

Maria O'Loughlin v Penton Publications Ltd

Sex discrimination proceedings brought in the Industrial Tribunal which settled on 11 May 2015.

Summary

The Claimant was employed by the Respondent from April 2013 as a Senior Sales Executive.

The Claimant alleged that she was subjected to unlawful sex discrimination by the Respondent when she became pregnant.

The Claimant alleged that when she was interviewed for her position with the Respondent, she was asked whether she had children and if she intended to have any more children. At that stage the Claimant had one child and alleged that she told the Respondent she did not intend to have more children. The Claimant was offered a position with the Respondent and commenced employment on the 15 April 2013.

In September 2013 the Claimant advised the Respondent that she was pregnant. The Claimant alleged that the Respondent was not happy with her pregnancy.

The Claimant alleged that she felt pressurised into attending a wedding show over a weekend when she had made other arrangements. At this show the Claimant became unwell and had to leave the show. She alleged that the Respondent was very dismissive towards her and showed no concern for her welfare.

The Claimant also alleged that the Respondent put more pressure on her work, failed to provide targets for her, failed to put appropriate IT support in place and pressurised her to remain in work after her contractual finishing time. The Claimant alleged that the Respondent unfairly criticised her work and told her she was not doing her job properly.

The Respondent invited the Claimant to a meeting to review her probationary period in October 2013. The Claimant alleged that other employees told her that they had not been invited to probationary review meetings. The Claimant also alleged that she was told she had to meet targets even though she was unable to do so as she had been absent from work attending antenatal appointments.

The Claimant commenced sick leave on the 1 November 2013. She experienced difficulties in obtaining some of her sick pay and maternity pay from the Respondents and eventually received same after contacting HMRC Disputes Line. The Claimant believed that the Respondent treated her very badly at work and during her sick leave and maternity leave. She is convinced that the treatment afforded to her was designed to force her to leave her employment. The Claimant and Respondent agreed that her employment terminated in May 2015.

In a conciliated settlement through the Labour Relations Agency, the Respondent agreed to pay the Claimant without admission of liability £6,200. The Respondent affirmed its on-going commitment to the principle of equality of opportunity in employment and further affirms its commitment to ensuring that its policies practices and procedures, in particular those relating to pregnancy, comply in all respects with best practice and with its obligations under the provisions of the Sex Discrimination (NI) Order 1976, as amended and the corresponding Codes of Practice. The Respondent welcomed the opportunity to meet with the Equality Commission to review its maternity and pregnancy related policies practices and procedures to ensure that they are effective and conform with all requirements of the Sex Discrimination (NI) Order 1976. The Respondent undertook to implement within a reasonable time scale any reasonable recommendations the Commission may make, including any recommendations concerning the provision of equality awareness training to management and staff. The Respondent agreed to provide a reference on request from any prospective employer in terms agreed. The parties agreed that the Claimant's employment with the Respondent terminated upon execution of these terms.