

**MINUTES OF EQUALITY AND FAIRNESS ADVISORY GROUP
MEETING HELD ON 31 AUGUST 2006 AT 10:00 HRS
AT BEXHILL FIRE STATION.**

PRESENT:	<p>Gary Walsh Dick Ashley Dave Dowling Matt Dale Mick Feather</p> <p>Gils Goncalves Chris Greenway Angela Parker Phil Scott Mark Whyte</p>	<p>Chair Director of Service Support Director of Risk Management Fire Brigades Union Equal Opportunities Training & Development Co-ordinator Diversity, Equalities & Fairness Officer Head of Personnel Services Corporate Services Directorate Member of Fire Authority</p>
APOLOGIES:	<p>Jim Mahoney Ann Newton</p>	<p>Service Support Officer UNISON</p>
		ACTION TO BE TAKEN BY:
27/06	BROWSEALoud PRESENTATION	
	<p>Mark Whyte gave members of the Group a demonstration of the Browsealoud facility which ESFRS had now installed on its website. This allowed users to download a reader, at no cost, which would enable them to listen to the information contained on the website. This would be especially useful for people with a visual impairment, dyslexia or those whose second language was English.</p> <p>ESFRS was one of only five Fire & Rescue Services who had signed up to this service, and a five year contract had been negotiated. The facility would be widely publicised through means such as posters, Service Brief and recruitment packs.</p> <p>Mark would e-mail Chris Greenway instructions on how to use Browsealoud as an outsider and Gary Walsh would meet with Mick Feather and Gil Goncalves to discuss wider advertising of the facility.</p>	<p>Mark Whyte Gary Walsh/ Mick Feather/ Gil Goncalves</p>
28/06	APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE	
	<p>Taken and recorded.</p>	
29/06	MINUTES	
	<p>The minutes of the meeting held on 24 May 2006 were approved as a correct record.</p>	

"You promote what you permit"

30/06	ACTION POINT REPORTS	
	18/05 Childcare Voucher Scheme	
	Chris Greenway reported that the scheme had now been running for a year and had been widely publicised. Each month the scheme was used by between 6 and 20 members of staff from all areas of the organisation, and a refresher campaign would be carried out in September to remind staff of the benefits of the scheme.	Chris Greenway
	Chris would continue to monitor uptake and would report back to the Group in approximately six months.	Chris Greenway
	4/06(iii) General Policy Monitoring	
	Gil Goncalves reported that he had attended a recent conference with Dave Dowling and they had now set up the last action plan – the inclusion of disability was in hand. He would be meeting with Mick Feather and Gary Walsh in September to progress this further.	Gil Goncalves/ Mick Feather/ Gary Walsh
	The draft Disability Equality Scheme would be presented to the Fire Authority for approval and consultation to commence on 14 September.	Sue Klein
	6/06 Religion Brochure	
	Mick Feather reported that the Religion brochure was at the printers and would be ready within two to three weeks. He was liaising with Dave Dowling about launching the brochure at Service HQ and would be involving Firefighters, Station Managers and the CFOs of East and West Sussex.	Mick Feather/ Dave Dowling
	20/06 Age Discrimination Document for Review	
	Chris Greenway had so far only received comments from Unison – any further comments should be forwarded by 8 September, so that the document could go out for formal consultation. It was hoped that the document could be signed off at the next EFAG meeting.	ALL Chris Greenway
	21/06 Equality Impact Assessments	
	See minute 33/06 below.	
31/06	STANDING AGENDA ITEMS	
31/06(i)	Corporate Update	
	Gary Walsh would write to the representatives of those groups of staff which were not regularly represented on EFAG. Mick Feather pointed out that the Group's Terms of Reference included representation by the Harassment Advisors' Network – Gary was writing to all Harassment Advisors seeking their re-commitment to the scheme and would then advertise for additional Advisors and for a coordinator to take over from Jim	Gary Walsh

