



# Discrimination Law Association

## **ANNUAL REPORT**

**2002-2003**

**Presented to the  
Annual General Meeting**

**held at the offices of**

**Bindman and Partners Solicitors  
275 Gray's Inn Road  
London  
WC1X 8QB**

**on Monday 8<sup>th</sup> December 2003  
at 6.00 p.m.**

**Discrimination Law Association  
PO Box 6715  
Rushden  
NN10 9WL**

**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.

We have been able to employ a part time employee to assist us in our activities since.

*This report covers the period from November 2002 to December 2003.*

### **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**

The level activity and development in the field of discrimination law this year has meant that our workload has been extremely high.

We have responded to numerous consultation papers (details of which can be found in e-mail news or from Melanie West at the DLA office and are described below).

E-mail News is now well instated as a regular, informative bulleting for our members.

'Briefings', the journal of the DLA, is of exceptional quality and that quality has maintained in particular this year.

In the summer of this year we held a conference which attracted well known speakers and a large and interesting audience.

Our practitioner groups (about which more below) continue to attract high quality and really informative speakers and participants.

## **3. Membership and Groups**

The Discrimination Law Association has two categories of membership, associate membership for organisations, and individual membership. On 14<sup>th</sup> November our membership stood at 399, of whom 179 (45%) were associate members and 214 (54%) were individual members and 6 were complimentary members (1%). During the period September 2002 and November 2003 approximately 34 new members were recruited. In other words, 9% of our membership during this period has been recruited during the year. This represents steady, if rather disappointing, growth.

The Practitioners' Group for members wholly or mainly advising complainants has continued to meet in Central London. The following meetings were held between November 2002 and December 2003:

- 30.1.03 - Update on disability discrimination - Catherine Casserley
- 26.03.03 – Update on positive discrimination – Tess Gill

- 9.6.03 - Update on race and sexual orientation regulations - Henrietta Hill and Anya Palmer
- 16.9.03 - Recent House of Lords cases - Catherine Rayner and Jill Bell
- 9.10.03 - Age discrimination – Rachel Crasnow and Declan O'Dempsey

We are grateful to Doughty Street Chambers for hosting those meetings. We are also grateful to Pinsent & Co who arranged a video link in their Leeds office for the meeting on 9 October. These meetings are generally well attended.

The Discrimination Law Association has also combined with the Disability Discrimination Act Advisers Group (DDAAG) which forms a distinct practitioners group within DLA, and who will meet between 4 and 6 times a year; it is hoped to hold meetings both in London and Manchester. The meetings will address specific topics and legal developments of interest to those advising and representing disabled people. A contact email list will also be maintained, whereby cases of interest and relevant information can be exchanged between meetings.

## **4. Briefings and E-mail News**

Developing our information services and staffing have been key priorities for this year.

### **Briefings**

*Briefings* are edited by Gay Moon, with assistance from David Massarella. 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.

Four issues of *Briefings* (Volumes 17 to 20) have been issued since the last Annual Report in September 2002, containing a total of 54 individual briefings. They appeared in October 2002, February 2003, June 2003 and October 2003.

### ***E-mail News***

The E-mail News service continues to improve with relevant national and international news and case up dates.

This e-mail service continues to be valued greatly by members. It also helps us to keep in touch with our membership and respond quickly to their needs.

### ***Staffing***

After some period of uncertainty we now have a new member of staff, Melanie West, who is a part time lecturer in law at University College Northampton. She has proved to be superb and we are extremely pleased that she is working with the DLA in delivering our services to members and developing our work.

Melanie is currently employed part-time on a one year fixed term contract and one of her key priorities is to assist the DLA in finding an office space. All our staff to date have worked from home and whilst that has served the DLA well, we have now expanded to a point where our own office space would be of real assistance and allow the organisation to develop further.

## ***5. Conferences and Training***

Our major conference took place on Monday 16<sup>th</sup> June 2003 at Sadler's Wells Theatre. It was entitled 'Making Rights Real: Challenging Discrimination in the Civil Courts.' It was a great success with around 90 delegates attending. Speakers at the conference included:

- Courtenay Griffiths QC (2 Garden Court)
- David Ruebain (Levenes Solicitors)
- Hugh Muir (The Guardian)
- Rowena Daw (MIND)
- Sadiq Kahn (Christian Kahn Solicitors)
- Karon Monaghan (Matrix)
- Robin Allen QC (Cloisters)

Although the conference made a loss of £3,621.32, it was seen as an important event for the future development and status of the DLA. It was an opportunity to raise and discuss important issues in the newly developing areas of discrimination law.

## **6. Policy Issues**

We have submitted responses to the following Government consultation documents:

- [Equality and Diversity: The Way Ahead](#)
- [Equality and Diversity: Making it Happen](#)
- [Consultation on the Gender Recognition Bill](#)
- [Simplification and Improvement in the Area of Equal Treatment between Men and Women](#)
- [June 2003 Parliamentary Briefing on the Employment Equality \(Sexual Orientation\) Regulations 2003](#)
- [DTI Religion or Belief and Sexual Orientation discrimination Occupational Pensions](#)
- [Disability Discrimination Act \(Amendment\) \(Pensions\) Regulations 2003](#)
- [ACAS Consultation on the Draft Guidance in respect of Religion and Belief in the Workplace and Sexual Orientation in the Workplace](#)
- [Age Discrimination Consultation: Age Matters](#)
- [Constitutional Reform: Future of QC's](#)
- [Constitutional Reform: Appointment of Judges](#)
- [Constitutional Reform: A Supreme Court for the United Kingdom](#)
- [Disability Rights Commission Draft Code of Practice](#)

We also responded to:

- [Commission for Racial Equality Legal Strategy 2003 Consultation](#)
- [Law Society consultation on proposed amendments to the Anti-Discrimination Rule](#)

Consultations which are currently ongoing and to which the DLA hopes to respond include:

Next steps for the House of Lords: (deadline 12<sup>th</sup> December 2003)

Responses to consultation documents were co-ordinated by a number of Executive Committee and DLA members and we would like to thank them for the time they have taken to draft these on behalf of the DLA.

