

DIVERSITY AND POSITIVE ACTION PROGRAMS IN THE UK

Fire, Police and Ambulance Services



Diversity, The Art of Making a Difference



EMERGENCY
SERVICES
FOUNDATION

By Dalal Smiley

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- The MFB's Diversity Management Committee

I dedicate this Report to my fellow colleagues in the diversity sector who are committed to making our workplaces accessible, equitable and representative of the communities they serve at all levels of the organisation. I acknowledge their struggles and efforts, their disappointments and let-downs, their tenacity, patience and resolve, their abilities, triumphs and achievements. This Report is not a diversity fairy tale but a real account of what is possible to achieve when there is a genuine intention at the leadership level of government, organisation and workers representative bodies.

FOREWORD BY SIR GRAHAM MELDRUM



If I were to be asked to describe one feature of the work that I have been involved in, relating to equality and diversity in the Fire and Ambulance Services I would state that it is a long journey which covers difficult terrain and at times you will not be able to see the wood for the trees. I would also say that it is a journey that will present many challenges and difficulties to overcome but that is what makes it worthwhile and reaching the objectives so satisfying.

Like any person setting out to make a journey of exploration, it is reasonable to ask the question, “why”? The answer often given “because it is there” is not sufficient in respect of the objectives related to equality and diversity. There is a deeper set of objectives which require explanation if the majority of people are going to understand and share the objective.

I set off on my journey over twenty six years ago and it is true to say that I still have a way to go but like a mountaineer when you reach one summit it gives you a great sense of achievement but also reveals the next mountain that you have to climb.

What was my motivation to bring about a change in the Fire and Rescue Service in respect of equality and diversity? It was simply my inbuilt belief that everyone should be treated fairly at work, they should never be bullied or made unhappy by the actions of others at their place of work and that there should be equality of opportunity for everyone who wished to be a member of the Fire and Rescue Service.

I was well aware however that this reflected my personal set of values and that they were not shared by everyone and that it was necessary to develop a business case to illustrate the value of a diverse workforce given the opportunity to contribute to the community.

The answer lies in an objective shared by everyone who is part of the Fire Service and that is that we exist to save lives.

By the mid eighties it was becoming clear that lives could be saved by prevention as well as intervention and the concept of community fire safety was born. This not only changed the role of the Fire Service but also required a culture change in the Service if it was to be successful.

In order to deliver community fire safety in an effective manner the Fire Service had to become part of the community. People living in a multicultural community would regard it as odd if one of the services in their area was dominated by white males only. They would regard this with some suspicion and such a service would find it difficult to communicate with the people they served. This then was the business case well researched and established if you were going to save lives through community fire safety you needed to communicate with all sections of the community of all beliefs and cultures and all ages.

This was not only the business case but the great prize for the Fire Service to achieve. We now knew two facts; that community fire safety saved lives and that it could only be effectively delivered by a service that reflected the people they served.

I do not believe that you could have a more compelling business case or ethical reason for creating a diverse service. I would be a very short lived mountaineer who believed that you could climb every mountain in the same manner using one guide book. As with every mountain every journey made in search of equality and diversity is different and to achieve results you need as much guidance as possible.

This excellent report which I commend to you has been produced as the result of exploring a great deal of the work that has been undertaken in a range of organisations in order to make the reader’s journey safer and more effective. It has also been produced after a long journey to this country but I think that you will agree with me that the result has been very worthwhile.

Read it, be inspired by it and then set off on your journey in the belief that you can achieve your goal based on the values that motivate people to be part of a life saving service.

KEY LEARNINGS FROM THIS RESEARCH

Increased diversity in the UK fire, police and ambulance services led to improved service delivery outcomes and a more inclusive, accepting and welcoming workplace culture

Achieving a diverse workplace requires persistent and multi-pronged approaches by dedicated teams

Advancing diversity initiatives relies on informed, courageous and principle-based leadership, cognisant of the impact and dynamics of power, privilege, inequalities and disadvantage

Implementing diversity initiatives needs to be supported by a well developed change management strategy

Implementing change will not please nor will it be accepted by everyone. Some will always resist the changes made

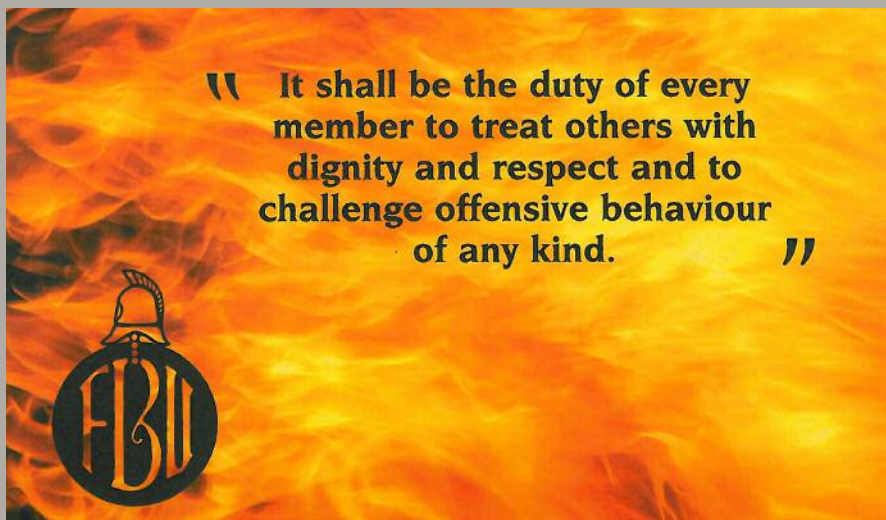
Resistance to diversity may become more covert and subtle rather than explicit

It is important to have consistent and shared messages on diversity by the organisation's leadership team

Developing and implementing diversity policies and programs requires a centrally positioned and resourced department able to liaise across the organisation with a clear remit, an appropriate level of authority and a well supported status that will provide strategic influence within the organisational structure

A more diverse workforce leads to increased responsibility by the organisation to accommodate difference, offer more flexible working arrangements and develop diversity-competent managers

It is ideal to have a partnership approach with unions in order to implement diversity initiatives, however, the diversity goals of the organisation should proceed as planned and not be halted by industrial disputes



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SECTION A

EMERGENCY SERVICES FOUNDATION APPLICATION

The application to undertake this study was made to the Emergency Services Foundation and included two main objectives:

- To investigate examples of ‘positive action’ programs undertaken in the United Kingdom (UK) by emergency services organisations such as fire, police and ambulance in order to increase the diversity of their workforce. In particular, the study would explore the programs’ planning, development, implementation and evaluation stages. Key research questions included; What outcomes were achieved? What led to the programs’ success? What were the challenges and shortfalls? What lessons can be learnt and applied in the Australian context?
- To examine the internal programs that have been implemented as a result of the increased diversity within these organisations. Key research questions included; What was the impact of increased staff diversity? What policies and programs have been put in place to respond to and cater for diverse needs?



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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

In the last ten to fifteen years, the public sector in the UK experienced major reforms led by a Labor Government that came to power in 1997 and remained until 2010. The reforms included an emphasis on Equality and Diversity, representation of women, and Black and Minority Ethnic (BME*) groups in public sector workplaces. The Government imposed a set of requirements to be met by public sector agencies which included specified recruitment targets.

Reactions to the Government's reforms regarding Equality and Diversity were mixed. Some organisations went on the defensive and were slow to respond while others embraced the opportunity and implemented a raft of changes across their workplaces.

This study reflects the views of people interviewed in seventeen organisations including fire, ambulance, police, government and education sector agencies as well as unions. It has found that the Equality and Diversity reforms have led to increased community benefits as well as benefits to the internal culture and dynamics of the organisations involved. The reforms did not happen without challenge and difficulties. In fact, their implementation was initially met with a great deal of resistance and backlash from a number of stakeholders, including, in some instances, the union movement. However, the pressure exerted on the public sector to address equality and diversity led to the application of a vast number of innovative initiatives which have shifted public sector organisations into a new landscape they ultimately found to be more equitable, accountable, responsive and representative of the community they serve.

The changes did not occur without a degree of pain, resistance, fear and anxiety as deep rooted traditions and practices were shaken and questioned and long held relationships were tested and affected. But the result did bring forth benefits and learnings to all involved.

Positive action programs in the UK which are the focus of this study are geared towards addressing the equity and diversity imbalance in public sector organisations. They are designed and intended as “corrective measures” rather than as many tried to label them, cases of “positive discrimination”. They were instigated as a result of a courageous recognition by the UK government that institutionalised racism and sexism within the public service including police, fire and ambulance were the cause for under-representation of women and Black and Minority Ethnic (BME) groups in the workforce.

Positive action programs rely and invest heavily in targeted marketing and programing of initiatives which are intended to increase the participation, engagement, employment and progression of women and BME communities.

This study explores the advances made in relation to the diversity agenda in selected fire, and police services and the national health service which comprises the ambulance service. The study focuses on positive action programs and makes general reference rather than an in-depth analysis to the socio-political conditions that characterised the reform years, as such examination was outside the scope of this research.

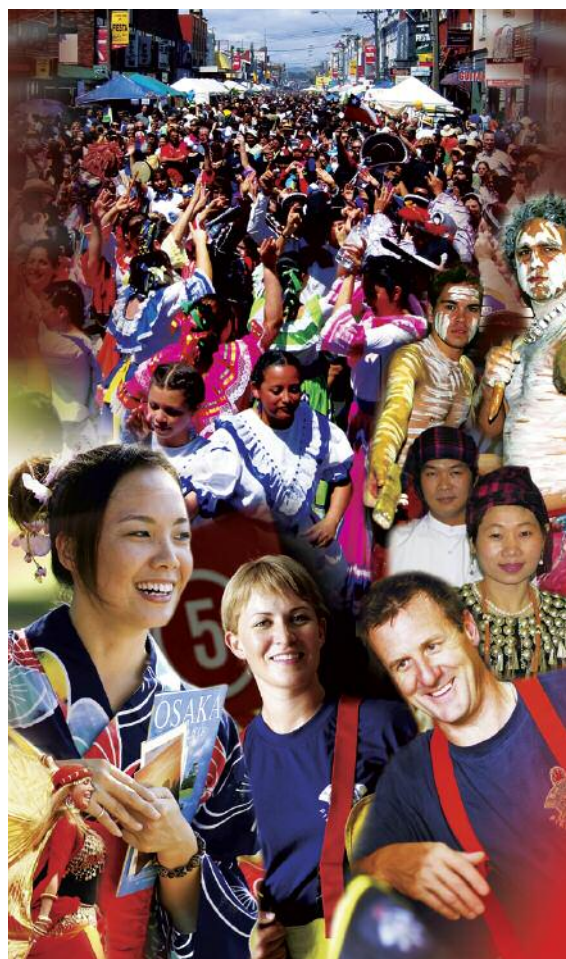
**BME - the equivalent to BME in Australia would be culturally & linguistically diverse community.*

The UK Equality & Diversity reforms occurred within the emerging paradigm of New Public Management (NPM), modernisation of bureaucracies, pressure towards more efficient, effective and economic public sector, policies of privatisation, outsourcing and public-private partnerships to name but a few of the dominant and contentious policies of that time. The Equality and Diversity (E&D) agenda did not escape the clutches of the debates on NPM. Unions, employers, Government and lobby groups viewed the E&D agenda from their individual vested interests. Often what should have been a straight forward strategy to achieve equal opportunity outcomes would become an object of suspicion and labelled as a veiled attempt to undermine existing working conditions. However, once the clouds of industrial disputes over pay conditions dissolved, the unions, government and employers began to work together more constructively to achieve progress in the Equality & Diversity space.

I have attempted in this report to quote my interviewees verbatim as often as possible. My reasoning for doing this is to represent their views exactly as they were expressed rather than be filtered by my interpretation.

There is a lot to learn from the work that was done in the UK to advance the inclusion of diversity within the fire, police and ambulance services. Australia has a highly diverse population particularly in NSW and Victoria. According to the figures from the Australian Bureau of Statistics Census 2006, there is a very low representation of women and non-English speaking background employees in all three emergency services. Yet, very little attention is paid to diversity in recruitment, retention, and promotion within the emergency services sector. For change to occur,

it will require legislative intervention, dedicated government department for resourcing and monitoring, committed leadership, community activism and union support. All of which were instrumental in driving the advances in equality and diversity achieved in the UK. Australian governments have based many of their policies on those emanating from the UK over the years, yet they stop short from also adopting the implementation, monitoring and accountability systems that helped such policies to reach their intended outcomes.



3

DEFINING POSITIVE ACTION

In the UK, the term 'positive action' refers to a number of methods designed to counteract the effects of past discrimination and to help abolish stereotyping.

Positive action can be taken to encourage people from particular groups to take advantage of opportunities for work and training. This can be done when under-representation of particular groups has been identified in the workplace, education institutions or other public sector organisations.

Positive action may include initiatives such as the introduction of non-discriminatory selection procedures, training programs or policies aimed at preventing sexual or racial harassment and discrimination.

Section 47 of the British Sex Discrimination Act 1975 (the SDA) does however allow for the use of 'positive action' in a number of specific circumstances. Sections 37 and 38 of the British Race Relations Act 1976 allow an employer to give special encouragement and provide specific training for a particular racial group.

