost to sickness last year. Over 13 million lost work days were attributed to stress, anxiety or depression. ■

◆ MORE INFORMATION ◆

UK National Work Stress Network: www.workstress.uk The TUC is offering online help and advice for all workers in identifying and dealing with stress at work at www.worksmart.org.uk/health/index.php and has developed a 'stress MOT', available at www.tuc.org.uk/h_and_s/

Research at work shows vital role of union reps

RESEARCH FROM THE TUC SHOWS THAT companies with union reps are successfully resolving individuals' workplace difficulties.

The Labour Research Department (LRD) surveyed 877 union reps over the past year. The LRD found that 84% spent time resolving difficulties between individuals and management and almost a third, 28%, spent more time doing this than any other union activity.

Only 12% of employers were unhelpful towards workplace reps and 58% of the reps met managers regularly on matters beyond formal pay and conditions. Twenty percent of reps carried out some of their duties in their own time. ■

Further information: www.tuc.org.uk

One in three are bullied says report

A SURVEY MADE FOR RECRUITMENT specialists Eden Brown says a third of Britain's workers have suffered or witnessed bullying in their jobs. The majority of bullies were found to be supervisors.

The evidence reinforces and exceeds findings by the TUC which suggested that 25% of the UK workforce had suffered bullying.

The Eden Brown survey found 90% of people regarded job security as their top employment priority, offering a possible explanation for the

finding that 80% of bullying targets took no action to defend themselves.

Amicus Equality Officer Clare Baker commented that 'bullying is one of the biggest unnecessary costs and the greatest danger to UK employees and the efficiency of industry. We have an important role to play in raising the issue and dealing with it'.

The next issue of *First Edition* will carry a full report on bullying and an interview with bullying expert Tim Field. ■

ON THE AGENDA: CORPORATE ACCOUNTABILITY

RECENT DEATHS IN INDUSTRY AND THE railways have highlighted the need for new legislation to ensure that companies are held properly accountable for deaths for which they bear a responsibility.

Amicus-AEEU has recently affiliated to the Centre for Corporate Accountability and will be joining the growing campaign calling for changes to be made to the law. The changes asked for seek to better preventative measures to be put in place and to identifying malpractice.

TUC General Secretary John Monks said: 'We do not want scapegoats. We want accountability. That is the way to ensure that employers give more emphasis to preventing people being killed or injured in the first place.'

Further information:

www.corporateaccountability.org

GET ACTIVE FOR A SAFER WORKPLACE

AS REPORTED IN LAST QUARTER'S *First Edition*, this year's National Workers' Memorial Day will carry the theme of corporate accountability for the health and safety of workers.

The TUC has put a briefing and a poster order form on its website at www.tuc.org.uk/h_&_s. FPA Health and Safety reps will also be receiving a special briefing and materials over the coming weeks. ■

The FPA has launched a new website at www.amicus-fpa.org.uk. Next season's First Edition will contain a special webwatch feature on the new association sites.



Unions demand legislation to force pensions reform

FIRMS SHOULD BE COMPELLED TO PAY UP to 10% of their employees' salaries or wages into pension schemes. That is the conclusion of the TUC's submission to the Department of Work and Pensions Select Committee.

The Government released its Green Paper on pensions provision at the end of last year against a background of further erosion of pensions rights. The National Association of Pension Funds reported that, in 2002, 84 firms closed their final salary schemes to new entrants - double the number in the previous year.

The Green Paper suggests a relaxation of rules surrounding pensions, but has been widely criticised as inadequate and having too long a consultation period.

Amicus-AEEU General Secretary Derek Simpson commented that Amicus 'will continue to campaign for a decent state pension linked to earnings and the

provision of occupational final salary schemes as a partnership between state, employer and employee to provide security in retirement for our members.

'The trade union movement has long considered occupational pensions as deferred wages. We have a national minimum wage, so why not a national minimum deferred wage as well.' ■

Further information: www.tuc.org.uk/pension

◆ MORE INFORMATION ◆

A rally organised by the National Pensioners' Convention to mark Armistice Day has called for the state pension to be raised to £100 a week for a single person. A report into provision by the Pensions Policy Institute suggested that the retirement age may have to be raised as high as 72 to offset lower forecasted returns on investments. Further information: www.pensionspolicyinstitute.com www.natpencon.org.uk

Introducing ...

Amicus Researchers Claire and Vicky

Vacancies in the Amicus-AEEU Research Department have been filled by two new faces – Vicky Foxcroft and Claire Brennan.

CLAIRE BRENNAN IS RESEARCH Officer covering local authorities, the economy and devolved institutions including the debate over regional assemblies for England. Claire comes from a job as a Senior Research Officer in the Scottish Parliament, where she specialised in education and the economy.



Before working in the Scottish Parliament, Claire studied at Glasgow and Edinburgh Universities, gaining a PhD in Literature. Following graduation, she worked as a lecturer at Dundee University and is a published academic on American poetry.

A Labour Party activist, Claire was Labour's candidate in the 2001 General Election in North East Fife and is a regional list candidate in the forthcoming Scottish Parliament election. ■

VICKY JOINED US AS A Research Officer in June last year. Her brief covers Transport, the MOD and Government establishments. Vicky has a degree in business studies from De Montfort University, Leicester.



Previously she worked as Political Liaison Assistant to Douglas Alexander MP and as an Education Officer at De Montfort University. She has also been an executive member of the National Union of Students and the National Chair of Labour Students. ■

DIARY DATES: HEALTH AND SAFETY

International RSI Awareness Day conference, February 28:

■ The RSI Association are holding a conference in Nottingham to mark International Repetitive Strain Injuries Awareness Day (the last day of February is the only non-repeating date of the year).

Further details from: rsi.websitehosting-services.co.uk

TUC Risks 100 conference, April 4

■ A day-long conference celebrating the 100th issue of the TUC health and safety magazine Risks.

Further information: www.tuc.org.uk/h_and_s

UK stress conference, April 12

■ The UK National Work Stress Network's conference will take place on Saturday, 12, April 2003 at Hillscourt Conference Centre, Rednal near Birmingham.

Conference details and flier: www.workstress.net

MPs back new rules on asbestos safety

MPs HAVE BACKED THE HEALTH & SAFETY Executive's new duty to manage asbestos in buildings. Despite discrediting claims from the Conservatives that white asbestos is not harmful, unions and Work & Pensions Minister Nick Brown defended the new regulations as vital to protect lives.

