

Jersey Hospitality Jobs “fayre” 27 February 2014 – but remarkably unfair in practice.

The States Social Security Department – the same department that is tasked with implementing the long delayed “anti-discrimination” legislation – organised the latest “jobs fayre” today at Liberation Quay.

Helping unemployed people into work is a laudable aim of course – but this was a very discriminatory event in accordance with the current discriminatory policies of the States.

It was an “invitation” only event and only those with their five years continuous residence or more were exclusively invited. Thus although many of those of the 10,500 without full “quals” contribute many £millions each year in taxes and social security to the government besides paying lodgers’ rents and spending almost all their earnings within Jersey were excluded from participation? Why?

At the “fayre” over thirty hospitality businesses were represented advertising vacancies with mostly low skills requirements.

I was not allowed to enter the suite to discuss these because I was not invited and not personally seeking employment.

But, in the recent past, many of the vacancies would have been taken up by “seasonal workers” or “new arrivals” but the current discriminatory policies of Jersey government are trying to “force” employers to employ only those with “work quals”. Is this really desirable and how compatible are such policies with the anti-discrimination laws that are planned or promised? Will it really be permissible to demand such qualifications as “good English spoken” from employees in future?

Meanwhile, in wet fields in the country parishes Jersey Royal potatoes are being planted or tended - mostly by about 1,000 Polish workers under regular but short term contracts. How long before these jobs are available exclusively to those with “jobs quals” and why is there a different standard now between the “hospitality” and “agricultural” sectors? Are those with “jobs quals” less able to undertake this agricultural type of work and shall this discriminatory dispensation be allowed to continue in future?

I asked if there might be a similar “fayre” organised for those without “jobs quals” too in the near future but the answer was evasive.

Since resident adults of less than five years are just as likely to have children or dependent relatives as any others the potential for unfairness of treatment seems considerable.

I suggest that the Scrutiny Panel might like to investigate such wider issues as a matter of urgency because the population “numbers game” does not seem to be the most important matter to be considered.

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