

New Blacklisting Regulations Won't Stop Outrageous Practice

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Construction union UCATT are bitterly disappointed with the new anti-blacklisting regulations, introduced today (March 2), the measures are so weak that they will not prevent blacklisting from occurring.

Alan Ritchie, General Secretary of UCATT, said: "The Government has entirely rejected all UCATT submissions and attempts to have the regulations amended to ensure that blacklisting was stamped out. Fortunately for Lord Young blacklisting doesn't occur in the House of Lords but ordinary construction workers are not so privileged."

UCATT have argued that the regulations were deficient as they did not make blacklisting a specific criminal offence and only prevented workers from being blacklisted for undertaking, the narrowly defined, "trade union activities". The Government has given the green light to employers to blacklist workers for undertaking unofficial industrial action, which could include stopping work due to safety fears or a refusal to undertake voluntary overtime.

The regulations also fail to grant an automatic right to compensation for any worker who discovers that they have been blacklisted. If a blacklist is discovered workers will not be automatically told that they had been blacklisted.

Mr Ritchie, added: "Cynical construction employers will recognise the weakness of the regulations and could continue to blacklist workers. They know that they are unlikely to get caught and if they do they will merely get a slap on the wrist. UCATT will continue to campaign to have the regulations overhauled so that they are truly effective in stamping out this despicable practice once and for all."

For Further information contact Barckley Sumner on 0780 2329235

UCATT represents 125,000 members employed in the construction industry throughout the United Kingdom and the Republic of Ireland

Note to Editors: Blacklisting is not currently illegal the Government had originally intended to outlaw the practice and made provision to do so in the 1999 Employment Relations Act. However the necessary regulations were never introduced, as there was not any concrete evidence that blacklisting was still taking place.

In March 2009 it was revealed following an investigation by the Information Commissioners Office that a company the Consulting Association was operating a blacklist in the construction industry. Over 40 major construction companies were using the blacklist, which contained the names and information in excess of 3,000 construction workers.

In July 2009 Ian Kerr who ran the Consulting Association was fined just £5,000 for Data Protection Offences, despite the Consulting Association having a turnover of over £100,000 per annum.

Lord Young is the Employment Relations Minister at the Department for Business, Innovation and Skills who oversaw the introduction of the blacklisting regulations.