

Press Release: 'Centre for Personal Growth' pays out to sacked worker in Employment Tribunal settlement.

Richard Clare, 40, from Sheffield, has accepted a financial payment from his ex-employer, the Unstone Grange Trust, in settlement of his claim against them for unfair dismissal and reinstatement through Sheffield Employment Tribunal. He was supported in bringing his claim by Sheffield Law Centre. The Trust also agreed to provide Mr Clare with a fair and factual reference and to provide Mr Clare's mortgage insurance company with the information they need to process his claim for cover.

Mr Clare worked as a volunteer Co-ordinator for the "Organic Gardening for Health" project at Unstone Grange, providing occupational therapy in the gardens, since 2001. He began teaching courses in Organic growing for the project in Jan '04.

Mr Clare is currently studying for a P.G.C.E. teaching qualification at Sheffield Hallam University and wants to deliver more courses about Organic food. Richard Clare states:-

"I worked at Unstone Grange for ten years in total, 6 as a volunteer and 4 as a paid worker. The manager dismissed me and I believe this was because I was critical of her managerial and organisational performance. I had a clean work record and was told that no-one doubted my professional abilities.

Last May, after a regular monthly team meeting the manager issued me with a warning. On appeal, in August, a co-worker whose views had been misrepresented by the manager in support of the warning, denied that he had made a complaint about me. Despite this evidence a committee of 3 trustees upheld the manager's decision. When I continued to plead my innocence, I was told that I should sign a gagging order, committing me to silence on the subject, or I would be suspended.. I refused to do this and was suspended.

When I continued to teach the course I had just started, with the consent of all the students, at an alternative venue, I was informed that this was insubordination, Three months later I was summarily dismissed.

I had to bring a claim in the Employment Tribunal because it was my only access to justice. "