Positive action is often confused with positive discrimination. Positive discrimination which generally refers to employing someone because they come from an under-represented group regardless of whether they have the relevant skills and qualifications, is unlawful.

"Positive action includes lawful action which seeks to address an imbalance in employment opportunities among targeted groups:

- *which have previously experienced disadvantage or*
- *which have been subject to discriminatory policies or procedures or*
- *which are under-represented in the workforce"*

~ NHS Employers 2008

Positive measures are allowed by the law in the UK to encourage employees and potential employees who are members of particular groups which are under-represented in specific areas of work.

Such measures are important for the development of equality and diversity practices. Examples of positive action measures include;

- Job advertisements designed to reach under-represented groups and to encourage their applications; for example, through the use of the ethnic minority press, as well as other newspapers.
- Use of employment agencies and careers offices in areas where under-represented groups are concentrated.
- Recruitment and training schemes for school leavers designed to reach members of these younger age groups.
- Encouragement to employees from under-represented groups to apply for promotion or transfer opportunities.
- Training for promotion or skill training for employees of under-represented groups who lack particular expertise but show potential.

Positive action is not about giving more favourable treatment to particular groups in the recruitment process. Positive action in training is lawful, provided certain criteria are met. Selection for recruitment or promotion must be based solely on merit!

www.equalityonline.org.uk/equality_advice/positive_action.html

In the words of Professor Uduack Archibong, who has done extensive studies on positive action programs at an international level:

“The way I would put it to my students is that if you want to play a game that requires you to use seven cards, it may be a board/table game and in order for you to win you need seven cards. What’s happened historically is that women [for example] have been playing with less cards, which means that however they play the game, ..they will not win, because they haven’t got the right number of cards to win that game.

What positive action means is that you actually give them the missing cards, so that they can play fair with everybody else. If you look at the analogy in that way, what you are doing is to empower people to give them the tools, to give

them the skills and give them the advantage to get into the competition. You’re not taking them past the competition into the job, you’re taking them to a level where they can compete favourably. Whereas positive discrimination is when you’re taking people past the competition into the job without the right competencies or the right skills.”



“ What you are doing is to empower people to give them the tools and skills to get into the competition... ”

4

INTRODUCTION

In 1997, a Labor Government gained power in the UK and remained in power until recent elections in May 2010. During the Labor years the UK public service underwent major reforms including reforms within the fire, police and ambulance services. The reforms have been prompted by a number of factors, key to which were the following:

- The publication of the Macpherson report in February 1999 which is regarded by many as a defining moment in British race relations. The report by Sir William Macpherson followed an inquiry into the Metropolitan Police's investigation of the murder of a black teenager, Stephen Lawrence. The 18-year-old A-Level student was fatally stabbed in an unprovoked attack as he waited for a bus in Eltham, South London, in April 1993. Nobody was convicted of his murder. Allegations of incompetence and racism against Metropolitan police officers in charge of the case soured race relations as did two internal police inquiries which exonerated the Met itself.

The Macpherson report delivered a damning assessment of the "institutional racism" within the Metropolitan police and policing generally. It made seventy recommendations, many aimed specifically at improving police attitudes to racism, and stressed the importance of achieving a rapid increase in the numbers of black and Asian police officers.

The government pledged to increase the number of officers from minority ethnic groups from around 2,500 to 8,000 by 2009.

At the same time in 1999, the Government commissioned a thematic review of the fire service on Equality and Fairness. The Review Team conducted inspections of ten fire departments across the UK and provided a Report of its findings including twenty-three recommendations. All the recommendations related to improving the fire service's response to and incorporation of equality and diversity. All brigades were asked to appoint Equality and Fairness Specialists and allocate appropriate resources, make modifications to their stations to accommodate privacy needs and take steps to recruit and retain members of under-represented groups.

The UK Fire Brigade Union (FBU) was asked about its views on what was the catalyst for change in the fire service. The FBU stated:

"It is without question the production of the Thematic Review that was the catalyst for reform, as it found that the UK Fire and Rescue Service (FRS) was institutionally racist and sexist and that homophobia was a taboo subject. It identified so many failings on the issue of equality, ranging from the lack of toilets for women to the outrageous harassment and bullying of firefighters and other fire service workers. It also identified that the FRS did not reflect the community that it served. Women made up less than 1% of the operational workforce, yet constituted 51% of the population."

– FBU

In May 2001, a second Report by Sir Graham Meldrum (Chief Inspector of Fire Services) was published under the title: *"Managing a Modernised Fire Service"*. This was followed in December 2002 by the publication of the Bain Report, *"The Future of the Fire Service; Reducing Risk, Saving Lives."*

The Bain report led to rapid changes to fire and rescue services. Bain's terms of reference were described as follows:

"Having regard to the changing and developing role of the Fire Service in the United Kingdom, to inquire into and make recommendations on the future organisation and management of the Fire Service..."

The Bain Report formed the basis of the Fire and Rescue Services Act 2004.

The key feature of the updated Act was that it placed prevention at the forefront of what the fire and rescue service was expected to do:

"Now if you're an organisation that is about prevention, it becomes important that you can relate to the community that you work with because as you know, firefighters go out there, squirt water, doesn't matter if they are women or black because that is what they do, but now the main thing is not about squirting water, it is about preventing those emergencies happening in the first place and the only way you are going to prevent those emergencies happening is if you can actually build relationships with the community."

~ Pat Oakley, Head of Equality Services,
London Fire Brigade



Sir Graham Meldrum and attendees at the 20th Celebration of Pre-recruitment Access Courses



Pat Oakley and Dalal Smiley

5

THE LEGAL CONTEXT

5.1 LEGISLATION

The UK Race Relations Act (1976) was amended in 2000. It required public authorities to make the promotion of racial equality central to all activities. The general duty of the Act also articulated the expectation that public authorities take the lead in:

- eliminating racial discrimination
- promoting equality of opportunity and good relations between people of different racial groups.

The new public duty requires public bodies to implement race equality in all aspects of employment matters, such as

- recruitment & selection
- training
- promotion
- discipline and
- dismissal.

Therefore, to comply with the general duty, all public bodies were required to equality-proof their employment procedures and practices and take all necessary steps to prevent discrimination. The Act also places specific duties on public authorities to:

- develop and implement a Race Equality Scheme
- assess whether their functions and policies are relevant to race equality
- monitor their policies to see how they affect race equality
- assess and consult on policies they are proposing to introduce
- publish the results of their consultations, monitoring and assessments
- make sure that the public have access to the information and services they provide
- train staff on the new duties

The Amended Act supports Positive Action measures permitted by the 1976 Act (Section 35), such as making facilities or services available to meet the specific education, training or welfare needs of particular racial groups. For example:

- Providing English language classes for refugees
- Seeking to attract ethnic minorities through targeted publicity to inform them of opportunities and services provided
- Providing training to a particular racial group that is under-represented in specific areas of work

Recently the UK Government introduced a new bill called the Equality Bill, which replaces 9 major pieces of discrimination law, 100 rules and regulations and 2500 guides and codes of practice.

The new Equality Bill replaces the following:

- The Equal Pay Act 1970
- The Sex Discrimination Act 1975
- The Race Relations Act 1976
- The Disability Discrimination Act 1995
- The Employment Equality (Religion and Belief) Regulation 2003
- The Employment Equality (Sexual Orientation) Regulations 2003
- The Employment Equality (Age) Regulations 2006
- The Equality Act (Sexual Orientation) Regulations 2007
- Much of the Equalities Act 2006

5.2 COMMUNITIES AND LOCAL GOVERNMENT

Communities and Local Government (CLG) is a government department that develops high level policies and frameworks that aim to meet the Government's goals. The Department develops policies in the following areas:

- Supporting local government
- Communities and neighbourhoods
- Regeneration
- Housing
- Planning, building and the environment
- Thames Gateway and the Olympics
- Fire and resilience

"It is our ambition to distribute power and opportunity to people rather than hoarding authority within government. That way, we can build the free, fair and responsible society we want to see."

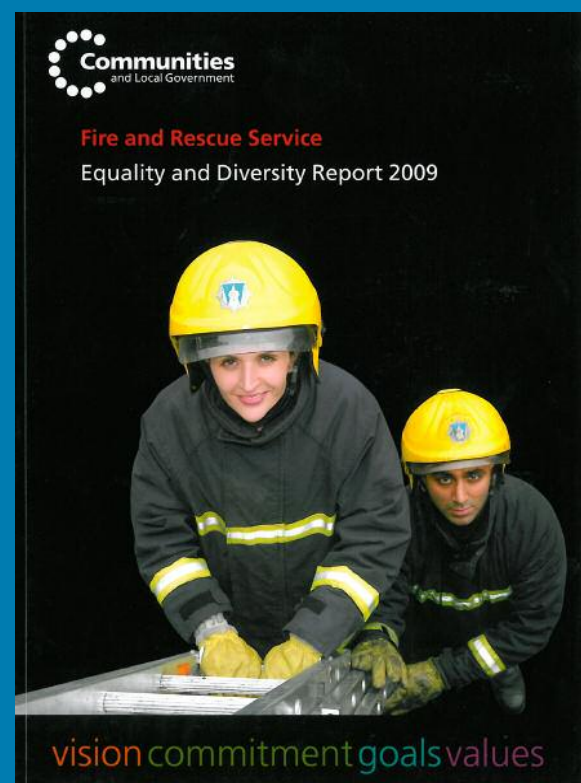
The Department works with Fire and Rescue Services to help prevent deaths, injuries and damage to property. It also works in partnership with the Fire and Rescue Services and other agencies to build the resilience and capability to deal with major emergencies, including terrorism and natural disasters.

CLG produced a high level policy framework on equality and diversity to guide fire services to better respond to the needs of their diverse communities. CLG has also produced resources on fire safety in a number of different languages that can be utilised by all fire services across the UK. In addition to fire safety resources and campaigns, the CLG have also run campaigns and produced materials aimed at promoting firefighting as a career to under-represented groups. CLG conducts research and collects data at a national level and monitors the fire services performance in relation to equality and diversity.

Gill McManus, Head of the Equality and Diversity Team explained:

"Well we have our Fire Services Act of 2004, which led to the establishment of a National Framework document that the fire and rescue service would be reviewed every three years. The Framework gives the service a very high level view of what it should be doing in all sorts of areas so not just equality areas but general workforce issues, service delivery issues so they are integrated in the risk management plan. But within that document we have a short piece related to diversity which says you have to apply the requirements of the equality and diversity strategy. We have to report to parliament on that. So if fire services, quite blatantly, are not doing anything to comply with those requirements we would have to tell parliament."

"But what we have found is fire services are very motivated by whether they have good press, whether they are doing well with regards to others and also they do take notice of what is considered important and if Ministers have something they have considered important and they are doing it, the service does notice."



5.3 REPORTING AND MONITORING

Towards Diversity 2000 Policy was the first policy attempt by Government to install a performance management tool to look at equality and diversity in the fire service. It involved a range of targets on different areas and required fire services to report back on what they were doing.

More recently the UK government set up a Fire and Rescue Service Stakeholder body to specifically drive the delivery and implementation of the Fire and Rescue Service Equality and Diversity Strategy 2008-2018. The strategy was developed in response to concerns about the Fire and Rescue Service's performance on equality and diversity issues and concerns about the low levels of diversity among the firefighting workforce. In 2007, only 3.2% of firefighters were from minority ethnic background as compared to a national average of around 13% of the working age population, and women only formed 3.1%.

The Strategy incorporated five priority areas:

- Leadership and promoting inclusion
- Accountability
- Effective service delivery and community engagement
- Employment and Training
- Evaluation and sharing good practice

All fire services in the UK were required to provide annual reports detailing evidence of their implementation of the strategy. One of the measures of performance specified within the E&D Strategy was achievement against local recruitment, progression and retention targets. The strategy required fire services to achieve, a minimum of 15% female new recruit firefighters by 2013. It also required the recruitment of all staff within the fire service (admin and operational) to be commensurate with their numbers within the community the fire service is recruiting from.

The Report outlines case examples of best practice from a number of fire services, including a list of individuals and organisations who have won the 2009 Fire and Rescue Services Equality and Diversity Awards.

One notable winner is the National Disabled Fire Association which was established in 2004 and won for its efforts in raising awareness about effective management of disability issues in the workplace.

5.4 EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENTS

An equality impact assessment is a way of systematically assessing and consulting on the effects that a policy or procedure will have on an equality target group(s). An equality target group is a group that is likely to face discrimination and disadvantage on the basis of race, gender, disability, sexual orientation, religion or belief, age or any other dimension of difference. The main purpose of an equality impact assessment is to pre-empt the possibility that a proposed policy could affect some groups unfavourably.

The Race Relations Amendment Act, the Disability Discrimination Act and the Gender Equality Duty requires the Fire Service to assess its functions, services and policies to determine whether the policy function or activity has an impact on equality in terms of both service provision and employment.

The Fire Service is required to take action to reduce or remove disadvantage on the basis of age, disability, sexual orientation, religion and belief, race and gender.

The legislation therefore allows for the undertaking of initial and full equality impact assessments and provides evidence that a policy function or activity has undergone an assessment to ensure that there are no unlawful discriminatory outcomes on particular groups of people.



