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## Anti - Racism Festival

Hundreds of local people turned up to the first ever anti racist music festival in Dudley on Saturday 26th April. Over 1200 people saw local and national bands play on two stages in Dudley Town Hall; hundreds enjoyed the stalls.

The event, organised by local Trade Unions and Labour politicians, was one of 3 national Love Music Hate Racism festivals organised in the UK.

Cllr Tim Crumpton, one of the organisers said, "This has been absolutely fantastic, (even boombastic), loads of families from all walks of life, coming together, laughing, playing and listening to great music. We have had help from Dudley, Sandwell and Walsall Councils, Unison, the NUT, GMB and local charities, all giving up their own time, all aimed at making the point that we are all one in this World.

I want to thank all of the bands, most of them have come here and played for nothing or just their petrol money, most are young and local and show how much talent we have in the Black Country. Now we have to plan for the next time."



## Disputes at Work - Big Changes

“Early Conciliation” through ACAS is now available for anybody thinking about lodging an Employment Tribunal claim. Contacting ACAS will also be a required legal step from 6 May. After Early Conciliation is introduced as a formal legal step on 6th May, anybody who wishes to lodge a claim with an Employment Tribunal will have to provide an ACAS Early Conciliation Reference Number. There are a limited number of exemptions that may apply. The Employment Judge in any given case can decide whether these exemptions apply.

ACAS will contact the potential claimant or representative within two working days of receiving the paperwork. They will gather basic information on the dispute itself and provide information about Early Conciliation. The case will then be passed to a conciliator who will aim to make contact with both parties and talk through the issues to see if a solution can be found.

Ministers say that Early Conciliation will help resolve the majority of workplace disputes which may lead to an employment tribunal, including:

- ◆ unfair dismissal claims
- ◆ workplace discrimination
- ◆ redundancy payments or disputes around selection procedures
- ◆ deductions from wages or unpaid notice/holiday pay
- ◆ rights to time off or flexible working
- ◆ equal pay.

There is a great deal of information about this new provision on the ACAS website.

## Money Management

CfED was pleased to have been invited to Stourbridge College open day in March. The event was used as one of our roadshows to promote our Money Mentor’s initiative led by volunteer Peter, scores of leaflets were handed out and the event gave over 100 young persons the opportunity to increase their basic financial awareness. The highlight of the open day was young people taking part in a money awareness quiz. We found that many struggled with giving answers to the questions demonstrating a rather low knowledge of basic money management. Volunteers on this programme have been busy attending several promotional events and providing support to several mentees.



## **Volunteering for Centre for Equality & Diversity: *What a wonderful experience***

I am a wife and mother of two children and a citizen of Stourbridge who is passionate about finance (I have a degree in Business and a Master's in Business law with a specialism in management of credit and debit recovery).

After my children, aged 4 and 6, started school I found that I had plenty of free time and felt I wanted to make a contribution to the community who has made me so welcome after coming from France. Having decided I wished to use my skills to help others, I began to look at volunteer groups in the area. After attending a talk at Brierley Hill Methodist Church and thought I would be a good asset to the Centre for Equality & Diversity (CfED). In my first week at the CfED I felt good, I was made to feel very welcome, supported and kept busy. This is what we want as volunteers. The CfED offer a lots of opportunities such as money mentoring; marketing; research & report writing; IT; Social media; Fund raising; etc. that will help the volunteers build up their work skills.

As a money mentor, I was offered the challenge to start advising straight away. I used my business and personal skills, and knowledge of accounting to advise a client on her financial issues.

The client, whom I will call Mrs C, had been issued with a court summon and was at risk of losing her home. I accompanied the client to court and carefully explained the circumstances that had brought my client to her present situation, not only was Mrs C allowed to remain in the property, all court fees were dropped. My first case was a success and it felt very rewarding.

As a volunteer for the CfED, I can also benefit from extra training. I have therefore enrolled on two courses, one on Money Mentoring and the other on Teaching Others (community groups). This will add extra value to the help I can provide to my community.

I would encourage anyone with time to spare, to consider taking up volunteering for their local groups as it is so rewarding for all concerned. Also anyone needing financial advice or experiencing financial difficulties should come and see someone at the CfED in Dudley.

***Marie Claire Singaye***

### **National "Trans Manifesto" Launched**

A National "Trans Manifesto", which has been produced as a collaborative document between 15 trans organisations across the UK, was launched earlier this month. The idea of a trans manifesto was first raised in discussions with Conservative, Labour, Liberal Democrat and Green politicians during the summer of 2013, and the idea was enthusiastically received. Accordingly a number of trans groups met in the autumn, and three core statements were unanimously agreed.

This is the first time the trans sector has collaborated on this scale and will now be used to encourage all political parties to include trans issues within their own developing manifestos in the run up to the 2015 General Election.

