



Discrimination Law Association

ANNUAL REPORT 2001-2002

**Presented to the
Annual General Meeting**

**held at
Matrix Chambers
Griffin Building
Gray's Inn
London
WC1R 5LN**

**on Monday 14th October 2002
at 5.45 p.m.**

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**Company Limited by Guarantee 3862592
Incorporated in England & Wales**

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1. History and Aims

The Discrimination Law Association was founded in 1995 with the objective of pushing forward the practice of complainant-oriented discrimination law and creating resources for those involved in practice. From the start strong emphasis was placed on the needs of the voluntary sector.

In 1998 a three-year grant was received from the Community Fund (formerly the National Lottery Charities Board). This enabled us to employ a part-time Development Officer. Membership grew rapidly and in October 1999 the Association was incorporated as a company limited by guarantee.

This report covers the period from September 2001 to September 2002.

Our aims

Our aims are:

1. to promote and improve the giving of advice, support and representation to individuals complaining of discrimination, harassment or abuse on grounds such as race, gender, religion, disability, sexual orientation, age, health status, political opinion, marital or family status and trade union affiliation or activity;
2. to raise awareness and encourage debate on discrimination law and practice;
3. to promote the teaching of discrimination law;
4. to secure improvements in the scope and enforcement of UK anti-discrimination legislation; and
5. to share information and ideas internationally.

Membership of the Discrimination Law Association is open to any individual or organisation interested in discrimination law who is in general agreement with the Association's aims.

2. Overview

This has been another interesting year of challenge for practitioners of discrimination law. Both law and practice are becoming ever more complex through case law and legislative amendments, posing difficult questions about expertise and resources for this area of work.

This year has seen the Government put forward it's proposals about how to implement the two new European Directives : the Race Directive and the Framework Employment Directive. Their Consultation Paper *Towards Equality and Diversity: Implementing the Employment and Race Directives* was issued in December 2001. Responses were required by March 31st 2002.

In preparation for this debate the Discrimination Law Association held a major, and very successful, conference at the Trades Union Congress Conference Centre in October 2001.

Internally, this year was marked by the appointment of a new Administrator, Mary Copsey, to replace Gaby Charing. Mary has decided to move on and will be leaving us on November 30th, her post is currently being advertised.

During her time as the Development Officer, Gaby ensured that the Discrimination Law Association has grown and developed onto a more professional organisation. She has overseen the steady expansion of membership from 310 to 428, she has masterminded the re-design of the Briefings into their current more professional format as well as our new logo, she has championed the e-mail news as well as unobtrusively looking out for the needs of a number of individual members.

Mary has been with us for only a short time but during that period she has been instrumental in re establishing e-mail news and has managed the DLA office with skill and courtesy.

During the last year we have been largely self-funding. Thanks to careful husbanding of resources in previous years, our reserves were adequate to enable us to continue our activities, secure in the knowledge that we could service our membership and meet all our commitments.

Our financial strategy during this period was to make ourselves self-sufficient through income from membership fees and advertising in *Briefings*.

3. Membership and Groups

The Discrimination Law Association has two categories of membership, associate membership for organisations, and individual membership. On 31st March 2001 our membership stood at 380, by 31st March 2002 it had increased to 428.

The Practitioners' Group for members wholly or mainly advising complainants has continued to meet in Central London. Four meetings were held during 2001/02. The topics were:

- The new Burden of Proof Regulations and the implications of the *Liversidge v Chief Constable of Bedfordshire Police* case for practitioners,
- The concept of indirect discrimination and its relevance to disability discrimination (jointly with the Disability Rights Commission),
- Non-employment discrimination cases against the Police, and
- An update on sex and race discrimination.

We are grateful to Henrietta Hill and Ulele Burnham who have taken responsibility for organising the Practitioners meetings during the year. We are also grateful to Doughty Street Chambers, the Disability Rights Commission and Matrix Chambers for hosting these meetings that are always well attended. There provide an important forum for members to discuss tactics as well as new developments in the law.

There has been no formal activity by regional groups during the year. However, contact has been maintained with many members in the regions through e-mail and personal telephone calls. The revival of the West Midlands branch is now being proposed.

4. Briefings, Web site and E-mail News

Briefings

Briefings have been edited by Gay Moon with assistance from David Massarella and Gaby Charing. The aim is to provide succinct and accurate summaries of cases and practice issues, geared to the needs of practitioners, who cannot be assumed to be qualified lawyers or to have access to the full range of law reports. The strong demand for *Briefings* from within the legal profession testifies to their quality.

Since July 2001 *Briefings* has been issued as a printed journal. It has been professionally designed to be elegant in appearance while remaining clear and readable. Reactions to this new format continue to be very favourable.