“
This resulted in a strong embedding
of equality and diversity...
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6

SECTION B

LONDON FIRE BRIGADE (LFB)

6.1 DEMOGRAPHICS

London Fire Brigade employs:

- 5862 uniform staff and
- 1047 corporate staff
- 660 Operational staff from Black and Minority Ethnic (BME) Groups and;
- 267 women firefighters

6.2 BACKGROUND TO EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY AT LFB

The work on equality and diversity at the LFB began well before the reforms prompted by Government. A dedicated diversity position existed in the Human Resources Department prior to 1996. According to Head of Equality Services, Pat Oakley, the LFB reviewed its approach to diversity in 1996, moved the diversity position from the HR department and appointed three Equality Advisers within the Fire and Community Services Directorate.

Another important development for the LFB was the formation of the Greater London Authority under the first Mayor Ken Livingstone who had a very prominent diversity agenda.

Head of Equality Services at LFB, Pat Oakley explains:

"During Livingstone's time as Mayor (8 years – 2000-2008), he instituted a very rigid monitoring system. So not only did we have to make progress, there were consequences because he controlled the budget and he really did mean it, unless you perform then he would look at your budget, he wanted to know what you spent on equality and diversity. He wanted to know how much you were spending on attracting a diverse

workforce. The Metropolitan Police were spending 5,290 pounds on every BME police officer they recruited, we were spending 2,000 pounds, why were we spending so little, so you were questioned on absolutely everything. This resulted in a strong embedding of equality and diversity which became part and parcel of what everybody in this authority does."

6.3 EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY AT LFB TODAY

Today, the LFB has a dedicated Equality Services (ES) department with six staff members. The Head of Equality Services reports directly to the Deputy Commissioner. The LFB also employs four Diversity staff in HR who focus on Positive Action programs which aim at increasing the number of under-represented groups amongst the recruit firefighters. In addition to the above the LFB has a dedicated team of nine Equality and Diversity Trainers who facilitate a range of training interventions designed to meet the requirements of staff with different levels of responsibility. The trainers include a mixture of uniform and non-uniform staff and deliver a variety of diversity courses on regular basis at the training college of the LFB. Within the HR department there are also two change managers who assist the organisation in implementing new policies and initiatives.

The role of ES at LFB is to look at retention issues, organisation culture and service delivery. The ES for example develops the specifications for diversity training expected to be delivered by the training department of the LFB. The ES plays the role of purchaser of services from other departments who act as suppliers. The ES also deals with bullying, harassment and discrimination complaints associated with diversity issues.

6.4 INVESTIGATING THE BARRIERS

The information below is extracted from the Audit Commission Report of 2008.

In 2008, the LFB used focus groups and recruitment test results to detect any barriers to entry for women. Women performed well in tests, provided they had physical fitness training support, but the number of women applying for firefighting positions remained between six to eight percent. The fire service was not being seen as a career choice.

In contrast, the main barrier for BME candidates had been in the selection process, specifically performance in psychometric tests.

6.5 BREAKING DOWN THE BARRIERS

LFB drew on learning from other organisations such as the Metropolitan Police and Transport for London to design a range of initiatives to improve the perception of fire fighting jobs as a career choice and change internal processes to better suit the needs of women and BME staff.

<http://www.auditcommission.gov.uk/localgov/goodpractice/userfocusdiversity/Pages/recruitmentfirefighterlondon.aspx>



6.6 POSITIVE ACTION PROGRAMS

The LFB implemented a number of positive action programs since 2000. Programs such as:

- Open Days specifically for women and BME
- Targeted Development and Graduate Entry Scheme
- Mentoring and Coaching
- Apprenticeships Schemes and Young offenders program
- Local Intervention Fire Education Scheme
- Community Engagement

The positive action team is made up of one manager and four team members, three of whom are operational firefighters who come off shift to join the team and work in the department for two to three years and then go back on shift. The positions are advertised internally with a clear message on what the positions are trying to achieve in terms of targeting BME and women to apply for firefighters' roles.

The team does a lot of outreach within BME communities and women's groups and organises a number of open days dedicated to BME and women. The Open Days cater for forty people at any one time and take place over a whole day during which attendees try various tests that the LFB has in place for the recruit selection process: Written tests, interviews and physical tests. Attendees get an idea of what is expected as well as an assessment of their performance on the day, where their strengths are and where they need to improve. Following the open days, the attendees who are willing to pursue a career as firefighters are invited to apply for a pre-entry training program (Firefighter Selection Skills Courses) which runs for ten Saturdays. The course is offered to assist BME and women applicants to develop skills required in the firefighters' selection process.

In order to be accepted onto the Firefighter Selection Skills Course, applicants need to pass verbal skills and numerical skills tests and a Personal Qualities and Attributes test (e.g. writing a piece on 'tell us a time where you've been in a stressful situation'). This gives the testers an understanding of the applicants' level and their potential to pass the Firefighter Selection Skills Course. The course participants are assigned a mentor firefighter to support them. At the end of the ten weeks, the participants are ready to apply for firefighter selection process if they choose to. Commenting on the program's effectiveness, Positive Action Program Manager Dawne Stephenson said:

"The majority have got through. Some we have lost along the way because they didn't declare that they had a criminal conviction or they had a criminal conviction that was pending. Some decided that it was not for them. When we were ready to recruit we sent a letter to all who were on the last course, reminding them that we are about to recruit and that they need to be logging on. I think two or three of them decided they didn't want to do it. So that's going to happen, but for the ones that do get through, I think, we see the benefit of it and if it does help people to get through the process, then I think it's worth it."

6.7 TARGETED ADVERTISING

Ninety five percent of the organisation's advertising costs are targeted at raising awareness of the Brigade as a genuine career option for women and BME communities. Targeted advertising, role models and advertorials have been used, assisted in 2006 by a government awareness campaign to attract more women firefighters.

6.8 OPEN DAYS

Women only and BME targeted open days are held twice a month, giving potential candidates the opportunity to meet other BME and women firefighters, practise written tests and receive advice on expectations for application forms and physical tests. For example, women can have their upper body strength assessed to see if they would need more preparation for the physical test for the firefighter role. Up till 27 June 2008, over 22,000 people have registered interest in attending the open days.

6.9 SELECTION PROCESS

The LFB reviewed the firefighter selection process using knowledge gained from focus groups, community research and data analysis. A number of innovative approaches were introduced, including video-based assessment tests.

Physical tests were moved to the end of the selection process to give potential candidates more time to train in order to meet the physical standards required for entry.

6.10 ORGANISATIONAL CHANGES

As well as increasing the number of applications to the authority, cultural and operational factors within the organisation had to be addressed. Physical changes to buildings, uniforms and equipment, and diversity training for staff were introduced. The Brigade also decided to cluster successful women applicants in watches and stations in order to address isolation and improve retention.

6.11 FAST TRACK AND GRADUATE SCHEMES

With slow turnover hampering progression of staff, LFB launched an internal fast track scheme. In addition, a graduate scheme was introduced in 2007, allowing operational firefighters to move into management roles.

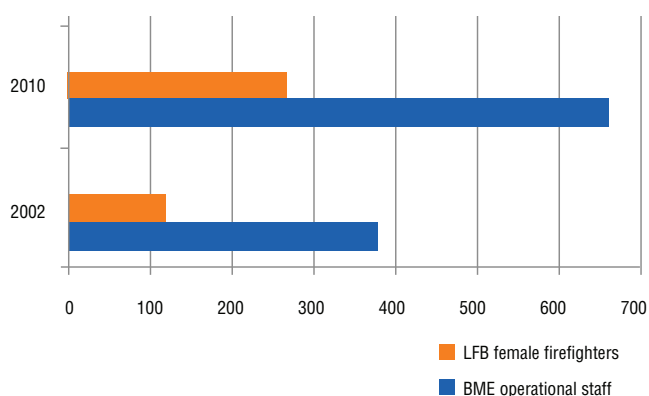
6.12 OUTCOMES

Most of the staff hired from under-represented groups have come into the service as a result of Positive Action programs.

In 2002, there were 378 BME operational staff which have now increased to 660 in 2010, a 75% increase.

In 2002, the LFB employed 119 female firefighters. This number went up to 267 in 2010, an increase of 124%. In other words, 11% of LFB firefighters are from BME and 5% are women.

The LFB reports that in its last recruitment round, 10% of applicants were women and 16% of those who were successful in the process were women, 23% of applicants were BME and 18% of those successful in the process were BME.



In relation to the Government's imposed targets of 15% women in the fire service and the difficulties faced by fire services in meeting this target, Pat Oakley had this to say:

"What everybody talks about when they talk about targets is the workforce target but Towards Diversity contained a lot more than workforce targets. There are a lot of cultural change targets in there as well. So targets such as every fire service must have a dedicated person for equality and diversity. Every fire service must do equality and diversity training. Every fire service must undertake an equality and diversity audit. So although the workforce targets haven't been met, it was one of the package of things that fire and rescue services needed to do and some fire and rescue services have done better than others at kind of implementing it, but all fire and rescue services have done something. So you know it gave you a framework to work within."

The graduate scheme has helped to increase the number of female applications to the authority: 42% of successful applicants in the initial round were women.

The modified selection process greatly improved the success rates of BME candidates at each stage of the selection process. For example, on the revised written tests the success rate improved from 36% in 2002 to 68% in 2006.

Of the 17 firefighters selected for accelerated progression to potential management level under the LFB Targeted Development Scheme in 2006, nearly half were women and just under a third were from BME groups. Initial feedback was very positive about this group's corporate input. By the end of 2008, the majority of this group applied for the Brigade's Middle Management Assessment Centre.

The authority's approach has acted as an exemplar to other corporate and public sector organisations in the UK and Europe. Representatives from British Gas attended the open days and the organisation now uses a similar process to attract women engineers.

However, slow turnover in fire services makes it difficult to change the ethnic and gender profile over a short time. More work is needed to improve applications from particular groups, such as those from Asian communities. To help address this, a specific officer was included within the outreach team to target women and Asian candidates. A reception was held for key players in the Asian communities in London to advertise careers in the service.

6.13 RESOURCES

- These initiatives have been developed and run by the six members of staff in the Equalities and Diversity Team at LFB. Redesigning the selection process required periodic input from a range of stakeholders such as Training and Development and Equality Services. Significant design work occurred within HR.
- Direct costs arose in terms of sourcing suitable external pilot samples (using a market research company) at approximately £20,000.
- Start up costs were higher and covered resources such as equipment, events, call handling and staffing. These are now reducing. For example, the Outreach Budget, which is used to fund open days and other events, has reduced from an initial £338,000 in 2003/04 to £115,000 in 2007/08.
- The current annual budget for awareness/recruitment advertising is £133,500.
- LFB spends approximately £1,533 per trainee from under-represented groups.

6.14 LEARNINGS

- Ambitious targets made it necessary to adopt a strategic approach, although targets have never been used as quotas for selection.
- Support at a senior level has been essential. Members of the London Fire and Emergency Planning Authority have visibly supported and driven all initiatives. In addition, the Deputy Commissioner at LFB is the organisation's equalities champion.
- There is a need to be open with staff and inform them why new initiatives have been introduced. If they had started their work with their current level of experience, the equalities team would have put greater emphasis on briefing staff and ensuring managers passed this information on, in order to avoid some existing staff not feeling informed.
- Equalities training for all staff is essential, covering topics from understanding the issues to experiencing and understanding behaviours.
- By learning from initiatives carried out by similar organisations, LFB has avoided having to 'reinvent the wheel'.
- Putting diversity at the core of the organisation has clear advantages for delivering more responsive services. Minority staff are seen as an asset to service delivery, as they can improve the effectiveness of outreach and engagement activities and establish stronger links with communities.

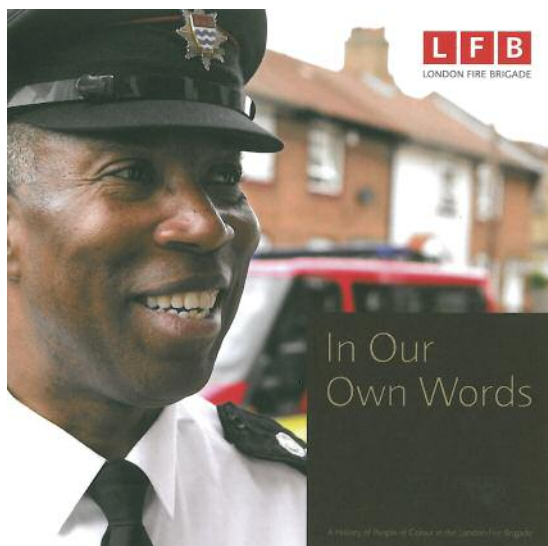
<http://www.auditcommission.gov.uk/localgov/goodpractice/userfocusdiversity/Pages/recruitmentfirefighterlondon.aspx>

6.15 BENEFITS OF INCREASED DIVERSITY TO THE LFB

- Improved service delivery
- Improved ability to identify and reach at risk communities
- A diverse workforce
- Cultural changes

The LFB attributes the success of the diversity initiatives to a committed leadership which took diversity seriously and did not just pay lip service and to a Government which provided a national framework and benchmarking tool to monitor the progress of the Equality and Diversity agenda. The Government also sponsored national campaigns to encourage women and BME to join the Fire and Rescue Service. The UK government set challenging recruitment targets for fire services to work towards.

