

CASE F

LONDON BOROUGH OF WALFORD – COUNCILLOR PAT RIX

Summary

The complainant alleges that Councillor Pat Rix has subjected her to unfair treatment on the grounds of religion and race, bullying, victimisation and racial harassment.

It is reported that Councillor Rix was on the interview panel which appointed her, but did not want her for the job and preferred a white woman who did not perform as well as the complainant. It is alleged that Councillor Rix called her a liar when she advised her that a community film had a racist remark in it which would offend and embarrass the complainant. It is reported that Councillor Rix has micromanaged her and set her unrealistic targets to make her look a failure, that she has been publicly humiliated at meetings and verbally abused. She reports that her position as a manager has been undermined, that she has had a meeting with her staff and managers, and been excluded from the meetings.

It is reported that Councillor Rix was unhappy when managers asked the complainant to work on assignments including a petition by the Punjabi Sikh community for a community centre. It is alleged that Councillor Rix tried to stop her being involved in this work, told her that she did not want Pakistanis or Muslims asking for a community centre and made derogatory comments about the various ethnic groups within the Muslim community. The complainant found these remarks offensive as a Pakistani Muslim herself.

The complainant says that her managers failed to manage the situation or to protect her, and that she was unfairly and wrongly dismissed. It is alleged that Councillor Rix has referred to the protocol for officer and member relations as “bollocks” and failed to respond to a questionnaire sent to her under the Race Relations Act.

complaint form

RU

16 NOV 2006

RECEIVED



If you have any questions or difficulties filling in this form, for example – if English is not your first language or you have a disability – please contact the Referrals Unit on 0800 107 2001.

You can also email them at newcomplaints@standardsboard.co.uk

Please note

- > we can only accept complaints in writing
- > one of our officers may contact you personally to go through the details of your complaint
- > we are unlikely to be able to keep your identity confidential if you make a complaint

RECEIVED
16 NOV 2006

ABOUT YOU

title Mr Ms Mrs Miss Councillor Other (please specify)

first name YASMIN surname BEGUM

address 23 AMBLESIDE AVENUE, WALFORD
LONDON postcode E 19 8QS

daytime telephone 0208 8597 4437(H)

evening telephone

email y.begum@walford.gov.uk

Please consider the complaint I have described below and in the evidence attached. I understand and accept that the details will normally be disclosed to the member, particularly if the matter goes through to investigation.

signature

date 1 2 1 1 0 6

YOUR COMPLAINT

Who are you complaining about?

Please give the name of the councillor/s, member/s or co-opted member/s that you consider has broken the Code of Conduct and the name of their authority/ies.

name of the individual/s
COUNCILLOR PAT TRIX

name of their authority/ies
LONDON BOROUGH OF WALFORD

Please tick here if you work for the authority/ies shown above

Please tick here if you are a member of the authority/ies shown above

complaint form

WHAT ARE YOU COMPLAINING ABOUT?

Please provide us with as much information as you can about your complaint to help us to decide whether or not it should be investigated. Include the **date** and **details** of the alleged misconduct, and any information that supports the allegation. We can only investigate complaints that a member has broken a local Code of Conduct (see section 3 of the information leaflet *How to make a complaint*). Continue on a separate sheet if there is not enough space on this form.

Please see attached complaint and also a copy of the Race Relations Questionnaire that I have send consider Patrick King. Please note that I have not had a response back as yet.

EVIDENCE (if this applies)

Please attach to this form copies of any correspondence, documents, names and details of witnesses, and any other evidence that you feel is relevant to your complaint. Please avoid sending us large amounts of background information that only relate indirectly to your complaint.

Please tick this box if you would like us to return the evidence to you.

Please send this form to:

The Standards Board for England
PO Box 36656
London SE1 0WN

The *Race Relations Act 2000* requires us to monitor ethnic or national origin to ensure that we do not inadvertently discriminate against members of a particular group. It would, therefore, be helpful if you would complete the ethnic monitoring section of the form, although this is not compulsory.

