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MAKING A DIFFERENCE

A Study of Under-Representation in UK and USA Fire Services

**Submitted in Support of:
Brigade Command Course 2002**

**Fire Service College and
MSc University of Central Lancashire**

by

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Glossary of Terms Used

B&EMM	Black and Ethnic Minority Members
BCC	Brigade Command Course
BLFRS	Bedfordshire and Luton Fire and Rescue Service
CACFOA	Chief and Assistant Chief Fire Officers' Association
CFO	Chief Fire Officer
CRE	The Commission for Racial Equality
EOC	Equal Opportunities Commission
EOTG	Equal Opportunities Task Group
FACE	Facing A Cultural Equality
FBU	Fire Brigades' Union
FSC	Fire Service College
HMFSI	Her Majesty's Fire Service Inspectorate
HMI	Her Majesty's Inspectorate
HRA	Human Rights Act
IABPFF	International Association of Black Professional Firefighters
IAPFF	International Association of Firefighters
LFCDA	London Fire and Civil Defence Authority
LGA	Local Government Association
NCFSC	National Community Fire Safety Centre
NFA	National Fire Academy
NJC	National Joint Council
NZFS	New Zealand Fire Service
ODPM	Office of the Deputy Prime Minister
UK	United Kingdom
USA	United States of America
WMFS	West Midlands Fire Service

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Ethnic minorities and women continue to be under-represented as firefighters in all fire brigades in the United Kingdom (UK) and in many fire departments in the United States of America (USA). Ethnic minorities are also under-represented in control rooms of most fire brigades, with many having no ethnic minorities at all. In spite of Government directives and positive action campaigns by fire brigades in the UK, and affirmative action in the USA, women and ethnic minorities continue to be under-represented in the uniformed sections of the fire service.

This study involved a comparative analysis of firefighters in the USA and UK fire brigades. The research focused on answering the following five questions:

What connection with the fire service did firefighters have prior to joining?

What motivated firefighters to join the fire service?

How were they influenced into joining the fire service?

How did they find out the service was recruiting at the time of application?

What the service can do to recruit more ethnic minorities and women?

The report also undertook research into the factors that effect and support management in addressing the issue of under-representation. By setting a hypothesis for this thesis with clear objectives, the author was able to address the issues highlighted above. A multi-faceted methodology was used for the research which produced both quantitative and qualitative data enabling different sources of information to be tested against each other. Triangulation was an important part of the methodology. This approach had the advantage of employing a number of different methods for the collection of data. This enabled

the author to deal with any bias and conflicts that may have occurred had only one method been used.

The study revealed that fire services can make an impact on the make up of its workforce, if the policy makers of the service adopt clear change management processes, making it clear that they are committed to change and provide the leadership and resources to meet the demands of a policy to change the representation of women and black firefighters. The research found a number of factors that impact on the employment of ethnic minorities and women firefighters. These are discussed in Sections 3 and 5. The research found that success in the recruitment of under-represented groups leadership should be more than that just provided by the CFOs, it should also include local and national government officers, the Fire Service Inspectorate, representative bodies and senior managers of fire brigades, who all have a critical leadership role. Another factor that is not fully utilised by UK fire brigades is that of the use of serving firefighters as role models from the under-representative groups. These groups could be better used to support the recruitment of black and women firefighter applicants and prepare them for selection tests through mentoring, outreach work activities, open days, and the use of access courses or programmes such as Connecting Communities programmes. The role played by contacts in the service for all sections of the service is illustrated in the results Section 4 of this report. Over 60% of all new entrants into the service have a contact in the fire service. The role that friends have in particular in influencing applicants needs to be acknowledged and the service needs to take account of how this impacts on its diversity and culture.

The author found during the interviews of members of the fire service that a number of key concepts and terms were poorly understood. An understanding of some of the terms is developed in Section 3. Section three also develops the business case for diversity, the role of the leadership in implementing the change and provides some guidance for the policy makers of the fire service about what they can do to support and implement objectives to change the make-up of the uniformed section of the fire service.

SECTION 1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background of Problem to be Investigated

Ethnic minorities and women continue to be under-represented as firefighters in the fire service in the United Kingdom (UK). This is replicated in many fire departments in the United States of America (USA). Ethnic minorities are also under-represented in control rooms of most fire brigades, many of which have no ethnic minorities at all. In spite of Government directives and positive action campaigns by fire brigades in the UK and affirmative action in the USA, women and ethnic minorities continue to be under-represented in the uniformed sections of fire services. The aim of this research project was to carry out a comparative analysis of firefighters in the USA and UK fire brigades. The research focused on the hypothesis that:

The majority of people who join the service have a connection with a serving firefighter.

The following five questions were developed to test the above hypothesis; What motivated firefighters to join the service? How were they influenced into joining the service? What connection with the fire service did they have prior to joining? How did they find out the service was recruiting at the time of application? What can the service do to recruit more ethnic minorities and women?

The report also researched the factors that affect and support management in addressing the issue of under-representation. Existing data, where possible, was used to identify how brigades have progressed towards reaching targets that were set for recruitment, promotion and retention by the then Home Secretary, Jack Straw, in March 1999.

The Bucke Report was published in June 1994 and was a study into the state of equal opportunities in United Kingdom fire services. The Report was commissioned by the Equal Opportunities Joint Committee of the Central Fire Brigades Advisory Council (CFBAC), and revealed some 'interesting and disturbing findings', Bucke (1994, p.2). The findings centred on the revelations that, despite over eighteen years of equal opportunities legislation, the fire service had been preserved as an almost exclusively white male occupation. Bucke (1994, p.iv) stated:

Social networks surrounding firefighting were found to have a degree of influence in attracting certain groups to this occupation. Such networks were found to create an informal recruitment process which preceded the formal one. White men were most likely to be initially drawn to firefighting through knowing a serving firefighter whilst women and ethnic minorities were more likely drawn by advertising or seeing firefighters at work.

This research report will be paying particular attention to the social networks affecting the recruitment of firefighters, and with the use of a questionnaire, quantify how effective the networks are in providing firefighters to the service. It will also measure if a difference exists between the recruitment of black men, women and white male firefighters. Bucke (1994) suggested that the fire service is predominately white male in make-up, therefore role models for the white male community exist, acting as ambassadors for the service both when on and off duty. These employees then naturally form social networks to inform and advise the future employees of the service thus supporting the comments made by Bucke (1994). Recruitment officers have shown that they recognise the value of role modelling in the marketing of the service because they regular employ serving firefighters from the under-represented groups to support recruitment campaigns. It may be possible to develop this approach to establish wider networks through an outreach programme for groups that are currently under-represented.

