# Level 2 Public Services – The Cost of Equal Opportunities

# 1 of 16 - Welcome

Welcome to this session on The Cost of Equal Opportunities.

In this session we will be covering:

* The cost of implementing equal opportunities
* The cost of not implementing equal opportunities
* Equal opportunity measures

# 2 of 16 – Introduction to the cost of equal opportunities

Creating and developing equal opportunities creates many benefits for society, public services and businesses. However, with the application of the Equality Act 2010 and so that equal opportunities can be achieved, it comes with a cost. Although this should far outweigh the cost involved with not adhering to the act.

Let’s look at the following examples to give you an idea.

# 3 of 16 – The cost for businesses

Possible costs of adhering to the Equality Act 2010 and equal opportunities for businesses employing a wide diversity of staff:

Costs to employers includes:

* Simplification of application process
* Learning and understanding of different cultures (clothing, special days, religious needs)
* Providing areas for rest or religious activities
* Food or methods of preparation (If canteen area is provided)

# 4 of 16 – Employing those with a disability

Costs to employers includes:

* Making or providing an accessible interview venue
* Making reasonable adjustments within the work environment (specialist equipment, access requirements)
* Learning and understanding of disabilities and illnesses
* Providing specialist areas for rest or hygiene needs (this would include toilet/shower facilities)
* Food or methods of preparation (If canteen area is provided)

# 5 of 16 – The cost of not implementing the act

Possible cost examples of NOT implementing or adhering to the Equality Act 2010 and equal opportunities.

Employee inequality or discrimination cost to employers/employees include:

* Employee complaints or grievances
* Stress and trauma (could lead to employee sick leave)
* Management time and effort (to resolve problem)

Escalated cases create more cost implications including:

* Employment Lawyers
* Court cases
* Publicity issues (future business will look negatively on discrimination issues)
* Financial and possible employee loss (recruitment is time consuming and expensive)

Employment law in the UK is very strict, so if an employee does raise a grievance at work, this should be dealt with properly (please look at session 8 for information on grievances).

Please read this case and make notes as you will be asked some questions about it. This is an example of how some employers have chosen to bully or victimise their employees instead of handling the complaint properly and lawfully.

Click [here](http://www.yorkshirepost.co.uk/news/pregnant-doctor-wins-4-5m-after-nhs-hounded-her-out-1-4066313) to read about the case.

# 6 of 16 - Question 1

Answer this question.

Following the article you have just read, what damages was Dr Eva Michalak awarded?

1. £1.5 million
2. £4.5 million
3. £9 million
4. £14 million

The correct answer is B: £4.5 million

# 7 of 16 - Question 2

Indicate whether the following statements are true or false.

1. Compensation was only provided for physical injuries in this case. True or False
2. Employees cannot be dismissed for raising a grievance. True or False
3. Pregnant women are one of the groups included in the nine protected characteristics. True of False
4. Eva Michalak could only be considered in one of the protected characteristic groups which includes pregnant women. True or False

The correct answers are: 1 and 4 are false, 2 and 3 are true.

# 8 of 16 - Question 3

Indicate whether the following statements are true or false.

1. An independent doctor was brought in to investigate this case. True or False
2. Senior staff decisions do not need to have a reason or evidence. True or False
3. Employers found to be part of the bullying or victimisation can lose their jobs or be demoted. True or False

The correct answers are: 1 and 3 are true, 2 is false.

# 9 of 16 - Question 4

Indicate whether the following statements are true or false.

1. Large employers like the NHS Trust have the power to suspend their staff independently. True or False
2. Employers and the business/organisation may be equally liable for costs if found to be victimising employees. True or False
3. Medical evidence and witness statements were provided for the case. True or False

The correct answers are: 1, 2 and 3 are true.