Three issues of *Briefings* have been issued since the last Annual Report and their time of issue has been fixed to coincide with the legal terms. All copy must be received by January 25th, May 25th and September 25th, so that the Briefings are sent out in the middle of February, June and October.

E-mail News

The E-mail News service has just been re-launched as a weekly service summarising the major issues that have arisen during the week, any requests for information received by our members, relevant training or seminars and job adverts.

Web site

This year has seen the first part of our development of a Discrimination Law Association Web Site. We see this as an important means of keeping our members and others aware of current developments in discrimination law. However, more work needs to be done to ensure that it is as accessible as possible to all users. We hope to be able to employ a designer to do this and to train our Administrator to be able to input new information onto the site as it arises.

5. Conferences and Training

Our major conference took place on October 29th 2001 and the Trades Union Congress Conference Centre. It was a success and did make a profit of £1,130 although it took a significant amount of time and energy to organise. It was an opportunity to raise and discuss important issues in the newly developing areas of discrimination law.

A sub-group of the Executive Committee has been examining our training strategy. The way forward may be to work with another training provider with a similar ethos, while retaining our own identity as a provider of high quality training in the field of discrimination law.

6. Policy Issues

The major policy issue to which we have responded this year has been the Government consultation document *Towards Equality and Diversity: Implementing the Employment and Race Directives* issued in December 2001. Responses were required by March 31st 2002.

In response to this we held a series of consultation meetings for all members covering all of the topics in the Consultation Paper. We were fortunate to have as speakers :-

- Barbara Cohen on Race,
- Catherine Casserley and Caroline Gooding on disability,
- Mark Bell on Sexual Orientation,
- Robin Allen on Religion and Belief,
- Mickey Rubenstein and Richard Baker on Age, with
- Gay Moon introducing and concluding the discussions.

We are grateful to them all for making time to come and discuss these issues with us.

Responses to this consultation document was co-ordinated by Gay Moon and Karon Monaghan with the material arising out of these discussions. Details of the submission is available from the office on request.

The Discrimination Law Association believes that it has an important role to play in the public debate on major policy issues affecting the practice of discrimination law.

7. Referrals

The Discrimination Law Association is not an advice agency. We do not give legal advice to individuals.

We do however receive many calls each year from members of the public seeking advice. In each case, we ascertain the broad nature of the problem, and the caller's circumstances, and then provide referral options.

8. Organisational Development and Funding

Funding from the Community Fund ended on 31st December 2000. We are enormously grateful to them for their support over our first three years. As a result of their support we are now able to fund our Administrator out of the income generated by the DLA.

We anticipate a small but steady income from advertisements in *Briefings*. We would like to raise money to appoint a Development Manager to work alongside our Administrator in the coming year.

Gay Moon,
Chair.

Appendix 1: Treasurers Report

Financially speaking the period 2001/02 has been a good one for DLA. Preparing the year end figures as 31 March the total funds carried forward increased by almost £2,000. (See Annual Audited Accounts for details.) More significantly, membership fee income increased from £14,041 as at 31 March 2001, to £28,485 at 31 March 2002.

Expenditure in the year to 31 March 2002 was almost double that in the previous year (£38,544, as opposed to £21,881). This was mainly due to an almost tripling in support costs. The support costs for the year to March 2002 included £13,102 costs associated with the conference. There was no conference the year before – hence the significant difference.

The expenditure for the half year to date has been £10,939. Over the same period we have had income above expenditure of £2,299 – although our reserves will be relied upon for the second half of the year.

We have also suffered two lots of significant extraordinary expenditure as a result of the resignation of Gaby Charing and then Mary Copsey as our workers. The cost of recruiting Gaby's replacement was just over £1,500 (although this was lower than expected due to very low removal costs). The cost of advertising for Mary's replacement was £1,120. There will be further costs to come regarding redirecting post, removal of office furniture, change to BT lines, etc.

I did a breakdown of estimated running costs in my report to the May Executive Committee meeting, at which point the monthly running costs were approximately £2,000 per month, i.e. £24,000 p.a. I would expect this to increase over the next year.

Since the 31 March 2002 figures shown in the accounts we have had more membership renewal income. Our current monies in the bank are approximately £22,000. This figure does not account for the cost of recruiting Mary Copsey's replacement (except the advertising cost as above).

Barring any extraordinary expenditure this should leave us with reserves of approximately £10,000 at the April 2003 membership renewal date. This is well in excess of our target minimum reserves of 3 months running costs, however it does not leave us much scope for development – e.g. improving the website/ funding the next conference/ new initiatives/future conferences and events.