To date no quantitative study has been carried out in the fire service to assess the impact of networks in the fire service on recruitment of firefighters. This report will provide hard data for the first time as to what extent firefighters influence recruitment. This report will also evaluate the need for the service to change and reflect the community. The fire service has had a strong signal from Government to change, in the form of the Home Secretary's speech to LGA Conference (March 1999):

The Fire Services record to date in the field of equality is – let us not mince words totally unacceptable. There are less than one percent of women and just over one and a half percent of members of ethnic minorities in the operational service. I simply cannot accept that there are any justifiable reasons for these figures. It is time for the service to stop making excuses and to set its house in order. I am encouraged that many of you are reaching the very same conclusions. (Jack Straw 1999)

The importance of diversity in the fire service is supported by McGuirk (2002, p.13):

The Fire Service faces a significant risk if it does not acknowledge and address the imperatives for equality and diversity. This risk is compounded by the societal changes taking place, and the increasingly turbulent environment both within, and outside the Fire Service. The risk is also immediate and demands action, action that tackles both the structure and the culture of the Service.

The need for the public services to provide a better reflection of the community has been clearly stated by Government officials and the McPherson report (1999), as well as the Fire Service Inspectorate's reports such as the Fire Service Inspectorate Thematic Report on Equality (FACE, 1999). The Race Relations Amendment Act 2002 further underpins the need to reflect the community.

The completion of this report will form a discussion document for the key equality committees of the Chief and Assistant Chief Fire Officers Association (CACFOA), and for the Black and Ethnic Minority Members (B&EMM) Group of the Fire Brigades' Union. During the research in the USA, the fire departments and chiefs

visited, the International Firefighters Association and The International Association of Black Professional Firefighters all expressed great interest in the subject area of this report. It is therefore intended to provide all the participants from the USA with copies of this report which will enable them to use relevant elements of the report to support them in addressing the issue of under-representation in USA fire departments.

1.2 Research Objectives and Hypothesis to be Tested

The research project will test the hypothesis that:

The majority of people who join the service have a connection with a serving firefighter.

The following research objectives will contribute to the testing of this hypothesis:

- To investigate the reasons that motivate people to join the service and what influenced them to join.
- To seek to determine if there is a difference between ethnic and gender groups in connections that they have prior to joining the service.
- To seek to determine if there is a difference between the USA and the UK when comparing connections that firefighters have prior to joining the service.
- To identify best practice from an analysis of the information received during the research.
- To identify a business case for addressing diversity in fire service.
- To draw conclusions from the research findings and make recommendations for a possible way forward.

By proving the hypothesis and answering the questions raised in this report, the service and its officers will be better able to understand the problems and be able to develop strategies and procedures that will support increasing the representation of women and black firefighters.

1.3 Report Limitations

When comparing data between USA and UK fire brigades/departments it must be noted that care must be taken, in that the fire service is organised and staffed differently in each country, with different legislation and financial models. In relation to this report, care was taken to only include data from full-time fire service employees in the UK and USA. However, it is possible that some USA figures will include firefighters whose sole role is paramedics and not firefighting.

Carrying out research within the parameters of the hypothesis and objectives, revealed a number of areas that need further study. Time constraints and the limitations of the project word count did not allow the author to fully cover many areas such as:

- The culture of the fire service to take on diversity issues highlighted in this report.
- Other sectors of the fire service where under-representation also exists, such as the retained and control sections of the uniformed service.
- Retention and promotion of under-represented groups has the potential for major impact on the success of recruitment from under-represented groups, but could not be covered for the reasons highlighted above.

All the above areas are suggested as a further area of study for future students on the BCC and by the fire service in general.

1.4 Report Structure

This report has been structured and laid out in accordance with advice from course tutors, the BCC manual and the research carried out during the literature review phase of the report. The contents page will give the reader an easy guide to the structure. The report is set out in five sections. Section 1 introduces the subject area and gives a background to the issues and sets out the limitations of the project. Section 2 provides a detailed presentation of what methodology was chosen for this project and why particular methods were selected. Section 3 gives a brief history and background to the key issues and explores in depth the factors that affect the recruitment of under-represented groups. Section 4 sets out the results of the questionnaires, semi-structured interviews and focus groups. In Section 5, the author offers an interpretation of the results and then brings together the key findings of the report and makes before drawing the final conclusions and recommendations.

SECTION 2 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

2.1 Introduction

Following the literature search the author adopted a methodology that closely fitted the following definition of research:

Seeking through methodical processes to add to one's body of knowledge and hopefully to that of others by the discovery of non-trivial facts and insights. (Howard and Sharp 1983, p.6)

This project uses quantitative and qualitative methods in a hybrid methodology. The literature survey is used to identify gaps in the existing knowledge of all levels of the fire service. These gaps are filled by using a multi-faceted approach called triangulation.

The quantitative aspects of the research focused on collecting facts, figures and existing statistics. The relationships between variables were studied in order to understand individual perceptions. Qualitative methods such as interviews were also used during the preliminary review of the current literature. It was clear during the early stages of the report that action research was needed. Action research as described by Cohen and Manion (1994, p.192) was the method used:

Essentially an on the spot procedure designed to deal with a concrete problem located in an immediate situation. This means that ideally the step-by-step process is consistently monitored over varying periods of time and by a variety of mechanisms, eg questionnaires, diaries, interviews and case studies. For example, so that ensuring feedback may be translated into modification, adjustment, directional changes, redefinition as necessary so as to bring about lasting benefit to the on-going process rather than to some future occasion.

2.2 Purpose of Research Methodology

In researching the methodology to be adopted for this report, guidance was found in Sweetham (2000) and in Hart (1988). They give guidance on how to carry out different types of research and how to set out formal reports together with advice on time management and project planning. Hart (1988, p.16) lists four things a research project should achieve:

- Focus on a specific problem, issue or debate.
- Relate to that problem, in terms that show a balance between the theoretical, methodological and the practical aspects of the topic.
- Include a clearly stated research methodology based on the existing literature.
- Provide an analytical and critical evaluation stance to the existing literature on the topic.

The list of eight items produced by Hart (1988, p.20) on the requirements for a doctorate theses was adapted and reduced to six for this research, these were:

- Making a new contribution to an area of knowledge.
- Demonstrate originality.
- The ability to write a coherent volume that is intellectually demanding and of a significant length.
- The ability to develop the capacity and personal character to intellectually manage research, including the writing of the thesis.

- Showing in depth understanding of the topic area and work related to the research.
- Defend orally what has been produced in terms of the research for doing the research and choices over the way it was done.

2.3 Triangulation

The method adopted in this research project is sometimes called triangulation, this is a multi-method approach defined as:

The use of evidence from different sources, of different methods of collecting data and of different investigators, where feasible, are all triangulation techniques, which enhance capability. Robson (1993, p.404)

Employing triangulation as a method for the collection of data enabled the author to deal with any bias and conflicts that may have occurred had only one method been used. This methodology proved to be very useful in providing the required data and support for analysing and confirming findings throughout the research process.