The changes that occurred have happened over the last eleven years and they are substantial in nature and impact.



6.16 CHALLENGES

The various Positive Action programs instigated by the LFB faced resistance from the LFB workforce with many expressing lack of support and making accusations of positive discrimination and favouritism. The LFB managed the resistance by adopting a number of strategies including:

- Messages sent out to all staff from Commissioner/Top Management
- Rolling out of Equality and Diversity Training
- Briefing to all Station Managers of why certain schemes and programs have been introduced
- Operational staff were used to re-enforce and relay messages about the LFB actions.

One of the key lessons from the London Fire Brigade's experience in implementing positive action programs is the damage done as a result of stopping an intended program from happening due to resistance encountered, in Pat Oakley's words:

"Stopping it, is almost worse than not starting it in the first place because it demonstrates to the organisation that you didn't really need to do this in the first place and when we used to stop them they would turn around and say 'see we told you, we told you'."

WEST YORKSHIRE FIRE AND RESCUE SERVICE (WYFRS)

7.1 DEMOGRAPHICS

The WYFRS employs a total of 2112 employees:

- 1653 are operational staff
- 459 are support staff
- Amongst Operational staff, 58 are from BME (3.51%)
- 54 women (3.27%)
- Amongst support staff 36 BME (7.84%)
- 231 women (50.33%)

7.2 DIVERSITY AT WYFRS

The WYFRS established an Equality and Diversity Unit with five support staff and two seconded firefighters. The roles consist of:

- Equality and Diversity Manager
- Equality and Diversity Officer – LGBT*, Training Delivery
- Equality and Diversity Support Officer - Monitoring and organisational performance of the Equality Framework
- Community and Recruitment Outreach Worker
- Clerical assistant
- Two seconded firefighters (female and BME role models)

7.3 POSITIVE ACTION PROGRAMS

The WYFRS has a positive action program that has been in place since 2000. The program is multifaceted and involves the following initiatives:

- Organising of a series of Awareness Training Days targeting women and BME community members
- Attendance of community events, careers/job fairs
- Visits to local mosques and Sikh temples
- Targeted approach for Chinese/Black Caribbean communities
- Sponsored BME and women's football clubs
- Drop-in fitness sessions for women



CFO Simon Pilling

7.4 KEY SUCCESS ELEMENTS FOR POSITIVE ACTION PROGRAMS

The WYFRS attributes the success of its positive action programs to the following:

- Leadership and support from the senior managers
- Equality and Diversity Team in place with appropriate resources
- Variety of initiatives
- Getting staff on board to support the initiatives
- Training all staff on Equality and Diversity
- Having competent women and BME staff working in stations

7.5 CHALLENGES

The challenges faced by the WYFRS in implementing its positive action programs were associated with:

- Meeting recruitment targets on time
- Increasing the number of women and BME applying but not being successful
- Fitness standards for women
- Some existing staff assumed the WYFRS was lowering standards to recruit women and BME
- Some staff expressed concerns about working with women and BME firefighters
- Some white males felt they were discriminated against

The WYFRS responded to the challenges through its Diversity Awareness Training program, effective communication from senior managers and by involving operational staff in awareness days.

* Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual & Transgender

Ensuring correct and consistent information regarding implementation of change was identified by DCFO Steve Beckley as absolutely vital:

"We have a very, very onerous station visits program where the four uniform members of the management board and now increasingly the non-uniform members, actually go on station visits, we get to understand the organisation far better as a result. They understand us as well and the tittle-tattle and the mixed messages that happen – because it's not just trade union officials that pass mixed messages, middle managers can be quite destructive sometimes in change process. If we've been on the fire station and listened to firefighters and listened to what their concerns and fears are and we can say to the station manager, why haven't you told them this because you knew, I told you but you've not communicated with them. So communication at middle management levels is improving now because they know that we're going out there."

7.6 OUTCOMES

As a result of the WYFRS positive action programs efforts there was an increase in the number of recruits who are women and of BME background. According to Maria Tonks, the E&D Manager;

"We have now a more diverse organisation better equipped to meet the needs of the communities in West Yorkshire."

Simon Pilling, the WYFRS Chief Fire Officer explained that the most convincing argument for gaining support for the Equality and Diversity agenda was by linking it to service delivery outcomes:

"The greatest single change in certainly West Yorkshire but in the fire service as a whole,

that's helped E&D is prevention, our work on prevention without a shadow of a doubt, has been the catalyst. Prevent fires occurring in the first place and education of communities that we serve, each fire station, each firefighter have now got clear targets and objectives to achieve in terms of reducing fire deaths, injury and associated property damage from fire in their communities. The only way they can do that is by relating closely to the community they serve."

Steve Beckley, the WYFRS Deputy Chief Fire Officer added:

"There was a huge job to be done in the poorer white communities that meant that we were having some success in reducing the numbers of fires, deaths and injuries but the greater challenge was accessing some of the more diverse communities. We were far more confident as an organisation knocking on the door of Mr & Mrs Smith where it was easy to get invited in for a cup of tea and where the community generally understood our role and trusted us. For a few years this served us well and it did result in a significant reduction in fires, deaths and injuries so we could genuinely say we were having an impact. The issue over the last few years and certainly the challenge over the next five years is to access those communities that are harder to reach. Our workforce is certainly far more confident now and it is not about simply using an Asian firefighter to gain the trust of the occupiers of the house in the middle of an Asian Community in Bradford. The white male firefighters that now work alongside women and minority black and ethnic firefighters understand the cultural differences far better and are therefore more confident to go and knock on any door and walk in that house to deliver fire safety advice and also better able to interact with diverse communities during an emergency."

Reflecting on the changes that occurred over the last two decades CFO Pilling commented:

"Twenty years ago we were this friendly organisation with closed doors. We were in a fire station, and everybody loved us, even then everybody loved us. Now we're actually the very same friendly organisation but in the community, completely in the community. Day after day after day after day, and that's the difference. That's really made the difference to the prevention agenda."

DCFO Beckley added:

"I can understand how firefighters may lack confidence in dealing with diversity. Early in my career I was that young white male, living in a predominantly white community with mainly white friends, drinking in the pub, playing football, going to work with white colleagues, but turning out to fires in diverse communities and completely separated from the community by the nature of the job we do. Because it's a dangerous environment, we separated our activities from the very communities we were serving, with no real interaction. So we went from our white environment into that community, dealt with the incident and came away again. As a young man I had very little exposure and therefore, no real understanding of diversity and was less effective in my job. Although training in diversity is important, it was the direct exposure to diversity and listening to other people's experiences that provided the best training for me and my own attitudes have changed significantly as I have progressed through my career. Community safety became an increasing part of a firefighter's role and as a result our interaction with the community is now so much stronger and more positive and this in turn has changed attitudes in the workplace."

7.7 WYFRS AND FBU

The WYFRS described its relationship with the FBU as a 'mature relationship'. The FBU is consulted over matters that may affect their members. The consultations vary from very informal to formal. Usually ideas are flagged and discussed between the leadership of the FBU and WYFRS well before the formal stage. The FBU does not use a formal committee process which was common practice twenty years ago. In relation to FBU-WYFRS consultation patterns Chief Fire Officer Simon Pilling commented:

"Well we don't particularly negotiate with them if we don't need to, but we do consult with them, so we tell them almost everything we're doing so they're aware. So if we're actually introducing a new policy or procedure or initiative, you can bet your bottom dollar that will mean a knock on their door, but if they're forewarned, they're forearmed. So we consult widely and effectively. In terms of negotiation, well that only crops up as and when it is a change to terms and conditions as such really of their membership."



MERSEYSIDE FIRE AND RESCUE SERVICE (MFRS)



CFO Tony McGuirk

8.1 DEMOGRAPHICS

Merseyside Fire and Rescue Service employs a total of 1424 employees.

■ Operational staff	920
■ Mobilising and Communications Centre staff (MACC)	49
■ Non-operational staff	455

All MFRS employees wear a uniform.

■ Number of BME	65
■ Women	326
■ Anglo /White British	1359

The MFRS has a dedicated Diversity department located under the Deputy Chief Fire Officer reporting to the Director of Performance and Values.

The Diversity department employs three staff members, a manager and diversity officers. It has an annual budget of £159,000.

8.2 POSITIVE ACTION PROGRAMS

As part of the Firefighter Recruitment program the MFRS attends a number of events during black history month. The MFRS staff also attend recruitment events in schools, colleges, community centres, sports centres and community groups and Pride events in Manchester and Liverpool. In addition to events, the MFRS has produced a number of recruitment marketing brochures each targeting specific community or under-represented groups.

These efforts are ongoing since 2007, and aim to raise awareness of a career in the Fire Service to females and under-represented minority groups. These programs are undertaken by the Recruitment and Diversity Teams. Benefits of the program are evident from the last four firefighter recruitment campaigns which included

the following results;

- Recruits from 2008 - 3 females and 4 BME
- Recruits from 2009 - 3 females
- Recruits from 2010 - 2 females and 2 BME

Generally, females struggled on the physical tests (mainly the bleep test* and the hand grip). This was overcome by engaging with females at positive action events and giving advice and guidance. BMEs generally face more challenges with the written tests. To overcome this MFRS signposted them to supporting colleges and during the positive action event provided sample questions and advice to help improve competency levels in this area.

8.3 CHALLENGES

The program did face resistance from white males who did not understand positive action. The response from MFRS was to explain the reasons for positive action and signpost it to the website for Firefighter Recruitment.

8.4 BENEFITS

The benefits of the program included that it raised awareness of a career in the Fire Service and highlighted to the public the changes and progress made over the last ten years. It has also raised respect for the organisation.

The program brought benefits to the community as it has given community members an opportunity for a fantastic career that they may not have thought of and helped them to make a difference to their communities.

The program was a joint effort between the Diversity Manager, Head of Recruitment and Recruitment Manager. It received strong support from various community leaders.

The unions were consulted with and supported positive action programs.

Tony McGuirk, the Chief Fire Officer of Merseyside Fire and Rescue Service, reflected on the changes to recruitment at MFRS:

"You've got to know why you are changing. The firefighters are right in the context in which they're responding because everybody is content with what's going on. But the problem actually is, the fire service is limiting itself in the people it recruits. So it's not recruiting the best, it's recruiting the best of a much smaller pool of people because it's intentionally limiting the recruitment pool for the future."

This was followed by comments from Jayne Monkhouse, the MFRS, Diversity Adviser:

"And the country is changing, the community is changing around us and if we don't recognise that, we'll just become more and more isolated as a white male enclave in the middle of that and become less and less in tune with what the community wants. We're providing a service that we think they want, not a service that they want."

In relation to the Uniform policy by MFRS, CFO Tony McGuirk, explains the rationale for having all staff at MFRS wear the same uniform:

"unless communities can see members of their community in the uniform, how are they ever going to pitch it to their children or their friends and brothers and sisters and daughters. Either de-uniform everybody or uniform everybody. If there is one uniform for everybody within the fire and rescue service, overnight you'd see hundreds of women in the same uniform and the public would say 'oh there's a lot of women in the fire service, could I do that'?"

8.5 SHIFT IN CULTURE AT MFRS

CFO Tony McGuirk spoke passionately about the reforms that have taken place at MFRS in the last ten years. He explained about the major shift in the role of firefighters and the increased emphasis on prevention.

"We do so many home fire safety visits and it means that the firefighters are off the fire station in and amongst the community and often in and amongst the very vulnerable people in vulnerable areas of the community. And that's helped us a lot with cultural change because you break the isolation of a fire station. Actually the work isn't in the fire station, it's in the community. And I think that brings out a humility in people as well which is a healthy thing. What starts to happen is that firefighters, our white male firefighters find that they can't speak to a deaf household, they can't speak to a Somali household and they can't speak to a predominantly female Muslim house, so they can't get into that household – they need others to do it. These are our community fire safety advocates who come in and provide the firefighters that kind of communication, that kind of service. So I think that in itself is a good cultural change that has helped us a lot."

8.6 COMMUNITY SAFETY VISITS

MFRS consists of twenty-five community fire stations. They are featured on the MFRS website and each fire station lists the number of fire safety visits conducted in its maintenance area. For example Eccleston fire station conducted 13,238 visits as at December 2008, while Liverpool conducted 146,672 for the same period. MFRS employs about forty community safety advocates who are a highly diverse group of people and even though they are not operational firefighters, they are trained in fire safety and wear the uniform. They have proven to be a great asset to firefighters and very positive role models to members of their community.

"We employ a wide range of Community Fire Safety Advocates to help achieve our aim of a fire safe community. Whilst our firefighters can carry out the majority of Home Risk Assessments there are communities and areas that require more resources and a targeted approach and as a result we have Bilingual Advocates, Older Persons Advocates, Disability Advocates, Arson Reduction Advocates, Deaf Advocates and District Advocates to assist with this work."

~ Michael Hagen, DCFO

Deputy Chief Fire Officer Michael Hagen commented on the effectiveness of community safety visits:

"It is a fact that fires across the whole of the UK have gone down in terms of a shift towards prevention. They've gone down far more in Merseyside than anywhere else because of the emphasis we've placed on fire prevention. That culture change has been alongside a change about staff."

