

**MINUTES OF EQUALITY AND FAIRNESS ADVISORY GROUP
MEETING HELD ON 24th MAY 2006 AT 10:00 HRS
AT LEWES FIRE STATION.**

PRESENT:	Chris Large Dick Ashley Steve Butcher Mick Feather Gils Goncalves Steve Huggins Tom Kelly Derek Masson Angela Parker Phil Scott Gary Walsh	Chair Director of Service Support TGWU Equal Opportunities Training & Development Co-ordinator Diversity, Equalities & Fairness Officer Fire Brigades Union Consultant, TK Training Risk Management Directorate Corporate Services Directorate Member of Fire Authority Director of Community Protection
APOLOGIES:	Ian Alexander Anne Bryen Dave Dowling Chris Greenway Jim Mahoney Mark Mitchell Ann Newton Mark Rist Neil Robinson FFJustin Stoneham DO Craig Thomson	Risk Management Directorate Clerk to the Fire Authority Director of Risk Management Head of Personnel Services Service Support Officer Fire Brigades Union UNISON
		ACTION TO BE TAKEN BY:
15/06	APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE	
	Taken and recorded.	
16/06	MINUTES	
	The minutes of the meeting held on 22 nd February, 2006 were approved as a correct record.	
17/06	ACTION POINT REPORTS	
	18/05 Childcare Voucher Scheme	
	Noted that the monitoring report was deferred until the EFAG meeting in August 2006.	Chris Greenway
	54/05(ii) Harassment & Bullying Monitoring	
	The staff survey results were reported to CMT in May.	
	4/06(iii) General Policy Monitoring	
	It was noted that this is on target for presentation to CMT in August but a final draft is to be approved by this Group before CMT. It was reported that the Race Equality Co-ordination Group alongside ESDA would be holding a conference with a series of workshops on 18 th July in East Sussex. Consultation needs to involve service users and Human Resources; G. Pearson, L. Foster and G. Goncalves will represent ESFRS.	Gils Goncalves

"You promote what you permit"

	Chris Large reported on a meeting held with Dennis Yates, Chair of ESDA and it is hoped in the future we will work more closely with them.	
	6/06 Religion Brochure	
	<p>Mick Feather circulated a copy of the draft “Faith and Culture in our Community” brochure and requested comments within the next two weeks. It was reported that this brochure is now 95% complete and it is intended that this will be circulated to each Station and provided to CFS for distribution in schools etc.</p> <p>Gary Walsh was requested to provide further input regarding CFS to Mick Feather.</p> <p>Chris Large was requested to provide a foreword for the brochure and it was reported that the foreword from West Sussex was still awaited.</p> <p>The Group considered the draft to be very good and comprehensive.</p> <p>Gils Goncalves reported on a meeting to be held on 23rd August, the target date to launch this brochure, with Station Managers to reinforce the content of the brochure and it is expected this will be cascaded down. Station Managers are to be requested to report back when they have discussed with their staff. It is also to be provided to the Fire Authority in September or at a Members’ Seminar.</p> <p>Chris Large requested that one copy be provided to each Watch, the Station Managers, one for each section in HQ, the District Officers and CFS members. It was, therefore, agreed that a print run of 1,000 would be practicable.</p> <p>Steve Huggins requested that Mick Feather ensures it is emphasised to Station Managers and employees how useful the information contained within this brochure is and why it has been produced.</p>	<p>ALL</p> <p>Gary Walsh</p> <p>Chris Large</p>
	7/06 Religion Calendar	
	Mick Feather reported that work on the Calendar is still ongoing with the Graphics Department and he intends to work with Bob Trotter and CFS on the content.	
	9/06 Stonewall – creating a network for gay, lesbian and bi-sexual staff	
	Gary Walsh confirmed that a meeting with Stonewall would take place in June to consider how they can assist us in providing a network within the Fire Service for gay, lesbian and bi-sexual staff. It was reported, however, that our own staff do not believe there is a need to set up our own forum at this time.	
18/06	STANDING AGENDA ITEMS	
18/06(i)	Corporate Update	
	<p>Dick Ashley circulated a copy of the “Race Equality Scheme” booklet for information.</p> <p>Chris Large reported on the event held at Lewes on 23rd May for the launch of the Disabilities Poster and also on the work undertaken with Sussex Downs College.</p>	

	<p>Chris Large requested that formal thanks be extended to Mick Feather and everyone involved in what was a very professional launch.</p> <p>Mick Feather requested that thanks be extended to Chris Large and Dick Ashley.</p> <p>It was reported that the booklet was being sent on to all local authorities and it was now published on the Internet and Intranet giving it a high profile. Copies will be distributed to all staff, key stakeholders, the Fire Authority and included in the Members' Handbook.</p>	
18/06(ii)	Harassment and Bullying Monitoring	
	It was agreed that this item be deferred until the next meeting.	
18/06(iii)	General Policy Monitoring	
	Discussed under Action Points.	
	MAIN AGENDA ITEMS	
19/06	EDCC Update (The Way Forward)	
	<p>Dick Ashley read out an e-mail from Jim Mahoney, which provided a brief on EDCC.</p> <p>Tom Kelly discussed the seven courses run to date, which have been well received with no hostile or negative feedback reported.</p> <p>It was considered that the drop out rate and transport issues need to be addressed and those people who do not attend the course are to be renominated. During discussion it was believed that the joining instructions should be more comprehensive covering course content and dress code.</p> <p>Tom Kelly discussed the continuing misconceptions and the need for CMT to continue the long-term exercise including communication and the need to work together with the representative bodies. Also, there is a need for CMT members to be programmed on to the course as soon as possible.</p> <p>Steve Huggins confirmed the message that consultation is taking place and issues being addressed was being presented to his members but there are always going to be conflict areas with elements within the membership who are difficult to persuade.</p> <p>Chris Large thanked everyone for their input and confirmed that CMT will do whatever is needed to be done to ensure the success of the project.</p> <p>It was confirmed that Jim Mahoney and his group would review the project and report back on where we go from here. It was considered that course champions might be identified with the creation of a 'champions committee', which Jim Mahoney has been tasked to consider how this can be set up.</p>	
20/06	Age Discrimination Document for Review	
	A copy of the manual on 'Age Discrimination' was circulated with comments to be forwarded to Chris Greenway who will report back at the next meeting.	ALL Chris Greenway

