

**EAST SUSSEX FIRE AUTHORITY  
MINUTES**

**EQUALITY AND FAIRNESS ADVISORY GROUP**

**Meeting held on 19 February 2004 at 10:00 HRS**

**PRESENT**

ACFO Chris Large	Chair
DO Ian Alexander	Service Support Directorate
SDO Dick Ashley	Director Service Support
Peter Brandstatter	UNISON
DO Mick Bright	Policy Support Directorate
Councillor Brian Gadd	CFA Member
Suzanne Gooch	Media Resources
Steve Huggins	FBU
Sue Klein	Clerk to the Fire Authority
ADO Jim Mahoney	Service Support Officer
Kobina Opoku	Equal Opportunities Adviser
Angela Parker	Organisation Support Directorate
Sub Officer Mark Rist	Community Protection Directorate
ADO Neal Robinson	Service Support Directorate
Craig Thomson	Community Protection Directorate
George Wippich	FBU Fairness at Work Representative

**APOLOGIES**

Steve Butcher	TGWU
Chris Greenway	Head of Personnel Services
Cllr Ann Leigh	CFA Member
Michael Meik	Community Protection Directorate

		<b>ACTION TO BE TAKEN</b>
<b>22.</b>	<b>APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE</b>	
	Taken and recorded.	
<b>23.</b>	<b>MINUTES</b>	
	The minutes of the meeting held on 20 November 2003 were approved as a correct record.	
<b>24.</b>	<b>ACTION POINT REPORTS</b>	
	<b>14(i)(a) Flexible Working</b>	
	Report on Flexible Working had been approved by CMT and circulated.	

	<b>14(i)(b) Working Time Directive</b>	
	Final guidance was imminent – draft manual to be circulated once guidance received.	
<b>ACTION</b>	<b>Draft manual to be circulated.</b>	<b>Chris Greenway</b>
	<b>14(ii) ACAS Guidance on Age Discrimination</b>	
	Deferred to next meeting.	
<b>ACTION</b>	<b>Report on ACAS guidance on age discrimination to next meeting.</b>	<b>Chris Greenway</b>
	<b>14(ii) &amp; 18 Report on new regulations relating to religious discrimination.</b>	
	Agenda item – see item 26 below	
	<b>14(v) Insurance Cover</b>	
	SDO Ashley awaiting feedback from Chris Greenway – deferred to next meeting.	
<b>ACTION</b>	<b>Risk Assessment to be prepared for presentation to insurers re Positive Action Initiatives.</b>	<b>SDO Ashley/ Chris Greenway</b>
	<b>14(viii) Equality &amp; Fairness Material for Notice Boards</b>	
	30 posters obtained and distributed as agreed. None available from EOC – Chris Greenway was investigating companies that could make our own to order.	
<b>ACTION</b>	<b>Chris Greenway to investigate commissioning posters.</b>	<b>Chris Greenway</b>
	<b>19(e) BVPI 2(b) (Race Relations)</b>	
	Struggling to comply with Level 1. Need to look at review process and work out an action plan for the way forward. Chris Large had taken the lead role in this. Kobina Opoku was thanked for his work on this item.	
<b>ACTION</b>	<b>Ongoing.</b>	<b>SDO Ashley/ Chris Large</b>
<b>25.</b>	<b>(i) Health, Safety and Welfare Issues</b>	
	There were none to report.	
	<b>(ii) Fire Authority Issues</b>	
	The 2004/05 budget had been agreed on 13 February 2004 and the Government's response was expected by 13 March.	

	<b>(iii) Service Planning Issues</b>	
	The key priority was to get the Equality & Fairness section of the Manuals updated.	
	<b>(iv) Budget Issues</b>	
	As 25(ii) above.	
	<b>(v) Best Value Issues</b>	
	As 19(e) above.	
<b>26.</b>	<b>EMPLOYMENT EQUALITY (RELIGION OR BELIEF) REGULATIONS 2003</b>	
	Kobina Opoku had produced guidance on the Employment Equality (Religion or Belief) Regulation 2003 and pointed out that health and safety would take precedence over the regulations where there was a conflict of interests.	
<b>27.</b>	<b>EQUALITIES, DIVERSITY &amp; CULTURAL CHANGE PROJECT</b>	
	Ian Alexander reported that most focus groups had now completed their consultations and the next step was to prepare a report on the results.  It was agreed to call an extraordinary meeting of this Group <b>before</b> presenting recommendations to CMT. It was further agreed that it would be more expedient to make this a joint meeting with the EDCC Project Group, and to invite the Chairman of the CFA to attend.	
<b>ACTION</b>	<b>Arrange additional meeting of EFA Group, with EDCC Project Group and Chairman of CFA.</b>	<b>Chris Large/ Sue Klein</b>
<b>28.</b>	<b>HARASSMENT ADVISORS COURSE</b>	
	Kobina Opoku reported that it had been agreed to hold a further training session on 1 March to update advisors on counselling skills, after which it was hoped to launch the programme. Dick Ashley was sorting out mobile phones for those who needed them.	
<b>ACTION</b>	<b>Dick Ashley to sort out mobile phones.</b>	<b>Dick Ashley</b>