.....but that business about people not having a problem with the service, they think it's good. It reminds me really of what Henry Ford said about the car, he said 'if you'd asked somebody at the end of the 19th Century how to improve transport, they'd have probably said, well it would be better if it would go a little bit faster and run a bit further. A member of the public wouldn't have come up with the idea of a car. He'd come up with the idea of a better horse wouldn't they?"



Green Goddess fire engine

8.7 MFRS AND THE FBU

MFRS and FBU relations have been affected by a number of high profile disputes, with major disputes in 1995, 2001, 2002, 2004 and 2006.

In July 2001, the FBU went on strike opposing Merseyside Fire Authority's proposal to appoint non-uniformed staff to senior management posts previously reserved for experienced firefighters.

Chief Fire Officer Malcolm Saunders asserted that the authority was hoping to encourage more women and people from ethnic minorities to join the service. Eighty three percent of Merseyside's 1,400 officers voted for the stoppage. The armed forces' Green Goddess fire engines were brought in to Merseyside to provide cover in the region. Armed forces staff tackled fires in Merseyside during the previous firefighters' strike which started in 1995 and lasted for nine months.

According to CFO McGuirk, the FBU's record on diversity is not one of showing leadership in that arena. The FBU initially used the original Thematic Review on Equality and Diversity to attack fire chiefs while it had its own problems in failing to acknowledge and respond to the needs of its diverse members.

The FBU minority members groups began to organise around their issues and rather than risk losing them to external organisations, the FBU stepped in to facilitate the development of internal structures within the FBU to accommodate minority groups' concerns.

Commenting on the current MFRS relationship with the FBU, Chief McGuirk said:

"Well we've won the war. We now need to win with our firefighters. The union is simply representative of a very small group of people. We would treat them as we would treat everybody else. This is what we're going to do, we'll give them the information as we give it to everybody else, we welcome their views and we'll take them into account. That doesn't mean we will agree with them. We're not asking their permission, we're just asking their view."

It's taken us a long time but I think the union is now starting to understand that concept of what consultation means.

We've also brought the auditor in to put some cost on the facilities we give and the public money that's spent on the union. That audit report said you're spending a lot of money, it's not very well accounted for, you need to account better for it. So we'll be looking again, fundamentally at their time, their facilities and we will be much more transparent about how much public money goes into subsidising the trade union and that will all be on the internet. So the public can actually have a view, on whether that's what they want."

DCFO Hagen added:

"People sort of whisper to us, 'what's industrial relations like in Merseyside' and we say 'well it's very good, yeah we meet regularly with the fire brigades union, we have on a personal level with officials, a very good dialogue, there's easy access when they want it, they have plenty of facilities, it's very good'. They do have the occasional bow out and strike, but apart from that it's fine. But at the heart of the trade union there's a militancy which inevitably is going to create tension when you've got a leadership of the service delivering change."

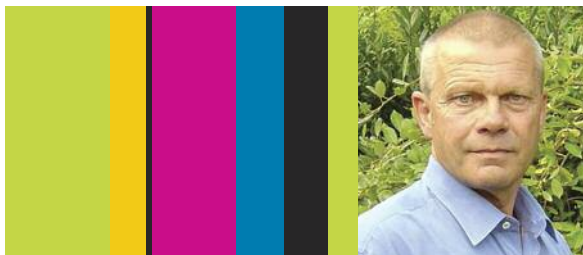
Les Skarrats, Secretary of the local branch of the FBU in Merseyside commented on the progress of diversity at MFRS :

"Equality and Diversity has to be truly reflected at all levels within the Fire and Rescue Service including MFRS and that means to rigorously examine the organisation continually, the constant vigilance of all procedures and the fullest inclusion of all stakeholders within the organisation. It is disappointing that the only formal equality body currently active within MFRS is the Diversity Action Group which is entirely made up by managers. That is contrary to previous arrangements where a full Fairness at Work Joint Strategy Group (an executive policy making body with councillor involvement) met on a bi monthly basis. The loss of it has done little to enhance equality and diversity within MFRS."

8.8 PROJECT ETHOS

A very recent work at MFRS is Project Ethos. It came about as a result of MFRS recognising that upon their induction into the fire service, new recruits seem to repress the attitudes they have been selected for and adapt to the dominant culture. This may be due to a lack of choice on the part of new recruits who are at the bottom of the decision-making chain of the organisation and are considered as apprentices with minimal skills. It could also be as a result of the recruit training process which can be very influential in developing conformity to the norm.

MFRS wanted to tackle this issue and engaged the research company *Fitting-in* which has extensive experience in researching fire service culture, to look into recommending approaches that would address this cultural reproduction phenomenon that favours conformity, engenders group-think and represses diversity and individualism.



Dr Dave Baigent

The *Fitting-in* team proposed the idea of instituting Training Stations whereby new recruits are placed and micro-managed and supported in their apprenticeship years and encouraged to display and express their differences and individual attributes. According to Dr Baigent the founder of *Fitting-in*, the rationale for the Training Stations is due to:

"Spreading resources over the whole of the fire and rescue service has not resulted in cultural change. Research suggests that it may be better to concentrate efforts on "training stations" where micro-management can ensure that the attitudes new entrants have about the fire and rescue service when they join are realised through their service's accepted core values."

9.1 DEMOGRAPHICS

The WMP employs:

- 15,000 people
- 9000 of whom are police officers
- 28% are women police officers
- 72% male police officers
- 12% are BME police officers

The WMP serves a population of 3.5 million. The population served by WMP is very diverse with varying concentration levels of diversity whereby Birmingham for example has a 40% of its population from BME, while Coventry has 12%.

9.2 DIVERSITY AT WMP

The WMP has eight staff diversity support groups consisting of:

- Disability and Carer's Network
- Black and Asian Police Association
- Rainbow for Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender (LGBT network)
- West Midlands Association of Women in Policing
- Inter-faith Working group
- Association of Muslim Police
- Shaw Trust Partnership for Disability
- Christian Police Network

Each local policing unit (LPU) within the WMP has a nominated Diversity Champion (DC). The role of the DC is to support the implementation of WMP Equality policies. The DCs are identified by LPU commanders to carry out the role in addition to their primary role. The Diversity team works to support the DCs and disseminate good practice.

The WMP has a Diversity Unit with five full time staff whose role is to embed diversity considerations throughout the organisation and to deliver "niche" diversity training not covered by the Learning and Development section. In

addition to the Diversity Unit staff, the WMP also employs four full time staff in its Human Resources area to focus on Positive Action programs for recruitment purposes.

Each LPU has a local Diversity Action Plan which is developed for their specific locality but in response to the WMP overarching Equality Policy.

All employees have a diversity related objective included in their workplans. This is reviewed annually as part of the Personal Development Review process. Guidance is provided to line managers on how to set diversity related objectives to make it relevant to the individual.

Fiona Washington, the Diversity Manager at WMP, explains that a key role of her department is to facilitate the embedding of diversity across all departments within the WMP, plus coordinating the reporting to Government on the WMP performance:

"Every three years we produce a combined equality and human rights scheme. This incorporates three separate equality schemes; the Race Equality Scheme, Gender Equality Scheme and Disability Equality Scheme. They are driven by law. They are embedded within Equality Legislation and you have to report on them and you are inspected by the Equality and Human Rights Commission. That's a legislative duty. So that's our key driver in terms of how we deliver corporate advice and guidance to all departments within the organisation and all local policing units."



9.3 POSITIVE ACTION TEAM

The Positive Action Team is involved in a variety of initiatives especially involving target communities that the WMP is keen to attract to its workforce. The team consists of a Diversity Officer, a Press and Public Relations Officer, and two police officers.

In May 2010, the UK Labor Government lost the elections and a new conservative coalition Government took over. The economic conditions across Europe meant that all public sector organisations were undergoing cuts in budgets and a freeze on recruitment.

In this context the WMP indicated that their recruitment efforts will now focus mainly on medium to long term outcomes by targeting youths and students in secondary college with the hope that in five to ten years they will consider joining the police force.

The Positive Action Team undertakes a number of outreach activities targeting BME communities for recruitment purposes. The team attends BME festivals and events. For example; Andy Towe, Positive Action officer explains;

"We've attended Chinese New Year to try and speak to parents and elders, because we've certainly discovered that we need to convince the adults that are guiding the youngsters that the police, or the fire service is a viable profession. So if there's an event with a particular community we know that there's certain staff from that community that we could ask to come along, so then people can actually meet someone face-to-face who is actually relevant to them, and a relevant positive role model. So we did that at Diwali Meadow, and at the Chinese New Year, because the best way to convince other people is to get somebody who's from a similar background and has that similar understanding of what their issues are."



Naila Suleman and Andy Towe

“
we've certainly
discovered that we
need to convince the
adults that are
guiding the
youngsters that the
police, or the fire
service is a viable

”



Chief Constable Gillian Parker and Diversity Officer Theresa Peltier from Bedfordshire Police

Bedfordshire Police Authority employs:

- 2,364 people
- 800 are police staff
- 1264 police officer posts
- 200 special constables
- 100 or so volunteers
- 30% female police officers
- 6% BME police officers
- 68% female police staff
- 8%. BME police staff

10.2 SPECIAL CONSTABLES

Special Constables (SC) have all the powers of a regular constable but do not get paid. They are individuals who either have a full time or part time job or may be unemployed, they don't want to join the regular force but they undergo training over a period of a year and are given all the powers of a constable.

SCs are required to put in a minimum of four hours a week and they do a whole range of duties. They attend big events to control traffic or attend fetes and make sure there are no public order problems. They are linked to traffic units and scientific services. They undertake a whole range of policing roles and are vital to the survival and sustainability of the police force in the UK.

Some SCs work regular hours and do regular night shifts with the police particularly on a Friday and Saturday nights. Others would do a Saturday or a Sunday in a local area, depending on their work commitments. If there is a major incident or disaster they are deployed to do whatever is required.

A number of full time police staff are also specialist constables. They develop leadership skills, problem solving, communication skills which they can take back into their usual employment.

Special Constables, like regular constables in the UK police, do not carry guns. They carry capsicum spray gas and batons and are trained to use both. The only police staff who carry guns are in the specialised firearms unit. If they find themselves in a situation that requires the use of firearms, they will call armed officers to the scene. They face the same level of risk as all other unarmed officers. The firearms instances that occur are so few and far between because guns are not freely available in the UK and police are able to manage with a very small but highly trained resource.

Chief Constable Gillian Parker explains about another category of people within the Bedfordshire Police:

"Amongst our police staff we have another group of people called Police Community Support Officers who are a relatively new addition to the policing family and basically they are uniformed members of staff who don't have powers of arrest or powers of a constable but they do have some powers and their job is to be in the community, problem solving, visible patrol, acting as a conduit for information and understanding their communities. We have actually found..., the diversity within that group of people is much higher than within the force and a lot of PCSOs, move into becoming regulars, there's more so now than the special constabulary."

10.3 POSITIVE ACTION PROGRAMS

Bedfordshire Police implements a number of positive action programs for recruitment purposes. They also have positive action programs for progression within the organisation. Police officers and Special Constables at Bedfordshire Police can access the Positive Action Leadership Program (PALP) that is run by the National Policing Improvement Agency (NPIA) which is a national organisation in the Police Force that has overall responsibility for the framework for police training. It is pitched at different levels with a Positive Action Leadership Program available to everyone and can either be run at the NPIA or in-house and then a Senior Positive Action Leadership Program that is for people that are in the senior ranks or senior grades.



The program targets under-represented groups, such as black and minority ethnic staff, staff with disability, lesbian and gay staff, and recently a couple of pilot courses were run for transgender and one for Jewish police officers.

In trying to attract under-represented groups to seek a career within Bedfordshire Police, a number of marketing strategies are used. One of which is to use internal staff from targeted communities as role models. Chief Parker explains:

"I remember having a conversation with an Asian superintendent. I was a female superintendent and he was an Asian superintendent and we were the ones that got rolled out. We both said we accept it and I must admit I'm actually happier to do it now than perhaps I even was then because I don't think I realised at the time, how powerful this role model bit is and it was only when I went to the next rank, when in a new force, when female staff started saying to me 'it's absolutely great to see a female doing your job' and I thought right, okay..... The power of the role model is extremely important."



Chief Constable Gillian Parker

“
...female staff started saying to me
‘it’s absolutely great to see a female
doing your job’... ”

10.4 LEADERSHIP AND DIVERSITY

Chief Constable Gillian Parker attributes the success of Bedfordshire Police in progressing its diversity goals to the fact that she has taken the portfolio of diversity as her responsibility;

"Actually equality and diversity is the only portfolio that I own. Everything else is delegated to my fellow chief officers and that is done very deliberately because it's just another way of getting the message across that the chief constable thinks this is important and therefore I better think that it is important as well."

Chief Constable Parker believes that leading by example sends a powerful message to the organisation.

"As a chief, I have the power to influence that sort of thinking. So that makes it important but equally I'm not an expert and I need somebody like Teresa (Diversity Officer) who is, not only going to do the work for me, but keep me on the straight and narrow and say 'look these are your responsibilities' and making sure that we are legally compliant as well as the spirit. So I do the spirit, she does the legal."

