

January 2014

What's inside this issue

- CfED visit Westminster
- Fundraiser in memory of wife
- Zumba, health & Well-being
- End of year celebrations
- Important months in 2014
- Immigration Bill update
- Free guidance on redundancies
- Dudley Community Forums

Dudley Holocaust Memorial Event 2014

Dudley's annual Holocaust Memorial Day (HMD) service will take place on **Friday 24th January 2014**, starting at **12.30pm**. Venue: **Dudley College, Broadway, Dudley DY1 4AS**.

This years guest of honour will be Holocaust survivor Mala Tribich. Mala was born in 1930 in Piotrkow Trybunalski Poland. When the Nazis invaded Poland in 1939 Mala and her family fled before being forced to live in a ghetto.

For more information on other HMD events and theme log on www.hmd.org.uk



Dudley Senior Citizens Forum have been awarded a level 4 Food Hygiene Rating by the Food Standards Agency. The rating was awarded after a thorough assessment of the kitchen and management techniques was conducted.

The volunteers who manage the kitchen were very proud of their achievements and are determined to achieve level 5 in their next assessment.



CfED Visits Westminster



Members of CfED and the Dudley Borough Interfaith Network joined hands for a trip to Parliament and Westminster Abbey on 11 November.

Participating workers and volunteers from the Five Estates Project attended and for many, it was an opportunity to learn how easy and important it is to engage their member of parliament.

CfED board member John Parman, a migrant from the United States: "Although I had been to parliament before, seeing my MP in person, knowing he was going to ask questions to ministers that I wanted myself to ask – this is very powerful. I like to know that although I am not a citizen and do not have the vote, I still have the right to have a voice."

Ian Austin, MP for Dudley North invited residents to contact him by phone or email for any reason and to feel free to come to ask for him even if one has not made an appointment to do so. "I want many more people from the Borough to come here," Mr Austin said.

Tour members joined Mr Austin in signing a petition to the government regarding the possible closure of Dudley's Magistrates Court.

What is more, there is no VAT on hot food served at the parliamentary cafe, so is a perfect place for lunch in London. "Try the scones," one person said. Many did.

The group then joined a tour of Westminster Abbey, one of England's oldest churches. Representatives from Dudley Central Mosque, local gurdwaras, and churches were in awe from the artefact's and artwork on display. "To see the tomb of Queen Elizabeth and Mary, Queen of Scots gave me a chance to connect to history that is often talked about but as a migrant, it is difficult to have a chance to really make personal connections," Mr Parman said. "I feel glad to know that CfED is supporting these opportunities for residents in and around the Borough."

The trip was planned by Dudley Borough Interfaith Network.



Fundraiser in memory of wife

Community Leader, Gurcharan Bedi, has once again proven his commitment to charitable collections. Mr Bedi has come to be known for his annual collections of fund for cancer charities. This year he collected a total of £2,000 of which £406 was donated to White House Cancer Support.

The aforementioned charities thanked Mr Bedi for his continued support and involvement in the community. The man himself said "I am just happy to be doing my bit for my community"



Zumba, Health and Well-being

8 sessions of zumba and health and well – being had been organised by Community facilitator Juliette Awili for migrant women in Dudley in the run up to Christmas and the New Year. The initiative has been a resounding success and had welcomed migrant women from many countries including, Cameroon, Kenya, Philippines, Pakistan, Togo and Zimbabwe. The feedback from the 20 participants who regularly attended had been encouraging with many starting to bring friends and family. Juliette even organised a special half term kids and mum programme and the children were able to participate. The sessions consist of 1 hour of Zumba and then 45 minutes of Health and Wellbeing talks and networking afterward. Organisations who had an input in the programme includes Health Exchange and the Office of Public Health.



End of year celebrations

The Dudley Senior Citizens Forum celebrated Diwali, Eid and Christmas festivals on the 28th November 2013. the event was attended by a wide array of community members, representatives from the local council and voluntary sector organisation.

The Chairman - Amrik Singh was delighted to welcome all the guests and uses this auspicious event to celebrate and thanked all the volunteers that have given their time in ensuring the centre achieves its targets and continue to develop its services. To show their appreciation the volunteers were presented with gift from the centre.

