

# Equality Matters

WINTER 2007

## Welcome

**Welcome to the Winter 2007 edition of Equality Matters.**

## Positive about Disabled People Symbol



TBG Learning has recently been awarded the Positive about Disabled People symbol by Jobcentre Plus.

In a market where it is increasingly difficult to find and keep skilled and motivated staff, we recognise that employing disabled people is a key factor in improving efficiency, productivity and overall business success.

The disability symbol is recognition given by Jobcentre Plus to employers who have agreed to meet five commitments:

1. To interview all disabled applicants who meet the minimum criteria for a job vacancy and consider them on their abilities.
2. To ensure there is a mechanism in place to discuss, at any time, but at least once a year, with disabled employees what can be done to make sure they can develop and use their abilities.
3. To make every effort when employees become disabled to make sure they stay in employment.
4. To take action to ensure that all employees develop the appropriate level of disability awareness needed to make these commitments work.
5. Each year to review the five commitments and what has been achieved, plan ways to improve on them and let employees and Jobcentre Plus know about progress and future plans.

By using the symbol it will help make it clear to disabled people that we welcome applications from them and are positive about their abilities. It will also show existing employees that we value their contribution and will treat them fairly should they become disabled, and publicly demonstrates our commitment to equality and diversity.

## Three become one

### New Equality and Human Rights Commission

From 1st October 2007, the Equality and Human Rights Commission (EHRC) took on the roles and functions of the Commission for Racial Equality (CRE), the Disability Rights Commission (DRC) and the Equal Opportunities Commission (EOC), with new responsibilities for sexual orientation, age, religion and belief, and human rights.

The Chair of the Equality and Human Rights Commission is Trevor Phillips; Dr Nicola Brewer is the Chief Executive.

The benefits of having a single commission include:

- Bringing together equality experts who can act as a single source of information and advice.
- Helping businesses by promoting awareness of equality issues, which may prevent costly court and tribunal cases.

**For further information about the Commission go to:**  
[www.equalityandhumanrights.com](http://www.equalityandhumanrights.com)

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Richard Dye is pictured with Pat Pointon, TBG Learning

*There's always light at the end of the tunnel!*

Richard started training on the Manufacturing provision at TBG Learning in October 2007.

With the demise of the mining industry, unemployed for 26 years and with the added responsibility of being a long term carer for his wife, Richard was doubtful of his chances in securing a job, thinking his age was against him.

In January 2008, Richard's Employability Adviser at TBG heard news of a vacancy at Carry Care in Staveley who operate an ambulance service. Richard attended an interview for a driver's position and was offered the job **straightaway!**

Richard says, 'I thought I had no chance of getting a job due to being unemployed for such a long time and that my age was against me'.

*'Thanks to everyone at TBG, I am looking forward to getting back to work, I can't wait'.*

*Surf's up?*

## Should employees be surfing the internet on work time?

Research suggests that at least one third of employees access the internet from the office. And there have been quite a lot of reports recently about employees being either sacked for, or banned from, using sites not related to their work, including social networking sites.

However, it has become a lot easier and, often quicker, to access services and products online such as booking train tickets, banking, finding holidays, so having a total ban on employees accessing websites for personal use from work, may not be that productive either.

Having very clear policies on internet and email use is one way to avoid any confusion about what is and what isn't allowed. A written policy, known to all the workforce can establish the boundaries and usage of organisational equipment. In this way, employees will know when they can access the web – at lunch or break times – and also if there are any particular websites, or types of websites that are explicitly forbidden. The policy should also outline any consequences of deliberately accessing sites that have been banned.

## Need some help?

The free ACAS advice leaflet Internet and email policies gives more detailed information on this subject. Order it via the ACAS website [www.acas.org.uk](http://www.acas.org.uk) or by calling ACAS Publications on **08702 42 90 90**



*Slips, trips and falls from height campaign 2008*



HSE will be running a new campaign in February and March 2008 on slips, trips and falls in the workplace.