Chief Parker brought her own style of leadership to the Bedfordshire Police. She explained that the police service have, as a result of the reforms, begun to acknowledge that;

"The style of leadership that is right for today is one that women actually more instinctively did than a lot of men and I'm very careful not to generalise there. Women in particular their time has come but equally for a lot of men. They are more comfortable with the transformation or style of leadership than the macho command and control. I mean we all revert to command and control on occasions as sometimes it's necessary. I'm not particularly good at it and other people are, so I wouldn't have really survived in a command and control organisation."

10.5 BENEFITS TO HAVING GREATER DIVERSITY AT BEDFORDSHIRE POLICE

Bedfordshire Police has reaped many benefits of having increased diversity within its workforce. Teresa Peltier, Diversity Officer explains:

"I think it creates greater understanding. If you want people to have greater awareness or if you want them to police better or to do a better job in any arena you can only do that, if you've got additional tools and those tools might be people from different backgrounds that are going to help you understand some of the issues and it's going to help you do a better job."

The benefits of having greater diversity however hinges on having a critical mass as Chief Parker asserts:

"I'm absolutely convinced you do need a critical mass of people and particularly if you're going to start to see people progress up through the organisation. It's important to have that mass and of course it comes back to the role model thing as well, that the more people you see doing a particular role, whether it's a firearms officer or a chief constable or an accountant or whatever it is, the more you're going to think 'I can do that'."



NATIONAL HEALTH SERVICE (NHS)

The National Health Service is the fourth largest organisation in the world. It employs 1.3 million people and has a budget of 90 billion pounds. The NHS employs 16,000 paramedics in twelve ambulance services. Almost 15 % of NHS employees are from BME. The NHS set out to achieve a 30% target for its top managers to be of BME background.

The program examined is called “*Breaking Through Program*” and was launched in 2003. It was designed to assist BME employees in NHS to gain director-level positions. In introducing the program the NHS Chief Executive said:

“Today’s NHS has a responsibility to fully reflect the population it serves. I am fully committed to ensuring there are people from diverse backgrounds at all levels of the service but particularly in more senior positions where representation is poor.”

~ David Nicholson, NHS Chief Executive

Yvonne Coghill, Manager of the Breaking Through Program, explained that what prompted the NHS to initiate the Program was the realisation of having very few BME people in senior positions and that in order for NHS to adequately and effectively serve its diverse community, it needed to address this imbalance:

“In 2003, the NHS woke up to the fact that in order to treat the communities properly, we need to have people who understand where they’re coming from. So Lord Crisp launched what was called his 10 Point Plan, the Leadership Race Equality Action Plan, and five of the strategic intentions were for making things better for patients and five were to make things better for staff.”



“One of the things that he did to make it better for staff was this program. The Breaking Through Program was permissible and legitimate on the back of the 2000 Race Relations Amendment Act Section 36. It meant if you didn’t have as many people of a certain race or sex in senior level positions, you were able to put on positive action programs legitimately. So this was what they did in 2003, 2004. They launched the first Breaking Through Program which was the first positive action program and the only positive action program that they’ve had in the NHS.”

The program is managed through the NHS Institute for Innovation and Improvement and people selected to participate in the program undergo a series of tests to determine their skills and leadership potential. Once selected, they undergo a professional development program for eighteen months which combines classroom learning plus coaching and practical placements.

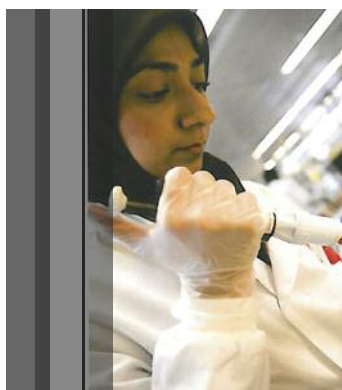
At the end of the program the participants are assisted to secure a permanent position at senior levels of the organisation. Yvonne Coghill, the program's manager, explained that out of the thirteen participants who just completed the program recently, eight have already been appointed to senior positions.

CHALLENGES

When asked about how the program was received by the general workforce and whether it was viewed as providing favourable treatment to a group of employees over another, Yvonne Coghill provided the following response:

"The reason why we don't make it open to everybody is because people aren't equal. The opportunities that the host population have and get are different to the opportunities that people from black and minority ethnic backgrounds have had. So in order to level the playing field, we're giving black and minority ethnic people additional help, additional support, additional coaching, additional mentoring, additional development, so that they then can go out and compete for jobs."

They still have to meet the competencies; in fact they have to be higher. Well I think they have to be better in order for them to get the jobs. So that's why this program came into being and I have to tell you that it is a constant fight to justify my existence. I think I've embedded the program more than I ever dreamt I could and it is, at the moment, safe, but that doesn't mean to say there aren't forces out there trying to get rid of it and don't want it. I'm training black and minority ethnic people and I've got some fantastic people on my programs, they just blow you away, they're so clever and bright, they make me feel ashamed they're so talented. What I do, I take them out of their jobs as middle to senior manager, and put them into a higher level jobs. Now it's not positive discrimination because they're in a job that isn't their job really, because it's an 18 month training program, they have evidence to show that they've had board level experience, that they've delivered on the agenda, that they've actually completed pieces of work, and have the evidence to show that they are capable of functioning at that level. They then leave the program and start to apply for jobs."



12

CASE STUDIES

12.1 WEST MIDLANDS FIRE SERVICE (WMFS)

HANDSWORTH COMMUNITY FIRE STATION

Handsworth Community Fire Station was the first purpose built community fire station in Europe and was opened officially in June 2000, as a joint initiative with Birmingham City Council Community Safety Team. It includes a fully resourced Safety Centre of Excellence and an interactive educational resource - The Red Hot Education Station.

HANDSWORTH SAFETY CENTRE FOR EXCELLENCE

The award- winning centre is designed to provide a service to the local community, whilst delivering a proactive approach to safety issues with an emphasis on fire safety. The Centre has all of the usual conference facilities available including a sixty seat presentation theatre, a fully equipped IT training room with seventeen workstations, a general training room, a small interview room and a conference room. Although the rooms are available for hire, non-funded groups from the local community actively involved in the betterment or safety of the community may, at the discretion of the centre manager, be offered the facilities free of charge.

Handsworth Community Fire Safety Centre allows the Fire Service to promote the fire safety message. In its first four years the centre hosted almost 70,000 visitors, each one an opportunity to make people safer through links to agencies that utilise the centre or joint working with the community.

RED HOT EDUCATION STATION

A recent development to the centre is the Red Hot Education Station, an interactive Fire Experience designed to allow groups to witness the dangers of a real fire in total safety and discover the consequences. They can then tour a virtual room containing safety hazards and learn the best way to survive if trapped by fire.

Visitors are also encouraged to take advantage of a free initiative the West Midlands Fire Service are able to offer - Home Fire Risk Assessments by trained professionals.

Opening hours are 09:00 to 17:00 hrs from Monday to Friday, although it may be used by prior arrangement outside of these hours. Community members wishing to use the facility can request a trained operator. The Red Hot Education Station can cater for groups of up to thirty and the visit can take up to ninety minutes.



SAFESIDE

Safeside is a state-of-the-art, scenario-based, experiential learning safety complex that provides an innovative, interactive, enjoyable learning experience that inspires people to think and act safely. This new facility opened in Autumn 2008, is available for group bookings across the West Midlands community. Safeside offers;

- 16 life-sized scenarios
- experiential learning
- stimulating environment
- interactivity
- safe learning environment
- a great time!

Safeside is an interactive, innovative safety complex, built and run in partnership with public, private and voluntary organisations.

At Safeside people get to learn about:

- Home safety
- Road safety
- Safer travel
- Water safety
- Consequences of crime
- Railway safety
- Drugs and alcohol awareness
- Internet safety
- Personal safety
- Consequences of vandalism
- Dealing with emergencies
- In car safety
- First aid
- Assisted living
- Environmental sustainability
- Fire safety



PRE-RECRUITMENT ACCESS COURSES

West Midlands Fire Service worked with Wolverhampton College to establish a Pre-recruitment Access Course. The course is designed to help participants develop the skills required to successfully complete the West Midlands Fire & Rescue Service application form and entrance tests. Candidates must be over 17 years and have a reasonable level of English and satisfy the basic entry requirements for joining the Fire Service.

There is no guarantee of success but the course has the full support of the West Midlands Fire Service. The courses have been running for twenty years and over 17% of serving firefighters are former students of the course. The courses are taught by experienced College staff and serving firefighters who are former students of the course.

The course covers:

- The Application form
- Communication skills
- Maths
- Strength and fitness
- Fire Service knowledge
- Interview preparation

Candidates complete an adult literacy examination and are given feedback on all assessments. On completion of the course, students are usually better prepared to make an application to the Fire Service once they have obtained an application form through the regular recruiting process.

Individuals interested in joining the course must attend the briefing session which lasts three hours. The briefing is free of charge. The cost of the course is £190. The course is offered in three modes: weekdays, evenings or weekends.

A similar course has also been designed for people wishing to join the police force.



CFO Vijith Randeniya

WMFS CHIEF FIRE OFFICER VIJITH RANDENIYA

Vijith Randeniya joined the London Fire Brigade in 1983. He came with his parents to England in the 1950s from Sri Lanka. He is now the chief fire officer of the West Midlands Fire Service, the first Asian chief officer of any emergency service in England and Wales.

Chief Randeniya remembers how his father was not that pleased about him joining the fire service. He thought it was a waste of the degree Chief Randeniya studied hard to obtain.

It's that kind of attitude about the fire service that Randeniya wants to change. *"I'm in charge of a £120m budget and 2,600 staff. I have to convince family groups that, if your son or daughter wants to join us, they can aspire to be, effectively, a chief executive of a large organisation, as well as making a real difference and serving in a physically demanding environment."*

For his achievements Chief Randeniya was presented in 2009 at the Leadership and Diversity Awards, the prestigious Hammer award, which recognises the contribution of someone who has smashed through the proverbial glass ceiling.

Randeniya was not a boy who dreamed of being a firefighter. He *"fell into it"* after leaving university and doing a few other jobs. It's typical, however, that once he had joined, and discovered the job fulfilled all aspects of work he was looking for — *"teamwork, a job that did good, where it was quite active, where you made a contribution to society"* — he went back to his careers service at university and demanded to know why they hadn't suggested the fire service as an option.

Randeniya started as a firefighter on one of the toughest watches in the UK. He describes the Brixton fire station where he began his career with the London Fire Brigade in 1983 – two years after the first Brixton riots – as *"under siege"*, the busiest fire station in Western Europe at the time. *"As a young firefighter, you always wanted to go to where it was happening, so I wanted to be at Brixton. It was a really good training ground for one part of the trade."*

Randeniya, who was one of the very few Asian firefighters in the service then, says: *"It was a rarity, and it's still a rarity."* Has he experienced racism in the service? *"Of course, in 26 years I have naturally experienced racism in some form. But I would say that the service has gone a long way to changing that in the time I've been in. We don't accept it, we don't stand for it, and anyone with a view like that is not welcome."*

His unique position in the fire service means he is a role model, and that brings both pleasure and responsibility. *"Part of me does enjoy it in a way. I enjoy the fact that my parents like it. And I have been surprised how many Asian people have come up to me, tugged me on the shoulder. There was a guy the other day. He said he'd never thought he'd see anyone from the Asian community get this far. But I also don't want to be seen as being wheeled out because I'm the first of this or that. I want to be wheeled out because I was part of enabling an organisation such as this to become the best in the world. That would be the thing that gave me the greatest satisfaction."*

As a young firefighter going round putting out lots of fires, he realised most of them were due to accidents and carelessness. As he moved up the ranks, he was firmly behind the prevention agenda.

"The fire service has gone through quite a change. That represents a lot of challenges for people who are still firefighters. They sometimes say to me: 'This isn't the job I joined.' Obviously, we still need someone who can go into a building on fire. That hasn't changed. But we want to say: 'That's a hugely important part of your job, but it's just a part.' Firefighters are expected to work with heavy equipment, but then go and visit a school in the afternoon and in the evening knock on someone's door and do a home fire safety check. The ask is much bigger than ever before."

<http://www.guardian.co.uk/society/2009/sep/16/vijith-randeniya-fire-service-role-model> (16/9/2009)



12.2 STAFFORDSHIRE POLICE (SP)

Staffordshire Police provides policing services for more than a million people in an area of around 1,000 square miles. Staffordshire Police employs around 4,500 employees, more than half of those being police officers.

"We aim to be a diverse workforce that represents the communities we serve. We are committed to equality of opportunity and a respect for diversity. Our success in this has been acknowledged nationally through the Stonewall awards as being one of the most gay-friendly employers in the country."

www.staffordshire.police.uk

The person interviewed at Staffordshire Police was Inspector Darren Oakey. The interview focussed on the Stonewall Diversity Champions program.

Stonewall was founded in 1989. The aim was to create a professional lobbying group that would prevent discrimination and attacks on lesbians, gay men and bisexuals. Stonewall has subsequently put the case for equality on the mainstream political agenda by winning support within all the main political parties and now has offices in England, Scotland and Wales.

Stonewall is renowned for its campaigning and lobbying. Some major successes include helping achieve the equalisation of the age of consent, lifting the ban on lesbians and gay men serving in the military, securing legislation allowing same-sex couples to adopt. More recently Stonewall has helped secure civil partnerships and ensured the recent Equality Act protected lesbians and gay men in terms of goods and services.



