



Sacked for having a butterfly tattoo on her foot

By Neil Sears

A BUSINESS executive was sacked for having a visible tattoo on her foot.

Jo Perkins, 38, had long had the butterfly design on the side of her left foot when she started working for multi-million pound firm Salisbury FM earlier this year.

But months after she took up the position, bosses brought in a 'no tattoos on show' rule - and terminated Miss Perkins' contract when she failed to cover up her inking.

Miss Perkins said: 'I've worked for many high-level companies in my time. But I have never heard anything as ridiculous as this.'

She is not the only businesswoman to display a tattoo. David Cameron's wife Samantha, who works for luxury brand Smythson, is often photographed with her dolphin inking visible on her right ankle.

Miss Perkins started working for the facilities management company - which has HM Revenue and Customs as its sole client - at its offices in Milton Keynes, Buckinghamshire, after being recruited through an agency and employed on a contract.

She was not dealing with the public and says she was praised for her 'outstanding' work during



On show: Her butterfly design

her five months with the firm. After hearing about the anti-tattoo policy, Miss Perkins says she sought advice from HR but never received a response.

Miss Perkins said: 'The only way to cover it would be to wear a sock. I'm a businesswoman and I wear smart dresses to work, so that would look stupid.'

Things came to a head last week when the issue of her tattoo was raised during a meeting and she



Experienced Jo Perkins has worked for several high-profile companies

was told to go home to work. She later discovered her contract had been terminated.

Miss Perkins, who lives near Kettering, Northamptonshire and is now looking for a new job, said: 'I'm not happy about the decision. I'm not a trouble maker but I have no legal comeback.'

'I would have expected a three strikes process but I was given zero tolerance. If I'd been guided by HR, I would have put a very large plaster over the tattoo although that may have drawn more attention to it.'

'I'm employed for my specific expertise. Having a tattoo doesn't affect my ability. I'd never have had it done if I thought it would ever impact on my work.'

'It's never caused a problem before. I had it done four years ago and paid £60. I thought the butterfly was quite tasteful.'

The company's chief executive

Ed Swales said: 'The policy is simply one of covering tattoos. I place to ensure our employees contractors project the professional image we want our customers to see in Salisbury. [Miss Perkins] made no effort to comply with the policy.'

Company spokesman Gr Sievers added: 'The policy on tattoos was launched in June as the line managers made everyone fully aware of it. She was asked to leave because she refused to comply with the company policy.'

Employment lawyer Nic Lakeland, of Silverman Shein in London, said it was unfair Miss Perkins could take any action because she had been engaged under contract for an agency.

He said: 'Because she is a former employee, they can pretty much get away with it because it is a discrimination type thing.'