2.4 Methodology for the Literature Review

For the purpose of carrying out the literature review, a number of general texts were read. Two key references Sweetham (2000) and Hart (1998) were used for the process of carrying out the research. Hart's definition of literature review was used:

The selection of available documents (both published and unpublished) on the topic, which contain information, ideas, data and evidence written from a particular standpoint to fulfil certain aims, or express certain views on the nature of the topic and how it is to be investigated, and the effective evaluation of these documents in relation to the research being proposed. (Hart 2000, p.13)

The guiding principle for the literature research provided additional support in adopting a clear methodology for this report, this was adapted from Verma and Beard (1981, p.10):

The importance of theory is to help the investigator summarise previous information and guide his future course of action. Sometimes the formation of a theory may indicate missing ideas or links and the kinds of additional data required. Thus, a theory is an essential tool of research in stimulating the advancement of knowledge still further.

A broad range of literature was studied in order to gain an understanding of not only the problem identified in the hypothesis, but also of some of the peripheral areas and related concepts. The documents that were identified used the guidance given by Hart (2000). Hart lists a numbers of groups that are likely to contribute to research, these being; associations, commerce, institutions, pressure groups, charities, individuals, government and unions. Hart also goes on to recommend the following as appropriate and relevant sources of information; conference papers, journals, lectures, letters, meetings, newsletters, newspapers, reports, seminars, textbooks and thesis.

The principal documents for this research that were identified using Hart's recommendations were, The Bucke Report (1994), Home Office publications, reports of USA Executive Program students at Emmetsburg, Audit Commission and Fire Service Inspectorate data and recruitment legislation. The recent Brigade Command Course reports of McGill (2002), Shuttleworth (2000) and McGuirk (1995) and the CACFOA report 'Are We serious' McGuirk (2002) were also cornerstones to the literature review.

The principles of academic research further ensured that the research project had the academic rigor required for a Master's degree. A list of the references used is

indicated in the reference section of this report. The Harvard referencing system recommended by BCC tutors is used to reference all material. A key word search was also carried out on the Internet. The literature review also included a review in the host country for the comparative studies in the USA at the National Fire Academy in Emmetsburg.

2.5 Use of Questionnaires

Questionnaires were used to obtain information which could be analysed, using statistical analysis tools, and used to make comparisons between the key variables that were identified such as race, gender, connections in the service and international differences between groups.

A pilot questionnaire was drafted and tested on senior officers of the fire service in May 2002 at the FSC. Further pilot questionnaires in the author's brigade and in America during the IABPFF conference August 2002 were used to finalise the questionnaire. This was found to be a very useful and informative part of the process, the findings of which are discussed later.

The purpose of the pilot was to test how long it took recipients to complete the questionnaire, to check that all questions and instructions were clear and to ensure the author was able to extract the relevant information. After completion of the pilot questionnaire, respondents were asked to complete a modified version of the seven questions set out by Bell (1999) to assess reliability and validation of the questionnaire.

The questionnaire was divided into six sections, with the order and flow of questions designed to be logical to the respondents. Section 1 was optional as this was

information about the individual which was not needed for the quantitative analysis. It, however, could be used for follow up research and for clarification of points made where respondents had used the opportunity to add further information in the sections allocated in the questionnaire.

Section 2 collected the independent variables for this research, country, brigade, rank, year of joining, gender and ethnic origin.

Sections 3 to 5 surveyed motivation to join the service, how applicants found out about vacancies in the service and what factors influenced applicants to join, with a Likert-style four point rating scale being used for some of the questions. The four-point scale was used following a pilot with BCC students and a discussion with Professor Youngman.

Section 3 surveyed the reasons motivating respondents to become firefighters. Fourteen factors were listed and the respondents were asked to rate the importance of each reason. The purpose of this section was to find what factors played the most important part in motivating respondents, in particular the role of family and friends was to be analysed. In order to understand this fully, differences between groups, ranks, brigades, year of joining and gender of respondents were analysed using a software programme called Statistica. Additionally, the opportunity to undertake a comparison on international difference was fully utilised.

Section 4 investigated how respondents had found out that the fire service was recruiting at the time of their application. Eleven methods were selected following a focus groups meeting with a small group of senior officers. A pilot questionnaire was used. This proved to very useful in identifying additional areas that the focus group had failed to identify. Of particular interest to the author in this section was the role

of friends, family, and firefighters known to the respondent and visits to the fire station.

Section 5 determined what had most influence on firefighters to join the fire service. There was a choice of twelve responses and an additional opportunity to add personal comments. Again, the analysis was carried out using the same methodology as Sections 2 and 3. The author was particularly keen to identify the direct factors that the service had influence on and the indirect factors which currently the service does little to influence, such as friends, family, and firefighters known to applicants.

Section 6 directly questioned respondents on connections with service members prior to joining the fire service. This sought to validate views expressed by Bucke (1994, p.3) 'that two thirds of firefighters who join the fire service have friends or family serving in the fire service'. Furthermore, this section was used to seek to assess the influence of family, friends and neighbours on the recruitment of firefighters from different groups.

At the end of Sections 3 to 6, a space was provided so respondents could make additional comments if they wished. This proved to be a useful way of collecting some good, qualitative data and certainly proved invaluable in the pilot questionnaire. Professor Youngman, in his advice to BCC students during the conference week advised against this practice in general questionnaire design, however he supported the author using this opportunity to gather additional information for the research project.

The questionnaire was designed using previous BCC reports of Shuttleworth (2000), McGill (2002), BCC students on the 2002/03 course, Professor Youngman, and

delegates at the IABPFF conference in Buffalo 2002. The use of a pilot questionnaire in the author's own brigade also supported the development of the final questionnaire. Suggestions that were made for improvement were incorporated into a new questionnaire. This was then circulated using the CACFOA equality network, two BCC students whose brigades were willing to take part, support from B&EMM members and the Women's Network in the UK.

Difficulties were experienced in receiving responses from some UK brigades due to the national fire pay dispute in 2002. This was overcome using students on Fire Service College courses and trainees at brigade training centres. Approaches were also made to CFO McGuirk, Cheshire, and ACO Turnock, Suffolk, to support the circulation and collection of the questionnaires.

Every effort was made to include the views of women firefighters. This was done by the author attending, the Networking Women in the Fire Service Conference in September 2002 in Chester and the FBU's B&EMM national school in October where women firefighters were approached to complete questionnaires.

2.6 Semi-Structured Interviews

The semi-structured, semi-formal interviews enabled the researcher to explore and develop an understanding of the themes that emerged from the questionnaire and helped explain and validate its findings. Key policy makers in the host brigades were identified for interviews in the USA and the UK. A request was made to a representative sample of brigades to enable triangulation, so that the data was unbiased. A total of twenty-five respondents were interviewed by the researcher, ten in the UK and fifteen in the USA. Interviews varied in length from one hour to three hours. Whenever possible the interviews were tape recorded and a pre-set form

was completed. A sample of the pre-set questions for the semi-structured interviews is provided in Appendix 1.