31/06(ii)	Harassment and Bullying Monitoring	
	<p>Mick Feather had spoken to Mani Gilbert-King who reported that there were currently 8 on-going cases. There was concern about whether there was any overlap between these cases and those which Chris Greenway was dealing with via other avenues. The Coordinator would continue to have problems identifying actual numbers due to issues of confidentiality and this should be addressed when the new coordinator was appointed so that there is accurate reporting to EFAG.</p> <p>The apparent increase in the number of cases could be attributed to improved policies, processes and training, leading to more coming forward. It was agreed that it was good to have a variety of routes available to individuals to process their individual cases.</p>	Gary Walsh
31/06(iii)	General Policy Monitoring	
	See minute 30/06 above.	
	MAIN AGENDA ITEMS	
32/06	FRS National Framework – Cultural Audit compliance	
	<p>It was noted that the National Framework Document required all FRSs to carry out a cultural audit and a draft Cultural Audit Questionnaire, prepared by Opinion Research Services (ORS), had been circulated to members of the Group for comment. The Group agreed that this exercise had already been carried out when the staff survey was undertaken and this would be fed back to the ORS. Any further comments should be sent to Dave Dowling, who suggested that future staff surveys could be re-named Cultural Audit Questionnaires to comply with CFOA guidance.</p>	ALL
33/06	Equality Impact Assessment Training	
	<p>Dave Dowling reported that EIAs were to be carried out for each Manual Note. The timescale (30 September deadline) was challenging and appropriate training was needed for those carrying out this work.</p> <p>It was agreed that two dates for training would be identified and managers would nominate those to attend. Dick Ashley would coordinate and liaise with Mick Feather over the record of attendees and EIAs already carried out.</p>	Dick Ashley/ Mick Feather

34/06	Religious Guide and Religious/Cultural Calendar	
	Mick Feather reported that the Faith & Culture in our Community brochure was at the printers. He had also produced a wall chart and calendar which members were very impressed with. Phil Scott asked to have samples available for the Fire Authority Members' Seminar and Mick would let Gary Walsh know if he needed anything else from Community Fire Safety.	Mick Feather/ Phil Scott
35/06	Discipline & Grievance Policy	
	Matt Dale was concerned whether ESFRS had a Discipline & Grievance Policy. Chris Greenway explained that the version based on the Grey Book was not lawful, so was having to be re-written. This was now going through the consultation stage and a further meeting was planned with Steve Huggins, following which Dick Ashley would meet with Chris to discuss it further and bring appropriate policies to the FBU consultation meetings.	Dick Ashley/ Chris Greenway
36/06	Borough Command Structure	
	Matt Dale raised concerns that the transfers and temporary promotions should continue to be carried out in a fair and non-discriminatory way following the introduction of the Borough Command structure. Gary Walsh assured him that any changes in current procedures would go through Dick Ashley and Chris Greenway and then to consultation to ensure that they were fair – information was available from Chris on the various stages.	
37/06	Childcare Vouchers	
	See minute 30/06 above.	
38/06	Keyworker Housing	
	Chris Greenway reported that the Government recognised firefighters as keyworkers for Keyworker housing schemes. The Government's scheme previously only applied to operational firefighters but now it had been confirmed that mobilising staff and support staff were able to access the various schemes. The schemes were being advertised on the Service's website, posters and recruitment adverts and staff could visit www.homebuy.co.uk for more information.	