The amended *Control of Asbestos at Work Regulations* were signed by the Minister after debate, and these new regulations will come into effect during 2004.

Amicus-AEEU Health and Safety Officer Mick Reed said that white asbestos deaths 'are higher than those caused by great white sharks. We accept the need to protect ourselves from 'Jaws' but the Tories are unconvinced that people need protection from ... asbestos.' ■

Further information: www.tuc.org.uk/h_and_s & www.hse.gov.uk/asbestos



CHARLES HICKLING

FIRST EDITION WAS SADDENED to learn of the death of former UKAPE National Secretary, Charles Hickling, on Monday, 2, December 2002.

Charles had been a member of the association since 1969. He began his working life at De Havilland, where he was a time-served precision engineer. He became a Chartered Engineer and was a shop steward of the TASS union, before joining UKAPE at its foundation.

An active Executive Committee member throughout his career, Charles finally served as National Secretary of UKAPE. He then chaired the Conference Committee from his retirement in 1991 and was largely responsible for last year's successful biennial conference at Newcastle-under-Lyme.

Charles moved to Ashmanhaugh near Wroxham, Norfolk, when he retired, in order to pursue his love of sailing. As well as his own Broads boat, he also skippered ocean yachts, including a pre-World War II 57-foot wooden ketch.

Among his charitable works he started LOSA, a 'sailability' organisation that organises sailing for the disabled and he personally adapted boats for their use. He was also a Church Warden at Ashmanhaugh and arranged the purchase of the church hall for the community and its refurbishment.

Charles was a sincere, honest man who will be sadly missed by his family, friends and Association colleagues but he will be long remembered as a man who got things done. ■

Brendan Barber wins election to head TUC

BRENDAN BARBER HAS BEEN ELECTED TO be the next General Secretary of the Trades Union Congress. He will take up his post at the end of May 2003. Barber takes over from John Monks, who will become the General Secretary of the European TUC.

Brendan Barber said that unions 'must reach out to non-union Britain. Not only exploited, low paid workers who fall below minimum union standards but also the new jobs in the new sectors which are too often no-go areas for unions. There is a growing professional workforce in Britain. Trade unionism has a job to do on their behalf too.' ■



BRENDAN BARBER

UKAPE in Good Shape

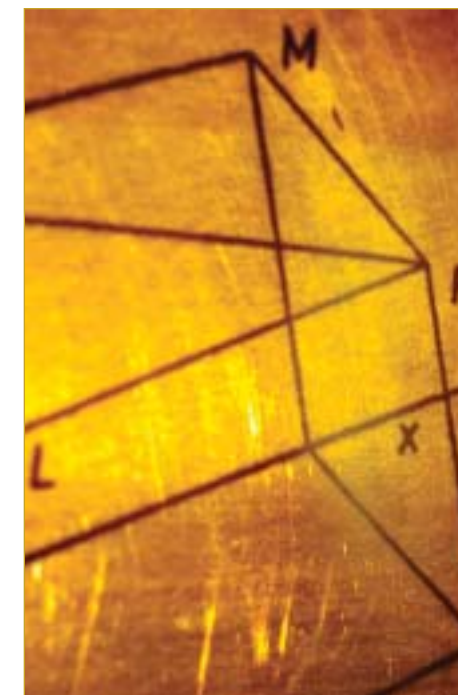
AT UKAPE'S AUTUMN CONFERENCE, President Ken Paterson reported that the Association had been very active throughout his term. Many members had benefited from the support and advice they had received from UKAPE. Recent enhancements to legislation on representation now offer even better opportunities to support members.

Regeneration was progressing, with modernised recruitment literature, a complete rebuild of the website and a renewed publicity campaign.

Workshops addressed recruiting and structuring the Association for the future. Major policy debates included pensions, manufacturing, rail safety, democracy in the engineering profession and ethics.

Conference delegates carried resolutions calling for state pensions to be increased using the same index as wages and for more flexibility from the government on money purchase pensions.

A resolution on manufacturing, calling for action by government to nurture engineering, technology and science, and



establish a strategic agency to oversee industrial development to target growth industries was carried unanimously.

New President Dick Hegerty took up office at the close of Conference. ■

Further information: www.ukape.org.uk

Surveys reveal time pressure

THREE RECENT SURVEYS OF WORKING LIFE suggest that the average UK employee takes less than half an hour for lunch, does not take the full holiday entitlement and has 10 sick days a year off work. The evidence points towards the conclusion that employees are being pushed too hard.

Another survey by Reed.co.uk also saw that around half of employees were not taking up all their holiday entitlement.

The number of sick days lost has risen over the previous year's figure by one. For non-manual employees, stress was the most common cause of long-term sickness. Economic and Social Research Council research suggests that nearly half

of men and one in three women often work extra hours. The Lunchtime Report by Eurest, the business caterer, also suggests an average nine-minute shortening of the lunch break to 27 minutes over the last year.

The Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development's (CIPD) survey of employee absence demonstrates that public-sector workers have more days off sick than workers in the private-sector.

Employers said sickness absences cost an average of £522 per employee per year but the CIPD noted that the true cost would be higher through loss of productivity and opportunity for overtime working. ■

A SURVEY RELEASED AT THE NEW year for the Department of Trade and Industry (DTi) reveals that flexible working is now the most desirable benefit for employees, ranking above cars, gym-membership and even pay.

In anticipation of new rights to request flexibility from employers, DTi Secretary Patricia Hewitt commented that 'the competitive advantages business gains from offering flexible working are now well established.' ■

Want to get Organised?

One of the key issues for trade union members in any workplace is organisation. We are stronger together.

But members with employers who don't hold recognition agreements with an FPA association face special difficulties. The FPA is running a special three day seminar for members who would like to gain the skill to help them build the FPA association presence in their workplace.

The agenda will cover topics such as how to organise towards winning a collective recognition agreement and employment law.

The seminar takes place from 24-26th March at Amicus' prestigious training facility, Esher Court. All accommodation and meals are provided and expenses for travel and for lost working time will be paid.