In the USA and UK the respondents were interviewed either face-to-face while they were on duty, or by telephone, due to travel distances involved. A written record was kept during the interviews. An audiotape was made whenever possible with the agreement of participants.

2.7 Statistical Data

National UK statistical data was gathered from brigades and Her Majesty's Fire Service Inspectorate (HMI), in addition, other available data in fire service reports on the employment of black and women firefighters was used. The data was analysed to quantify the problem facing the service, and was essential in providing an indication as to the effectiveness of fire brigades' strategies in the recruitment and retention of black and women firefighters. National data of the type available in the UK was not available in the USA, the best explanation for this being:

If we can not tell you how many fire departments we have in the USA we certainly will not be able to give you the breakdown of firefighters in gender and ethnic groups. (Dr Burt Clarke Interview Nov 2002)

Selected Brigades were requested to provide additional data and supporting materials. Nine questions were identified as core data requirements. A sample of the questionnaire is attached in Appendix 1. Following analysis of the returns, further semi-structured interviews were carried out by the researcher.

2.8 Reliability, Validity and Generalisability

Sweetham (2000), supports the use of the above three concepts as they help to provide a level of control and clarity throughout the process of the research and bring a sense of focus to the report by posing the questions 'Is this any good? Is it going to be of any use?, Can the results be repeated?'

The definitions of the terms reliability, validity and generalisability as described by Sweetham (2000, p.30) were used for this report:

Reliability: Would the same procedure; experiments or actions carried out again produce the same results?

Validity: Are we actually measuring or observing what we claim to be?

Generalisability: Is our work applicable or useful to other people or situations?

The data collected was examined critically to assess to what extent it is likely to be reliable and valid. The data was analysed through a rigorous process of checks from both data input and statistical analysis using a number of tools.

This report will have some read-across to many areas of employment in the fire service such as control rooms, retained and support staff. This report should also have application and benefit to other organisations that are grappling with the issues of diversity and equality. In particular, those who are attempting to reflect the communities of the catchment areas of their workforce.

2.9 Ethical Considerations for Research

In order to ensure that the information gathering is reliable and to ensure confidentiality, clear ethical guidelines and protocols were used as detailed in Bell (1999). In brief, the process used is described as:

Research ethics is about being clear about the nature of the agreement you have entered into with your research subjects or contacts. This is why contracts can be a useful device. Ethical research involves getting informed consent of those you are going to interview, question, observe or take materials from. It involves reaching agreement about uses of this data and how its analysis will be reported, and disseminated and it is about keeping to such agreements when they have been reached. (Blaxter et al 1996, p.196)

A statement was made at the front and at the end of the questionnaire to reassure personnel completing the questionnaires. An explanation was given to those participating in the forum discussions and the interviews prior to carrying out any interview.

2.10 Summary

The research methodology was successful in achieving the objectives of the research project. The literature review provided the foundation for the methodology and was a vital source of reference throughout the project. The comparative international study of the USA fire departments and in particular of Atlanta, Buffalo, East Point and Phoenix Fire Departments and the UK brigades proved to be a useful process by which to evaluate the critical factors that impact on the employment of black and women firefighters. The methodology enabled the author to test the research hypothesis. Using a multi-faceted research methodology enabled triangulation to take place and provided the researcher with the quantitative and qualitative data necessary to reach conclusions on the factors affecting the employment of black and women firefighters.

SECTION 3 LITERATURE REVIEW

3.1 Introduction

A major challenge at the heart of this report was that of how to approach a literature review of such a broad subject. The literature review supported the research in that it helped meet the research objectives and helped to:

- Develop an understanding of diversity / equality terminology that is commonly misunderstood in the fire service.
- Provide some advice for the fire service and its officers on how organisations can better understand the reasons for adopting diversity and equality issues.
- Highlight how change management principles could support fire brigades in meeting the diversity agenda.

The literature review was also important as it helped to develop the methodology and investigative techniques that were used in this research project. The focus was the hypothesis that had been set and the objectives of the research project that were submitted in the research proposal to the course tutors of the BCC. The purpose of the comparative study between the UK and the USA fire service was to assess the key differences between the two countries and in particular as they relate to employing firefighters from the under-represented groups.

Preliminary research identified the themes that appeared relevant to the recruitment and retention of under-represented groups from the community. This preliminary research included the reading of relevant literature, informal discussions with CACFOA equality group members, B&EMM members and also the author's Chief Officer and drawing upon personal knowledge and experience. This process

resulted in the identification of the ten key areas which have impact on the recruitment of under-represented groups. These areas are covered in Sections 3.2 to 3.12 of this section.

Wherever possible, the review concentrated on the literature pertaining to the fire service. The author did find some useful literature available on the employment of under-represented groups in other uniformed, male-dominated occupations, including other public sector organisations. This is recommended as an area of further study.

3.2 Equality v Diversity

Whilst carrying out the literature review and during the structured and the semi-structured interviews, it became clear to the author that the terminology used in the area of equality and diversity was poorly understood; in particular, terms such as diversity, equal opportunities, positive action and affirmative action were poorly understood. Officers and junior ranks in the service also did not understand the reasons why this was an important area of work for the service and the reasons why management needs to address the issue of under-representation in the fire service. The findings of the interviews and returns on the questionnaire are documented in Section 4 of this report. The business case for tackling the under-representation is made below and the above terms are defined in order to develop understanding of these issues in the service.

McGuirk (2002) argues that equality and diversity are interdependent and that equality without diversity is treating everyone the same. This in turn, McGuirk (2002) claims, can lead to travesty and political correctness if common sense is not also applied. He goes on to argue that equal opportunities have often been viewed as

'treating everybody the same' and that equality of opportunity has been created by society in order that we can live in a fairer society and is something that we should strive towards. McGuirk (2002) supports the view that, essentially, equality is about giving everyone a fair chance to fulfil their potential. He argues that diversity however focuses on how to harness differences between people to drive forward excellence and creativity in performance. Finally, McGuirk (2002) supports the view that organisations that embrace diversity, reject prejudice, and understand and accommodate changing work patterns, will be the organisations that reap the reward of a happy, fulfilled and motivated workforce with diverse skills:

Diversity is more than just ethnic and gender, differences it is a management responsibility and it is managements duty to bring about diversity internally and bring into their service the external values and beliefs of the community. (B. Roper (1998, p.3)

In discussing what 'Managing Diversity' means for the fire service McGuirk (2002, p.5), lists six areas for the service and in particular for CACFOA, these being:

- It means that we have to make sure that diversity is a strategic issue and therefore crucial for organisational success and to maintain the image, credibility and reputation of the fire service.
- It means that diversity is the responsibility not just of 'Personnel' or 'HR', but also of all employees and in particular those managers who are expected to be leaders and role models.
- It means that diversity is about having individuals at the centre of an organisation's focus. We must think about managing the differences between people as opposed to those differences being rejected or viewed as a liability.

