

**MINUTES OF EQUALITY AND FAIRNESS ADVISORY GROUP  
MEETING HELD ON 30 AUGUST 2007 AT 10:00 HRS  
AT BEXHILL COMMUNITY FIRE STATION.**

<b>PRESENT:</b>	<p>Cheryl Rolph Matt Dale Sarah Dyde Mick Feather Chris Greenway Sue Klein Jim Mahoney Derek Masson Angela Parker Andy Reynolds</p>	<p>Chair - Assistant Chief Officer Fire Brigades Union Diversity and Equality Fairness Officer Equal Opportunities Training &amp; Development Co-ordinator Director of Personnel Services Clerk Head of Learning &amp; Development Head of Business Assurance Corporate Services Directorate Director of Community Protection</p>
<b>APOLOGIES:</b>	<p>Dick Ashley Garry Collins Margaret Lowe Ann Newton Gary Pearson Phil Scott</p>	<p>Director of Service Support Head of Community Risk Management Occupational Health Adviser UNISON Director of Risk Management Fire Authority Member</p>
		<b>ACTION TO BE TAKEN BY:</b>
<b>25/07</b>	<b>APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE</b>	
	Taken and recorded. Cheryl Rolph welcomed Derek Masson to the meeting, who was substituting for Gary Pearson.	
<b>26/07</b>	<b>MINUTES</b>	
	Matt Dale pointed out that the Disciplinary & Grievance Policy - Minute 20/07, 35/06 - was not an issue for this Group. Otherwise, the minutes of the meeting held on 17 May 2007 were approved as a correct record.	<b>Sue Klein</b>
<b>27/07</b>	<b>ACTION POINT REPORTS</b>	
	<b>30/06 4/06(iii) 47/06</b>	<b>General Policy Monitoring and Disability Equality Scheme</b>
		Sarah Dyde reported that the draft Disability Equality Scheme Action Plan needed a few more adjustments to meet Level 3 of the Local Government Standard but would be finalised by mid September; this would then be issued to EFAG so that a full progress report could be considered at the next meeting on 13 November 2007.
		<b>Sarah Dyde</b>  <b>Sue Klein</b>

"You promote what you permit"

	<b>48/06</b>	<b>Gender Equality Scheme</b>	
		Sarah Dyde and Chris Greenway would be considering further cosmetic alterations to the document, to bring it into line with other ESFRS schemes, after which it would be circulated for consultation. It would then be posted on the intranet and staff would be encouraged to complete the on-line questionnaire. Notification would be via Service Brief and e-mail.	<b>Sarah Dyde/ Chris Greenway</b>
	<b>50/06 (i)</b>	<b>Recruitment Campaign</b>	
		See minute 38/07 below	
	<b>53/06</b>	<b>Flexible Working Hours Policy</b>	
		Chris Greenway would re-issue guidance to all staff and a more detailed guidance to managers of support staff by mid September.	<b>Chris Greenway</b>
		<b>Agreed</b> that this item be kept on the agenda until resolved.	<b>Sue Klein</b>
	<b>56/06</b>	<b>Meeting Room Facilities at Fire Stations (Community Involvement and Engagement)</b>	
		See minute 30/07 below.	
	<b>57/06 (i)</b>	<b>Temporary Promotions and Acting Up</b>	
		Chris Greenway and Cheryl Rolph would be meeting in the next two weeks to further consider these policies. Chris would also be looking at how they would link into the ADC policies. Jim reported that, according to the Grey Book, an ADC should be completed <u>before</u> acting up but, as the Service was in the early stages of IPDS, this was not yet achievable.	<b>Chris Greenway/ Cheryl Rolph</b>
		<b>Agreed</b> that this be considered further at the next meeting.	<b>Sue Klein</b>
	<b>4/07 (ii)</b>	<b>Harassment and Bullying Monitoring</b>	
		Chris Greenway and Garry Collins had prepared a presentation on the new Colleague Support Network (CSN) for the CMT meeting in October – this would also be presented to the Members’ Seminar in October and EFAG in November. Guidance and Manual Notes were still being put together.	<b>Chris Greenway/ Gary Collins</b>
		It had been agreed to delay the launch of the CSN until 7 November, to coincide with the National Ban Bullying at Work Day, and training was now almost complete.	
		It had also been agreed that the CSN would be a standing agenda item on EFAG, and that Garry Collins would be a full member of the Group.	<b>Sue Klein</b>