More than 1,000 workers a month suffer a serious injury following a slip, trip or fall. The campaign is aimed primarily at those most at risk of a slip, trip or fall at work; however accidents do happen in any workplace.

The aim of the campaign is to raise awareness of the risks and help those involved to take simple action.

**Slips, trips and falls at work shatter lives.**

**For more information visit [hse.gov.uk](http://hse.gov.uk)**

## Employment Law Update

### Main changes expected in 2008

While some of the changes expected in 2008 are now fairly certain, even though the details or the actual date of implantation is not yet fixed, others are dependent on the outcome of government consultations or reviews, and the progress of Bills through Parliament.

### In February:

**The Employment Rights (Increase of Limits) Order 2007 (SI 2007/3570)** – will come into force on 1 February 2008. The maximum compensation in an unfair dismissal case will increase to £63,000. The maximum weekly pay to be taken into account when calculating statutory redundancy payments and the basic award in unfair dismissal claims will increase to £330. Two sets of **new immigration regulations** will come into force from 29 February introducing penalties for employing illegal workers.

The **new points-based system for managed migration** will have a phased introduction from the first quarter of 2008. Following the High Court ruling that the UK Government had not properly implemented the Equal Treatment Directive, **amendments to The Employment Equality (Sex Discrimination) Regulations 2005** are expected to be implemented.

### In April:

**Conduct of Employment Agencies and Employment Business (Amendment) Regulations 2007 (SI 2007/8992)** – will come into force on 6 April, increasing protection for agency workers.

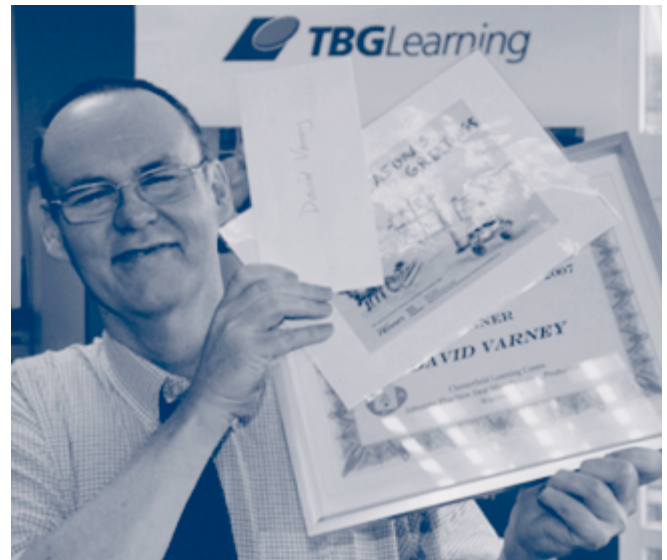
**Corporate Manslaughter and Corporate Homicide Act 2007** – will come into force on 6 April, creating a new offence of corporate manslaughter (corporate homicide in Scotland).

**Employers with 50 or more employees** will have additional duties to consult their employees under the information and Consultation of Employees Regulations 2004 (SI 2004/3426) and the Occupational and Personal Pensions Schemes (Consultation by Employers) (Modification for Multi-employer Schemes) Regulations 2006 (SI 2006/16 – from 6 April).

**Statutory maternity/paternity/adoption pay** – from April 2008, the flat rates for SMP, maternity allowance (MA, SPP and SAP will increase to £117.18 per week (or 90% of average weekly earnings if less).

**Statutory sick pay** – from April 2008, the flat rate for SSP will increase to £75.40 per week.

## TBG Learning Corporate Christmas Card Competition



## Congratulations

David Varney (pictured above) was the proud winner of TBG Learning's 2007 Christmas Card competition held in association with our Equality & Diversity Calendar of events.

The decision to hold a competition for learners to design TBG's corporate Christmas card for 2007 proved to be a big success.