The answers will be removed and kept entirely separate from your complaint and will be completely confidential. They will be used for statistical purposes only, in which individuals will not be identified.

Confidential

Employee Details

From: Yasmin Begum

Post: Neighbourhood Management Co-ordinator/Community Engagement Team Leader, London Borough of Walford

Location: Old Town Hall, Bournestoke

Department: Regeneration Section

Complaint

1. Equalities

2. I am an Asian Pakistani Muslim Female who has been subjected to less favorable treatment on the grounds of religion and race, bullying, victimization and racial harassment by Councillor Pat Rix.

3. Bullying, victimization and Harassment on the grounds of religious belief and race

4. I have been subjected to continuous bullying, victimization and racial harassment since my interview and throughout my employment, and which I have raised with my Line Managers and Head of Service, and which they did nothing about, as the bully, Councillor Pat Rix is an Executive Member of the Council and is in a powerful position. Councillor Rix was on the interview panel, and did not want me selected for the job and preferred a white female, even though I was the best performing candidate. The other panel members did not agree with her, and I was appointed. She has been unhappy with my appointment ever since.

5. She has victimized me and racially harassed me on various occasions since my appointment.

6. I have been constantly picked on. I have been accused of being "a liar" by this bully at a public meeting when I advised her that a community film had racist material and should not be shown in a public meeting. She insisted on the film being shown and complained to my managers. She knew the racist remark in the film would offend and embarrass me. My performance, work assignments and workload, has been unfairly and publicly questioned and I have been blamed without justification. She has treated me unfavorably by "micro-managing" me and setting me unrealistic targets designed to make me look like a failure in front of others. I have been publicly humiliated by this bully at public meetings and verbally abused. My position as a manager has been undermined, and she has had meeting with my staff and managers and excluded me from the meetings.

7. She has been unhappy with me being asked by managers to work, on other assignments, for example on a case involving a petition by the Punjabi Sikh community for a community centre. I am fluent in Punjabi and so was well placed to communicate with the community. However, she deliberately tried to stop me being involved in this work and asked my managers to remove me from the project without justification. She also said to me she did not want the Pakistani or Muslims asking for a community centre and made derogatory comments about the various ethnic groups within the Muslim community. I found her comments offensive as I am a Pakistani Muslim, which she was aware of, and it was inappropriate for her to single out this racial group and religious community.
8. My area of work has been independently reviewed and reported to Members and Chief Officers, where the strategic importance of the work has been recognized. She has been unhappy with the commissioning and recommendations of this review. The review was critical of her.
9. I have raised the bullying, victimization and harassment at meetings with my managers, but they have failed to act and provide me with a safe working environment.
10. The bullying, victimization, manipulation and harassment also influenced and contributed to my unfair and wrongful dismissal. My managers failed to effectively manage the bully to my ultimate detriment, resulting in the less favourable treatment and with me being served with an unfair and wrongful dismissal notice by my managers. The bully has refused to follow the Council's code of conduct or the protocol for Officers and Members referring to the protocol as "bollocks".
11. I have asked the Councillor to respond formally to a number of questions I have asked under the Race Relations Act (RR65), copy attached for ease of reference, but unfortunately I have not received a reply to date.



The London Borough of

Walford

www.walford.gov.uk

Ms Yasmin Begum
23 Ambleside Avenue
London
E19 6QS

Reference: CC
Phone: 020 3201
Fax: 020 3698
Minicom: 020 3155
E-mail:

Date: 19 October 2006

Dear Ms Begum

Grievance – Treatment by Elected Member.

I am writing further to my letter of 20 September 2006 and to your e - mail of 9 October 2006.

In order to clarify the position, complaints about a Member which amount to a breach of the Members Code of Conduct need to be referred to the Standards Board for England. Such complaints are outside the scope of the grievance procedure which only applies in respect of employees.

I am sending you the Standards Board for England booklet "How to make a Complaint", which has a form inside for you to complete should you wish to pursue the complaint about the Member.