Stonewall also works with a whole range of agencies to address the needs of lesbians, gay men and bisexuals in the wider community. It has a Diversity Champions program which offers advice and support to over 400 organisations.

Staffordshire Police won first place on the Stonewall Workplace Equality Index for the top 100 companies assessed in 2006. The Stonewall Workplace Equality Index uses 10 measures of success to rate the various organisations that apply. These measures look at:

- 1 Organisation's policies
- 2 Working group or diversity team that includes LGB issues
- 3 Diversity lead person for LGB issues at Board/Chief executive level
- 4 Audited policies and procedures for employees and service users to ensure compliance with the Civil Partnership Act
- 5 Whether the organisation has had any successful complaints related to sexual orientation in the last 12 months
- 6 Automatic survivor pension entitlement to same-sex partners of employees in the UK
- 7 Equality of benefits offered to married straight couples and same-sex partners
- 8 Officially recognised LGB employees network group
- 9 Officially recognised LGB employee network group routinely involved in discussions on employment rights, benefits and development
- 10 Engaging with LGB staff on sexual orientation issues in various ways



Six to Seven per cent of the Staffordshire Police employees are LGB. The Staffordshire Police has been working with Stonewall to address homophobic bullying at schools.

Stonewall motto is:

"People perform better when they can be themselves"

13

SECTION C

UNIONS' PERSPECTIVE

13.1 POLICE FEDERATION

The Police Federation is the closest that police officers in the UK have to a trade union. It represents all police officers below the rank of Superintendent. The federation was established to give police officers the chance to express their views on welfare and efficiency matters to the government and the Police Authority. Under the Police Act 1919, police officers are not allowed to take strike action and are not allowed to be members of trade unions.

13.2 FIRE BRIGADES UNION BACKGROUND

The UK Labor government's reforms of the public sector were being carried as part of a modernisation agenda. Modernisation attempts were considered by some stakeholders as a double edge sword because they considered them as a potential threat to working conditions secured by the unions over years of industrial struggles.

Bitter industrial disputes erupted during those reform years. A major one was the 2002 - 2003 UK firefighters' dispute which began when the UK firefighters union, the Fire Brigades Union (FBU), voted to take strike action in November 2002 in an attempt to secure better wages. The FBU demanded a 39 % increase in pay. It was the first nationwide firefighters' strike in the UK since the 1970s.

The armed forces provided emergency cover during the strike, using vintage Green Goddess engines, and modern red fire appliances as part of Operation Fresco. The armed forces also fielded small breathing apparatus rescue teams (BART) and rescue equipment support teams (REST) headed by professional firefighters of the RAF and staffed by specially trained members of all three services.

This cover was barely sufficient, and the strike put lives at risk. Each side placed the responsibility entirely with the other; the FBU said that their employers' failure to meet their demands was the cause of the strike.

On June 12, 2003, the dispute ended with the firefighters accepting a pay deal worth 16% over three years linked to changes to working conditions.

Tensions were raised again in 2004, when the FBU and local authority employers clashed over whether the deal brokered in 2003 was being honoured. However, this round of negotiations was settled without recourse to industrial action in August of that year.

http://www.worldlingo.com/ma/enwiki/en/UK_firefighter_dispute_2002%E2%80%932003



13.3 FBU AND DIVERSITY

According to Carl St Paul, former national secretary of the Black and Ethnic Minorities Members (BAEMM) of the FBU, the FBU's record on diversity prior to the establishment of the three Equality Committees (Women, BAEMM, LGBT) was non-existent.

The first equality support group to be formed was the FBU National Women's Committee (NWC). The FBU also realised that a number of BME firefighters needed to have their concerns addressed and were on the verge of establishing their own group outside of the FBU's structure. The FBU moved quickly by stepping in, giving consideration to concerns raised and establishing a mechanism for advocacy by BME members within the union's framework.

"If you're going to be cynical about it, you could say part of that is because of the control. As long as they [FBU] have their memberships with them they still had control over what was going on. Me personally I didn't want the union to have control. I felt there needed to be some autonomy with the groups. So we have control and influence to a great degree over the group but then once we were installed within the rules of the union you are very much restricted then."



Carl St Paul and Dalal Smiley

However, on the positive side there were advantages associated with BAEMM being attached to the FBU structure as it enabled it to draw on the FBU's position of power and influence to effect change. This meant that the three Equality Committees took on many of their members' issues and disputes with fire services management and supported them adequately:

"Having elected, accountable, equality representatives within the FBU is very progressive for a Trade Union in the UK and we are very proud of this achievement. It must be recognized that this happened following rule changes led by the Executive Council following lobbying by committed men and women from minority groups. These were particularly challenging times as many members were pretty resistant to these changes. Nevertheless, the leadership pressed ahead with support from the majority of local officials and these rules remain today"

~ FBU

In the early days of reforms, the FBU may have been somewhat sceptical of diversity initiatives but due to the internal lobbying and advocacy from within its own diversity groups it became supportive and did not oppose diversity-related initiatives introduced by the various fire services. In fact, nowadays, the FBU does not get involved much at all in diversity programs and leaves the fire services to get on with the agenda. The FBU has supported positive action programs that targeted the recruitment of women and BME communities:

"Resolutions have been passed by our Annual Conference to support positive action. The BAEMM committee and the National Women's Committee have written guidance on positive action and how it should be carried out. The FBU get involved locally with positive action initiatives and members of the equality committees assist on positive action days where they have been engaged from the beginning of the process. The FBU pushed

through CLG for funding to provide positive action outreach workers to assist in supporting smaller FRA's throughout the UK. We did this as small brigades do not have the resources to carry out this kind of work. Neither the previous government nor the current one are willing to provide such funding."

The FBU National Women's Committee (NWC) magazine Siren, Winter 06/07 issue, page 4, features an article on recruitment targets for women firefighters, it argues that the NWC supports the UK Government Select Committee's findings regarding equality and diversity targets. The targets sought by Government regarding recruitment of uniform females should remain distinct from non-uniform female recruitment as the need to increase diversity amongst non-uniformed staff is less pressing. The FBU NWC supports the committees' findings in this regard and have been concerned at the growing discussion amongst various stakeholders, especially at chief fire officer level to alter the targets in terms of the constituent group that is targeted. Targets are produced for areas where recruitment and retention is a problem and as such targets should remain for women firefighters to ensure that every effort is applied by FRS to retain and recruit women.

"Whilst we do acknowledge that some progress has been made in the UK FRS, we are nowhere near where we need to be. The latest statistics show that 3.7 % of operational women (Not including firefighters control) make up the English Fire Service, a statistic that we should hardly be shouting from the rooftops about given that Jack Straws set a target in 2000 for that figure to be 15% in 2009. Our fear is that without Government intervention and with the serious budget cuts that are being imposed on the FRS, that the foot will be taken firmly off the gas in regards to equality. The progress that has been made, has been through a lot of hard work of the FBU, committed civil servants, some committed equality practitioners and a few CFOs who do actually care about what happens to their staff.."

~ FBU



The FBU was subjected to significant criticism and accused of discriminating against women and BME workers due to its defence of shift patterns and single entry promotional arrangements. The FBU however argues that it has been at the forefront of campaigning to modernise the fire service's approach to equal opportunities, recruitment policies and family friendly working practices. The FBU accuses fire services management of having done too little to improve conditions for female firefighters by providing appropriate facilities in fire stations. (Seifert, R. & Sibley, T. 2005).

"The FBU was significantly concerned that Bain talked about altering a shift system that 97% of current women employees supported and said was conducive to family life (NWC report 2003 and Baigent 2006). In fact many women said that if the shift pattern changed they would have to consider whether they would be able to remain in the FRS. What was frustrating was that women were used as a reason for altering the shift system and yet it wasn't something that the women wanted. There was nothing in the Bain report about addressing the many issues that were really going on for women in the FRS".

~ FBU

Carl was asked whether the progress on diversity in the LFB where he works was ever caught up in industrial disputes:

"No we don't really have that. The only time I can remember that happening was in 2003 when we had the pay dispute and it was felt that we should withdraw from all consultations, like everything, diversity included but at the time I remember saying to my committee I don't think you should do that, if there is a diversity seminar, conference or meeting being held in your individual brigade, my recommendation to you is that you go. The reason being when this dispute is over we still have to sit around the table, so why block those views now? So that was my recommendation at the time. So a lot of my members did actually attend meetings and they weren't given disciplinary action for it either."

This view was supported by Les Skarrats, Local Branch Secretary of the FBU, Merseyside:

"This work (on equality and diversity) has been enhanced in most brigades by a philosophy of non-partisan joint working between the union and management which has enabled progress to be made irrespective of other industrial relations business. We are proud to continue to reflect that commitment whatever the thoughts of some principal managers and despite the industrial relations tensions of the day."

Carl commented further on the importance of union and management working together on advancing the diversity agenda:

"The way they want to do it [work together on diversity] might be debatable but the principle I think everybody signs up to the principle of it. Because that same diversity exists within the union itself. The union didn't have black members who had a position; the union didn't have black members who were aspiring to

move up through the union structure. So the union couldn't necessarily look at the brigade and say 'oh you're doing this wrong' because they had to look at themselves first and now that the unions have looked at themselves and are now doing something, I wouldn't say they are doing their best but they are trying to make amends for not having that representation within their own ranks and structure. They have got to look in the mirror before they can start pointing the finger elsewhere."

13.4 TRADES UNION COUNCIL (TUC)

Wilf Sullivan is the Race Equality Officer employed by the UK Trades Union Council. It is a role that has been in place for the last twenty years. It came about as a result of BME workers who were organising within unions and demanding unions introduce reserved seats, so that they were more representative of their members and started tackling problems of racism within the Trades Union movement.

"The TUC have done a number of different campaigns both in terms of the workplace and in terms of unions to try and highlight and improve the situation with race equality. They certainly have lobbied for legislative change both in the UK and in Europe. In Europe they have got race directive. Also I think they are very actively involved in campaigns against far right racist parties."

I think over the last 10 years one of the key achievements has been about changing the attitude within affiliates that they really do need to be doing something about the institutional barriers that face BME members. It has been taking a lot more action on increasing participation and making unions far more reflective of their membership really."

Wilf went on to defend the Union's track record on diversity leadership:

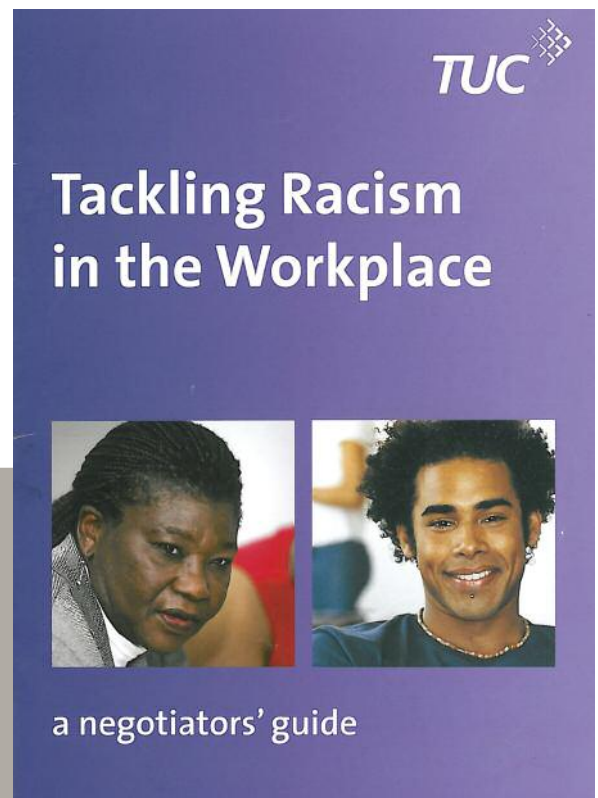
"I think undoubtedly in terms of race equality, especially back in the 70s and 80s a lot of progress was made only because unions were forcing the issue with employers. That was very much because it was taken up as a bargaining issue. So unions, especially in the public sector were insisting that employers have equal opportunity policies, that they did workforce monitoring, that they reviewed their recruitment procedures, that they did something around training. That didn't come from employers or as a result of legislation or government action at all."

Wilf asserted that the TUC is fully supportive of Positive Action Programs:

"Yes, we are much in favour of positive action. I think that is the only way that you're going to make any progress really. We don't believe that equality is neutral – in fact discrimination is almost like a default state. Some of the argument against positive action is that it favours minorities. We take the view that default state is discrimination against minorities so therefore what you have to do is correct it. And the only way you can correct it is by taking positive measures to correct it."

Wilf was asked what advice would he provide to unions in Australia:

"I would say to them, if you are going to be a successful union that's got to be based on solidarity. You need to be inclusive. And secondly the workforce in any country is changing. It doesn't look like it used to. If you want a growing trade union movement you can't just think in terms of white blokes because otherwise your trade union movement won't be growing at all. So you can either defend what you've got and decline or embrace the fact that there is a lot of other people out there that look different and are part of the future workforce and if you want to be a growing trade union then you need to make sure that you take notice of their interests."



“Yes, we are much in favour of positive action. I think that is the only way that you're going to make any progress really...”