	<b>08/07</b>	<b>EDCC and FFA Update</b>	
		Jim Mahoney will update the Group in November 2007 following quarterly evaluation from Tom Kelly. Allison Gilson was producing a special edition of 'Lets Talk' for August which would encompass this.	<b>Cheryl Rolph/ Jim Mahoney</b>
	<b>10/07</b>	<b>Stonewall Workplace Equality Index 2007</b>	
		This was now being dealt with by Mick Feather and Sarah Dyde, who had completed most of the work on the Workplace Equality Index, and then will report back to the November meeting. The outcome would be known in February 2008.	<b>Mick Feather/ Sarah Dyde</b>
	<b>16/07</b>	<b>Disability Poster Fund</b>	
		It was noted that the Borough Commanders had now received their allocated funds from the sale of the Posters and officers were awaiting their suggestions as to what they wished to spend this on. Andy Reynolds, Mick Feather and Sarah Dyde would support the Borough Commanders in progressing this issue quickly.	<b>Andy Reynolds/ Mick Feather/ Sarah Dyde</b>
<b>28/07</b>		<b>STANDING AGENDA ITEMS</b>	
<b>29/07(i)</b>		<b>Corporate Update</b>	
		<p><b>(a) Department of Communities and Local Government - Questionnaire</b> Cheryl Rolph reported that DCLG had still not sent out a questionnaire seeking information on FRSs progress against the Action Plan 'Towards Diversity' that had been drawn up following the HMFI's Thematic Review of Equality and Diversity in FRSs. Further information would be brought to EFAG when available.</p> <p><b>(b) Equality &amp; Fairness Training</b> Noted that the new recruits training, including that for MCC staff, had now been arranged and would include one day during the 14 weeks training course being set aside for Day One of the Fairness for All course, with the recruits undertaking Day Two during January 2008 with a wider group of staff.</p> <p><b>(c) Improving Accessibility of Corporate Documentation and related arrangements.</b> CMT had now approved a draft report relating to updating the current translation page for corporate documents.</p> <p><b>(d) Change of Name of Equality &amp; Fairness Advisory Group</b> Members of the Group had met on 20 August and Cheryl Rolph had circulated notes of the meeting for comments, to be returned by 5 September, together with a draft standard agenda. Appendix 2, a list of BVPIs relevant to the Group, was handed out at his meeting. It was noted that the suggested name for the Group was the Equality &amp; Fairness Steering Group. It was also agreed to add 4.6 to the suggested terms of reference – that the meetings need consistency of attendance.</p>	<p><b>Cheryl Rolph</b></p> <p><b>Mick Feather/ Jim Mahoney</b></p> <p><b>ALL</b></p> <p><b>Cheryl Rolph</b></p>

