**Discrimination at work allowed to “flourish unchecked” as employment tribunal claims fall**

Last week we once again condemned the steep fees which allow bad bosses to get away with discrimination and unfair treatment.

New analysis published by the TUC last week shows that the number of working people in the North East challenging discrimination or unfair treatment at work has fallen sharply since charges of up to £1,200 came in.

The analysis shows that since employment tribunal fees were introduced, unfair dismissal claims have fallen by more than three-quarters (-77%) in the region.

And there have been sharp falls in challenges over sex discrimination (-71%) race discrimination (-65%) and disability discrimination (-54%) claims, too.

The figures show that a key mechanism to stamp out discrimination and stop unfair sackings is broken, allowing discrimination to “flourish unchecked”.

The Ministry of Justice was due to publish a review on the impact of fees by the end of 2015. However, nearly a year on, nothing has happened. The review must be published urgently and we are calling on Theresa May and Phillip Hammond to abolish fees in next month’s Autumn Statement.

These figures show a huge drop in North East workers seeking justice when they’ve been unfairly treated. Now bosses know they can get away with it, discrimination at work can flourish unchecked and people can be sacked without good reason.

The evidence is there for all to see. These fees – of up to £1200, even if you’re on the minimum wage – are pricing out thousands from pursuing cases each month.

Theresa May has repeatedly said she wants to govern for ordinary working people. Here is a perfect opportunity. She could reverse employment tribunal fees, and make sure workers can challenge bad employers in court.

Beth Farhat

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