For further information contact the FPA office on 020 8462 7755 or email seminar@fpa.org.uk



Study shows wage boost of migrants

RECENT RESEARCH BY THE HOME OFFICE confirmed that migrant workers do not add to unemployment in the UK. *Migrants in the UK, their Characteristics and Labour Market Outcomes and Impact*, shows that migration actually has a positive effect on UK wage rates.

The Study produces evidence that 'an increase in immigration of one per cent of the non-migrant population leads to a nearly two per cent increase in non-migrant wages'.

In addition the research also shows that migrants born outside of the UK have a variety of useful skills, with 19% holding a degree compared to an average of only 16% of the UK population.

Amicus-AEEU Equalities Officer Clare Baker said that study 'explodes the myth that migrants take others jobs and raise unemployment. On the contrary, people who come to work in the UK contribute to the success of its economy.' ■

The report and further information can be viewed at www.homeoffice.gov.uk

RESPONSIBLE BUSINESS: The way forward

THE SCANDALS OF ENRON AND the now defunct Arthur Anderson accounting firm in the US have brought corporate social responsibility (CSR) to the forefront of the public consciousness. Around the world, unions have been raising the issue for decades, especially in the area of health and safety. **Ian Geary**, Amicus Research Officer, examines the background and the implications for trade unions in the UK, and on page 15 **John Morgan-Evans** reports on the Eurocadres conference on CSR.

CSR is now the vogue concept in the realm of modern corporate governance. Increasingly major businesses are claiming to accept greater responsibility for their environmental and social impacts.

The phenomenal influence of Non-Government Organisations (NGOs), the changing demands of consumers in their purchasing and ethical decisions and Government legislation have put pressure on companies to shift their business focus. In seeking the goal of 'sustainable development' many businesses have come to realise there is a sound business case for acting, and being seen to act, in a responsible manner.

Pressure

With major companies embracing CSR through specific activities such as stakeholder consultation, environmental and social programmes and reporting, it seems that the conventional wisdom of how and why a firm operates are being radically re-evaluated. But, before we get carried away with these welcome developments, trade unions need to take stock of events.

CSR has developed out of growing concern for the impact on the environ- Continued on page 10



The 'Relearn Rosyth' project in Babcock-Rosyth naval dockyard is an example of the connection between lifelong learning endeavours and community benefit

Continued from page 9

mental state of the earth by economic activity and the realisation that corporate power can either be a force for tremendous good or can be irresponsibly misused.

It is clear that the CSR agenda has been gaining popularity within the business community. And yet, few trade unions have got involved. When we consider that trade unions have an *a priori* interest in the way companies behave this neglect seems rather odd.

Trade unions need to take part in the wider debate. We need to be explicit on our stance. You cannot have genuine CSR without meaningful trade union involvement and fair treatment of the workforce.

Part of our heritage

CSR is incomplete without the inclusion of trade unions. Unions have been preaching social responsibility and social justice since the start of their very existence. It is an indelible part of our heritage. In order for CSR to become permanently integrated into modern business values and, not just a shallow marketing gimmick, it needs the benefits that a trade union can give. Good employers have nothing to fear from responsible unions.

We should also be very clear that companies that claim to be socially and environmentally responsible but treat their employees shabbily can hardly claim to be following the CSR route. Many companies boast about their progressive CSR credentials and yet do not even recognise trade unions. Employees are key stakeholders in companies and should be treated as such.

Green paper

The CSR agenda will be significantly affected by political interventions. The European Commission published a Green Paper on CSR in July 2001 which was followed by a White Paper in the summer of 2002.

The document affirms that there should be greater regulation of CSR to ensure consistent standards and a common framework. With little clarity on what CSR really is and a current dearth of regulation this is certainly an attractive proposition.

The 'Relearn Rosyth' project at the Babcock-Rosyth naval dockyard in western Scotland, is just one example of this connection between lifelong-learning endeavours and community benefit. The project equipped many dockyard workers with new skills in a period of sustained redundancies. This did not reduce the number of redundancies but it minimised the potential adverse effects. In addressing issues of employment and employability unions can ensure that companies strategies are rooted in reality and not simply focussed upon positive public relations.

Voluntary practice

Currently, CSR is a voluntary practice and its future currently may be vulnerable. Heavy regulation might stifle the agenda but limited and targeted regulation may help to move the debate on. For example, a mandatory requirement for all companies with over 250 employees to report annually on their social and environmental impact would be a welcome start.

Furthermore, if a requirement was made for companies to report on relationships with their key employee stakeholders, the connection between CSR and trade unions would be reaffirmed. Union endorsement of a company's CSR strategy should be seen as the litmus test for their credibility.

The inclusion of CSR on the business agenda is a welcome trend. With the active involvement of modern, progressive trade unions and a guiding legislative framework it can achieve its worthy potential.

Ian Geary can be contacted at i.geary@headoffice.aecu.org.uk

...BECAUSE WE ARE WORTH IT...

L'Oréal Belgique, the pharmaceuticals and cosmetics company, is a good example of a company where a genuine partnership on CSR had been developed between union and employer. L'Oréal employs 650 people in the Ardennes region, an area of exceptional natural beauty but also of high unemployment.

The union approached the company for a CSR agreement, which was achieved after a process heavily involving shop stewards. New safety mechanisms were put in place which emphasised avoidance and involvement.

The company agreed to become involved in training the regions' population for employment at L'Oréal and also to actively seek to employ locally and to use local suppliers wherever possible. In addition, a social balance is sought in the makeup of the workforce.

With regard to environmental issues, an annual account is provided by the company, which has invested in a water purification plant and has committed to use natural materials. L'Oréal itself states that protecting the environment is 'a civic duty, much more than a mere technical objective or legal obligation'.

Delegates to the Eurocadres Seminar agreed that the environment ought to be at the centre of business policy, arguing that 'companies cannot survive without the environment'. ■

FOR YOUR EYES ONLY: The Data Protection Act

The Data Protection Act 1998 implements the European Data Protection Directive which was adopted on 24 October 1995. The Act is broad ranging and covers all kinds of information stored by almost any organisation. In the workplace, where the levels of information stored by employers has rapidly increased over the last few years, the Act is likely to have a far-reaching effect.

The Act, which came into force fully in the UK in October 2001, replaces the Data Protection Act 1984. The main difference is that it gives employees access to certain manual records as well as those held on a computer. It also sets more rigorous controls on the processing of sensitive data and improves the rights of access of employees to their personal data.

