

Sex-change man to get job back after vote

An engineer from Rugby, sacked when his employers learned he had decided to change sex and come to work dressed as a woman, has been reinstated — thanks to the overwhelming support of 2,000 colleagues.

Today a union chief said the company, GEC Telecommunications in Coventry, had been taught "a sharp lesson that such discrimination will not be tolerated."

Linda Hollingworth, of Cromwell Road, Rugby, formerly known as Ray Fowell, was dismissed in March 1981, after more than 10 years service.

The company had felt the new guise might cause disruption among other workers — and possibly even a strike.

However, an industrial tribunal in April ruled Miss Hollingworth had been unfairly dismissed, because she had a medical problem for which she was blameless.

Mass meetings of more than 2,000 supervisory, technical and clerical staff voted overwhelmingly in favour of reinstatement.

Precedent

Today it was learned that GEC have decided to give Miss Hollingworth, 31, another job.

She is expected to start next week, and will receive salary increases which would have been due during her dismissal.

Mr. John Fisher, ASTMS Coventry divisional officer, said: "This

case set a very important precedent, as it demonstrates that attitudes towards those with serious medical problems, such as Miss Hollingworth, can no longer be treated with prejudice and discrimination by companies.

Unfair

"Clearly, both the tribunal and working colleagues have given GEC a sharp lesson that such discrimination will not be tolerated."

A GEC spokesman said: "The decision to terminate the services of Miss Hollingworth was taken after proper consideration of all the facts.

"However, the Industrial Tribunal came to the conclusion that the company's decision was unfair.

"The findings of an independent statutory body must be given the fullest attention, and in the light of the tribunal's decision, the company have offered to reinstate Miss Hollingworth in another location on the Stoke (Coventry) site."