	<p><b>(e) Fairness for All Courses</b> Managers would be contacting all staff who had not yet attended Days 1 and 2 of the FFA course by the end of September to ensure attendance was complete – any cancellations would have to be approved by Directorate Heads or Duty Officers. Once the programme was complete, consideration could be given to the next stage.</p> <p><b>(f) Equality Standard Level 3</b> Noted that all nine CFOs in the SE Region had signed up to achieve Level 3 by December 2008 – see minute 31/07 below.</p>	
<b>29/07(ii)</b>	<b>Harassment and Bullying Monitoring</b>	
	Noted that three cases had been advised to Chris Greenway since the last EFAG meeting; one had been resolved instantly and the other two were going through formal procedures. Garry Collins and Sarah Dyde would sort out recording procedures to ensure there was no double counting or omissions.	<b>Gary Collins/ Sarah Dyde</b>
<b>29/07(iii)</b>	<b>Colleague Support Network</b>	
	Noted that a full report would be brought to the next meeting.	
<b>29/07(iv)</b>	<b>General Policy Monitoring</b>	
	Nothing to report.	
<b>29/07(v)</b>	<b>Progress Review of Disability Scheme</b>	
	Nothing to report.	
<b>29/07(vi)</b>	<b>Equality Impact Assessments</b>	
	Chris Greenway would chair a Working Group to draw up an appropriate process for ensuring that the necessary impact assessments were included in all policies and manual notes at the appropriate time. The Working Group would include Matt Dale for the Representative Bodies, Sarah Dyde, Derek Masson and Mick Feather. A progress report would be brought to the November meeting of EFAG.	<b>Chris Greenway Sarah Dyde Derek Masson Mick Feather Matt Dale</b>
	It was noted that 25-30 people had been trained to carry out EIAs and manual/guidance notes were now needed - Gary Pearson and Diana Williams would be meeting to discuss re-invigorating the Manual Note project.	<b>Diana Williams/ Gary Pearson</b>
	Cheryl Rolph would write a reminder about the need to complete EIAs and ask those who are responsible for this to ensure they receive training from Mick Feather. New Manual Notes should have EIAs completed simultaneously, whilst others should be scheduled-in to an agreed timescale. Cheryl would also speak to Vijay Anam to ensure that the IT systems necessary were in place and Matt Dale would let Derek Masson know if he received an Manual Notes without EIAs.	<b>Cheryl Rolph</b>  <b>Matt Dale</b>
	<b>MAIN AGENDA ITEMS</b>	
<b>30/07</b>	<b>ESFRS in Partnership with Local Communities</b>	
	Following a half day brainstorming session, Derek Masson had drawn up a draft Manual Note on Workplace Sharing - ESFRS in Partnership with Local Communities. The sharing of workplaces with the local community would help the Service work towards achieving Equality Standard Level 3 and link in with the Local Area Agreements (LAAs) and the Charter Mark.	

	<p>It was noted that a number of stations were already sharing their facilities on an informal basis and this Manual Note was designed to provide a framework and guidance to formalise the arrangements, covering liability risks arising from Health &amp; Safety and the issue of 'undesirable' groups wishing to use ESFRS facilities. The Manual Note had linked into other ESFRS policies such as H&amp;S and Harassment &amp; Bullying.</p> <p>Members were re-assured that local managers would make the final decisions regarding sharing facilities locally, and that liability issues had been discussed with our insurers. The user would have to provide a named/responsible person as a point of contact. Reasonable adjustments could be made to ensure security and welfare matters were addressed and the suggestion that the contract for external contract cleaners be extended to retained duty stations would be investigated.</p> <p>Members should let Derek know of any further issues or concerns that they have, following which the manual note would go out for a six week consultation process.</p>	<b>ALL</b>
<b>31/07</b>	<b>EQUALITIES AUDIT</b>	
	<p>Sarah Dyde reported that all nine Fire Authorities in the SE Region had committed to achieve Level 3 of the Local Government Standard by December 2008 – the SE Improvement Partnership (SEIP) had received £186k of funding to make this possible.</p> <p>Sarah and Chris Greenway had met with a representative from I&amp;DeA who now wished to examine documentary evidence and spend a day meeting with ESFRS staff, probably on 10 December. He would like to see at least three EIAs from each area, although it was noted that these are not yet available, and a report would be taken to CMT on 17 September.</p> <p>Sarah also reported positive feedback received relating to ESFRS's attendance at the Brighton Pride Festival on 4 August, which was led by the CFO.</p>	<b>Chris Greenway/ Sarah Dyde</b>
<b>32/07</b>	<b>DISCRIMINATION LAW REVIEW – A FRAMEWORK FOR FAIRNESS – CONSULTATION – SINGLE EQUALITIES ACT</b>	
	<p>Sarah Dyde informed the Group that the Government was proposing to bring in a single Equalities Bill, interpreting the law surrounding the six key themes in a more consistent and coherent way. The consultation period was due to end on 4 September, and she would contact the SEIP as there needed to be a whole region response.</p>	<b>Sarah Dyde</b>
<b>33/07</b>	<b>Equality and Fairness Representatives' Reports</b>	
	<b>(a)FBU</b>	
	<p>Matt Dale brought up the question of how 'expressions of interest' should be put forward and how they could be measured to decide who to shortlist. Chris Greenway reported that a new pro forma had now been produced for internal candidates, and 'expressions of interest' would no longer be asked for.</p>	
	<b>(b)UNISON</b>	
	<p>Cheryl Rolph had written to Judy Foster, at Unison's national office, seeking more local support due to Ann Newton's difficulties with attendance.</p>	<b>Cheryl Rolph</b>