The Act works in two main ways. Firstly, it sets out how those who record and use personal information must be open about how that information is used. Secondly, it gives individuals certain rights of access to this information.

Coverage of the Act

It is important to remember that the provisions of the Act cover virtually anyone who stores information on individuals or is the subject of this information.

Like the 1984 Act, the new Data Protection Act applies to employee records held on computer. However, unlike its predecessor it now extends to information 'recorded as part of a relevant filing system or with the intention that it should form part of a relevant filing system'.

A relevant filing system is defined as a set of

non-automated information relating to individuals which is 'structured, either by reference to individuals or by reference to criteria relating to individuals, in such a way that specific information relating to a particular individual is readily accessible'.

The Government has said that a relevant filing system would include 'files about named individuals in which each item has an internal structure conforming to some common system'. For example, forms that make up part of an organised filing system are likely to be covered.

'Data' is defined in the Act as either material in a relevant filing system or that which is 'being processed by means of equipment operating automatically in response to instructions given for that purpose' or is recorded with the intention that it should be processed in this way. This means all systems with some kind of automated control, not just information stored on a computer but also on video, audio or telephone logging systems.

The employer's obligations

All employers have two main obligations relating to keeping personal data under the Act. They must:

- comply with eight 'data protection principles' (listed below);
- ensure that they make a notification to the Data Protection Commissioner if necessary.

The data protection principles

Continued on next page



FOR YOUR EYES ONLY:

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The principles state that data must be:

- fairly and lawfully processed
- processed for specified, lawful and limited purposes
- adequate, relevant and not excessive
- accurate
- not kept longer than necessary
- processed in accordance with the data subject's rights
- secure
- not transferred to countries without adequate protection.

Keeping sensitive personal data

The 1998 Act introduces new restrictions on the processing of sensitive information relating to employees:

- Racial or ethnic origin
- Political opinions
- Religious belief (or other beliefs of a similar nature)
- Membership of a trade union
- Physical or mental health or condition
- Sex life
- Any criminal offence committed
- Any proceedings or sentencing relating to any offence alleged to have been committed by the employee.

The processing of this data is subject to the

eight data protection principles. However it also needs to comply with at least one of ten conditions. Set out below are the main ones which relate to the workplace:

- The employee has given his or her explicit consent to the processing of the data
- The processing is necessary in connection with any legal proceedings or for the purpose of obtaining legal advice. This would allow an employer to disclose sensitive personal details from an employee's file in defending a tribunal claim
- The processing is necessary for the administration of justice, for the exercise of functions conferred by statute or for the exercise of any functions of the Crown
- The processing of information relating to ethnic or racial origin; is necessary for the purpose of monitoring equality of opportunity or treatment between persons of different racial or ethnic background with a view to achieving equality of treatment; and is carried out with appropriate safeguards for the rights and freedoms of employees.

Employee rights to Access as data subjects

The Act contains a number of provisions

Continued on next page

OTHER RELEVANT LEGISLATION

THE HUMAN RIGHTS ACT

On the 2 October 2000 the Human Rights Act came into force. The Act, which brings the rights enshrined in the European Convention on Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms into force in the UK, requires all public bodies to take these human rights into account in their procedures and actions.

THE ACCESS TO MEDICAL RECORDS ACT 1988

Protection for employees for the use of confidential medical records by their employer without their consent is already enshrined in the Access to Medical Records Act 1988. It also gives the employee the right to see a medical report before it is given to the employer and enables the employee to ask for changes to be made to it.

THE DATA PROTECTION TELECOMMUNICATIONS REGULATIONS 1998

Regulations implementing the provisions of the EU Data Protection Telecommunications Directive 97/66/EC came into effect with the 1998 Data Protection Act. This Directive imposes special rules for the processing of personal data in public telecommunications systems, faxes, telephones and automated calling systems for unsolicited marketing.

The Data Protection Act

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giving employees the right to obtain access to their personal records and demand that errors be rectified.

Employees have the right to request in writing:

- Whether personal data about them is being processed
- To be given a description of the data concerned, why it is being processed, and to whom it can be disclosed
- To have communicated 'in an intelligible form' the personal data concerned and any information available to the employer as to the source of the data
- To be informed, in certain circumstances, of the logic involved in computerised decision making.

Requesting information

The employer is not obliged to supply this information unless the employee has made a written request and he is supplied with sufficient information he may reasonably require as to the identity of the person making the request and in order to locate the requested information. The employer can also ask for a fee of not more than £10. Employers must comply promptly, within 40 days.

Where compliance with an employee's request for information or disclosure would result in disclosure of information relating to another employee, the employer need not comply unless the third party consents or it is reasonable in all the circumstances to dispense with his or her consent. This does not absolve the employer from the duty to disclose this information if the identity of the third party

can be concealed by the omission of names or other identifying particulars. However there are some important exemptions to these rights of access, including employee references, information for which the disclosure would 'prejudice the conduct of business', and information which is sensitive to pay negotiations.

The right to compensation

A data subject can claim compensation from a data controller for damage or damage and distress caused by any breach of the Act. Compensation for distress alone can only be claimed in limited circumstances.

Asking the Commissioner

Anyone who believes that one of the principles or requirements has been broken and is unable to sort the problem out themselves, can ask the Data Protection Commissioner to make an 'assessment' as to whether the Act has been contravened. The Commissioner may then decide to serve an 'enforcement notice' on the data controller in question. The Commissioner can now also issue a notice requiring the employer to provide information for the purpose of determining whether a data protection principle has been breached. Failure to comply with a notice amounts to an offence.

Further information

www.dataprotection.gov.uk | www.hms.gov.uk/acts

A fuller version of this guide, For Your Eyes Only, can be downloaded from the Amicus AEEU website at www.aeeu.org.uk or ordered on paper from the Research Department at Hayes Court – see p.2 for address.



CREDIT REFERENCES

The right to see your credit reference details is covered by the Consumer Credit Act 1974. You can get a free leaflet from the Data Protection Commission on 01625 54 5745.

UNWANTED MAIL OR PHONE CALLS

If you want to stop personally addressed marketing material being sent to your home you can contact the Mail Preference Service on 020 7766 4410 or write to them at Freepost 22, London W1E 7EZ. If you want to stop uninvited telesales calls or telemarketing faxes, contact the Telephone Preference Service (TPS) on 0845 070 0707 and the Fax Preference Service (FPS) on 0845 070 0702.