- It means that the organisation has to adapt and change rather than to expect individuals to conform.
- It means we can recruit the best people and will be more creative.
- It means we will be better equipped to access a changing world.

3.3 Harassment

Harassment faced by black and women firefighters was an area that was identified as affecting recruitment during the literature review and during the interview of firefighters. Hostile attitudes from co-workers towards black and women firefighters may result in harassment, this harassment can be of a general nature and be motivated by opposition to minority groups employed as firefighters. Chetkovich (1997) observes that firefighters have developed their own ways to cope with the demands of their job and to ensure the reliability and solidarity of their co-workers. Fire station interactions are characterised by teasing about mistakes in job performance, personal foibles, aspects of appearance and events in their personal lives, along with gossip and practical jokes. This has been documented in a CD produced by the Banner Theatre Company 'Black and White in the Red' (1999). McCarl (1985, p.177, cited in Chetkovich 1997, p.204) claims:

The solidarity of the group is reinforced by this verbal parry and thrust and if the individual cannot exchange this abuse with equanimity, then his opportunities for acceptance as an equal in the culture are severely limited.

Bucke, (1994) reports that all firefighters must learn to cope in this potentially hostile environment, Bucke claims, those who perform well in their job and are not unpleasant to be around can expect to be accepted as insiders.

Women firefighters report continual references being made regarding their gender and of feeling constantly watched and judged when working. Any errors are picked on, attributed to their gender and excused less than they would be for male firefighters, Chetkovich, (1997,p.37) concludes:

That women must negotiate a male firefighter culture and a set of expectations and cultural norms that is foreign to most and unfriendly to all women.

To explain why male firefighters harass female colleagues in particular, the literature points to power and control issues. Rosell and Miller (1995) claim women firefighters are prime candidates for sexual harassment, with their minority status magnifying their vulnerability to men using harassment as a form of power. 'The numerically dominant group, view the minority group as outsiders, and tokens rather than individuals'. Kanter cited by Rosell and Miller (1982, p.2)

Rosell and Miller (1982) go on to explore how women are stereotyped and expected to maintain feminine role expectations. In the fire service context they claim that women are viewed first as women and firefighters second. The relevance of males being the numerically dominant group is challenged by the research of Ragins and Scandura (1995), which found no significant difference in reports of sexual harassment between male-typed, female-typed or gender-integrated occupations. However, they did find that women in blue-collar occupations (such as firefighting) reported a significantly higher level of sexual harassment than women in white-collar occupations. They attributed this to the occupation's physical culture, which values the physical expression of masculinity. They also found that blue-collar women in male-typed organisations were less likely than white-collar women to report sexual harassment, and tended to respond passively by ignoring the incident.

The survey by Rosell and Miller (1995, p.5) claims 'that current sexual harassment policies are simply not working'. The literature makes several recommendations on how to combat harassment. Fire services should have a policy on harassment and provide awareness training to all staff. These measures alone do not ensure effectiveness, as shown in their survey. They recommend these measures be bolstered with:

- Publicising management commitment.
- Efficient, responsive complaint channels.
- Protecting the victim and providing counselling.
- Effective enforcement.

The four measures above could be applied equally to the enforcement of racial harassment policies and would support recruitment and retention issues currently facing the service. Burton (1998) also supports periodic monitoring through anonymous surveys and publicising the results to emphasises the importance of teaching men that women are likely to experience small incidents of gender or sexual harassment repeatedly and it has an accumulative effect.

3.4 Positive Action, Affirmative Action and Reverse Discrimination

3.4.1 Positive Action

Positive action measures are permitted under Sections 47 and 48 of the Sex Discrimination Act of 1975 and Sections 37 and 38 of the Race Relations Act of 1976. The purpose of positive action is to encourage potential employees from groups that are under-represented in an organisation to apply for employment and advancement in organisations. Positive action is usually designed to counteract the

organisational effects of past discrimination. In the guidance document issued by the Fire Service Inspectorate of Scotland (2000, p.13) five examples are given of appropriate positive action initiatives, these are:

- Pre-recruitment training.
- Job advertisements designed to reach a particular group.
- Targeting recruitment in areas of high concentration of particular racial groups.
- Recruitment schemes for school leavers designed to reach members of a particular gender or racial group.
- Use of the disability services teams of the employment services for advice on employment and retention of disabled employees.

The guidance also goes on say that positive action is not:

- Withholding information from one gender in order to attempt to encourage applicants from the other gender.
- Selecting a job applicant simply because they are of a particular group and or of a particular gender, regardless of ability.
- Selecting a number of employees from minority groups irrespective of merit to give the brigade a good name.

Principally, positive action is designed in the fire service to provide women and other under-represented groups with equal access to information prior to the formal application and testing stage. The parameters of what is legal and what is not permitted is not fully understood in the service. Advice from the Fire Service Inspectorate and the Commission for Racial Equality is needed to support the work of brigades in improving the results from positive action campaigns. This is an area of further study needed and an area where brigades need more support and guidance from Government. Currently a number of brigades, in particular West Midlands and Avon, are using the 'Connecting Communities' Government led programme to attract more members from the ethnic communities. The early success of this scheme in Avon in getting more minorities into the probation and police service and in West Midlands in attracting over 200 applicants from the ethnic community to the fire service is worthy of a more in depth study.

3.4.2 Affirmative Action

Affirmative Action in the USA goes a lot further than the UK. In the USA, courts can impose quotas on organisations to recruit specific ratios of women and black employees. The quotas stay in place until the imbalance has been met. Affirmative action is described by Bachtler and Thomas (1995) as the steps that organisations can take to recruit, hire and promote individuals, which have been the subject of discrimination on the basis of race, gender, and other characteristics. Affirmative action they say goes beyond 'equal employment opportunities' as that only requires employers to eliminate discriminatory conditions and to treat all employees equally in the work place. They go on to explain that affirmative action may be imposed by federal or state courts or may be voluntarily agreed and list the following requirements of affirmative action programmes:

- An analysis of all the major job categories.
- Goals, timetables and commitments designed to correct identifiable deficiencies.
- Support data for the above analysis. Bachtler and Thomas, (1995, p.253)

The legal rights for organisations to carry out affirmative action are to be found mainly in the following five USA pieces of legislation, the Civil Rights Act of 1964, the Age Discrimination in Employment Act, the Equal Pay Act of 1963, The Rehabilitation Act of 1973 and the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990.