Yours sincerely

Parvinder Kaur
Deputy Monitoring Officer

Legal Department, Town Hall, Walford E19 1BB
DX 7222 WALFORD

Yasmin Begum
23 Ambleside Avenue
London
E19 6QS

Mrs Pat Rix
33 Lordship Lane
Borough Green
London E20 4PZ

11th November 2006,

Dear Madam,

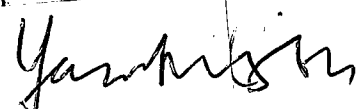
Re: Race Relations Questionnaire RR65 – Dated 9th October 2006

I refer to the above which was sent to you by recorded delivery on the above date.

Could you please note, as stated in the guidance attached to the questionnaire, that by virtue of section 65 of the Race Relations Act, the questionnaire and any replies are admissible in proceedings under the Act and a court of Tribunal may draw any such inference as is just and equitable from a failure without reasonable excuse to reply within a reasonable period, or from an evasive or equivocal reply, including an inference that the person questioned has discriminated unlawfully.

I therefore look forward to a full reply as originally requested.

Yours faithfully,


Yasmin Begum

THE RACE RELATIONS ACT 1976 SECTION 65(1)(a)

QUESTIONNAIRE OF PERSON AGGRIEVED (THE COMPLAINANT)

Name of person to be
questioned (the
respondent)

Address

Name of complainant

Address

Give date, approximate
time, place and factual
description of the treat-
ment received and of
the circumstances
leading up to the treat-
ment (see paragraph 10
of the guidance)

Complete if you wish
to give reasons,
otherwise delete the
word "because" (see
paragraphs 11 and 12
of the guidance)

This is the first of
your questions to the
respondent. You are
advised not to alter it

To: Patricia Rix

Of: 33 Lordship Lane Borough Green
London E20 4PZ

I Yasmin Begum

Of: 23 Ambleside Avenue
London E19 6QS

consider that you may have discriminated against me contrary to the Race Relations Act 1976.

2 On

*please see attached Grievance
Statement dated the 11th Sept 2006.*

3 I consider that this treatment may have been unlawful ~~because~~

4 Do you agree that the statement in paragraph 2 is an accurate description of what happened? If not in what respect do you disagree or what is your version of what happened?

This is the second of you against me? your questions to the respondent. You are advised not to alter it.

Enter here any other questions you wish to ask (see paragraphs 13-15 of the guidance)

*Delete as appropriate above is if you delete the first alternative, insert the address to which you want the reply to be sent

5 Do you accept that your treatment of me was unlawful discrimination by

If not

- a why not?
- b for what reason did I receive the treatment accorded to me? and
- c how far did considerations of colour, race, nationality (including citizenship) or ethnic or national origins affect your treatment of me?

⁶ please see attached list of questions that need to be answered by you.

7 My address for any reply you may wish to give to the questions raised

*that set out in paragraph 1 above/the following address

See paragraph 16
of the guidance

Signature of complainant

Gemma Byrne

Date

9th October 2006

NB By virtue of section 65 of the Act, this questionnaire and any reply are (subject to the provisions of the section) admissible in proceedings under the Act and a court or tribunal may draw any such inference as is just and equitable from a failure without reasonable excuse to reply within a reasonable period, or from an evasive or equivocal reply, including an inference that the person questioned has discriminated unlawfully

QUESTIONS UNDER THE RACE RELATIONS ACT 1976

YOU ARE UNDER A LEGAL OBLIGATION TO ANSWER THESE QUESTIONS

EMPLOYEE: _____

Please provide the following information and answers to the questions in electronic format on a CD and a hardcopy:

