

Anti-discrimination

In a response to what many felt was an unacceptable level of discrimination towards people who have HIV and AIDS the Guild has adopted a new policy which clarifies and puts into perspective the facts of this sensitive issue. Further to this, again to combat discrimination, the Guild has decided to exclude the armed services from promoting themselves in the Union.

The armed services boycott which bans armed services representatives from Freshers Fair and Recruitment Fair and from advertising within the Guild. It is in effect an implementation of the policy of anti-discrimination the Guild has and to maintain equal opportunities.

However it is a controversial decision because of the high levels of student involvement in the armed services. But the facts are relatively clear – there is a discriminating policy. Service personnel may be prosecuted for homosexual activity which in

the eyes of the civil and criminal courts is lawful – and between 1987 and 1989 228 men and women were dismissed from the armed services for reasons relating to their sexuality.

In maintaining this boycott it is hoped that the armed forces who recruit considerable numbers from universities and polytechnics will be galvanised into changing these policies.

However the boycott will have an immediate effect on the student divisions of the forces that operate within the University. Squadron Leader Clifford of the Liverpool University Air Squadron said he did not think it was a productive action. He emphasised that he is unable to alter or modify the policy – he is a “mere servant of government.” He felt that although it would create something of a practical problem in terms of recruiting, the level of interest among students in the armed forces is high enough that they will continue to at-

tract.

Indeed the forthcoming general meeting is expected to debate the issue and may see an attempt by the armed services groups to overturn it.

The HIV and AIDS policy is an attempt to clarify some of the misunderstandings and put an end to unjustified discrimination that surrounds this sensitive but crucial area.

Through ignorance and fear people with HIV and AIDS have, by some mistakenly been labelled a threat to society and therefore to be excluded, often unfairly discriminated against in the workplace.

The adoption of the policy shows the broader campaign by the Guild to tackle the AIDS/HIV question. The creation of an HIV working party has made sure that the subject maintains its momentum – that awareness is increased and thereby prejudice and misinformation can hopefully be prevented.

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