Details of the submissions are available from the DLA office on request.

## **7. Influencing Law and Policy**

In addition to our campaigns to influence government on specific issues by responding to consultation papers and lobbying on those issues, the DLA now is regularly consulted by other organisations and invited to contribute to debates on discrimination law and practice.

We are represented on the Employment Appeal Tribunal's Users Group (this year by Akua Reindorf).

We are contacted by MPs and appropriate Select Committees when issues of relevance to our organisation are to be debated (the Joint Committee on Human Rights, for example).

The Equal Opportunities Commission have specifically asked to meet with us to discuss their legal strategy.

The DLA now plays an active role in public debate on major policy issues affecting the practice of discrimination law. We were invited to send a representative for the CRE Statutory Code of Practice Advisory Group. We have also requested that the DLA be among the organisations represented on the Task Force which will advise on the governance and structure of the proposed Commission for Equality and Human Rights. We may not achieve this but we expect to be consulted about discrete issues in any event.

Our current Chair (Karon Monaghan) appeared for the DLA on Radio 4 to discuss the constitution and lack of diversity in the judiciary ('the Commission').



We have recently become a member of UK Race & Europe Network (UKREN), which enables us also to have an input to race equality matters in Europe through the European Network Against Racism.

## **8. 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.

We are in the process of setting up a new website and hope that a referrals directory will be included for members access only.

## **9. Organisational Development and Funding**

As described above, one of Melanie's key priorities for next year will be assisting the DLA in finding their own office. We shall try and secure funding for this and Melanie will assist in this process.

We are also planning to establish a DLA web site that will offer up to date information to anyone interested in our activities and will also operate as a resource for our members.

To assist us in achieving our key objectives we have decided to seek the membership's approval to increasing membership rates. Rates have not been increased for three years. Whilst the membership has grown and so our income has increased further real development will require additional funding support.

## ***Appendix 1: staffing***

Mary Copsey took over as Administrator from April 1<sup>st</sup> 2002 until November 31<sup>st</sup> 2002.

Karen Whitehead became Administrator on 1<sup>st</sup> December 2002 until 14<sup>th</sup> May 2003

Melanie West became Administrator/Development Officer on May 14<sup>th</sup> 2003 and is working 17.5 hours per week.

There are no other paid or unpaid staff.

## ***Appendix 2: 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:

- ◆ Doughty Street
- ◆ Matrix

Bindman and Partners (solicitors) are hosting the Annual General Meeting and have kindly assisted with the catering. Irwin Mitchell have also assisted with the catering.

Many thanks to Matrix for providing the wine.

We are very grateful to them all.

## **Appendix 3: Executive Committee**

### **Membership**

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

<b>Robin Allen QC</b>	Elected October 2002	Director
<b>Elaine Banton</b>	Elected October 2002	Treasurer
<b>Rachhpaul Singh Bedi</b>	Elected October 2002	Director
<b>Ulele Burnham</b>	Elected October 2002	Director
<b>Catherine Casserley</b>	Co-opted November 2002	Director
<b>Barbara Cohen</b>	Elected October 2002	Director
<b>Tess Gill</b>	Elected October 2002	Director
<b>Philip Greasley</b>	Elected October 2002	Director
<b>Henrietta Hill</b>	Elected October 2002	Director
<b>David Massarella</b>	Elected October 2002	Director
<b>Karon Monaghan</b>	Elected October 2002	Chair
<b>Gay Moon</b>	Elected October 2002	Director
<b>Camilla Palmer</b>	Elected October 2002 (resigned January 2003)	Director
<b>Akua Reindorf</b>	Elected October 2002	Director
<b>Nathalie Stewart</b>	Elected October 2002	Director

### **Attendance at meetings**

Nine meetings of the Executive Committee were held between September 2002 and November 2003. Attendance figures are shown below.

Name	Possible	Actual	Apologies	Notes
<b>Robin Allen QC</b>	9	3	4	
<b>Elaine Banton</b>	9	6	3	
<b>Rachhpaul Singh Bedi</b>	9	4	5	
<b>Ulele Burnham</b>	9	3	5	
<b>Catherine Casserley</b>	8	6	2	
<b>Barbara Cohen</b>	9	8	1	
<b>Tess Gill</b>	9	6	3	
<b>Philip Greasley</b>	9	6	2	
<b>Henrietta Hill</b>	9	4	4	
<b>David Massarella</b>	9	5	4	
<b>Karon Monaghan</b>	9	7	2	
<b>Gay Moon</b>	9	7	2	
<b>Camilla Palmer</b>	2	2	0	
<b>Akua Reindorf</b>	9	2	6	
<b>Nathalie Stewart</b>	9	5	3	