TO: Pat Rix

1. Please explain why you were on the interview panel for the selection of the Neighbourhood Co-ordinator and who agreed this?
2. Please explain your reasons why you wanted the officers at the interview to offer the position of Neighbourhood Co-ordinator to S_____ and not to me?
3. Please explain why you did not introduce me and welcome me to my first Neighbourhood Management Partnership Board meeting on the 14th December 2004, which you chaired.
4. Please explain why you did not hold the partnership board accountable for service delivery rather than focus on me?
5. Please explain what concerns you had over my performance, and what action you took?
6. Please explain why you instructed me to read out my reports at each partnership board meeting and then persistently interrupted and rudely question me in front of other members causing me embarrassment
7. Please state why you set unrealistic timescales and targets for me to achieve tasks?
8. Please explain what discussions you had with my managers J_____ and B_____ on my workplan or targets or performance and why?
9. Please state why you bullied me to write to the Chair of the _____ Network group asking her to resign from her position?
10. Please state why you pointed your finger at me across the table on the 7th August 2006 at the Neighbourhood Management Partnership Board meeting and you said "this is all your (_____) fault for the mess we are in" in a rude, condescending and bullying manner to me.
11. Please explain why you have never appraised or acknowledged my work or achievements to the NMPB or at the quarterly meetings with my line managers.
12. Please explain why it was difficult for you to say thank you to me for the good work I did or was involved in at any Neighbourhood Management board meetings?
13. Please state why on the 7th August 06, you thanked K_____ and L_____ for their efforts on the community film, but did you not thank me?
14. Please explain why again on the launch of the community film on the 13th September 2006, you said "I would like to thank 2 officers; K_____ Vasa and L_____ and members of the NMPB" and why did you not include me in your thanks.
15. Please explain why you called me a liar in at the NMPB on the 6th March 2006, when I explained to you that the community film contained offensive remarks?

16. Please explain what you meant when you said to me "what have you been up to" when you met me and my manager B and J on 19th June 2006
17. Please explain why you spoke to me in a high pitched, raised tone and scolding voice, as if telling a child off like a child at each board meeting with me?
18. Please explain why you picked holes in my reports to the NMPB, even though I had briefed you prior to the board meetings?
19. Please state why you at the NMPB meeting of the 7th August 2006 singled out the Muslim community for your comments knowing that I was a Muslim?
20. Please state why you were unhappy with me dealing with the Sikh Punjabi petition?
21. Please explain why you were opposed to and do not want Black Ethnic Minorities groups to have accommodating on the G ward and also why you are against the K site being used to re-house existing groups, please explain why you are opposed to these groups? Please explain your role on the Planning Committee and why you opposed their application?
22. Why did you at the Sure Start Partnership Board on the 1st December 2005, say "The council is under no obligation to pay any redundancy to staff on temporary contracts, we just give notice and ask people to leave" and then look straight at me and smirk?
23. Please explain why you think I should be dismissed?
24. What was your role in my dismissal?
25. Please state what you discussed with J when I was asked to leave the room on the 19th June 2006.
26. What aspects of the Draft Neighbourhood Management Review report February 2006 for NMAGT and Final Review Report of both pilots 'An Overview and Learning for the Borough dated June 2006 did you not like and please outline reasons why
27. Please state what was discussed at your 45 minute meeting with K on the 31st July 2006.
28. Please confirm why you stated to K at the above meeting that "The Chief Executive had received the reviews was now looking at the Neighbourhood Management and its going to be taking off big time".
29. Please explain why you said to K that she was to have a role in the new work but I was not to?
30. Please state why did you not consider it appropriate to ask or seek my permission as Line Manager of K, my staff member, prior to having the meeting with her?
31. Please state why you said "bollocks to the protocol" to K when she informed you on the telephone that there was a Member and Officer protocol in place on the 19th July 2006
32. Please state why you gave instructions to J on your meeting with him on the 14th August 2006, "to kill off the Neighbourhood Management Partnership Board" which was due to meet on the 2nd October 2006?
33. Please state what your role on the Personnel Board? How many dismissals have you dealt with or comment upon on the Board. Please provide details of all your decisions.
34. Have you been involved in any previous or current Employment Tribunals cases? If so please explain your role and the outcome or issue.
35. Please provide details of all complaints against you, current and previous.

36. Please provide electronic copies of all your e-mails to K. J.
J. D., K., HR sent or received concerning N.
V., D. Neighbourhood Management, Community Engagement,
Community Development Trusts, Personnel Board, Re-organisations or
Restructuring, staff employment or dismissals.
37. Please provide a copy of your .pst file from your computer