

**MINUTES OF EQUALITY AND FAIRNESS ADVISORY GROUP
MEETING HELD ON 9 MARCH 2007 AT 10:00 HRS
AT BEXHILL FIRE STATION.**

PRESENT:	Gary Walsh Dave Dowling Mick Feather Chris Greenway Sue Klein Jim Mahoney Derek Masson Mark Mitchell* Angela Parker	Chair Director of Risk Management Equal Opportunities Training & Development Co-ordinator Head of Personnel Services Clerk Service Support Officer Head of Business Assurance Fire Brigades Union (substitute for Matt Dale) Corporate Services Directorate	
APOLOGIES:	Dick Ashley Matt Dale* Ann Newton Andy Reynolds Phil Scott	Director of Service Support Fire Brigades Union UNISON Director of Community Protection Member of Fire Authority	
			ACTION TO BE TAKEN BY:
01/07	APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE		
	Taken and recorded.		
02/07	MINUTES		
	The minutes of the meeting held on 16 November 2006 were approved as a correct record, subject to minute no. 49/06 – 31/06 (i)(i) - Steve Brown had not replaced Steve Butcher as the TGWU representative on EFAG.		Chris Greenway/ Sue Klein
03/07	ACTION POINT REPORTS		
	18/05	Childcare vouchers	
		Chris Greenway reported that 15-25 staff, across all categories, were using the scheme each month, and it was now embedded in the recruitment procedures. Busy Bees were renewing the scheme with the government and any updates would be reported to the next meeting. Otherwise, monitoring of the scheme would no longer be reported to EFAG.	
	30/06 4/06(iii) 47/06	General Policy Monitoring and Disability Equality Scheme	
		All comments from the East Sussex Disability Association on the draft Disability Equality Scheme had now been included in the Scheme and it had been passed to Graphics for progressing with the Action Plan. The Scheme would then be widely publicised, although it was noted that this did not mean every member of staff needed to have their own copy. It was also noted that the Actions Plans should form part of EFAG's monitoring role.	Mick Feather

"You promote what you permit"

48/06	Gender Equality Scheme	
	This had gone to Members of the Fire Authority at their recent Seminar and any comments would be considered by EFAG prior to CMT signing it off ready for publication by 30 April 2007.	Mick Feather
	It was agreed to consult staff on-line on their views on gender equality re development, training, etc – Mick to give consideration to how best to encourage firefighters to complete this; one suggestion was to include it on station drill nights.	Mick Feather
27/06	Browsaloud	
	Actions complete.	
30/06 and 20/06	Age Discrimination Document for Review	
	Actions complete.	
31/06(i)	Corporate Update	
	(i) Steve Brown has not replaced Steve Butcher on EFAG – check who has. (ii) Staff Survey – see minute no. 05/07 below. (iii) Thanks to Dave Dowling, Jim Mahoney and Mick Feather for their work on the Action Plan.	Clerk
33/06	Equality Impact Assessment Training	
	See minute no. 11/07 below.	
35/06	Discipline & Grievance Policy	
	Awaiting comments from Steve Huggins on proposed amendments upon return from leave then sign off and publish on Intranet.	Chris Greenway/ Steve Huggins
41/06	Attendance at Courses on Rota Days	
	See minute no. 06/07 below.	
50/06 (i)	Recruitment Campaign	
	Awaiting results of recruitment for September course then Cheryl Rolph to publicise through 'Lets Talk'. As a result of ESFRS's representations the NFFST application form was being reviewed nationally. Chris Greenway was writing to those who had asked for application packs to join the RDS and not subsequently applied - they would be invited to re-apply using the any revised form (although would have to complete the longer form at a later date). Other groups would be looked at later. Physical tests would be carried out in Kent or Hants (or split between the two) but the same assessors and standard equipment would be used at all locations to ensure equitable treatment. The issue around RDS staff transferring to wholetime had still not been resolved in the High Court in respect to part time workers.	Chris Greenway/ Cheryl Rolph Chris Greenway