	<p>Gils Goncalves suggested that the Group consider the Procedure before reading the manual as this reinforces individual approaches, i.e. comments on Procedures, which would flow through into the policy. It was emphasised that this is not the final format; this is only a draft to raise the issues.</p> <p>It was noted that point 1.4 is an item, which should be considered particularly.</p>	
21/06	Equality Impact Assessments	
	<p>It was noted that these should tie in with the risk assessment process.</p> <p>Gils Goncalves confirmed that a date has been set to receive the first screening results back to himself and Mick Feather.</p> <p>Mick Feather asked that people indicate to him if they require support but it is for the training managers to make it happen. He confirmed that Dave Yates is currently looking at all the manuals to identify, which require screening.</p> <p>Chris Large confirmed that each Directorate had been asked to identify people to be part of a project team led by Derek Masson to risk assess and equality impact assess all manuals. It is hoped that a suite of manuals, properly set out, will be available at the end of the year with everything up to date and also the project team will be in place by the next meeting.</p> <p>Gary Walsh reported that two posts are being advertised to bring people in to undertake this project within CPD. Other Directorates may need to do likewise.</p> <p>Mick Feather and Gils Goncalves confirmed that they are available to help with the screening of manuals.</p> <p>Cllr Scott requested an update at the next meeting.</p>	Gils Goncalves
22/06	Equality and Fairness Representatives' Reports	
	(a) FBU	
	<p>Gils Goncalves confirmed that a presentation had been made to CMT on 11th May and reported that consideration was now being given on how this can now be cascaded down to staff. Some of the issues raised in the survey were outlined with 297 responses received out of a total of approximately 800 questionnaires circulated.</p> <p>Steve Huggins requested that a presentation is made to EFAG to enable them to consider an action plan and it was agreed that a meeting of this Group be held on 29th June at HQ to enable this to happen.</p> <p>Steve Huggins reported an increase in the number of bullying and harassment complaints and, particularly complaints to him by non-members of FBU. It was considered that a number of managers were taking a more aggressive line with 'robust management' being implemented.</p> <p>During discussion it was noted that the policy states the options an individual has and the route they should take is clear. It was considered also</p>	

	that perhaps there is a need to encourage people to try to deal with any issue themselves and to consider mediation involving their line manager.	
	(b), (c) and (d) UNISON, TGWU and FOA	
	Nothing to report.	
	(e) Directorate Representatives	
	Dick Ashley confirmed that the Performance Indicator Reports indicated that the figures at the end of the year did not give cause for concern. It was reported that a new Performance Indicator showed that there are 28 people who consider themselves disabled within the organisation, i.e. 3% of the organisation. The survey will be repeated next year.	
	(f) Others	
	Nothing to report.	
23/06	URGENT ITEMS	
	There were no urgent items to report.	
24/06	DATE AND TIME OF NEXT MEETING	
	Agreed that the next meeting and all future meetings should be held at Bexhill but this will be reviewed after two meetings. An extraordinary meeting will be held on 29 th June at HQ to consider the Staff Survey with the next scheduled meeting being held on Thursday 31st August at 1000h.	All to note
25/06	ANY OTHER BUSINESS	
	(i) It was pointed out that all references to the ODPM should now read DCLG. (ii) Mick Feather reported that Ann Newton had received a copy of the Race Equality Scheme.	
26/06	EXCLUSION OF PRESS AND PUBLIC	
	There were no items in relation to which the Panel resolved that the press and public be excluded from the meeting.	
	The meeting ended at 11.45 hours	
Signed		Chair
Dated this	day of	2006

**EQUALITY AND FAIRNESS ADVISORY GROUP
ACTIONS**

18/05	Childcare vouchers	
	Monitoring report to EFAG in August 2006.	Chris Greenway
4/06(iii)	General Policy Monitoring	
	Final draft to EFAG prior to presentation to CMT in August.	Gils Goncalves
6/06	Religion Brochure	
	Comments on draft brochure to Mick Feather within two weeks.	All
	Gary Walsh to provide further input on CFS to Mick Feather.	Gary Walsh
	Foreword to brochure to be provided to Mick Feather.	Chris Large
20/06	Age Discrimination Document for Review	
	Comments on manual to be forwarded to Chris Greenway.	All
	Chris Greenway to report back at the next meeting.	Chris Greenway
21/06	Equality Impact Assessments	
	Further update to be given at next meeting.	Gils Goncalves