

REPORT ON PROGRESS OF OBJECTIVES WITHIN RES 2002-2005¹

Objective 2

Key Task

1. Have completed list of functions and policies of high relevance to the duty
2. Impact assessment training began for Managers in Oct 2004. Training was completed in December 2005.

Objective 3

Key Task

1. Consultation on impact for race was conducted with regard to Whole-time Fire-fighter recruitment with regard to advertising and perception; the new Integrated Risk Management Planning process has undergone extensive consultation, partners with specific race reference were involved in this.
2. ASTAR training model was introduced to agree an impact assessment process across the organisation
3. Full impact assessments have not yet been carried out across all functions.
4. The Equality & Diversity Manager sits as part of the National Equalities Professionals Group whose remit is reviewing and developing framework documents for use by the Fire Service Nationally. This has recently included a framework impact assessment initial, partial and full impact assessment form, as well as a basic training package for Fire & Rescue Services to use regionally.

Objective 4

Key Task

1. An audit has been carried out with regard to monitoring systems currently in place. Areas currently monitored are: training, disciplinary, promotion, applicants and stages of de-selected applications, exit-interviews, length of service, rank, grade, and secondments. Ad-hoc record keeping is occurring in various areas of service delivery but without structure and systemic organisation.
2. Database monitoring systems are being developed for:
 - grievance
 - selection for internal special projects
 - transfers

¹ To end of year (Dec 2005)

- personal development review scoring
- top-line figures for records of people using specialist services (occupational health, counselling referrals)
- management and recording of incidents of harassment and bullying

Monitoring data reporting systems are being developed for

- home fire safety visits
- smoke detector fitting
- leaflet drops
- community profiling
- response to fire trends
- FDR1 (Home Office data reporting return) being revised nationally

3. a. Customer satisfaction survey conducted². 1681 responses received of this number

- 1% of all responses returned were from people identifying as Black or Black British.
- 54% of all responses returned were from women
- Satisfaction rating as “excellent” by 42% of respondents
- 56% of respondents felt it was “fairly” to “very” important for Black and Ethnic Minority (BEM) people to be recruited by AFRS.

b. We received qualitative feedback by way of BEM focus group activity 2003/4 with regard to recruitment campaigns and public perception of AFRS. The majorative response was that the Fire Service was still perceived as a predominantly white male disciplined service. It was also felt that AFRS had moved consistently in attempting to counter that perception through advertising that was focused and appealed to underrepresented groups, and its presence in the communities.

4. a. Whole-time fire-fighter recruitment results show consistently that BEM applicants either are de-selected from the application process at application form sift or failure at the written test. This is also true for the majority group. As a result a proposal has been submitted that AFRS in partnership with Next Step³, introduce an independent support tool in providing literacy, numeracy, IT, health & fitness and interview technique courses, based on the entry requirements of AFRS. This is to be used within the parameters of the positive action toolkit that AFRS are developing.

b. Recruitment literature has been reviewed to reflect the separate representations of Black men, other ethnic minority men, Black women, and other ethnic minority women. It is a targeted, focussed outreach programme that uses community

² ORS Survey FIRES 2003 (3 yearly cycle of implementation)

³ Connexions and Learn Direct

members to convey a community message (2002-2004). The approach to recruitment and the images have been featured in the 2004 Parliamentary Year Book. Images have also been used by the APU Fireworks Project, and been beacons of good practice by the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister.

OBJECTIVE 5

Summary reports have been written and published year ending 2003 and 2004. Reports were published on the AFRS website, and circulated to the Equalities Forum and CFA. Copies were also provided to organisations on request as well as distributed to partner agencies.

OBJECTIVE 6

a. Fire safety literature has been produced and distributed in 12 separate languages.

b. AFRS attended many community events during the period 2002-2005 where fire safety and recruitment literature was given out. Examples of events attended: Divali celebrations, EID, Islamic Fayre, St Paul's Carnival. We also hosted trust building events such as "Catch Di Fyre" Dinner Dance, Black History Month Open Doors Day, Gambia & AFRS Charity launch.⁴

c. The Equality & Diversity Manager sits on an Office of the Deputy Prime Minister's Community Safety working group that looks specifically at the Fire Services' service delivery response to BEM communities.

OBJECTIVE 7

Training carried out:

- Race Relations (Amendment) Act (RRAA) conducted within generic equalities training to all staff 2002-2004
- RRAA training carried out to Service Management Board 2002
- RRAA training carried out to some CFA members 2003
- RRAA training carried out to Race Equality Steering Group 2002
- Equalities Employment Law Training conducted for all management graded staff 2004
- Equalities Audit of workforce (qualitative) began 2004: Fire-fighting staff completed January 2005; Support and Control staff outstanding.
- Impact Assessment Training for all managers commenced Oct 2004 finalised in Dec 2005

⁴ full details provided on request to Equalities Unit

- OCN Accredited Mentoring training commenced 2002, and continues to date. Currently 21 employees trained: 12 accredited, 9 awaiting accreditation
- OCN Accredited Mediation Skills training commenced 2004: currently 12 employees accredited
- OCN Accredited Equality & Diversity "Cascading with Confidence" Training the Trainer Programme. 8 Staff completed, 5 currently accredited, 3 awaiting accreditation.
- Currently working to new Equality & Diversity Training strategy⁵ 300 staff trained under new programme since April 2005.

OBJECTIVE 8

1. Roles and responsibilities with regard to race have been consolidated. The Equalities Forum remains the scrutiny and monitoring body for the RES, the Equalities Work Group flag up adverse occurrence within the progression of the RES, the Equality & Diversity Manager coordinates the day-to-day activity with regards to the progress of the scheme and is responsible for the review of the scheme.

2. Staff survey has been under discussion for some time. At national level a cultural audit is being developed for the Service nationally, of which the Equality & Diversity Manager is a part of structuring. AFRS awaits its completion in August of 2005. AFRS have piloted a cultural audit survey through its Senior Management Team. It is planned that the Senior Management Board undertake such an audit in order to set priorities for change at Board level.

⁵ See Equality Unit Business Plan