10 of 16 - The cost for employers

Dr Eva Michalak’s case cost the NHS Trust £4.5m for five years of unlawful treatment and eventual damage to Eva’s mental health, career and future. This is an extreme example of what can happen if an employer refuses to implement the Equality Act 2010 and bully those who raise an issue because of this. However, the cost of a small grievance can begin to run into thousands of pounds, even for employees who try to resolve the matter quickly.

The average cost for an employment tribunal is estimated to be £90,000 per case!(including legal costs, employment lawyers and publicity issues)

It is important then, that equality issues should be considered and applied before they arise.

Making sure that fairness is right in the work environment can reduce the risk of serious grievances and problems as a whole.

This can be achieved by making sure that equal opportunities measures are in place including:

* Equality policy
* Action plan

11 of 16 - Equality policy

An equality policy should be a physical document which is available to all staff in a written or typed format and should include:

What you believe is fair (your values) and how you have put this into practice:

* To provide equality for everyone
* To provide a supportive and safe workplace
* To provide a diverse environment

What behaviour is expected (and not expected) and what can be expected from you.

12 of 16 - Action plan

An equality policy should be backed up by an action plan if things go wrong or to support and develop your values. This should include:

* Objectives (things that you want) and tasks to complete that can be measured.
* Employee and employer training.
* How you will deal with grievances, bullying or victimisation.
* How you will monitor behaviour.
* How you will provide advice and guidance to all workers such as training courses, through newsletters or emails.
* How you will review procedures that are important to equal opportunities – recruitment, training, promotion, discipline and grievances.

# 13 of 16 - Summary

An equality policy, more specifically the action plan, will be expensive for a business to create, develop and keep going. However they are needed to create a fairer work environment and reduce equality issues and the possibility for escalated grievance cases, which we have found to be even more damaging to a businesses finances and image.

# 14 of 16 - Question 5

Considering what you have learned about the cost of equal opportunities measures. Please fill in the blanks in the text below, with the following words and phrases: **Law, opportunities, adjustments, understanding, complicated, simplifying, legislation, where, year, Equality Act.**

Maintaining equal **BLANK** creates many benefits for society, public services and businesses. However, the application of the **BLANK** 2010, so the equal opportunities can be achieved, can be costly. For example, employing a wide diversity of staff will include **BLANK** the application process and the **BLANK** of different cultures. Whilst employing people with disabilities may include making reasonable **BLANK** within the work environment i.e. specialist equipment and access measures.

The correct answers are:

Maintaining equal **opportunities** creates many benefits for society, public services and businesses. However, the application of the **Equality Act** 2010, so the equal opportunities can be achieved, can be costly. For example, employing a wide diversity of staff will include **simplifying** the application process and the **understanding** of different cultures. Whilst employing people with disabilities may include making reasonable **adjustments** within the work environment i.e. specialist equipment and access measures.

# 15 of 16 - Question 6

Considering what you have learned about the cost of equal opportunities measures. Please fill in the blanks in the text below, with the following words and phrases: **Financial, implications, complaint, records, publicity, lawyers, cost, resources, grievances, employment.**

Businesses not implementing equal opportunities however, are more likely to receive employee **BLANK.** Serious cases create heavier cost **BLANK** and may include court hearing that require hiring **BLANK** lawyers. Employee grievances will result in a **BLANK** loss due to the time and effort needed to resolve a problem, with the potential for **BLANK** issues.

The correct answers are:

Businesses not implementing equal opportunities however, are more likely to receive employee **grievances.** Serious cases create heavier cost **implications** and may include court hearing that require hiring **employment** lawyers. Employee grievances will result in a **financial** loss due to the time and effort needed to resolve a problem, with the potential for **publicity** issues.

# 16 of 16 – End

Well done. You have completed this session on the cost of equal opportunities.

In this session we have covered:

* The cost of implementing equal opportunities
* The cost of not implementing equal opportunities
* Equal opportunity measures

If you are unsure or have any questions about any of these topics, make a note and speak to your tutor for more help.