The success of affirmative action programmes is illustrated by Mathis (1999, p.55) who cites the example of the consent decree that was served on the Los Angeles Fire Department in 1974. The consent decree stated:

The city shall, as a long range goal, seek to recruit and hire Blacks, Mexican-Americans, Asian American and other minorities, in sufficient numbers as to increase substantially the minority composition in the ranks of the uniformed personnel within the fire department. So that the said

fire department will become more representative of the racial and ethnic composition of the community as a whole.

Mathis goes on to demonstrate the effect of the decree in that in 1975, one year after the decree, the department had 10.4% ethnic minorities. By 1999 the department had increased its representation to 42.6%. This is reflected across the USA in fire departments that have been the subject of consent decrees.

3.4.3 Reverse Discrimination

A major issue in the USA is the challenge from the public and in some cases by the trades unions on the adoption of affirmative action. The challenges are based on the claim that affirmative action causes the effect of reverse discrimination on the indigenous white male population. The most outstanding case was the 1978 case, Regents of the University of California V Bakke, in which the plaintiff, a white male, gained admission to the university after challenging a programme that allowed a less qualified minority person to be admitted ahead of him. This case and others, raise a number of interesting questions that could be the focus of future BCC studies on affirmative action. However, it is worth noting that some employers have survived this challenge by demonstrating the following four key tests:

- The employer made a detailed and through documented self analysis to determine whether minorities were under-represented.
- Finding that there were fewer minority members in the work force than would normally be expected, the employer took reasonable action, relative to the degree of under-representation, to correct it.
- The affirmative action plan was for a limited period of time and was suspended when goals were achieved.
- It did not result in displacement of non-minority employees nor did it restrict opportunities for non-minorities. (Mathis 1999, p.50)

3.5 Business Case for Diversity

The first time a business case for diversity is made in the fire service in the UK is in the CACFOA document 'Are We Serious'. In this document McGuirk (2002, p.6) gives six reasons why CACFOA should seek to build a diverse service:

- Integrate our services alongside those of other public sector bodies and add more value to the urban renewal/social inclusion agenda, and local strategic partnerships.
- Build on existing good practice of working with the elderly and young people through partnerships.
- Enhance traditional methods of service delivery and encompass a wider safety dimension.
- Be less 'threatening' and be better able to work at the heart of communities through reflecting the race, culture and faiths of our local communities.
- Improve our corporate image and be better equipped to compete in the labour market and attract people who can rise to meet future challenge. In relation to customers and service provision, there are heightened expectations of equality because of the increased social awareness in a society where there is a greater acknowledgement of the potential for institutional discrimination and a desire to do something practical about it.
- Change our internal culture and reduce costs related to morale, job satisfaction, turnover and absenteeism.

Mathis (1999) calculated that (in the years 1993 to 1999) the Los Angeles Fire Department paid out \$4 million in settlements to women who filed cases for wrongful practices. He claims this makes a compelling financial case for improving fire brigade/ department diversity procedures and policies.

The business case for diversity is supported by the Audit Commission (1995), in their report on the fire service, they claim that the fire service needs to reflect the community it serves if it is to meet its community fire safety strategies and it is to reflect the changing values of society. This supports the business case, as meeting community fire safety objectives will reduce fire deaths and casualties, thus reducing the cost of fire to the community. A practical example is given in Section 5, where

the CFO of Atlanta gives an example of reducing fire deaths by over 50% in a predominantly black area, achieved by increasing the recruitment of black firefighters in the Atlanta Fire Department over a period of twenty years.

3.6 Politics and Legislation, Its Role in Recruitment

It is clear that the UK has, in developing equality legislation for the recruitment of women and racially affected groups, attempted to avoid association with practices such as affirmative action. It is generally felt in the UK that the affirmative action route leads to associations with reverse discrimination and the backlash that is currently being experienced in the USA. In the USA, a number of states have found themselves facing reverse discrimination cases in the courts, having followed the affirmative action course of action.

Smith (1994) points out that the hiring procedure of the USA fire service had, during the 1970s, perpetuated a mainly white workforce. However, through political action and legislative enforcement of affirmative action, many departments made some positive moves forward. The removal of federal funding for affirmative action under the Comprehensive Employment and Training Act however curtailed many of the efforts that had been gaining momentum. He goes on to support this with the example of a well-funded Minorities Assistance Programs (MAP) in the Tucson Fire Department. In the UK, the provision of additional funding from government for diversity issues and the introduction of Connecting Communities funding demonstrates the support for diversity in Government. This has may have a positive effect in the fire service if support and funding is maintained.

In the following sections, 3.7 to 3.14, the literature review will concentrate on the practical strategies, policies and procedures fire brigades and Chief Fire Officers can

implement to make a difference to representation in the fire service and to the culture in the service.

3.7 Managing Change/Diversity

The importance of understanding how change should be managed in organisations and how an understanding of the change process can help support management in meeting the diversity need of the service cannot be understated. Coleman et al (1988) emphasise this particular point when they say:

In a change, orientated environment, the fire chief will devote more time and will direct a substantial part of the organisational efforts to the management of change. (Coleman et al 1988, p.268)

They go on to support the need for strong leadership in the management of change, a point that is supported in section 3.10 of this report. Coleman also supports the need for organisations to identify the key people that will be involved in the change and how these people should be involved in the management of the change. If the fire service is to be successful in the change on diversity issues, managing the change is another key element that must be taken into account. McGuirk (2002, p.16-17) identifies eighteen internal and twenty-one external stakeholders, see Appendix 2. Although this is not an exhaustive list it is one that would be useful to any fire brigade undertaking the process and wishing to involve key stakeholders in the change process and in the consultation that is needed if all stakeholders are to be kept on board.

Another key to overcoming the difficulties of diversity change management is indicated by Coleman et al (1988, p.414). He says:

Often managers and employees see change as something that is exciting and an adventure when in fact it is often boring and tedious and for the latter type of change, management will need to provide direction and clear planning tools.

Coleman et al (1988) provide further guidance about factors that will support the implementation of change. These being, the need to engender enthusiasm for the change in the workforce, evaluating and monitoring the process, identifying and destroying barriers to the change and finally the importance of learning from the process. Although an in-depth analysis for managing change was not investigated during the research for this project, it is clear from the findings discussed in this section that management of the change process has a major impact on the success or failure of diversity strategies.

3.8 Leadership and Accountability

3.8.1 Leadership

When Burton (1998) talks about women this could easily be read as under-represented groups in the fire service. Burton (1998, p.160) cites the studies of Morrison and Associates (1992) that:

Leadership commitment is the single most helpful factor in improving women's advancement within an organisation. Leadership's commitment and support of the integration of women is crucial for the acceptance by managers that their energy and resources need to be directed to gender integration outcomes. This signals to women that they can expect fair and equitable treatment.

Bucke (1994) supported the view that leadership is critical in meeting the equality agenda and goes on to explain why some brigades were further ahead than others.