Legal Queries

One of my colleagues has been off work due to stress for eight months. There are now moves to terminate his contract. Will this be a 'fair' dismissal?

Employees only gain protection against unfair dismissal after one year's service. For a dismissal to be deemed fair, employers need to:

- investigate and assess the nature of the illness;
- consult with the employee on the likely period of absence or whether a return to work is likely or possible;
- obtain medical evidence;
- consider suitable alternative employment within the company.

They will also need to look at the options for dealing with the absent worker's workload. If the employer fails to carry out the above procedures before dismissing the employee it may give rise to a claim for unfair dismissal.

The Disability Discrimination Act 1995 (DDA) may also be of some help if the employee has or is likely to suffer an impairment to the ability to undertake 'daily activities' for at least one year.

The DDA has no qualifying period of service. Protection begins at the start of employment.

The DDA requires the employer to make 'reasonable adjustments' to the job to allow those protected to remain in post. For example, altering working hours or allocating some of the disabled employee's duties to someone else. However, the determination of the reasonableness of the adjustments is subject to 'business needs'.

My child is sick and I need time off work to look after her but my employer is refusing. Do I have any rights?

You have the right to take a reasonable amount of time off for such an emergency, so long as you tell your employer as soon as you can. Your employer is not obliged to pay you unless your contract of employment states you are entitled to paid time off in such circumstances. However, this is a short-term right and is limited to time you may need until alternative care arrangements are made.

There may be circumstances where it is

reasonable for an employer to refuse time off, for example, if your spouse is unemployed and free to care for your child. It would be for a tribunal to consider whether a refusal was reasonable if a complaint was made. The right also covers other emergencies such as domestic flooding or power failure.

A refusal on the part of the employer may be taken to an industrial tribunal within three months of the date of refusal.

I work in an engineering firm with bases on the continent. We are currently being re-structured. What will happen to my terms and conditions if the company ask me to work temporarily in France or Germany?

Employees working in EU countries have the right to the same basic terms and conditions as apply in another EU country. Therefore an EU national can come to the UK and the minimum wage will apply. However, companies are not currently obliged by EU law to offer the same contractual terms and conditions across the EU.

I am leaving my job and I want to be sure that I get a good reference. I haven't seen eye-to-eye with my line manager. What are my rights?

In the long-run it is best that you part on good terms with your employer, as you may need references in the future, so avoid antagonising your manager.

References can be written or verbal but must only relate to the employee's ability to do the job being offered and how well the employee has performed in the current post.

Companies are not obliged by law to provide references, but where they do, they must be accurate and fair. This is called their 'duty of care'. Where inaccurate or misleading references are provided companies may be sued for negligence.

Send your legal queries to us at: fristedition@amicus-fpa.org.uk

First Edition recommends that you contact your full-time official for further advice, especially if you intend to take a grievance or tribunal.

Putting CSR on euro agenda

Corporate Social Responsibility is in part the duty of trade unions – in Europe, federations are already in consultation

IN CONSIDERING WAYS TO ADDRESS CSR, the European Community (EC) will be legislating as soon as 2005. As part of the legislative process, 'social partners' and 'stakeholders', such as trade unions and business bodies, are being consulted.

In Europe, as well as the all-embracing European TUC (ETUC), unions are organised into federations based on industrial and professional interests. The FPA associations are affiliated, through the TUC, to Eurocadres, a grouping of professional and managerial unions. Eurocadres members met in December to consider its response to the EC consultation on CSR.

The seminar, entitled Responsible European Management, identified four areas which Eurocadres members want to see addressed in developing the 'European management model':

- credibility
- management processes
- employee involvement
- a pan-European framework.

Eurocadres President Michel Rousselot described the processes involved in developing the strategy and went on to highlight the importance of personal development, accountability and openness in developing CSR partnerships.

Penny Clarke of the ETUC underlined the importance of examining the social and environmental impacts of business. The ETUC also want to see a globally respon-

sible approach to the placing and administration of contracts. Evaluation tools will be developed in order to gauge the CSR performance of companies.

Erik de Smedt, of In Society, reinforced these arguments and added that unions had a responsibility to ensure that the social aims of CSR may be undermined by the drive for short-term financial benefits.

Further discussion highlighted the need for unions to train their reps in CSR issues and to incorporate CSR philosophies into current learning programmes. It is seen as most important to ensure that development of CSR was 'inclusive', involving as many of the parties as possible in planning, implementation and monitoring.

Suzy Sumner of the international civil society group Solidar argued that the unions needed to come to agreement on a 'broad strategy', which encompassed global issues such as supply chains and the protection of vulnerable communities.

The conference concluded that there were some difficulties to overcome in developing CSR policies but these could be overcome by wide involvement and a consistent benchmarking and evaluation model.

Michael Murdoch, FPA National Secretary, commented that, 'a sincere and structured approach to CSR makes sense in many ways: for the care of the environment; for

the health and safety of the workforce; and for the overall efficiency and performance of the business and industry.

'But we have to be alert to the danger of superficial compliance. Some firms may apply the minimum statutory requirements with little real commitment. This will result in correspondingly small improvements. This is a matter which requires genuine conviction to its social validity, and not some half-hearted or half-baked attitude relying on statutory fall-back arrangements'.

A full policy report is to be produced by Eurocadres later this year.

Further information: www.eurocadres.org

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GENERATING RESOURCES

Mature and effective partnerships between unions and business benefit from an outward focus. Amicus AEEU has many competencies and attributes that can 'add value' to CSR. Our charity, 'The Learning Fund', seeks to generate resources for projects that will benefit working communities. In seeking to involve our members and partner companies in lifelong learning and social welfare projects we are making a pertinent point:

The nation suffers from a deficit in basic skills across a range of key sectors.

The Union's lifelong learning activities make an impact. Underpinning lifelong learning, in partnership with companies and training providers, not only equips individuals for vocational challenges but can meet real social needs as well as personal aspirations.





In the last issue of *First Edition* we reported on Amicus' new lifelong-learning strategy and the project's objectives. The Union has received funding of £1.4m for the Learning Fund and now has all its staff in place. Maggie Lambert, one of the Fund National Co-ordinators, talked to John Morgan-Evans about her hopes for the endeavour.

