

15/07/2010

PRESS RELEASE

## Tribunal Rules Woman was Harassed on Grounds of Age

An Employment Tribunal has ruled that a Cookstown woman was harassed by her employer on grounds of her age, and awarded her £3,780 compensation.

Anna Stirrup, then aged 50, was employed as a shop manager at Summers Dry Cleaners, Cookstown and brought the complaint against the owner of the business, Mr. Ufuoma Obahor.

The Tribunal, in their decision, state "*When Mrs. Stirrup had been off work sick for four days [Mr. Obahor] called at her home and told her that she was unreliable and could not be depended upon. He told her that at her age she should be slowing down and was too old to be working five days a week, and that at 50 she was 'too old'.*" He subsequently said to Mrs. Stirrup that "*she was tired and that at her age she should be thinking about slowing up.*"

The Tribunal ruled that Mr. Obahor "*did have a fixation with the claimant's age which unfortunately led him to making ageist remarks directed against her.*" They add "*we are satisfied that the injury to the claimant's feelings can be attributed to [Mr. Obahor's] acts of harassment.*"

The Tribunal awarded Anna Stirrup £3,500 for the injury to her feelings which, with interest, amounts to £3,780.

She was also awarded £2,087 for unlawful deductions from her wages.

A claim that Mr. Obahor had discriminated against Mrs. Stirrup on grounds of religious belief was not upheld by the Tribunal.

Commenting on the Tribunal's decision, Eileen Lavery, Head of Strategic Enforcement at the Equality Commission, said, "This case highlights the fact that hurtful comments about the age of a colleague or an employee have no place in the workplace. As the Tribunal stated, Mrs. Stirrup found these remarks about her age 'hurtful and unwanted'. Most people have long since recognised that harassing a person on grounds, for

example, of their religion, race or sexuality is unacceptable and unlawful. The same applies to harassment on grounds of age.

*Note:*

The Tribunal's decision can be accessed on the website of the Office of the Industrial Tribunal and the Fair Employment Tribunal at:

[http://forms.employmenttribunalsni.co.uk/OITFET\\_IWS/DecisionSearch.aspx](http://forms.employmenttribunalsni.co.uk/OITFET_IWS/DecisionSearch.aspx)