

Summary of substantive policy discussions
at Liberty Council meeting
October 2008

Forthcoming Equality Bill and Positive Action in the workplace

The meeting discussed the Government's proposal to allow employers to consider characteristics such as sex and race in recruitment and promotion tie-breaks. The meeting discussed the difference between positive discrimination and positive action. The Government's proposal would not place a positive duty on employers to take any characteristic into account but would allow employers to take under-representation into account in a tie-break scenario. The meeting discussed how the current legal position as regards considering under-representation was unclear. The Government's proposal would allow the UK to take advantage of a measure that is already permitted under EU law. The meeting agreed that positive action in genuine tie break situations should be supported.

Liberty in the Economic Downturn

The meeting discussed Liberty's strategy for the forthcoming economic downturn. It was discussed that while the economic downturn may make Liberty's work ever harder, it was worth remembering that the Government's approach to rights and freedoms had hardly been satisfactory during a time of relative affluence. It was decided that Liberty should focus on the challenges presented by an economic downturn including including the potential for increased inter-racial tension and potential ratcheting up of anti-immigrant political rhetoric.