Releasing the Potential

THE FUND AIMS TO OFFER members new opportunities for their personal development. Maggie has an understanding of the importance of this to employees through her own experience. Having left school with no qualifications, Maggie worked on her own education and achieved a degree in sociology from Warwick University.

Maggie has previously worked in her own business, and it was during this time, and with two small children, that she worked on her degree.

'I always knew I could do it, but I'd had a very broken education. I did an O-level in sociology and A-levels in English literature and history. This got me into university, which was a big culture shock for me as I left school at sixteen, got married at seventeen and had my first child at eighteen.'

Bottom-up approach

During her time managing over thirty staff in her own business, she realised the need for staff to identify and plan their own training. The arrival of computers was a strong prompt to do something. The staff themselves chose the IT training company.

'It was based on what they wanted because they were the ones who had to learn. Basic key skills came out as an

important issue. We all had to learn together and the company was keen to pay for staff to go to night classes.'

Attention to career development is an important issue for FPA members but Maggie says 'it is also about developing people in themselves and getting a balance in your life. There is more to life than just work and a happy person also performs their work better – the sooner employers work that one out, the easier it will be.

Work-Life balance

'I'm very keen on work-life balance and ensuring that people have time for every aspect of their life. The happier people are, the more motivated they are, and that's good for everyone. The more a person feels their employer really cares about them as a person, the more loyalty they get.'

Maggie points out that one of the difficulties unions will have to overcome is addressing the denial within companies and their staff in addressing key skills needs.

'At the moment not too many companies want to talk about basic and key skills. Often the response is "we don't have that problem here." Often very clever people go unnoticed for many years because of a reluctance to address their skills needs. There are also discrimination concerns.'

There is a need to overcome an industrial culture in which women in particular are not normally encouraged, or even themselves expect, to achieve in their careers.

'There is also an age problem. We have a lot of equality laws and anything should, in theory, be possible for anyone, but the facts are somewhat different. We live and work in a multi-cultural environment but some constituencies are not being properly addressed. In some cases women feel they can't talk to men and vice-versa, so it's up to the union to help overcome those barriers and perceptions.

'But it is not just about basic and key skills. In my view it goes beyond that, because as we develop as a nation, and the Government has a target for us to be world leaders in skills by 2010. So all of our key skills have to improve.

Culture of change

'Companies need to recognise that they need to deliver the basics but then go beyond that. When people get a flavour for training they want more and smart firms will help them get it. It has to be about changing the whole culture, including management and all the workforce.'

One of the important features of the programme is that it gets away from

the top-down approach. The Learner Reps come from all levels of the company and so the employees themselves take ownership of the project, reflecting the diversity of interests and desires.

Time for trust

Maggie points out that the Unions' role is to support and train the reps in an area in which they may not feel naturally comfortable: 'What people want is respect and variety in their work, and to be listened to. Nowadays, people don't want to be on the same machine for their entire working lives. They want to be in a position to ask for time-off for family matters without feeling anxious about an employer's response. It's all down to trust.

'We want to work with companies and we want to make sure our Learner Reps are confident and happy with their role. So, we have developed a package of training and materials to support them.'

Maggie Lambert will be reporting on developments in Lifelong Learning for First Edition over the coming year.

FURTHER INFORMATION

If you would like to become a Learner Rep, or receive further information see the Training and Education pages at www.aeeu.org.uk or Call Andy Sims on 020 8462 7755

International

Fighting repression needs global solidarity

Despite justified calls for further legislation to protect trade unionists, the social background to union organisation in the UK is extremely calm compared to many countries, reports *Harry Graham*

DECEMBER 10TH WAS INTERNATIONAL Human Rights Day, marking the 54th anniversary of the adoption of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights by the United Nations. Unfortunately, this year's Human Rights Day has been marked by arrests and murders of trade unionists.

On the eve of Human Rights Day, Zimbabwe President Robert Mugabe ordered the arrest of a number of leading officials of the Zimbabwe Congress of Trade Unions, including ZCTU General Secretary, Wellington Chibhebhe. The arrest was immediately condemned by the International Confederation of Free Trade Unions (ICFTU).

The ICFTU's Annual Survey of trade union rights violations, which covers 132 countries and territories across the world, notes 223 cases of murdered or 'disappeared' trade unionists in 2001 – (14 more than in 2000). Over 4,000 trade unionists were arrested, 1,000 injured and 10,000 sacked.

The cause of the problem in many countries is social instability. Some regimes fear that allowing trade unionism will encourage wider democratic ideals to take root. In response they act to outlaw and otherwise block and discredit unions.

Zimbabwe crisis

The crisis in Zimbabwe has been accompanied by attacks on members of the Zimbabwe Confederation of Trade Unions (ZCTU). Activists have been thwarted in their attempts to organise by threats and intimidation. The legal right to strike has been disregarded by the government.

In January 2002, in Zimbabwe's Masvingo province, three striking teachers were beaten by 'war veterans' and then incarcerated in the local police station for several hours. In May, a threat to ban strikes was met by a general strike, during which shots were fired at strikers by police. This was followed by several arrests, including that of ZCTU General Secretary Wellington Chibebe, who was interrogated by police.

Korea still dangerous

As reported in last month's *First Edition*, South Korea continues to repress union activity. Since the summer, several more unionists have been arrested, including 241 striking hospital workers. The arrests took

place on September 11th 2002 when 3000 riot police stormed three hospitals owned by the Catholic Church of Korea where striking workers were taking part in sit-ins as part of an on-going pay and conditions dispute. In all, 49 trade unions are



languishing in Korean jails, including Dan Byung-Ho, President of the ICFTU-affiliated KCTU and Kim Dae-ghil, President of the Korean railworkers union, with a further 75 wanted by the authorities.

In April, 300 members of the Daewoo Motors Workers' Union tried to enter their union office, located within the Pupyong plant in Incheon. Riot police prevented the workers from entering, then attacked them. When the police rampage ended, the street was literally strewn with the injured. A total of 43 unionists had to be taken to the hospital with broken arms, legs and serious head wounds; one person was almost blinded and another had a lung perforated.

'Regimes fear that allowing trade unionism will encourage wider democratic ideals to take root...'

WHAT CAN BE DONE?

