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PRESS RELEASE

Driving Test Examiner Wins Sex Discrimination Case against DVA



A female driving test examiner has been awarded £9,000 by an Industrial Tribunal because her employer, the Driver Vehicle Agency (DVA,) failed to let her go on a training course to be an LGV test examiner.

Frances Colvin is one of Northern Ireland's very few female driving test examiners and the holder of an LGV licence since 1993. She has just been awarded £9,000 by the Industrial Tribunals for sex discrimination by her employer, Ms Colvin (47) brought a complaint with the help of the Equality Commission. The Tribunal found that the DVA had discriminated against her on grounds of her sex by failing to afford her the opportunity to go on a training course to be an LGV test examiner.

Ms Colvin said she was relieved that the case was over. "I found it very difficult and distressing to take the case against my employers, but I believe that it's very important, not just for me but for all women, to make a stand against unfair treatment and I'm pleased with the Tribunal's decision. I'm just looking forward now to progressing my career and fulfilling my ambition."

Ms. Colvin has been employed by the DVA since September 2000 and is based in Cookstown. She works as a driving test examiner and has held her LGV licence for almost 20 years. She had repeatedly formally expressed her wish to train as an LGV examiner to her employers but was not given this opportunity.

The Tribunal, in finding in favour of Ms. Colvin, found that she was treated differently to a male colleague who was sent on the course, even though he did not meet a course requirement, whereas Ms. Colvin at that stage did.

The Tribunal also found that the DVA had treated Ms. Colvin less favourably on grounds of her part-time working status – she works a 24 hour, three day week.

The Tribunal found that Ms. Colvin was very upset by this act of sex discrimination and awarded £7,500.

Frances Colvin had raised these matters with the DVA by way of an internal grievance procedure in May 2011, but a grievance meeting was not held until October 2011. The Tribunal held that this delay, without adequate explanation, was unreasonable and uplifted the compensation award by 20% to a total of £9,000.

"Women are still greatly under-represented among vehicle and driving test examiners," Mary Kitson, Senior Legal Officer with the Equality Commission, said.

"This decision is a welcome affirmation by the Tribunal that women are not only entitled to work in what were previously predominantly male occupations, but that they must be afforded completely fair and equal treatment for all aspects of their careers within these jobs."

ENDS

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Notes to editors

The 2010 Review of Gender in the NI Civil Service (March 2012) shows that of 398 Vehicle and Driving Examiners in Northern Ireland, just 12 were female (3%).