	<b>(c)TGWU, (d)FOA, (e)Directorate Representatives and (f) others</b>	
	None to report.	
<b>34/07</b>	<b>URGENT ITEMS</b>	
	There were none.	
<b>35/07</b>	<b>DATES AND TIME OF FUTURE MEETINGS</b>	
	Thursdays:- 15 November 2007, 6 March, <b>8 May (please note change of date)</b> , 28 August and <b>6 November (please note change of date)</b> 2008, commencing at 10.00 hours, venues to be confirmed.	<b>All to note</b>
<b>36/07</b>	<b>ANY OTHER BUSINESS</b>	
	None	
<b>37/07</b>	<b>EXCLUSION OF PRESS AND PUBLIC</b>	
<b>38/07</b>	<b>NATIONAL FIREFIGHTER SELECTION TESTS</b>	
	Chris Greenway presented a confidential report to the Group, detailing the numbers of applicants by gender and ethnic background at each stage of the latest recruitment exercise for firefighters. It was noted that this was a pilot exercise and Chris still had to feed back nationally – any feedback from the Group should be e-mailed to Chris.	<b>ALL</b>
	Chris emphasised the amount of external assistance received at each stage of the process, which had seen an initial 2,419 expressions of interest whittled down to 16 candidates being offered places on the recruits' course commencing on 10 September 2007. Of these 16 candidates, eight were male and eight female, and this had caused a certain amount of cynicism in some areas of the Service. Cheryl Rolph had given staff her professional re-assurance that the process had been completely fair and transparent, and the results not contrived, but could not release the individual scores of the top 21 who took the final physical tests, due to confidentiality issues. She would, however, put together a written statement giving her assurance that the final places were allocated on a highest score principle.	<b>Cheryl Rolph</b>
	It was noted that the physical tests were now carried out at the end of the recruitment process because of the high costs involved, and that ESFRS had included its own step test in line with ESFRS policy on fitness testing. This was the same step test used as part of firefighters' annual fitness tests, and it was noted that no-one on the course failed it.	
	Chris had offered full feedback to any applicant who had requested it and Mick Feather suggested that a report be prepared showing details and background information around RDS staff failing to be appointed; Cheryl and Allison Gilson would support Andy Reynolds in preparing this report for Borough Commanders and Station Managers.	<b>Cheryl Rolph/ Allison Gilson/ Andy Reynolds</b>
	The meeting ended at 12.40 hours	
Signed		Chair
Dated this	day of	2007

**EQUALITY AND FAIRNESS ADVISORY GROUP  
ACTIONS**

<b>30/06 4/06(iii) 47/06</b>	<b>General Policy Monitoring and Disability Equality Scheme</b>	
	draft Disability Equality Scheme Action Plan be finalised by mid September; this would then be issued to EFAG so that a full progress report could be considered at the next meeting on 13 November 2007.	<b>Sarah Dyde Sue Klein</b>
<b>48/06</b>	<b>Gender Equality Scheme</b>	
	Scheme to be brought into line with other ESFRS schemes, then circulated for consultation. Then be posted on the intranet and staff would be encouraged to complete the on-line questionnaire.	<b>Sarah Dyde/ Chris Greenway</b>
<b>53/06</b>	<b>Flexible Working Hours Policy</b>	
	Guidance to be re-issued to all staff and a more detailed guidance to managers of support staff by mid September.	<b>Chris Greenway</b>
<b>57/06 (i)</b>	<b>Temporary Promotions and Acting Up</b>	
	Chris Greenway and Cheryl Rolph to further consider these policies and look at how they would link into the ADC policies.	<b>Chris Greenway/ Cheryl Rolph</b>
<b>4/07 (ii)</b>	<b>Harassment and Bullying Monitoring</b>	
	Presentation on new Colleague Support Network (CSN) to CMT meeting in October and to Members' Seminar in October and EFAG in November. Guidance and Manual Notes still being put together. CSN to be launched on 7 November and training almost complete.	<b>Chris Greenway/ Gary Collins</b>
<b>08/07</b>	<b>EDCC and FFA Update</b>	
	Jim Mahoney to update the Group in November 2007 following quarterly evaluation from Tom Kelly. Allison Gilson producing a special edition of 'Lets Talk' for August.	<b>Cheryl Rolph/ Jim Mahoney</b>
<b>10/07</b>	<b>Stonewall Workplace Equality Index 2007</b>	
	Report to the November meeting.	<b>Mick Feather/ Sarah Dyde</b>
<b>16/07</b>	<b>Disability Poster Fund</b>	
	Andy Reynolds, Mick Feather and Sarah Dyde would support the Borough Commanders in progressing this issue quickly.	<b>Andy Reynolds/ Mick Feather/ Sarah Dyde</b>
<b>29/07(i)</b>	<b>Corporate Update</b>	
	<b>Change of Name of Equality &amp; Fairness Advisory Group</b> Suggested name for the Group was the Equality & Fairness Steering Group and agreed to add 4.6 to the suggested terms of reference – that the meetings need consistency of attendance.	<b>Cheryl Rolph</b>
<b>29/07(ii)</b>	<b>Harassment and Bullying Monitoring</b>	
	Recording procedures to ensure no double counting or omissions.	<b>Gary Collins/ Sarah Dyde</b>