<b>29.</b>	<b>JOINT STATEMENT ON BULLYING, HARASSMENT AND VICTIMISATION</b>	
	Chris Large suggested that it seemed an opportune time for representatives to sign a joint statement on bullying, harassment and victimisation and consideration was given to a draft statement. It was agreed to replace “Trade Unions” with “Representative Bodies” in the first line, to cross-refer to the full harassment policy and to get the Chairman of the CFA to sign up as well. Tom Kelly would also be invited to comment on the draft.	
<b>ACTION</b>	<b>Chris Large to amend as agreed and send copy to Tom Kelly for comments.</b>	<b>Chris Large</b>
<b>30.</b>	<b>BRIGHTON &amp; HOVE RACIAL HARASSMENT FORUM</b>	
	Kobina Opoku had attended Brighton & Hove’s Racial Harassment Forum on 10 February and reported that it was very representative of the local community. It was agreed that it would be good to work towards all stations having links with local representative groups.	
<b>31.</b>	<b>HUMAN RIGHTS ACT – IMPROVING PUBLIC SERVICE DELIVERY</b>	
	Kobina Opoku recommended all to think about how public service delivery impacted upon human rights. It was agreed that all staff needed training at different levels to ensure they complied with the legislation.	
<b>ACTION</b>	<b>Chris Large to liaise with Tom Kelly and ensure appropriate training available to all staff.</b>	<b>Chris Large</b>
<b>32.</b>	<b>EMPLOYMENT EQUALITY (SEXUAL ORIENTATION) REGULATIONS 2003</b>	
	Kobina Opoku had produced guidance notes for the group and pointed out that, for the first time, gay and lesbian workers were protected by law. It would be necessary to check all policies to ensure there was no discrimination and draw attention of all staff to these issues.	
<b>ACTION</b>	<b>Check all policies, draw attention of all staff to legislation.</b>	<b>Chris Large</b>

<b>33.</b>	<b>ACCESS TO SERVICES</b>	
	Kobina Opoku had produced a check sheet on the Access to Services legislation (attached) which comes into effect on 1 October 2004. The DCFO at Cheshire had met with CACFOA and would be producing guidance before the autumn but, meanwhile, ESFRS would continue with its actions, which included improving the front entrance to HQ.	
<b>34.</b>	<b>REPRESENTATIVES/WORKING GROUP REPORTS</b>	
	<b>(a) FBU</b>	
	Steve Huggins reported that there was disquiet over perceived “dual standards” of competence required for whole time and retained fire fighters. Chris Large responded that the ODPM was getting similar reports from across the country and guidance was needed from the centre.	
	<b>(b, c, d) UNISON, TGWU, FOA</b>	
	<b>(e, f) Directorate Representatives and Others</b>	
	Nothing to report	
<b>35.</b>	<b>URGENT ITEMS</b>	
	<b>Joining Instructions for Training Courses</b>	
	Angela Parker was concerned that forms inviting staff for courses etc were still asking for “rank” – this was inappropriate for a lot of staff and was supposed to have been phased out. Dick Ashley agreed to address and run the changes past Angela and Peter Brandstatter.	
<b>ACTION</b>	<b>Dick Ashley to ensure offending titles removed</b>	<b>Dick Ashley</b>
<b>36.</b>	<b>EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES ADVISOR</b>	
	Chris Large thanked Kobina on behalf of the Group for his hard work over the past 10 months. This was his last meeting and the Group wished him well for the future.	
<b>37.</b>	<b>DATE AND TIME OF NEXT MEETINGS</b>	
	<b>Thursday, 20 May, 2 September and 18 November 2004 at 10:00 hrs in the Main Conference Room, Fire &amp; Rescue Service HQ.</b>	<b>Sue Klein</b>
	The meeting ended at 11.10 hours	

g/spg/acfo/general/equality&fairness advisory group/efag minutes 04.02.19

## ACTIONS

14(i).	HPS to circulate the new draft manual on the Working Time Directive once guidance received	Chris Greenway
14(ii).	Report on ACAS guidance on age discrimination to next meeting	Chris Greenway
14(v).	Risk Assessment to be prepared for presentation to insurers re Positive Action Initiatives	SDO Ashley/ Chris Greenway
14(viii)	Investigate companies that could make posters to order.	Chris Greenway
19(e).	SDO Ashley to meet with Chris Large to discuss how to progress on BVPI 2(b)	Chris Large/ SDO Ashley
27.	Arrange additional meeting of EFA Group with EDCC Project Group and Chairman of CFA	Chris Large/ Sue Klein
28.	Obtain mobile phones for Harassment Advisors	Dick Ashley
29.	Amend draft statement of bullying, harassment and victimisation and send copy to Tom Kelly.	Chris Large
31.	Ensure appropriate HRA training available to all staff.	Chris Large
32.	Check all policies meet employment equality sexual orientation legislation and draw to attention of all staff.	Chris Large
35.	Ensure staff forms do not ask for "rank".	Dick Ashley