Clearly, more regulation is needed in order that the global market is underpinned with better social protection. Preventing poor labour relationships from being exploited by global companies would remove the unfair advantage they have in production costs over good employers. Our trade unions have a role to play in raising awareness of the issue in international forums.

It is also important to give daily practical support and encourage individual members to help, for example through financial donation or electronic campaigning. Experience of recent years shows that companies and regimes are sensitive and do respond to unfavourable publicity.



In Central Africa the union leader Théophile Sony Colé (USTC) was arrested on 17 June 2001 at the airport. The regional organisation alerted a maximum number of regional and international leaders, and this eventually led to his release.

In El Salvador, thanks to the combined pressure of unions, the press and solidarity groups, the workers at the Taiwanese textile factory Tainan El Salvador S.A. managed to gain recognition for their union, the union of textile workers (STIT). ■

Further information:
kctu.org www.labourstart.org
www.imfmetal.org www.icftu.org

UNCHAINING CORPORATIONS

CONVENTIONAL WISDOM HAS IT THAT NATIONAL UNIONS ARE powerless in the face of international corporations because while capital can easily move around the globe, workers generally cannot. So, when the Prudential Insurance company announced recently it was to axe hundreds of jobs in Britain and replace them with jobs in a call centre in India, there seemed little that could be done.

tabled a motion at the forthcoming company AGM that would have reduced the voting rights of corporate shareholders. Once news of this leaked out, the way was clear for an unusual and broad alliance against the Hanson-Peabody top management team. Nine months after the strike began Peabody climbed down and signed a collective



However, the evidence from successful corporate campaigns shows that workers don't need to move around the world to confront multinational corporations: it is international worker organisation, not mobility, that is far more critical. John Kelly, Professor of Industrial Relations at the London School of Economics gives two examples which illustrate the principles involved.

In 1993 the Peabody company, America's largest coal mining firm, deliberately forced a strike by the United Mineworkers (UMWA) as part of the coal owners long term plan to de-unionise the entire industry. At the peak of the strike, in summer 1993, 18,000 miners were engaged in strike action across seven US states. However, as Peabody was owned by the multinational holding company Hanson plc, it was clear to the UMWA that Hanson would absorb the profits cut in Peabody and simply sit out the strike until the miners gave in.

The UMWA searched around for other power resources to pressure the company. Three familiar tactics in the union's repertoire were quickly started up, the first of which was international solidarity action at Hanson-owned firms around the world.

For example, South African workers staged a 24 hour strike at a battery factory in Port Elizabeth. Coalitions were built with progressive religious groups in the US around the theme of Hanson's third-world sweatshops. The Clinton administration was officially asked by the UMWA to investigate Hanson's third-world labour practices and agreed to do so.

Unusually, the UMWA also decided to try and mobilise corporate shareholders, some of whom were becoming alarmed at the mounting losses due to the strike as well as the adverse publicity. The union leadership offered to shareholders a classic defence of union-management partnership: labour-management cooperation would improve both profits and wages far more effectively than Peabody's aggressive anti-union approach to management.

By a stroke of luck the union campaign was helped by Lord Hanson himself, who had quietly

agreed acceptable to the union.

Another example comes from the telecommunications industry. For many years the major telephone companies around the world were often state-owned monopolies and heavily unionised. A combination of government-driven deregulation and technological change has transformed the industry, opening it up to new firms and forcing many existing firms into mergers.

One such firm was Ameritech which in the early 1990s rapidly bought up telephone companies in Europe to add to its core US holdings. There were two key elements in the company's industrial relations strategy.

In its unionised establishments it pursued a sweeping programme of contracting out so that unionized jobs were literally removed from the corporation. In its newly acquired companies it ran aggressive campaigns to counter union organizing drives. Over a period of years union density levels had fallen steadily as a result.

By late 1997 the leadership of the Communication Workers of America (CWA) decided to step up contacts with union counterparts in other areas of the Ameritech empire. A meeting in January 1998 involved unions from Belgium, Denmark, Hungary and the US and decided on a mass lobby of the company's AGM in April followed by an international day of action in June to protest against the company's policies.

Not surprisingly in the turbulent world of telecommunications, the AGM was to debate an acquisition proposal from a US rival, SBC, with whom the CWA enjoyed a good working relationship. Both the lobby of the AGM and the International Day of Action went ahead as planned. Both alarmed the new SBC management sufficiently for it to invite the Ameritech unions to the first of a series of meetings in February 1999 to discuss the issues at stake.

This article was originally published as a chapter in the new TUC pamphlet Organising Revival: Organising Around the World, which can be ordered at www.tuc.org.uk or by calling 020 7636 4030.

COLUMBIA TOPS LIST

Columbia currently has the worst human rights record in the world, EESA member Paul Grunmill reports.

In the autumn of 2002 the Oilworkers Union of Columbia (USO) called for a conference entitled 'Right to Life'. The purpose was to draw attention to the plight of the country's trade unionists, with the USO describing the movement as 'facing extinction'.

Backing up the claim are the grim statistics that 80% of the world's murders of unionists happen in Columbia, with the death toll for last year already at 120 in September 2002.

The background is the continuing deterioration of the economy under President Uribe. There have been severe cuts in public expenditure including a 30% wage cut for public sector workers. The state retirement age is to be raised and pensions may be privatised.

In preparation for an escalation of protests, the police and army have been given greater powers to arrest unionists. Foreign nationals have had travel restrictions imposed, and this has led to the postponement of the USO Right to Life conference. ■

New directive aims to end workplace discrimination

TOUGH NEW RULES TO PROTECT employees from sexual discrimination and harassment at work are being introduced following recent amendments to strengthen the 25-year-old EU directive on equality in the workplace.

The new EU legislation updates the 1976 Equal Treatment Directive by bringing it into line with more recent European Court judgements that clarify and reinforce the 1976 provisions. These guaranteed equal treatment for women and men in applying for a job or promotion, in vocational training and working conditions. The changes also comply with the anti-discrimination legislation introduced on the basis of the Amsterdam Treaty.

One of the key reforms focuses on sexual harassment at work. Now, for the first time at the EU level, binding legislation defines sexual harassment and outlaws it as a form of sexual discrimination. It bans any form of unwanted sexual behaviour that creates an intimidating or degrading environment.

The commission initiated the first Europe-wide research on sexual harassment in 1987. Since then, it has argued for strong measures to deal with the problem, which it says exists in all workplaces to a varying degree.

