



Home Office

BUILDING A SAFE, JUST
AND TOLERANT SOCIETY

Toward Diversity

Promoting Cultural Change

THE FIRE SERVICE EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES ACTION PLAN

1 June 2000 – 31 May 2001

Produced by
The Equal Opportunities Task Group

	COMPLETION DATE	IMPLEMENTATION	MONITORING	OWNERSHIP	
Leadership					
1	Communication of a clear statement of values and commitment to diversity	October 2000	Chief Fire Officers/Key Stakeholders	HM Fire Service Inspectorate (HMFSI)	Fire Authorities/Chief Fire Officers
2	Development of a set of leadership behaviours and management styles to support managers in their personal demonstration of commitment to diversity	To follow the conclusion of "Managing The Modernised Fire Service" review. To Be Advised.	"Managing The Modernised Fire Service" review team	Equal Opportunities Task Group (EOTG)	Fire Authorities/Chief Fire Officers
3	Chief fire officers to make provision for minority role models and champions to participate in activities which support diversity *See Footnote (i)	Ongoing	Fire Authorities/Chief Fire Officers	HMFSI/EOTG	Fire Authorities/Chief Fire Officers
4	Support and promote the existence of support networks for minority employees and positive action initiatives which target minority groups	Ongoing	Fire Authorities/Chief Fire Officers	HMFSI/EOTG	Fire Authorities/Chief Fire Officers
5	Support and encourage positive action initiatives which target under-represented groups	Ongoing	Fire Authorities/Chief Fire Officers	HMFSI/EOTG	Fire Authorities/Chief Fire Officers
Culture					
External Perceptions					
6	Build monitoring into service delivery satisfaction surveys to enable results to be analysed by race and gender	October 2000	Chief Fire Officers	HMFSI/EOTG	Fire Authorities/Chief Fire Officers
7	Brigades' best value consultation process should include reviews on the perceptions of the fire service, which actively seeks views of minority groups.	October 2000	Fire Authorities/Chief Fire Officers	HMFSI	Fire Authorities/Chief Fire Officers
8	Each brigade to conduct an audit to determine whether links with ethnic minority communities could be improved/strengthened	October 2000	Fire Authorities/Chief Fire Officers	HMFSI/EOTG	Fire Authorities/Chief Fire Officers

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Internal Culture					
9	Each brigade to develop an action plan arising from the Thematic Review on Equality and Fairness	October 2000	Fire Authorities/ Chief Fire Officers	HMFSI/EOTG	Fire Authorities/ Chief Fire Officers
10	Each brigade to identify a set of core values and jointly develop agreed effective methods to actively communicate and encourage ownership of the values to all employees	October 2000	Fire Authorities/ Chief Fire Officers	HMFSI/EOTG	All employees
11	Development of a set of core values and guidelines to form the basis of a national cultural audit questionnaire	August 2000	EOTG	N/A	EOTG
12	Each brigade to conduct a cultural audit in partnership with key stakeholders based on a national set of core questions. The key issues arising from the audit should be addressed as part of the brigades ongoing equality and fairness strategy See Footnote (ii)	March 2001	Fire Authorities/ Chief Fire Officers	HMFSI/EOTG	Fire Authorities/ Chief Fire Officers
13	Following the "Managing The Modernised Fire Service" thematic review each brigade to undertake an internal justification exercise in relation to their own current 'militaristic' practices and identify any changes required to support a fundamental change in culture. See Footnote (iii)	May 2001	Chief Fire Officers/ "Managing The Modernised Fire Service" Thematic Review Team/ Uniform Task Group/ EOTG	Following the outcome of the next "Equality and Fairness" Thematic Review (2003)	Fire Authorities/ Chief Fire Officers
14	Co-ordination and dissemination of good practice related to fairness and equality and the development of a more inclusive culture	Ongoing	EOTG	EOTG	EOTG

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Policy & Provision					
15	Each brigade to have a separate jointly agreed bullying and harassment policy, supported by effective procedures for implementing and monitoring the policy	October 2000	Fire Authorities/ Chief Fire Officers	HMFSI/EOTG	Fire Authorities/ Chief Fire Officers
16	Provision of training for those responsible for implementing the bullying and harassment policy (to include informal resolution of cases)	Ongoing	Fire Authorities/ Chief Fire Officers	HMFSI	Fire Authorities/ Chief Fire Officers
17	Each brigade to appoint an Equality and Fairness Specialist Advisor See Footnote (iv)	May 2001	Fire Authorities/ Chief Fire Officers	HMFSI/EOTG	Fire Authorities/ Chief Fire Officers
18	Each brigade to conduct an audit of its recruit selection tests and withdraw any test considered to be either directly or indirectly discriminatory	July 2000	Fire Authorities/ Chief Fire Officers	HMFSI/EOTG	Fire Authorities/ Chief Fire Officers
19	Promotion and active implementation and communication of work-life balance (i.e. family friendly) policies	December 2000	Fire Authorities/ Chief Fire Officers	HMFSI/ National Joint Council	Fire Authorities/ Chief Fire Officers
20	Audit and cost outstanding needs in relation to facilities for women (in both brigades and training centres) and accelerate the completion of provision of these facilities See Footnote (v)	December 2000	Fire Authorities/ Chief Fire Officers	HMFSI	Fire Authorities/ Chief Fire Officers
21	Introduce arrangements to provide high quality mentoring schemes.	May 2001	Fire Authorities/ Chief Fire Officers	HMFSI/EOTG	Fire Authorities/ Chief Fire Officers

