

Brexit job discrimination

THE *FREELANCE* has already encountered one example of an EU national within the Branch who applied for a staff job with a media organisation and who was asked for evidence of their Permanent Residence (PR) status in the UK.

Applications for that status are still a work in progress, as EU nationals had no idea they'd ever need to apply until last summer's referendum result. Nor do they yet need any evidence of their immigration status – beyond showing an EU passport.

Until the UK formally leaves the EU, its citizens have the same rights to work in the UK as UK citizens: anyone who tries to tell them otherwise is in breach of the (still valid) Treaty of Amsterdam and other EU treaties and Directives.

It isn't even clear yet what sort of status EU nationals will need to apply for in order to stay in the UK after Brexit. So asking EU citizens about their residence status is – on the face of it – currently unlawful.

UK Minister for Equalities Nick Gibb, responding to a recent Parliamentary Question, has said he will “review” a couple of dozen advertisements that have come to his attention and specify that only UK passport holders can apply for the job – in some cases a job needing a foreign language or travel to the EU. Other ads offer different terms to EU nationals.

Gibb said the Government Equalities Office was “looking into” these cases and that it sponsors the Equality and Human Rights Commission, which enforces anti-discrimination legislation. The *Freelance* is making enquiries and hopes to have advice soon for EU nationals on how to re-



Demonstrators at a pro-EU rally in London in September

Image: © Matt Salusbury

spond to discrimination on the basis of their nationality and who to contact. Watch this space.

A recently-leaked Home Office document marked “Draft – official sensitive” proposes that, following Brexit, there will be a two-year “implementation period” – after which freedom of movement “in its current form” will end. In its place it proposes compulsory registration and biometric ID cards for EU nationals resident in the UK, with restrictions on bringing in their spouses. “Non-skilled” EU nationals will become temporary workers on a two-year work permit.

It's not clear whether journalistic professions will count as “highly skilled” workers who can stay on permits of five years or more. EU

national freelances will be asked for “proof of self-employment” with a “minimum earnings threshold”.

The *Guardian* reports that there have already been ministerial rows within the UK government over the draft document. It should be stressed that this draft document is marked “subject to negotiation” with the EU, which has already taken a dim view of initial UK “offers” on the status of EU nationals. The European Parliament in particular is preparing to use its power to veto a final EU-UK deal over the issue of citizens' rights.

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• The Equality and Human Rights Commission press office advises that anyone seeking advice on discrimination matters can contact www.equalityadvisoryservice.com

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Germany, that allows presenters to write really, really big on flipcharts so the people at the back can read what they've written in presentations. Most of the efforts were along the lines of “Size matters.”

She unpacked the “work process” for a copywriting gig, from an inquiry to an “initial chat”, after which she will send the client 20 questions, along the lines of “Who are you? How are you different from anybody else?” There follows a “more detailed chat” and offering them a quote, at which point she'll then invoice the client for 50 per cent, without having written a word.

There follows the draft copy, then revised copy. If they haven't responded to this in a month, they'll be invoiced anyway for 25 per cent more.

Then they get the final version with an invoice for the remaining 25 per cent: “as you know, most of the work is at the beginning of the job.”

Average daily rates reported by the ProCopywriters network (www.procopywriters.co.uk) survey are £339 – or £426 in London, “£30 an hour for beginners”, £100 an hour for the very experienced. Jackie charges “by the project” having worked out how many hours will be involved and “how difficult” the client is.

Her course includes “how to find clients”: in a phrase “network hard” at the beginning is her advice. She has free tips at www.jackiebarrie.com and posts gigs she doesn't fancy or is too busy to do at facebook.com/groups/copywritersclub. A member asked whether



there is a trade union that organises copywriters. LFB Secretary Phil Sutcliffe noted that the NUJ “does include PRs, and copywriters.”

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Fox Sky bid – watch this space

THERE HAS been a surprising turn of events around the Murdoch bid to take over all of broadcaster Sky (see www.londonfreelance.org/fi/1708sky.html). Culture Secretary Karen Bradley announced in mid-September she was “minded to” refer the bid to an inquiry by the Competitions and Markets Authority (CMA) on the grounds of the Murdoch family's commitment to broadcasting standards. While a referral to the CMA on the grounds of “media plurality” was anticipated, such a move based on “broadcasting standards” grounds was unexpected and is unprecedented. The Murdochs can expect an inquiry of up to six months, with “very tough remedies” prescribed at the end of it as a precondition of the takeover being approved, according to one analyst. Shares in Sky fell nearly 2 per cent following the announcement. Bradley is expected to confirm whether she will refer the bid to the CMA shortly before the *Freelance* goes to press. Watch this space.

Jackie Berry

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