One volunteer stated:

"its so nice to see the management committee recognises the work we do for the centre"



Important Months in 2014

January

- Pension's auto-enrolment - employers with 350-499 staff will have to offer a qualifying pension scheme to their staff by the start of 2014.

- Nationals of Bulgaria and Romania had restrictions on working in any EU Member State lifted from 1 January

Transfer of undertakings reform – changes to the TUPE Regulations are expected to come into effect on 31 January.

October

- October will also see new legislation outlawing caste discrimination. There is also an expected repeal of employment tribunal powers to make wider recommendations in discrimination cases.

- National Minimum Wage rates will increase from 1 October – depending on the recommendations of Low Pay Commission and on economic conditions. Statement from Chancellor imminent!

Employment tribunals will be able to order an employer to carry out an equal pay audit in circumstances where it is clear they have breached the equal pay provisions in the Equality Act 2010 – expected in October.

April

- Under the National Insurance Contributions Bill, an employment allowance will be introduced entitling every business and charity to a £2,000 reduction in employer national insurance contributions (NICs) bills each year.

- Pension's auto-enrolment – the time period for employers to auto-enrol eligible staff into a qualifying pension scheme will be extended from one month to six weeks.

- Early conciliation through ACAS will be introduced on 6th April. Claimants will have to send details of their dispute to ACAS, who will attempt conciliation and settlement, before a person can lodge an employment tribunal claim.

- The right to request flexible working will be extended to all employees with 26 weeks' service – again on 6th April. ACAS producing a new Code of Practice and non-statutory guidance for employers

- New approach to sickness absence management is set to be introduced in April. Following its major review of workplace sickness absence, the government will introduce a new Health and Work Advisory and Assessment Service which will provide state-funded occupational health assessments and case management support for employees with complex needs to facilitate their return to work.

- Discrimination questionnaires through which a person can obtain information about potential discrimination from an alleged discriminator will be removed from the Equality Act 2010 – from 6th April.

- Employment tribunals will be able to levy a financial penalty up to a maximum of £5,000 on employers found to have breached an employee's employment rights – 6th April.

Rates of statutory sick pay (SPP), maternity allowance and statutory maternity pay (SMP), statutory paternity pay (SPP), statutory adoption pay (SAP), and the weekly earnings threshold for these payments are all expected to increase.

Carried over from 2013

- The Children and Families Bill, introduced last year continues through Parliament. It introduces a new shared parental leave system, statutory shared parental pay and a right to time off for antenatal care. If passed, many of these changes are expected to be introduced in 2014-15.

- The Pensions Bill bringing further changes to the state pension was introduced last year and continues through Parliament. As we went to press, the Prime Minister and the Leader of the Opposition reiterated their commitment to maintaining the "triple lock" to protect pension rates.

The Immigration Bill, introduced in October 2013, contains provisions to further reform the immigration system. Expect Coalition divisions over this legislation

Immigration Bill up date

A new **Immigration Bill** was introduced into the House of Commons on 10 October 2013. The second reading of this bill took place on the 22nd October, where only 20 MPs voted against it: 3 Lib Dems, 7 Labour and 10 from other parties. Normally it is three weeks after the second reading that the bill will go to the committee stage, but in this case, the committee stage will start only a week later on Tuesday the 29th. The third reading of the bill will take place in December.

Although the Bill spans six Whitehall departments, it looks like the bill is being rushed through the various decision making stages.

The Joint Council for the Welfare of Immigrants (JCWI) and other agencies tracking every stage and wording of this Bill emphasise the problematic impact of these key issues. For instance, asking Landlords to ask for immigration status of their tenants can easily lead to the increase of rogue landlords and increased discrimination and racial profiling. Furthermore it creates a society where the public are encouraged to spy on one another. The Movement Against Xenophobia (MAX) said that "if something isn't done about this bill, Britain would be a very different place to live in next spring when these changes would come into effect."

After the third reading of the bill, the bill goes to the House of Lords. More information on this Bill to come as and when it goes through the various Parliamentary approval stages.