Bucke (1994) suggested that various explanations exist for the under-representation of women and black members of the community in the fire service. The main reason being that of commitment to the equal opportunities policy by senior management:

The support of senior management is therefore clearly important, but the danger is that a decline can occur with senior personnel changes. This is especially relevant to a strong hierarchical organization such as the fire service. (Bucke 1994, p.74)

Bucke (1994) then goes on to suggest ways in which senior managers can overcome this problem of changes in leadership. He recommends that brigades should develop formal structures and channels through which effective programmes can be maintained. This message has been reinforced in further reviews conducted by the Home Office (1999) and the latest report from the inspectorate 'Bridging the Gap' which focused on leadership. The importance of leadership has been well documented in the fire service and is supported by the Commission for Racial Equality who have produced a plan for organisations to demonstrate and support equality. This plan gives principal officers of the service guidance as to what leaders should do to support equality. During a seminar in 1998, in Sunderland at the Stadium of Light, the author further highlighted the need for leaders to demonstrate positive leadership by taking up the CRE leadership challenge and listed the advice taken from the CRE guidance about what leaders in the fire service could do to support equality in their brigades (see Appendix 3).

3.8.2 Accountability

Leadership is clearly important, the literature review led the author to confirm that accountability measures are an essential ingredient in ensuring the success of equality events/diversity issues. Burton (1998) supports this view; he maintains that

one certain way to ensure leaders and managers comply with policies is to make them accountable for their own achievements in these matters. A recognised method of achieving accountability is to clearly describe the responsibilities in every manager's job description and hold them responsible for the achievement of specific goals in a performance reporting and appraisal system. Burton, (1998) goes on to say that for managers to carry out these responsibilities and accountabilities effectively, they need comprehensive training and the opportunity for informal discussions so that they develop confidence and a thorough understanding of what is expected of them. A further point is made by Bucke (1994) in that given the traditional, autocratic nature of the fire service management structure, the issue of leadership emerges as a key factor to consider when assessing how some fire services have been more successful than others in the appointment and integration of under-represented groups. The role which individual chief fire officers play in the success of equality and diversity would be an important area of work worthy of further study and quantitative analysis, particularly for future BCC students.

3.9 Recruitment Strategies, Processes, and the Effect of Connection in the Service

Fire services tend to attract high numbers of applicants for each firefighter position that is advertised, Bucke (1994) but only a small proportion of these applicants are from black sections of the community and women. One of the main reasons for this is that most of these groups have simply never thought of firefighting as a career option, Bucke (1994) and Shuttleworth,(2001) also supported this view. O'Farrell (1999) contends that this is a typical situation for skilled blue-collar occupations, such as firefighting, where traditional recruitment practices are barriers because the public never learn about job openings or requirements of the job. This point is

explored in the findings of the research where the respondents to the questionnaire were asked if they had contact with firefighters prior to joining the service. It formed a critical part of the questionnaire that was completed by firefighters in the USA and UK. Bucke (1994) supports this in explaining that knowledge about vacancies in the fire service tends to be handed down informally from contacts within the service. He goes on to argue that this means fire services need to change traditional recruiting practices, if they are to attract more under-represented groups of the community. A range of initiatives are advocated in the literature that was reviewed for this report, Chetkovich (1997), Osby (1991) and Shuttleworth 2000 make a number of recommendations that would support recruitment of under-represented groups. These are summarised as:

- Developing advertising strategies specifically to attract minority groups.
- Using firefighters from the under-represented groups for outreach work at recruitment events.
- Focusing on schools where the target group are in the majority and promoting firefighting as a fulfilling and suitable career choice for all sectors of the community.
- Targeting recruitment through gyms and fitness centres, military bases and sporting events and programmes where again the target audience will be in the majority.

Chetkovich (1997, p.162-4) conducted an extensive study of women firefighters and concluded that the following personal qualities are crucial for job performance. He recommends that recruitment officers focus on women who have the following qualities: self-confidence, high self-esteem, assertiveness and a strong commitment to the work, which includes a desire for physical work, a physical aptitude, appropriate social skills and orientation.

Burton, (1998), Messing *et al* (2000) all highlight the difficulties that women, particularly have had in meeting the physical test standard. They all support the

view that fire services, if committed to the integration of women, should be striving to develop physical testing regimes which accurately match a firefighter's job requirements and that do not discriminate against women or men who are physically capable of doing the job. This has been an area of work in which the service has made some improvements in moving to more scientific tests of lung capacity, grip, back pull, and shuttle test. This is reflected in that the old test, involving chest expansion and carrying other candidates up ladders or across drill grounds, have been replaced. Much still needs to be done to ensure entry standards are job-related and that the equipment carried on fire appliances is designed so that it can be used by all firefighters irrespective of weight, height or strength.

3.10 Support Systems for Under-Represented Groups

Given the small numbers of black and women firefighters and the challenges they face in being integrated into the fire service, it is logical to expect that support systems will play a beneficial role. Lindberg's (1997) study of women firefighters in the Los Angeles Fire Department reveals firefighters rely on family and friends, rather than co-workers, to cope with work stress.

The Home Office (1999) and McGuirk (1995) strongly encourage brigades in the UK to support women's networks and other under-represented groups, believing they not only provide a useful personal support role, but also represent the collective views of women and black firefighters. These groups can help to identify issues so they can be dealt with proactively; minority support groups can play a particularly useful role in assisting with targeted recruitment campaigns and in assisting candidates to prepare for the selection testing process Elliot, (2001). These support groups are also able to provide minority firefighters with moral support and advice on

service-related issues. The author's experience with B&EMM and his work with women's and gay and lesbian groups of the FBU, support the benefits of such groups and the need of the service to demonstrate practical and visible support.

The Home Office (1999) also commented that the FBU has been active in pursuit of equality issues and has a significant role to play. The majority of union members are male. Harassment, when it happens, usually occurs between firefighters. In the USA the IAFF is one of the largest sources of reverse discrimination law suits in the USA, acting on behalf of men against women firefighters (Chetkovich, 1997). Unions can also be called on to represent workers involved on both sides of harassment complaints and will be placed in a dilemma over whom to support. In the UK, FBU rules would prevent the alleged harasser from receiving representation if preliminary investigation proved that a case to answer was found by the regional FBU officials. This has to be commended as it sends a clear message to all FBU members and officials.

3.11 Promoting the Firefighter Role

In the literature on employment of firefighters and in the media, traditionally the role of firefighters has nearly always been portrayed as active, macho, white male. Little has been done on a national scale to promote the proactive community fire safety education role, the fire investigation role, and the technical fire safety enforcement role, which may be more attractive to a more diverse community. The recent recruitment material produced by the fire service inspectorate should be supported by the fire service as a first step in sending out a common message. It was encouraging to see the Midlands fire brigades working together in September 2002 at the Mela (a high profile Asian event at the National Exhibition Centre in

Birmingham) using a common logo and using the national material to promote the job of a firefighter to the Asian community. The Midlands brigades and London Fire Brigade committed significant resources into the event and were rewarded by voluntary co-operation of black and women firefighters. Over 1000 names were collected by the Midlands brigades and the London Fire Brigade in the three days. This supports the literature reviewed in the use of role models at profile events that are likely to attract significant numbers of under-represented groups. This is an area that the service should develop further.