Our recent application for lottery funding for a development worker was unsuccessful. It is hoped that either the new worker, or an EC member, will be willing to take responsibility for/lead fundraising, and to this end will do further work on identifying potential funding sources and making funding applications &/or developing other sources of income/support. This is a separate role from that of Treasurer.

Membership Fees

The increased membership fee income reflects the increase in the number of members, which is a reflection of DLA activities as a whole, but perhaps particularly the conference in October 2001.

The EC have recently decided to make a small increase in membership fees. It is intended to offer the facility of payment by monthly direct debit, rather than by annual payment only. This is being delayed until we move banks, since our current bank charges £5 for each time that a direct debit is deducted (i.e. making it financial not feasible to have such a system with them). The intention is that those opting to pay by direct debit will get a £5 annual reduction, which should cancel out the fee increase for them.

We also hope to introduce a facility for members to join at any point in the year rather than a fixed one year membership. I would expect these changes to membership arrangements to be brought in with an updated membership leaflet in time for the next conference.

Training

In the year to 31 March 2001 we had training income of £6,211, whereas we made no income from training in the year to 31 March 2002. This is because the training that we have provided has been free of charge. It is hoped that we will be running some training which will bring in some revenue in the future. Thanks again to those who have provided the training and venues free of charge this year.

Conference

The conference in 2001 was considered a risky venture at the time. We had a guarantee for up to £5,000 from the Stone Ashdown Trust to cover any losses which may have arisen from the conference. To our pleasant surprise the conference instead made a profit.

The limited free reserves has implications for the conference which the Executive Committee has been planning for early 2003. It is intended that this conference targets an audience which is beyond our additional employment orientated base by covering non-employment aspects of discrimination. It is not yet clear how many people we are likely to have attend the conference. This conference will be an opportunity to extend our size and scope, but with the risk of a heavy financial impact if attendance numbers are disappointing. It may be that we can obtain a guarantee re losses as we had for the last conference, but this has yet to be secured.

Summary

We are presently financially secure. The coming year may facilitate a step change in our size and membership and funding base. The EC has many intentions for new developments re services etc., but we do need new sources of funding to facilitate at least some of these.

Georgina Hirsch, Treasurer.

Appendix 2: staffing

Gaby Charing served as Development Officer until March 31st, working 17.5 hours a week.

Mary Copsey took over as Administrator from April 1st 2002 until November 31st 2002.

There are no other paid or unpaid staff.

Appendix 3: support

During the year we have benefited from the support of the following barristers' chambers, who have allowed us the use of their rooms for meetings:

- Cloisters
- Doughty Street Chambers and
- Matrix Chambers

The 4th National Conference was supported by :

- The Stone Ashdown Trust,
- Thompsons Solicitors,
- Reynolds Porter Chamberlain, and
- Russell Jones and Walker.

Matrix Chambers are hosting the Annual General Meeting and Irwin Mitchell (solicitors) are generously providing the refreshments.

We are very grateful to them all.

Appendix 2: Executive Committee

Membership

The following individuals have served on the Executive Committee during the period covered by this report:

Robin Allen QC	elected September 2001	Director
Elaine Banton	elected September 2001	Director
Christopher Benson (job share)	elected September 2001	Director
Ulele Burnham	elected September 2001	Director
Maya de Souza	elected September 2001	Director
Tess Gill	elected September 2001	Director
Philip Greasley	elected September 2001	Director
Dai Harris	elected September 2001	Director
Henrietta Hill	elected September 2001	Director
Georgina Hirsch	elected September 2001	Director (Treasurer)
David Massarella	elected September 2001	Director
Karon Monaghan	elected September 2001	Director (Vice Chair)
Gay Moon (Chair)	elected September 2001	Director (Chair)
Chris Purnell	elected September 2001	Director
Simon Robinson (job-share)	elected September 2001	Director

Attendance at meetings

Eight meetings of the Executive Committee were held between September 2001 and October 2002. Attendance figures are shown below.

Name	Possible	Actual	Notes
Gay Moon	8	7	
Karon Monaghan	8	5	
Georgina Hirsch	8	7	
Robin Allen QC	8	3	
Elaine Banton	8	4	
Christopher Benson/Simon Robinson	8	5	
Philip Greasley	8	6	
Dai Harris	8	1	
Maya de Souza	5	3	Abroad since April 2002.
David Massarella	8	4	
Tess Gill	8	3	
Henrietta Hill	7	6	Abroad since August 2002
Chris Purnell	8	3	
Ulele Burnham	8	3	

As well as editing *Briefings*, Gay Moon chaired all but one of the Executive Committee meetings held in 2001/2 and line managed the Development Officer and then the Administrator.