Some of the key parts of the bill

- Private landlords would be required to verify immigration status of tenants or face a fine.
- The Bill proposes to charge all undocumented migrants for the use of the NHS, increasing this from hospital care to primary services. It also wants to introduce a levy to make migrants and visitors contribute to the NHS.
- The Bill proposes to reduce the 17 current immigration decisions that can be appealed to 4, in essence restricting the right of appeal to an asylum or human rights claim.
- The bill wants to change the right to appeal from within the United Kingdom for those being deported from the United Kingdom – the person would be deported first and can appeal after.
- The Bill suggests that '*little weight*' should be given to family life claims under Article 8 made by those people being deported/removed from the UK.

New Free Guidance on Small Scale Redundancies

ACAS have published new guidance to help employers handle small-scale redundancies. It is packed with seven key essential steps, case studies and a toolkit with a range of frequently asked questions.

ACAS say their new and free '*Handling small-scale redundancies – A step-by-step guide*' will particularly help small and medium sized businesses stay on the right side of the law if they want to make fewer than 20 people redundant.

The guide reminds readers of the risks that small-scale redundancies can create if an employer needs to:

- Close or move part of their business.
- Make cost savings due to change in customer demand or an efficiency drive.
- Reorganise the way their business is run.
- Sell the business to another company.

ACAS say that so far this year they have handled around 930,000 calls to their helpline and that one in five callers asked about redundancy related issues. They believe that their new guide builds on their knowledge as workplace experts to help business owners understand the regulations around small-scale redundancies with top tips on how to handle or prevent them. And they say that "*a better understanding of the law can make the difference between managing staff well and potentially facing a costly and stressful employment tribunal if things aren't handled correctly.*"

<http://www.acas.org.uk/index.aspx?articleid=4547>

People urged to get involved with community forums (hosted by Dudley Council)

Residents are being invited to discuss local issues at the latest round of community forums – from multi-million pound budget savings to car parking and bin collections.

Dudley Council is running the 10 forums across the borough from January 28 to February 5.

They give people an opportunity to raise issues and concerns on any subject but could include the £60million worth of savings the council needs to make over the next three years, car parking in town centres, the council's new waste or recycling scheme.

People can speak to councillors at each of the forums or raise issues with the council. Community groups can also bid for funding at the forums.

The forums begin on:

January 28

- Castle and Priory, St James's and St Thomas's community forum, St Barnabas Church, Middlepark Road, Dudley.
 - Coseley East and Sedgley community forum, Christ Church C of E Primary School, Church Road, Coseley.

January 29

- Gornal, Upper Gornal & Woodsetton community forum, Upper Gornal Methodist Church, Kent Street, Spills Meadow, Dudley
- Netherton, Woodside & St Andrews and Quarry Bank & Dudley Wood community forum, Dudley Wood Neighbourhood Learning Centre, Pavillion Gardens, Dudley Wood Road

January 30

- Halesowen North and Halesowen South community forum, Hurst Green Primary, Narrow Lane, Halesowen.
- Norton, Pedmore & Stourbridge East, Wollaston & Stourbridge Town community forum, St Michael & All Angels Church, Maynard Avenue, Norton, Stourbridge

February 4

- Amblecote, Cradley & Wollescote, Lye & Stourbridge North can be raised at its community forum at Amblecote Church Hall, Vicarage Road, Amblecote
- Kingswinford North & Wall Heath, Kingswinford South and Wordsley community forum, St Mary's Parish Church Hall, The Village, Kingswinford

February 5

- Belle Vale, Hayley Green & Cradley South community forum, Windsor High School, Richmond Street, Halesowen,
- Brierley Hill, Brockmoor & Pensnett community forum runs at Nine Locks Community Centre, Hill Street, Brierley Hill.

All meetings start at 6.30 pm

For more information on community forums visit <http://www.dudley.gov.uk/about/community-council>

We welcome any articles, news, events, views and opinions that you would like to share with the wider community and see included in our newsletter. Please send them to: Centre for Equality & Diversity, 16a Stone Street, Dudley, DY1 1NS.

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