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Recruitment & Retention					
22	Development of a statutory national standardised fair recruitment and selection process based on role related competencies for whole time staff to include:	Fire Authorities/ Chief Fire Officers	N/A	Fire Authorities/ Chief Fire Officers	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Information Pack (which gives a clear understanding of the full range of jobs opportunities available in the Fire Service) ● Application Form ● Fitness Tests ● Medical Tests ● Skills criteria ● Interviewing/Assessments 	November 2000 November 2000 November 2002 To be advised To be advised To be advised	Chief and Assistant Chief Fire Officers Association		
23	Implementation of a rolling programme of recruitment (ideally undertaken on a regional basis), in which there is a positive response to applicants throughout the year, and where all applications are given full consideration	Fire Authorities/ Chief Fire Officers	HMFSI	Fire Authorities/ Chief Fire Officers	
24	Training in fair recruitment and selection for all those involved in the recruitment and selection process	March 2001	Fire Authorities/ Chief Fire Officers	HMFSI	Fire Authorities/ Chief Fire Officers
25	Implementation of positive action initiatives to redress imbalances in the workforce and encourage under-represented groups to gain access to development and promotion opportunities	Ongoing	Fire Authorities/ Chief Fire Officers	HMFSI	Fire Authorities/ Chief Fire Officers
26	Develop a national recruitment campaign supported by representatives from under-represented groups	December 2000	Home Office	EOTG	EOTG

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27 In addition to current practice, follow up exit interviews to be conducted after the individual has left the brigade (by someone not associated with the brigade) and outcomes to be considered by managers and any necessary actions taken	August 2000	Fire Authorities/ Chief Fire Officers	HMFSI/EOTG	Fire Authorities/ Chief Fire Officers
Diversity Training Issues				
28 All training courses to be reviewed (including media training) to achieve a better balance between command and control, diversity and service delivery issues	October 2000	Fire Authorities/ Chief Fire Officers	HMFSI/EOTG	Fire Authorities/ Chief Fire Officers
29 All staff should be re-trained on the fundamental values and issues of diversity, and this should be supported by locally based station training See Footnote (vi)	May 2001	Fire Authorities/ Chief Fire Officers	HMFSI/EOTG	Fire Authorities/ Chief Fire Officers

Footnotes

- (i) Full recognition should be given to the role and contribution of women and ethnic minority members of brigades who are prepared to attend lectures, seminars and careers fairs, in order to promote the fire service. Such events are tools to assist brigades to achieve their targets, improve understanding of the issues, and develop progress toward equality. It is in the interests of brigades to demonstrate commitment by facilitating attendance.
- (ii) The set of core questions will be developed centrally by the EOTG and will be made available to brigades by August 2000.
- (iii) The thematic review report "Equality and Fairness in the Fire Service" identified style of uniform and terminology, and formalities such as squad drill, saluting and similar activities, as characteristics that carry militaristic overtones. Other issues, such as procedures, behaviour, formal rituals and ceremony also fall within this category. The Joint Strategic Committee on Operational Practice and Technology's Task Group on Fire Service Uniform is currently considering issues concerning clothing for operational and non-operational activities. It has been asked by the EOTG to ensure that diversity and equality are considered and promoted.
- (iv) The thematic review on equality and fairness recommended that in all brigades there should be an equality and fairness specialist advisor post (or posts in larger brigades). In smaller brigades this role might form part of the duties of the appointee rather than a full-time commitment.
- (v) Brigades should seek input from the Fire Brigades Union's Women's Committee and Networking Women In The Fire Service. Fire Service Circular 1/2000 set a recruitment target for 1 April 2002 that 4% of uniformed staff (excluding control) should be women.
- (vi) Diversity training is recognised as a very important issue, and it is felt that the same importance and recognition should be given to this training as given to training in other areas e.g. operational work such as breathing apparatus, health and safety training etc.

Diversity training and integrating equality and fairness into all courses requires a high degree of knowledge and expertise. Therefore the EOTG will analyse the issues surrounding diversity training and provide further guidance for brigades in relation to meeting this objective. It is understood however that the training cannot be completed within twelve months.

Issues Still to be Addressed

- Uniformed staff managing specialist workforce teams, i.e. personnel etc.
- Integration of equality and fairness more generally into promotion and appraisal
- Recruitment of retained firefighters - 'Centrally supported and managed retained recruitment procedures be put in place in all brigades'
- Guidance on how to achieve outcomes e.g. model equality and fairness policies; positive action
- Monitoring on recruitment/retention and progression
- Consideration of the South Wales material on harassment for use as the standard training package
- Cultural observance
- Factors affecting women in the workplace
- Training which raises awareness of the brigade policy and the issue of diversity; appropriate and acceptable standards of behaviour and language and legal responsibilities; develops an understanding of the difference between targets and quotas and highlights the benefits of addressing diversity

Issues on Strategy to be Considered by the EOTG

- Equality workshop for Chief Fire Officers
- Next steps for the Action Plan
- Co-ordinating current initiatives on equality and diversity e.g. the work of the EOTG with the "Managing The Modernised Fire Service" Thematic Review; the Uniform Task Group; CACFOA Equality Exchange; etc
- Resources- 'each fire authority ensures appropriate resources are deployed to match their expectations in respect of equality and fairness'
- The target setting exercise as part of the overall Home Office strategy.
- Commitment to provide resources to check compliance
- Communication strategy- review of publicity materials; regular and planned communication; dissemination of good practice; attractive and user friendly documentation; diversity 'magazine'
- Role of the EOTG regarding the strategy
- Representation on EOTG
- Brigade/Local Steering Groups for diversity
- Identification of champion for equality and diversity
- Recruitment of Equality and Fairness specialists to support work on diversity
- Measuring progress on Action Plan
- Need for HMFSI "Expectations" document to embrace the action plan

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