39/06	LGBT Recruitment Fair - Brighton	
	Chris Greenway and Gil Goncalves had attended this Fair which had proved very successful, with a number of women attending specifically to learn more about careers in the fire & rescue service. Chris had details of 18 women who she would be keeping in touch with regarding future recruitment options.	Chris Greenway
	Discussions ensued surrounding the funding of equalities issues and, although it was generally felt not to be a problem for 2007/08, there were concerns for 2009 – Gary agreed to discuss this with Diana Williams.	Gary Walsh/ Diana Williams
	Members discussed whether senior managers should be encouraged to attend Gay Pride in Brighton, as the Chief of Police had done this year. Members of the Fire Authority would be asked to consider this, in the light of the police experience.	Gary Walsh
40/06	Equality and Fairness Representatives' Reports	
	(a) FBU	
	Nothing to report.	
	(b) UNISON	
	Mick Feather had sent a copy of the Faith & Culture in Our Community document to Ann Newton at her request.	
	(c) and (d) TGWU and FOA	
	Nothing to report.	
	(e) Directorate Representatives	
	Nothing to report.	
	(f) Others	
	Nothing to report.	
41/06	URGENT ITEMS	
	Matt Dale asked that consideration be given to issues surrounding staff having to attend courses on their rota days, including the costs of childcare. Gary Walsh to investigate.	Gary Walsh
42/06	DATE AND TIME OF NEXT MEETING	
	Thursday 16 November 2006 at Bexhill, commencing at 10.00 hours.	ALL to note

43/06	ANY OTHER BUSINESS	
	<p>(i) Mick Feather reported that 18 FRSs had now ordered Disability posters, plus the Disability Consultancy, and that the Royal Society of Arts was also considering it. Approximately £1,500 net had been raised and ideas were sought for the use of the money remaining after the purchase of the laptop computer. Mick also had fliers available to distribute to other organisations to try to encourage a wider take-up of the posters, and he would contact the Commercial Training Manager who had access to a wide range of organisations to promote the posters.</p> <p>(ii) Gil Goncalves reported that Surrey FRS had now paid for the DVDs supplied.</p>	<p>ALL</p> <p>Mick Feather</p>
44/06	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 11.55 hours	
Signed		Chair
Dated this	day of	2006

EQUALITY AND FAIRNESS ADVISORY GROUP ACTIONS		
18/05	Childcare vouchers	
	Monitoring report to EFAG in March 2007.	Chris Greenway
4/06(iii)	General Policy Monitoring	
	Final draft Disability Equality Scheme to Fire Authority on 14 September 2006.	Gil Goncalves
27/06	Browsealoud	
	Mark Whyte to e-mail Chris Greenway Browsealoud instructions. Gary Walsh to meet Mick Feather and Gil Goncalves to discuss wider advertising.	Mark Whyte Gary Walsh Mick Feather Gil Goncalves
30/06	Religion Brochure	
	Mick Feather and Dave Dowling to arrange launch.	Mick Feather/ Dave Dowling
30/06	Age Discrimination Document for Review	
	Comments to Chris Greenway by 8 September.	ALL
31/06(i)	Corporate Update	
	Gary Walsh to write to those groups not regularly represented on EFAG. Gary and Mick to discuss EFAG's Terms of Reference and Harassment Advisor representation. Results of recent staff survey to CMT and EDCC – Gary and Gil to discuss.	Gary Walsh Gary Walsh/ Mick Feather Gary Walsh/ Gil Goncalves
33/06	Equality Impact Assessment Training	
	Two dates for training to be identified and managers to nominate. Dick to coordinate and liaise with Mick Feather over the record of attendees and EIAs already carried out.	Dick Ashley/ Mick Feather
34/06	Religious Guide and Religious/Cultural Calendar	
	Phil Scott to have samples for Members' Seminar.	Mick Feather
35/06	Discipline & Grievance Policy	
	Dick Ashley to meet with Chris and bring appropriate policies to the FBU consultation meetings.	Dick Ashley/ Chris Greenway
39/06	LGBT Recruitment Fair - Brighton	
	Gary to discuss funding of equalities issues with Diana Williams. Members of Fire Authority to consider whether senior managers should be encouraged to attend Gay Pride.	Gary Walsh/ Diana Williams Gary Walsh
41/06	Attendance at Courses on Rota Days	
	Matt Dale asked that consideration be given to issues surrounding staff having to attend courses on their rota days, including the costs of childcare. Gary Walsh to investigate.	Gary Walsh