



equal pay week 23rd to 27th apr 2007

£910,000 equal pay awarded

This week the House of Lords ruled favourably on an equal pay claim for 36 women who brought a claim against their employer with the assistance of their union. Upholding the original £560,000 employment tribunal award, the House of Lords awarded an additional £350,000 compensation after the employer (St Helens Borough Council) issued a letter to all staff claiming that if the women pursued the claim they would put jobs at risk.

Clearly most equal pay cases do not end up at the House of Lords, but this demonstrates not only the fact that after over thirty years of equal pay legislation inequality still exists, but also that the law is on the side of women.

So how do you go about making an equal pay claim if you feel you are being discriminated against?

First off talk to your local workplace union rep. Whilst the law on your side if you are being discriminated against, it is a complicated area of legislation and there are time limits and specific processes to follow. Your local solicitor will be out of his depth on this and you will need the specialist assistance the union can provide. The law covers like work, equivalent work and work of equal value, so your case need not be restricted to a comparison with a male colleague with the same job title.

Initially you will need to follow the company grievance procedure and demonstrate your case against that of a comparator. Again the union can help here as for the collective bargaining unit (grades 6a to 9 in Insurance, Life, Shared Services and UK) we have the right of disclosure of information on earnings for work groups by grade and sex which is one of the quickest ways of demonstrating any inequalities in pay. Additionally your rep will be able to assist with an equal pay questionnaire if necessary, which whilst the employer is not legally obliged to complete can influence a tribunal's view of the case if they do not.

If we are not able to resolve any claim through the grievance procedure, the union will be able to help you through an employment tribunal should you case have merit.

Whilst **Amicus** will not pursue spurious claims or use legislation to 'go fishing' to obtain pay data, we are here to help our members and will use all our rights and resources to assist members with valid claims.

Women tend to be offered lower starting pay than men. You may be missing out on other benefits, especially if you work part-time. If you think you are being paid less because you're a woman, call our Helpline on 0845 601 5901 or go to www.eoc.org.uk/timetoeven

**YOU WERE
cheap
FROM DAY ONE**

It's time to get even.

Women. Not Different. Equal.
Equal Opportunities Commission

What is pay?

Equal pay legislation outlaws discrimination in all contractual terms and conditions. In addition to your salary it covers holidays, profit related pay, bonuses, loans, company car allowances, staff discounts, nursery facilities to name but a few.

Again these are areas that your local union rep can help you with if you have any concerns over your benefits.