	50/06 (ii)	Harassment and Bullying Monitoring	
		See minute no. 04/07(ii) below.	
	51/06	Commission for Equality & Human Rights and a Single Equality Duty	
		See minute no. 07/07 below.	
	52/06	Positive Action	
		The difference between positive action and positive discrimination continues to be promulgated and raised at training sessions – need to be aware of the perception among certain staff that these are the same	All to action
	53/06	Flexible Working Hours Policy	
		Chris Greenway and Gary Walsh to consider further changes to the wording of paragraph 12.1 of the policy – keep on action plan.	Chris Greenway/ Gary Walsh
	56/06	Meeting Room Facilities at Fire Stations	
		Framework being prepared for letting accommodation – no fundamental issues had been raised by insurers, but need to identify a ‘responsible person’ from within group hiring facilities, to give instructions to re health & safety issues, etc. It would be essential to remember the operational issues of a working fire station.	Derek Masson
		Derek to carry out a check across the organisation for Chartermark purposes.	Derek Masson
	57/06 (i)	Temporary Promotions and Acting Up	
		Policy being reviewed.	Jim Mahoney/ Chris Greenway
	57/06 (ii)	Catering	
		The employment of cooks be considered at the next FBU Consultation meeting	Gary Walsh/ Matt Dale
	57/06 (iii)	ADC Process	
		Initial investigation provided no evidence of RDS staff being paid for attendance at ADC process – any evidence to be forwarded to Chris Greenway for further investigation.	Chris Greenway
04/07		STANDING AGENDA ITEMS	
04/07(i)		Corporate Update	
	(i)	Change in Principal Officers’ References Cheryl Rolph had been appointed on a 12 month, temporary contract as a non-uniformed ACO, taking on responsibility from Gary Walsh for corporate references including Strategic HR and Policy Support, with effect from 1 April 2007. This would free up Gary to spend more time on the Accident Investigation. It was anticipated that Cheryl would take on the Chairmanship of EFAG from the next meeting.	Gary Walsh/ Cheryl Rolph

	<p>(ii) Diversity & Equality Fairness Officer Chris Greenway reported that following interviews held on 8 March 2007, the 'preferred candidate' had accepted the offer of the post. It was noted that the post holder would now spend three days each week, instead of two, working for ESFRS. Accommodation issues were being investigated, as were the potential challenges of working to a different line manager to Mick Feather.</p> <p>(iii) Equality Issues Course Gary Walsh had attended a FEFRA course with Phil Scott, which, while 'good', was very expensive and not new or innovative. It was necessary to start planning now what would follow once all the FFA courses were complete.</p>	<p>Chris Greenway/ Jim Mahoney</p> <p>Mick Feather/ Jim Mahoney</p>
04/07(ii)	Harassment and Bullying Monitoring	
	<p>Noted that there appeared to have been one more case since the last EFAG meeting, although it was difficult to establish what were new, and what were on-going cases, due to the different reporting structures.</p> <p>Agreed that where trends or patterns were identified these should be reported to EFAG by the co-ordinator.</p> <p>16 applications had been received for the various harassment advisor posts and interviews had now been held, although no final decisions had been taken due to training needs issues. Members of EFAG agreed that the network would be re-named 'Colleague Support Network' to reflect its wider role, and noted that it would be re-launched at the end of April 2007.</p>	<p>Chris Greenway</p> <p>Chris Greenway HAN Co-ordinator</p> <p>Cheryl Rolph</p>
04/07(iii)	General Policy Monitoring	
	<p>Nothing to report Agreed not needed – to be removed from standing agenda items.</p>	Clerk
	MAIN AGENDA ITEMS	
05/07	Staff Survey – Action Plan	
	<p>Copies of the matrix circulated through CMT were circulated to EFAG and members were asked to forward comments to Dave Dowling by the end of March 2007, following which the Action Plan and results of the survey would be published.</p>	ALL Dave Dowling
06/07	Attendance at Courses on Rota Days	
	<p>Jim Mahoney reported that next year's training plan was complete and special efforts had been made to ensure that staff did not have to attend on rota days or, in the case of staff employed on wholetime and RDS contracts, during their retained duty hours.</p> <p>Further liaison was required with the Training Centre to ensure capacity issues were addressed.</p>	Jim Mahoney
07/07	Single Equalities Policy	
	<p>Mick Feather had canvassed other FRSs to establish whether they had individual equalities policies, or one combined policy. EFAG agreed that it was better to have individual policies, at least while staff became familiar with them, to reduce the risk of 'watering down' the different messages. This policy could be reviewed in 2008/09.</p>	Mick Feather