14 CONCLUSION

This research clearly illustrates that the advances made in the UK fire, ambulance and police services were a result of a number of factors:

- The diversity in the demographics of the UK population
- Recognition by the UK Government that such diversity should be reflected in the public sector workforce
- The establishment of a set of legislation that holds the public sector accountable in meeting diversity targets
- A set of policy frameworks to guide monitoring and reporting
- A government department resourced and tasked to support fire services with implementation of diversity policies
- A committed leadership that recognised and communicated the link between diversity and service outcomes
- Organisational processes and procedures which set out to embed diversity considerations across all organisational business plans
- Well resourced diversity departments that focus on policy, training, and act as internal consultants and auditors (in some cases) of diversity outcomes
- Dedicated Positive Action teams tasked with recruitment of under-represented groups
- Consistent, ongoing and systemic recruitment efforts with measures for outputs and outcomes
- Incentives for achievements such as the Diversity Awards
- A supportive union movement that does not oppose diversity initiatives but has advocated for Equality and Diversity policies and programs
- Investment by organisations to communicate the diversity goals of the organisation to all staff
- Willingness by organisations' leadership to weather the storms, deal with backlash and remain committed to implement positive action programs despite their lack of acceptance amongst some employees
- Well supported, valued and respected diversity and positive action teams within their respective organisations
- Targeted marketing and promotion recruitment programs aimed at specific under-represented groups
- Diversity activism by minority groups within police, fire and ambulance services whereby they set up their own support groups to lobby on their behalf on their issues of concern. Some of the groups are set up within union structures
- Multi-pronged approaches to attract, retain and promote minority groups



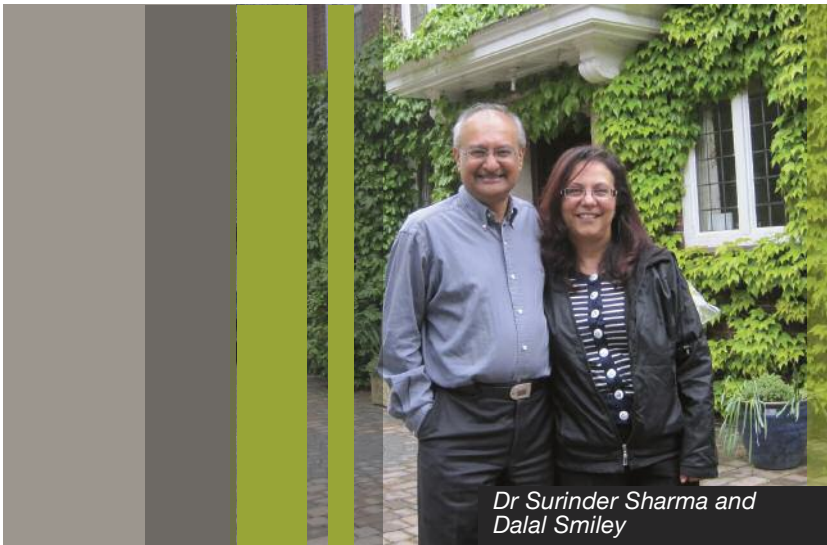
It all begins with the right leadership. In the words of Dr Surinder Sharma:

“There are core issues obviously around equality, if leadership isn’t there it doesn’t happen. Leadership commitment is paramount. And not just commitment on paper, it needs to be translated into action. That’s a core issue. Secondly it has to be part of the organisation’s vision and values. It really needs to be part of the core reason for the organisation being there. It needs to be linked as part of that. As you’re taking the organisation on a journey because your role is the agent of change role, you’re the catalyst for change; you’re enabling change to happen. You have to take the leaders on that journey as well. So you’re actually taking everybody on this journey. And it isn’t an initiative, it’s a change management, it’s an organisational change model.

The leader has got to walk and talk this. It’s no good just saying that they believe in it, they’ve got to demonstrate it because you know when leaders say something and demonstrate that behaviour, then people take it seriously.”

And in the words of Laura Liswood in The Loudest Duck, change begins with:

“A small group who dares it, before more join in and ultimately it is accepted by everyone”



Dr Surinder Sharma and Dalal Smiley

“
Leadership commitment is paramount. And not just commitment on paper, it needs to be translated into action...
”



15 RECOMMENDATIONS

15.1 RECRUITMENT

- 1 Establish an Outreach Recruitment Team involving uniformed personnel (ensuring to include women, CALD and ATSI* employees) to focus on promoting careers to targeted communities such as Aboriginal, multicultural and women and in various settings including, schools, TAFEs, sporting clubs, fetes, employment expos and festivals
- 2 Develop a set of promotional resources (posters, flyers, postcards, videos) that focus on recruitment and which are customised to attract the target groups the organisation is trying to influence
- 3 Establish a data base to store the information of interested individuals from the target groups that the recruitment team engaged with, to follow up with and invite to open days and other pre-entry assistance programs
- 4 Organise regular recruitment open days to be held in highly diverse areas of Victoria and targeting under-represented groups to showcase careers in fire, police and ambulance services
- 5 Establish a Pre-entry Training Programs (PETP) that target under-represented groups and locating the program in areas of highly diverse population
- 6 Recruit uniformed diversity champions willing to promote their roles to external communities
- 7 Establish traineeships and mentoring programs and market them to under-represented groups
- 8 Introduce a variety of roles to involve under-represented groups in police and fire services; such as uniformed full time community safety advocates as per Merseyside Fire Service and volunteer community police officers (aka special constables) as per Bedfordshire Police

15.2 MONITORING AND EVALUATION

- 9 Evaluate and monitor the effectiveness of the marketing, traineeships, mentoring and pre-entry training programs in meeting the diversity goals of the organisation
- 10 Include in relevant departments a KPI** on recruitment and engagement of under-represented groups

15.3 GOVERNANCE

- 11 Establish a dedicated Diversity Department strategically positioned within the organisation, well resourced and tasked with policy development, research, monitoring and evaluation
- 12 Be loud and clear about the organisation's commitment to Diversity and the business case that supports it
- 13 Emphasise, develop and strengthen the community safety roles and responsibilities of the operational staff through their recruitment, training, daily activities and future promotions
- 14 Incorporate diversity goals in the organisation's plans to achieve leadership status in the emergency management sector
- 15 Establish diversity community advisory groups (Aboriginal, Disability, Women and Multicultural) as formal avenues for community input into the organisation's work on diversity and cultural change



15.4 CULTURAL CHANGE

- 16 Develop and roll out a cultural change program to assist the implementation of the Diversity plans
- 17 Consider a similar model as per Merseyside “Training Stations” as a way of fostering cultural change through a focused and staged approach rather than organisation-wide
- 18 Develop and roll out internal and external communication programs to inform employees and the community of the organisation’s diversity initiatives and goals
- 19 Institute a rewards system to celebrate and acknowledge achievements of positive action programs and diversity champions

15.5 TRAINING

- 20 Develop an in-house Diversity train-the-trainer program for operational personnel to equip them in incorporating diversity consideration into in-house courses at all levels
- 21 Establish, train and resource a core group of operational diversity trainers (as per the LFB model) to roll out customised diversity training on on-going basis. It is important at the establishment stage to provide one-to-one coaching from professional diversity trainers

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- Head of Equality Services, **Pat Oakley**, and Positive Action Manager, **Dawne Stephenson**, London Fire Brigade
- National Lead, Breaking Through Program, **Yvonne Coghill**, National Health Service
- Head of the Equality and Diversity Team, **Gill McManus** and Equality and Diversity Policy Adviser, **Erin Richardson**, Fire Safety Policy Adviser, **James Webb**, Communities and Local Government
- **Dr Surinder Sharma**, Department of Health
- Chief Fire Officer, **Vijith Randeniya**, West Midlands Fire Service
- Diversity Manager, **Fiona Washington**, Diversity Officer, **Naila Suleman** and Positive Action Officer, **Andy Towe**, West Midlands Police
- **Sir Graham Meldrum** and **Mohamed Jogi**, Ambulance Trust
- Chief Fire Officer, **Simon Pilling** and Deputy Chief Fire Officer, **Steve Beckley** and Diversity Manager, **Maria Tonks**, West Yorkshire Fire Service
- Chief Fire Officer, **Tony McGuirk** and Deputy Chief Fire Officer, **Michael Hagen** and Diversity Adviser, **Jayne Monkhouse**, Merseyside Fire Service
- Inspector **Darren Oakey**, Staffordshire Police
- Chief Constable **Gillian Parker**, Diversity Officer, **Theresa Peltier**, Bedfordshire Police Authority
- National Officer, Equalities, **Colette Corkhurst** and Equalities Researcher, **Anooshah Farakish**, UNITE the Union
- Former National Secretary of the Black and Ethnic Minority Members of the FBU, and the Founding Member, **Carl St Paul**, Fire Brigade Union, Black and Ethnic Minorities Committee
- Race Equality Officer, **Wilf Sullivan**, Trades Union Council
- Professor **Uduak Archibong**, University of Bradford
- Fire Brigade Union, **John McGee**, **Kerry Baigent**, **Mick Nicholson** and **Les Skarratts**

THE CARL FACTOR

The work in the diversity space requires

Courage and commitment

Accountability

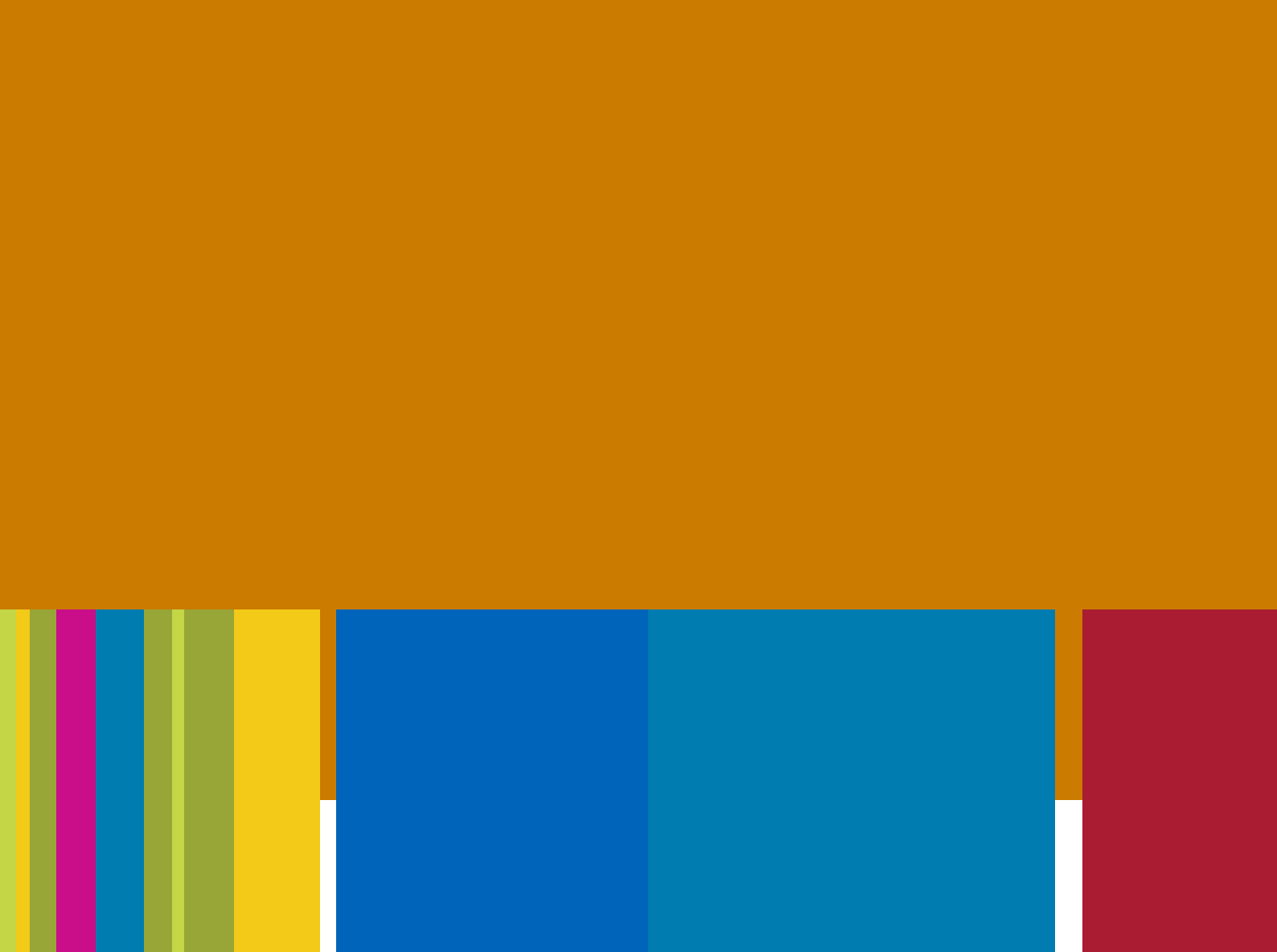
Resources, and

Leadership



*Change starts with the unthinkable, moves
to the impossible and ends with the inevitable*

The Loudest Duck, Laura Liswood



Research Report by Dalal Smiley, Manager, Diversity Development,
Metropolitan Fire and Emergency Services Board
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