

EXTRACTS FROM THE LATEST CHURCHES' LEGISLATION ADVISORY SERVICE BULLETIN EMPLOYMENT & VOLUNTEERING

Discipline and grievance procedures: Acas draft Code of Practice

Acas has produced a draft [Code of Practice](#) on employment dispute resolution in response to the provisions of the Employment Bill currently going through Parliament. The fact that the Bill removes the current statutory dismissal and discipline procedure has prompted Acas to revise its existing Code. In revising it, Acas has been conscious that many of the responses to the Government's initial consultation in advance of the Bill called for a shorter Code which concentrates on the key principles that underpin the handling of disciplinary and grievance situations in the workplace.

The revised code is therefore more concise than its predecessor and is principles-based. The effective parts of the Code are as follows:

Discipline

- establish the facts of each case;
- inform the employee of the problem;
- hold a meeting with the employee to discuss the problem;
- allow the employee to be accompanied at the meeting;
- decide on appropriate action; and
- provide employees with an opportunity to appeal.

Grievance

- let the employer know the nature of the grievance;
- hold a meeting with the employee to discuss the grievance
- allow the employee to be accompanied at the meeting;
- decide on appropriate action;
- allow the employee to take the grievance further if not resolved
- special cases: it is good practice to consider dealing separately with issues involving bullying, harassment or whistle-blowing.

Acas invites comments on the content and structure of the revised code by post, e-mail or fax by to: George Boyce, Acas, D & G code revision, Brandon House, 180 Borough High Street LONDON SE1 1LW. Fax no: 020 7210 3664. E-mail: dandgcode@acas.org.uk. CLAS would not expect to submit a corporate response, but individual churches might wish to do so. The closing date is **25 July 2008**.

[Source: *ACAS Current Consultations* – 25 May 2008]

FAITH AND SOCIETY

Birth registration

The Department for Children, Schools and Families and the Department for Work and Pensions have published a joint White Paper, *Joint birth registration: recording responsibility* which includes a proposal to change the law in England to require fathers as well as mothers to be named on birth certificates. The change will be implemented in the next session's Welfare Reform Bill and will give mothers or fathers a right to insist that the other parent acknowledge his or her responsibilities to the child by registering on the birth certificate.

The responsibility to register a new baby for unmarried parents currently lies predominantly with the mother. In England and Wales around 7% of births (about 45,000 children) each year are solely registered by mothers. The new proposal intends to address this by three changes to the law:

- **A requirement jointly to register:** both parents will have to register jointly – if either parent wants to register as a single individual, the registrar will explain that parents have to register jointly unless it is 'impracticable, impossible or unreasonable to do so'. If it is not, then the registrar will ask the registering parent to come back with information about the other parent in order to continue with the joint registration.
- **Father's obligation to register:** where the mother wants joint registration but the father does not, the mother can provide information that allows the registrar to contact the father, who will be obliged to take a paternity test. If he is proven to be the father then the child will be jointly registered.
- **Father's right to register:** a father will have the right to declare his paternity and have his name recorded on the birth certificate. Where the mother does not acknowledge his paternity he will have the right to ask to take a paternity test.

The names of married parents are automatically recorded in the birth register when one of them registers; they do not have to register jointly. It is not proposed to change this.

[Source: *DCSF Press Notice* – 2 June 2008]

Immigration

Tier 1 of the points-based system for immigration opened globally on 30 June 2008. The UK Border Agency completed the roll-out of Tier 1 (General) worldwide and introduced the Tier 1 (Entrepreneur), Tier 1 (Investor) and Tier 1 (Post Study Work) categories.

[Source: *UK Border Agency News* – 23 June 2008]