

Press Release

Serco welcomes Court of Appeal ruling Judgment declares dismissal of BNP councillor not racist

25 May 2006

Leading international service company Serco was not guilty of breaking the Race Discrimination Act when it dismissed a British National Party (BNP) Councillor, the Court of Appeal ruled today.

Arthur Redfearn was employed by Serco to transport vulnerable adults and children to schools and day-centres. He was elected to Bradford Council for the BNP in 2004. Serco dismissed him on health and safety grounds, as part of its duty of care to its passengers, fellow employees and Mr Redfearn himself.

The Court of Appeal ruling overturned an earlier Employment Appeal Tribunal decision to refer the case back to a new Tribunal, to re-hear Redfearn's allegations of discrimination on racial grounds, after the original Tribunal had rejected his claim.

In the ruling, Lord Justice Mummery, sitting with two fellow judges said: "Mr Redfearn was no more dismissed "on racial grounds" than an employee who is dismissed for racially abusing his employer, a fellow employee or a valued customer. Any other result would be incompatible with the purpose of the 1976 [Race Discrimination] Act....."

Chris Hyman, Serco Group Chief Executive said: "Mr Redfearn was dismissed because of the potential threat his public support for BNP policies posed to the wellbeing of our clients and our employees. The idea that we breached the Race Discrimination Act by dismissing Mr Redfearn was, frankly, ridiculous. We are grateful to the judges for their clear and unambiguous ruling.

"Serco is committed to maintaining a safe environment for all of our customers, our employees and the general public, in Bradford as everywhere else. We may not be perfect but we work hard to be a good employer. Serco tries to do the right thing. We reject totally any form of racism."

Geoff Binnington, Serco Contract Manager for West Yorkshire Transport Services said:

For further details contact:

Serco Group plc
T +44 (0)1256 745900 www.serco.com

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“The safety of our passengers and our employees is of overriding importance to us. We dismissed Arthur Redfearn because we strongly believe he represented a health and safety risk to Serco’s clients, vulnerable disabled children and adults with special needs.

“Mr Redfearn was dismissed after he became an elected BNP councillor – a public representative of BNP views and policies. We took a responsible step as an employer in removing him from his job.”

Ends

For further information please contact:

Graham Capper, Head of Media and Public Relations or
Dominic Cheetham, Corporate Communications Director
020 8334 4122

Notes to editors

Serco is an international service company which combines commercial know-how with a deep public service ethos.

We improve services by managing people, processes, technology and assets more effectively. We advise policy makers, design innovative solutions, integrate systems and - most of all - deliver to the public.

Serco supports governments, agencies and companies who seek a trusted partner with a solid track-record of providing assured service excellence. Our people offer operational, management and consulting expertise in the aerospace, defence, education, health, home affairs, local government, science, technology, transport and the commercial sectors.

More information can be found at www.serco.com.

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