Commission studies have shown that 40-50% of women and 10% of men in the EU consider that they have been sexually harassed at least once in their working lives. The offenders are overwhelmingly men and mostly colleagues or superiors.

The new rules define direct and indirect discrimination more clearly. They also strengthen enforcement provisions and sanctions and, for the first time, allow associations and organisations to take legal action on behalf of victims.

The legislation urges employers to take preventative action against all forms of discrimination including sexual harassment.



DOMESTIC VIOLENCE - MAKING THE WORKPLACE A REFUGE

A new guide published by the TUC aims to help unions and employers develop sympathetic but effective ways of assisting the victims of domestic violence.

The problem will affect one in four women at some point in their lives, according to the TUC.

'Domestic violence: A Guide for the Workplace' points out that whilst employers have no legal obligation to act over domestic violence, the existence of a sensible policy is a goal towards which all workplaces should be working. The guide suggests a number of areas on which employers and unions can work jointly, including security, confidentiality and training.

A number of organisations are listed and a number of case studies are used to illustrate the serious nature of the problem.

Clare Baker, Amicus-AEEU Equalities Officer said: 'those who experience domestic violence often keep it to themselves. Ashamed and embarrassed by what is happening to them, they are unsure of where they can go and what help they can get, and fearful of doing anything which might make the situation worse.'

'It is mainly women who experience domestic violence and it is largely men who perpetuate such violence. Frequently the children are caught up in the middle. The sheer scale of the violence

has many dreadful consequences not only for the individuals directly involved but also for their wider families and the whole community.

'Half of the incidents of domestic violence recorded by police involved co-habitant couples, therefore, work can be a refuge and companies should be able to provide appropriate support for women and men who are experiencing domestic violence.'

The guide costs £20 and is available from TUC Publications on 020 7467 1294.

HAVE YOU GOT A MENOPAUSE STORY TO TELL?

The TUC will soon be publishing a report on the health and safety implications of the menopause as part of a continuing work on women's health and safety.

They have surveyed safety reps and now want personal testimonies to make the issue more live.

The TUC's Owen Tudor says: 'we want to know what problems women have encountered at work - what has gone wrong and what you would have wanted done better.' Your testimony can be anonymous.

If you have a story to tell, or if any of your colleagues do, send it to: otudor@tuc.org.uk at the TUC.

WebWatch

ONLINE CAMPAIGN VICTORY

'Sydney's 500 Hilton Hotel workers have won a magnificent victory, and they owe it to the more than 3000 people from around the world who joined a cyber-picket line, sending protest e-mails to the Hilton Hotel chains top executives.'

That was the verdict of the Australian LHMU general union. The hotel is temporarily closing to carry out a \$200 refurbishment and had been planning to lay off its staff on unfavourable statutory terms.

The Hilton management informed the union that the online support from thousands of ordinary trade unionists and high profile figures such as Rev Jesse Jackson was a major factor in settling the dispute. Getting protest letters from top US universities such as Harvard, UCLA, Cornell and Yale caused the Hilton concern.

In a demonstration of the breadth of support, Rabbi Laurie Coskey of San Diego, USA, organised Christian, Jewish and Muslim clergy from across California to support the Sydney Hilton workers.

The union has learned that the hotel is so aware of the effect of the email campaign that they plan to write to all 3,000 people, individually, to tell them they have made peace with the union.

The hotel settled with the LHMU Hotel Union in November, improving their redundancy offer to the 500 workers by fifty per cent, guaranteeing that all workers will be asked back to work at the hotel and, most importantly, agreeing to a first-ever union agreement when the hotel re-opens in 18 months time.

Further information:
www.labourstart.org
www.lhmu.org.au

WorkSMART with a TIGER

In this season's look at online publishing, *WebWatch* takes a look at two new resources on employment law, and the website of the Engineering Council.

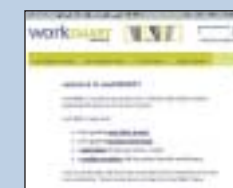


www.tiger.gov.uk

The Government's Department of Trade and Industry (DTi), have launched a new web resource on employment law. TIGER (Tailored Interactive Guidance on Employment Rights) is part of the UK Online project which seeks to open up information on government in the UK.

DTi Policy Advisor Stuart Gamester, says that 'TIGER (www.tiger.gov.uk), provides both employers and employees with guidance and information about their individual employment rights and responsibilities. The maternity TIGER provides an interactive 'ready-reckoner' calendar to help pregnant employees identify what their individual maternity entitlements are, and has now been extended to include a calendar based on the new maternity rights from April 2003.

'The TIGER site presently includes summary information on all the new parental rights being introduced in April 2003, such as paternity, adoption and the duty to consider flexible working, and will, in time, be extended to provide tailored guidance and information on these new rights'.

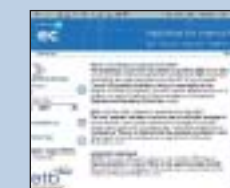


www.worksmart.org.uk

WorkSMART (www.worksmart.org.uk) is a new TUC site which fulfils a number of roles. Like TIGER, workSMART has facts about your rights at work. It also includes a monthly newsletter, healthy living tips and a 'union finder' to help people choose a union.

One of the key features of workSMART is a searchable database of employment law developed by the Department of Human Resource Management at the Nottingham Trent University.

The 'health' section of the workSMART site also contains health and safety at work information on areas such as: employer responsibility; safety enforcement; women's rights and disability issues.



www.engc.org.uk

The Engineering Council, which replaced the Council of Engineering Institutions, can be found on the web at www.engc.org.uk.

The Council runs the Register of Chartered Engineers, Incorporated Engineers and Engineering Technicians.

The website contains useful information on professional development for engineers. There is a page for engineers seeking employment, as well as information on professional standards and codes of conducts. There are also several downloadable publications and the facility to order online.

The links:
[workSMART](http://www.worksmart.org.uk) www.worksmart.org.uk
[TIGER](http://www.tiger.gov.uk) www.tiger.gov.uk
[Engineering Council](http://www.engc.org.uk) www.engc.org.uk

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The FPA website is at www.amicus-fpa.org.uk

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www.aeeu.org.uk (Membership for Professionals pages)

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www.probationmanagers.co.uk

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