The standard of designs was extremely high and it was very difficult for the judges to decide on the winner. Therefore, after much deliberation the entries were short listed to seven. The eventual winner was David Varney, a learner at TBG Learning in Chesterfield who is attending a Jobcentre Plus New Deal Manufacturing, Production and Warehousing programme.

### Congratulations also to the following finalists:

Yesim Berksay  
**Camden**

Louise Slater  
**Chesterfield**

Samantha Waller  
**Barking**

Kirtibara Narane  
**West London**

Hannah Petty  
**Derby**

Kirsty Kidd  
**Camden**



## Wellbeing briefs.....

### Unbalanced workforce:

Almost one in four UK employees never take a break during work, and 7% do not even take holidays, according to research from insurer Legal & General. The survey of more than 2,000 people found that more than one in five were unhappy with their work-life balance, while a fifth felt they were working too many extra hours.

### In the dark about cancer

Cancer charity Macmillan reports that cancer patients and their managers are too often in the dark when it comes to returning to work or dealing with people affected by cancer in the workplace. Although four in five people expected to go back to work should they be affected by cancer, three in four would not know where to get help to do so, the charity concludes.

## Most important meal of the day



Many office staff skip breakfast before coming to work, a survey by caterer BaxterStorey has found.

Nearly one-fifth of 1,015 workers polled never had breakfast during the working week, while a further 17% had it between just one and three times a week.

Meanwhile, 8% of employees polled regularly skipped lunch.

**Content:** While every care is taken in compiling this newsletter, we cannot accept responsibility for any errors or omissions. Advice is general as religious and cultural observance varies by group and individual. The opinions expressed are those of the author.

We welcome any feedback or comments you would like to make, we would also be happy to include information and experiences you may feel will be of interest for future editions.

**Barbara Read – TBG Learning – 0121 200 1140**

**Email: [bread@tbglearning.com](mailto:bread@tbglearning.com)**

## How to contact us...

### TBG Learning Head Office

Lombard House,  
145 Great Charles Street,  
Birmingham B3 3JR  
t: 0121 200 1140 f: 0121 233 0573/9567  
e: [headoffice@tbglearning.com](mailto:headoffice@tbglearning.com)

### TBG Learning Alfreton

10 High Street, Alfreton,  
Derbyshire DE55 7BN  
t: 01773 521921 f: 01773 521821  
email: [customerservice.alfreton@tbglearning.com](mailto:customerservice.alfreton@tbglearning.com)

### TBG Learning Barking

Monteagle Court, Unit 6A Waking Road,  
Barking, Essex IG11 8PD  
t: 020 8507 1377 f: 020 8507 1296  
email: [customerservice.barking@tbglearning.com](mailto:customerservice.barking@tbglearning.com)

### TBG Learning Camden

Unit A, Ground Floor, Linton House  
39-51 Highgate Road, London NW5 1RT  
t: 020 7485 1677 f: 020 7485 1911  
email: [customerservice.camden@tbglearning.com](mailto:customerservice.camden@tbglearning.com)

### TBG Learning Chesterfield

Block A 1st Floor, St Mary's Court  
St Mary's Gate, Chesterfield,  
Derbyshire S41 7TD  
t: 01246 207500 f: 01246 207002  
email: [customerservice.chesterfield@tbglearning.com](mailto:customerservice.chesterfield@tbglearning.com)

### TBG Learning Colchester

Portal House, 27 Southway,  
Colchester CO2 7BA  
t: 01206 366341 f: 01206 366358  
email: [customerservice.colchester@tbglearning.com](mailto:customerservice.colchester@tbglearning.com)

### TBG Learning Derbyshire

6th Floor St. Peter's House, Gower Street,  
Derby DE1 1SB  
t: 01332 202828 f: 01332 202804  
email: [customerservice.derby@tbglearning.com](mailto:customerservice.derby@tbglearning.com)