**Get in touch if you would like a copy – [admin@cfed.org.uk](mailto:admin@cfed.org.uk)**

## TOP TIPS...

### The StP Project

The StP project, for which CfED is the accountable body, is now well into its 5<sup>th</sup> and final year of operation in its current format. The project has achieved much in terms of supporting and up-skilling members of black and minority ethnic (BME) led voluntary organisations in the Black Country and Telford. The success of its main training programme has been of particular note. To date, with just one workshop left to deliver, the StP project has delivered 33 workshops and trained 260 people (with 85 attending 2 or more workshops) in a range of subjects related to governance and organisational development.

The project has also been working on a one to one basis with organisations across the project area helping them to develop and become sustainable. Through her work with these organisations, Lydia Sharland, our Infrastructure Support Officer, has identified some top tips for running a voluntary sector organisation.

**Use your governing document!** All too often organisations come to me with a query about issues such as appointing trustees, managing meetings etc. A good governing document will contain all the information you need to know to answer these questions and should always be the first thing you look at if you have a governance query.

**Plan!** The importance of planning is paramount. You wouldn't expect a private profit led business to operate without some sort of business plan in place and the same should be true of voluntary sector organisations. Effective organisations know where they've been and have a realistic plan of where they want to go and how they will get there.

**Be open to partnership working!** There's no denying that partnership working is difficult but in the current economic climate it offers great potential for sustainability and development and should always be considered as an option.

**Consider the income generating potential of your organisation!** With government funding cuts in full swing many local voluntary sector organisations are struggling to survive. Generating your own income as an organisation may plug the funding gap. Be imaginative about how you might generate an income and make sure you are aware of and remain in line with trading restrictions and regulations.



## Dudley Senior Citizen Forum



30 members of the Dudley Senior Citizen Forum received Food hygiene in February 2014. The training was facilitated by NSC Safety Training, and provided both volunteers and community members with vital skills. Participants greatly enjoyed the session and were very proud to receive their certificates. The training was a requirement for kitchen volunteer who prepare healthy meals for elderly members 4 times a week at the centre.



Chairman (Amrik Singh) thanked the St James's Community Panel for their financial contributions that allowed the forum to hold the training and enable volunteers to prepare food safely at all of their events and activities taking place for the next 3 years.

## Illegal Working v Illegal Discrimination? New Code of Practice for Employers

A draft statutory Code of Practice for employers on avoiding unlawful discrimination while preventing illegal working has just been published by the Coalition Government. Employers have a duty to prevent illegal working in the UK by carrying out pre-employment immigration checks under the Immigration, Asylum and Nationality Act 2006. However, if employers only carry out checks on people they believe are not British citizens, for example, on the basis of their colour, or ethnic or national origins, they could be accused of race discrimination. A double dilemma!

The Code of Practice is an attempt to address this potential double dilemma. Its starting point is a reminder that it is unlawful to discriminate in employment practices because of race (and outlines the various types of race discrimination) before going on to give practical guidance on avoiding race discrimination while complying with the duty to conduct right-to-work checks. Its second key point is that employers should not make assumptions about a person's right to work or immigration status on the basis of their colour, nationality, ethnic or national origins, accent or the length of time they have been resident in the UK and recommends treating all applicants fairly and in the same way at each stage of the recruitment process.

In addition, it reminds us that job applicants should not be treated less favourably if they produce acceptable documents showing only a time-limited right to work in the UK. Questions should only be asked about an applicant's or worker's immigration status where it is necessary to determine whether their status imposes limitations on the number of hours they may work each week, the type of work they may carry out, or on the length of time for which they are permitted to work. Finally, the Code of Practice also notes that, if a person is unable to produce acceptable documents, employers should not assume that they are living or working in the UK illegally. Instead, employers should try to keep the job open for as long as possible in order to provide them with the opportunity to demonstrate their right to work.

## Enabling Equality: *from disabling barriers to equal participation*

The fourth British Library/British Sociological Association Annual Equality Lecture is to be given by Tom Shakespeare on 30 May 2014, from 18.30 – 20.00, at the British Library, 96 Euston Road, London.

Dr Shakespeare, researcher and disability rights advocate will explore what it takes to achieve equality for disabled people, in the era of the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities and 'welfare reform'

## Apprenticeship at CfED

My name is Ben Smith, currently 16 years old and I graduated from Dormston School in Sedgley as of May last year after spending 5 years in education there. During these years I developed a keen interest in humanities and ICT, and part-took in sports such as running and football. After I left I went to Halesowen College for a period of 2/3 months before leaving as I did not find it enjoyable nor rewarding and my time there was not enjoyable nor well spent, and decided to pursue an apprenticeship, where I was recruited by Mercia Management, which in the long term led me to work here at CfED, where I will remain until said apprenticeship is completed and I move onto a higher tier. Outside of work and education, my hobbies and interests are in motorbikes and IT Tech.

## Bank Account Controls

Subject to completing its Parliamentary passage and to Royal Assent, the current Immigration Bill will introduce new rules to crack down on illegal migrants accessing banking products and services in the UK. The government has announced in a [statement of intent](#) that [CIFAS](#) is the anti-fraud body likely to oversee proposed bank account controls set out in the Immigration Bill.

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.