08/07	EDCC and FFA Update	
	<p>Jim Mahoney had been evaluating the eight considerations suggested by an independent assessor (see Appendix A) and would meet with Cheryl Rolph and Chris Greenway to put something formally in place.</p> <p>Jim confirmed that the FFA courses were due to be completed by the end of the next financial year, giving 12 months to think about the next steps.</p>	<p>Jim Mahoney/ Chris Greenway/ Cheryl Rolph</p> <p>EFAG Chair</p>
09/07	Prayer Rooms	
	<p>Mick Feather had canvassed other FRSs to establish whether anyone had Prayer Rooms established. Very few had, and it was agreed that it was best to be prepared, as far as possible, so that a prayer room could be established if required and not be seen as reverse discrimination. Mark Mitchell agreed that staff should be made aware that, if the need arises, arrangements can be made. It was agreed that this should be as simple as a 'quiet room', which could be used by all faiths or simply for quiet contemplation or to take 'time out' from a stressful day.</p> <p>Chris Greenway said that this should be included in the accommodation strategy and that staff should be educated about the rooms' purpose so that it was not hijacked for meetings or lunch breaks.</p>	<p>Mick Feather/ Chris Greenway</p> <p>Mick Feather/ Chris Greenway</p>
10/07	Stonewall Workplace Equality Index 2007	
	<p>Stonewall had published their Top 100 Employers of Gay People and ESFRS were actually listed at 192 out of 207 employers, with a 'score' of 32%. However, following a meeting with Stonewall and three members of staff from the LGBT, our score was increased to 52%, putting ESFRS 3rd behind London (77%) and W Yorkshire (73%) FRSs.</p> <p>Mick Feather and Chris Greenway to discuss the completion of the next Workplace Equality Index.</p> <p>It was noted that ESFRS staff still did not want a formal LGBT staff forum and members accepted that unless this happened, ESFRS would not get any points for that area – it was agreed, though, that is was for LGBT staff to decide whether this was something they wanted.</p>	<p>Mick Feather Chris Greenway</p>
11/07	Equality Impact Assessments - progress	
	<p>Mick Feather thanked Derek Masson for his work on the template but expressed his disappointment at the small number of EIAs carried out. It was agreed that Irene Woolway would return Manual Notes which did not have EIAs attached to them. Dave Dowling would continue to monitor these, and it would be a standing agenda item for EFAG.</p>	<p>Dave Dowling/ Irene Woolway/ Clerk</p>
12/07	Disability Equality Scheme	
	This had now gone to Graphics.	
13/07	Equality and Fairness Representatives' Reports	
	(a)FBU, (b)UNISON, (c)TGWU, (d)FOA, (e)Directorate Representatives and (f) others	
	Nothing to report	
14/07	URGENT ITEMS	
	There were none.	
15/07	DATES AND TIME OF FUTURE MEETINGS	
	Thursdays:- 17 May*, 30 August and 15 November 2007 at Bexhill	ALL to note

	Community Fire Station, commencing at 10.00 hours. [* Note date changed from 24 May 2007]	
16/07	ANY OTHER BUSINESS	
	<p>(i) Disability Poster Fund Mick Feather distributed copies of a report on the Disability Poster Fund – Mick to meet with Gary Walsh to discuss options.</p> <p>(ii) Religious Guide Mick Feather reported that the Guide had received praise from Kent and Sussex Police, who both wanted to be part of the next one; GOSE, who were writing an article for their regional magazine; and Churches Together in England, who had also written an article. Following the launch of the guide, the Muslim leader had sent in a list of 24 HSVs which were required, and these had all now been carried out.</p> <p>(iii) Work Related Stress Review Gary Walsh was awaiting the outcome of the audit.</p>	Mick Feather/ Gary Walsh
17/07	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 12.38 hours	
Signed		Chair
Dated this	day of	2007

EQUALITY AND FAIRNESS ADVISORY GROUP ACTIONS		
02/07	MINUTES OF LAST MEETING	
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	The Scheme to be widely publicised, although it was noted that this did not mean every member of staff needed to have their own copy. Note that Actions Plans should form part of EFAG's monitoring role.	Mick Feather
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	can be made. Be included in accommodation strategy and staff be educated about the rooms' purpose so that it was not hijacked for meetings or lunch breaks.	Chris Greenway
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