### TBG Learning Gravesend

23-25 King Street, Gravesend,  
Kent DA12 2DU  
t: 01474 566588 f: 01474 569100  
email: [customerservice.gravesend@tbglearning.com](mailto:customerservice.gravesend@tbglearning.com)

### TBG Learning Newham

City Gate House, 246-250 Romford Road,  
Forest Gate, London E7 9HZ  
t: 020 8221 4656 f: 020 8221 4644  
email: [customerservice.newham@tbglearning.com](mailto:customerservice.newham@tbglearning.com)

### TBG Learning Southall

Unit 1, Ironbridge House,  
Windmill Place Business Centre  
2-4 Windmill Lane, Southall,  
Middlesex UB2 4NU  
t: 020 8893 5389 f: 020 8813 8656  
email: [customerservice.southall@tbglearning.com](mailto:customerservice.southall@tbglearning.com)

### TBG Learning South London

13-14 Ellerslie Square, Lyham Road,  
London SW2 5DZ  
t: 020 7274 4106 f: 020 7274 0764  
email: [customerservice.sl@tbglearning.com](mailto:customerservice.sl@tbglearning.com)

### TBG Learning Tendring

103-105 Carnarvon Road,  
Clacton-on-Sea CO15 6QA  
t: 01255 430053 f: 01255 688240  
email: [customerservice.tendring@tbglearning.com](mailto:customerservice.tendring@tbglearning.com)

### TBG Learning Tower Hamlets

Truman Building, 91 Brick Lane,  
London E1 6QL  
t: 020 7247 0036 f: 020 7426 0560  
email: [customerservice.tower@tbglearning.com](mailto:customerservice.tower@tbglearning.com)

### TBG Learning West London

84 Uxbridge Road, Ealing, London W13 8RA  
t: 020 8566 5252 f: 020 8579 6735  
email: [customerservice.wln@tbglearning.com](mailto:customerservice.wln@tbglearning.com)

### TBG Learning West Midlands

5th Floor, Lombard House,  
145 Great Charles Street  
Birmingham B3 3JR  
t: 0121 200 2646 f: 0121 233 9567  
email: [customerservice.westmids@tbglearning.com](mailto:customerservice.westmids@tbglearning.com)

Lanchard House, Suite 2, First Floor,  
Victoria Street  
West Bromwich B70 8ER  
t: 0121 525-5498 f: 0121 525 4219  
email: [customerservice.westbromwich@tbglearning.com](mailto:customerservice.westbromwich@tbglearning.com)

## Employer Division

### (Apprenticeships, NVQ's & Train 2 Gain)

#### TBG Learning East Midlands Region

6th Floor St. Peter's House,  
Gower Street, Derby DE1 1SB  
t: 01332 202828 f: 01332 202804  
email: [eastmids-ed@tbglearning.com](mailto:eastmids-ed@tbglearning.com)

#### TBG Learning London Region

Truman Building, 91 Brick Lane,  
London E1 6QL  
t: 020 7247 0036 f: 020 7426 0560  
email: [customerservice.newham@tbglearning.com](mailto:customerservice.newham@tbglearning.com)

#### TBG Learning East of England Region

Portal House, 27 Southway,  
Colchester CO2 7BA  
t: 01206 366341 f: 01206 366358  
email: [eastofengland-ed@tbglearning.com](mailto:eastofengland-ed@tbglearning.com)

#### TBG Learning West Midlands Region

5th Floor, Lombard House, 145 Great  
Charles Street, Birmingham B3 3JR  
t: 0121 200 2646 f: 0121 233 9567  
email: [westmids-ed@tbglearning.com](mailto:westmids-ed@tbglearning.com)

#### TBG Learning South East Region

23-25 King Street, Gravesend, Kent,  
DA12 2DU.  
t: 01474 566588 f: 01474 569100  
email: [southeast-ed@tbglearning.com](mailto:southeast-ed@tbglearning.com)

[www.tbglearning.com](http://www.tbglearning.com)