<b>29/07(vi)</b>	<b>Equality Impact Assessments</b>	
	<p>Working Group to draw up appropriate process for ensuring that necessary impact assessments included in all policies and manual notes at the appropriate time. Bodies, Sarah Dyde, Derek Masson and Mick Feather. A progress report be brought to the November meeting of EFAG.</p> <p>Gary Pearson and Diana Williams would be meeting to discuss re-invigorating the Manual Note project.</p> <p>Cheryl Rolph to write a reminder about the need to complete EIAs and ask those who are responsible for this to ensure they receive training from Mick Feather. Cheryl would also speak to Vijay Anam to ensure that the IT systems necessary were in place.</p>	<p><b>Chris Greenway</b> <b>Sarah Dyde</b> <b>Derek Masson</b> <b>Mick Feather</b> <b>Matt Dale</b></p> <p><b>Diana Williams/</b> <b>Gary Pearson</b></p> <p><b>Cheryl Rolph</b></p>
<b>30/07</b>	<b>ESFRS in Partnership with Local Communities</b>	
	Members to let Derek know of any further issues or concerns that they have, following which the manual note would go out for a six week consultation process.	<b>ALL</b>
<b>31/07</b>	<b>EQUALITIES AUDIT</b>	
	Representative from I&DeA wished to examine documentary evidence and spend a day meeting with ESFRS staff, probably on 10 December. A report would be taken to CMT on 17 September.	<b>Chris Greenway/</b> <b>Sarah Dyde</b>
<b>32/07</b>	<b>DISCRIMINATION LAW REVIEW – A FRAMEWORK FOR FAIRNESS – CONSULTATION – SINGLE EQUALITIES ACT</b>	
	The consultation period due to end on 4 September, and Sarah Dyde to contact the SEIP as there needed to be a whole region response.	<b>Sarah Dyde</b>
<b>33/07</b>	<b>Equality and Fairness Representatives’ Reports</b>	
	<b>(b)UNISON</b>	
	Cheryl Rolph had written to Judy Foster, at Unison’s national office, seeking more local support due to Ann Newton’s difficulties with attendance.	<b>Cheryl Rolph</b>
<b>38/07</b>	<b>NATIONAL FIREFIGHTER SELECTION TESTS</b>	
	<p>Noted that this was a pilot exercise and Chris still had to feed back nationally – any feedback from the Group should be e-mailed to Chris.</p> <p>Cheryl to put together a written statement giving her assurance that the final places were allocated on a highest score principle.</p> <p>A report to be prepared showing details and background information around RDS staff failing to be appointed; Cheryl and Allison Gilson would support Andy Reynolds in preparing this report for Borough Commanders and Station Managers.</p>	<p><b>ALL</b></p> <p><b>Cheryl Rolph</b></p> <p><b>Cheryl Rolph/</b> <b>Allison Gilson/</b> <b>Andy Reynolds</b></p>