



## **Open Access Training Case Study – Colchester English Study Centre**

### **Background to the Organisation**

Colchester English Study Centre is a private English Language school that provides language classes to overseas students. The organisation employs approximately 50 staff.

### **Participation in the Open Access training**

Two members of staff in the organisation attended an Open Access training event on Employment Law and Equality and Diversity in early 2010. The main reason for attending the training was to develop their knowledge around Employment Law, to help them resolve situations and problems that could potentially arise in the workplace.

The training was tutor lead and included lectures on facts about the law, as well as discussions with colleagues on issues around this subject area.

The representatives of the organisation who attended the training felt the trainer had been well informed, very professional, and happy to discuss issues raised by delegates. They also found packs provided at the training useful. More importantly, the fact that the training could be accessed locally was a bonus as it cut down their travel time.

### **Outcomes of the training**

The training attended by members of staff in the organisation has generated a number of outcomes. Firstly, staff involved in the training feel they are now 'better informed' and therefore more able to deal effectively with employment issues that could potentially arise in their organisation. The training has also improved their knowledge of the subjects covered. As a result, they have reviewed and revised existing policies in line with legal requirements.

Key changes that the Colchester English Study Centre has made since the training include introducing and revising policies and practices around Discipline and Grievance, Bullying and Harassment and Redundancy. The organisation originally had these policies described in their handbook; however these were written many years ago and 'had not been tested'. They therefore felt that the policies needed to be 'more detailed and specific' and updated in line with current changes in the law.

One key lesson learnt as a result of the changes made was the need for managers to be well informed about Employment law. The organisation therefore plans to recruit an HR specialist who will keep them up to date with policies around this area.



## **Impact of the training**

The organisation believes the changes made to their HR practices have impacted on the organisation in a number of ways, including improving:

- relations between management and employees;
- communication within the organisation; and
- leadership and management skills of line managers.

In addition to the above, the organisation feels the changes introduced have reduced the number of cases around employee grievances in the organisation. Overall, they believe the training has made them 'more efficient' and are now in 'possession of the facts' to enable them to handle employee disputes or grievances.

## **Summary of benefits of the training**

Addressing employee disputes or grievances in any workforce the organisation feels can be disruptive and divide opinions, however, as they are now 'better informed' as a result of the training, they feel they will be able to handle these issues more effectively in the future. They feel the training has given them the 'right tools' to do this.