3.12 Monitoring and Review

This is the final element of any successful strategy for the implementation of change. The effectiveness of equality programmes needs to be measured through monitoring and evaluation systems. Both quantitative and qualitative data need to be collected and analysed Burton (1998, p.45). This should include:

The maintenance of a database of all staff for measuring equality issues, regular reviews of human resource policies and practices to identify areas of bias and discrimination, exit interviews, cultural audits and climate surveys of the fire service.

Hall (1995) supports the use of cultural audits and climate surveys, claiming these will provide benchmarks against which change can be measured. Perhaps the ultimate and most tangible measure of the effectiveness of equality programmes is provided by Edgar (2001, p.35) who recommends using two performance indicators, these being:

1. Any alterations or changes evident in the representation of firefighters from the under represented groups in the fire service compared to changes in their representation in the total labour force.

2. Changes in the proportional representation of black and women firefighters at various levels throughout the fire service's rank structure to check on promotion.

The West Midlands Fire Service provided the author with an example audit that they have developed. This system appears to address the above recommendations and is recommended as a model that should be considered by UK brigades.

Application of the above practices by fire brigades would enhance and support the recruitment and retention of under-represented groups and give communities the reassurance that the leadership of the fire service was serious about equality issues. Many of the above items are not just good practice for equality issues, but also support good management practice. The reviewing of policies and procedures, exit interviews and culture surveys are all good management tools for a progressive learning organisation.

The guidance document produced by the Fire Services Inspectorate of Scotland for the Scottish Executive (2000) gives guidance for brigades and fire departments on what they should be self-auditing and monitoring to ensure compliance with equality and fairness issues. The guidance documents list the following as key areas for monitoring and audit; strategy, policy, leadership, service delivery, recruitment, promotion, selection, resources, task groups and training.

This guidance coupled with the check list to be found in FACE (the HMI Thematic Report 1999) and the recent issue of draft 'expectations' concerning diversity issues from the fire service inspectorate provides the service with advice about what is required for audit and monitoring of diversity issues. This should be used to support brigades to meet one of the key requirements for the Race Relations Amendment Act.

A model used in the USA and supported by the US Federal Employment Opportunities Commission (1997, p.8) encourages employers to adopt a program named 'SPLENDID'. This stands for a series of actions that employers can take to address equality and diversity issues in the work place; Study, Plan, Lead, Encourage, Notice, Discussion, Inclusion and Dedication. See Appendix 4.

The above documents and advice should be used by the service to develop a self-audit model. It is a model that can support the development policies and initiatives to support the diversity needs of the fire service.

3.13 Summary

The literature review confirmed the importance of integrating the sections of the community that are currently under-represented in the fire service, in particular black and women members. The literature provided the researcher with the essential background knowledge required to proceed with this research project and to develop a questionnaire and approach for the formal and informal interviews.

Ten key areas that can support brigades in attracting, retaining and supporting black and women firefighter have been discussed fully in the above section of this report. Although leadership was seen by many as the key factor, a number of others such as accountability, understanding the need for a diverse workforce, harassment in the service, development of recruitment literature and understanding the role of legislation and political support for addressing diversity have been explained above.

Often chief fire officers are looking for a quick fix for problems:

Chiefs of many departments seek a magic solution. There is no magic for increasing the number of women and black firefighters within fire brigades and fire departments. This has to be seen as a gradual process where

departments make the public aware of the opportunities in the fire service.
(Florin 1999 in Mathis 1999, p.18)

SECTION 4 RESEARCH AND FIELD RESULTS

4.1 Introduction

The purpose of this Section is to present the results found during the research. Interpretation of the results can be found in Section Five. The sections below present the key findings of the quantitative and qualitative surveys. The research results were drawn from a range of sources and data to meet the triangulation criteria set for the research in Section 2.

4.2 Questionnaire Survey

The primary propose of the Questionnaire survey was to test the following hypothesis and the four objectives described in Section 2:

The majority of people who join the fire service have a connection with a serving firefighter.

The survey was conducted by using a questionnaire that adapted questions developed by two previous BCC students, Shuttleworth (2000) and McGill (2001). A pilot questionnaire was carried out in the UK at the Fire Service College using senior fire officers on the BCC and in Bedfordshire and Luton Fire and Rescue Service. In the USA a pilot was carried out at the IABPFF conference. This was useful in revealing the subtle language differences between the UK and USA. The pilot was also helpful in highlighting two areas that had not been considered as possible motivational factors, that is pay and the applicants being out of work at the time of application.

Two questionnaires were used, one in the UK and one in the USA. An example of the questionnaire used in the UK can be found in Appendix 5. The USA Questionnaire was very similar. However, following the pilot, minor changes were made to the UK questionnaire due to language differences found between the UK and the USA respondents. In the UK, the questionnaires were sent to selected brigades and to students attending the Fire Service College. Questionnaires were handed out at the B&EMM annual school to ensure a representative sample of black firefighters completed the questionnaires. In the USA the questionnaires were completed by black firefighters at the IABPFF conference in Buffalo, questionnaires were also handed out at the Women's Network Conference in Cheshire (UK) to ensure that sufficient women firefighters completed the questionnaire to enable the analysis to be valid. It was not possible to ensure similar representative samples of women were covered in the USA due to time constraints. This has been reflected in the results in the number of women firefighters in the analysis from the USA.

The results of the analysis from the database that was produced are reported in this section. Further investigation and analysis will be carried out by the author with the support of the partners who supported the collection of data, after completion of the Brigade Command Course. Statistica was used to calculate the probability of the results occurring by chance. It is generally accepted that there are three levels of statistical significance, which correspond to the numerical value of probability:

Probability values greater than .05 are considered not to be significant, probabilities between .005 and .001 are considered significant whereas values less than .001 are said to be highly significant. (Robson, 1993, p.351)

The significant differences between the groups can be found in the tables below. The analysis was carried out by using statistics and the Anova analysis to discover P Values of below .05 between the following groups:

- Fire service personnel in the UK and USA.
- Black and white firefighters in the group sampled (UK and USA combined).
- Men and women firefighters in the group sampled (UK and USA combined).
- Black and white firefighters in the UK.
- Men and women firefighters in the UK.

The tables below show in red the factors identified as being statistically significant (P value below .05), together with the mean scores for that group.

These significant differences were also explored more closely using Microsoft™ Excel spreadsheets and charts. Some of the bar charts have been illustrated below. A full set of charts and graphs produced from the data can be obtained from the author.

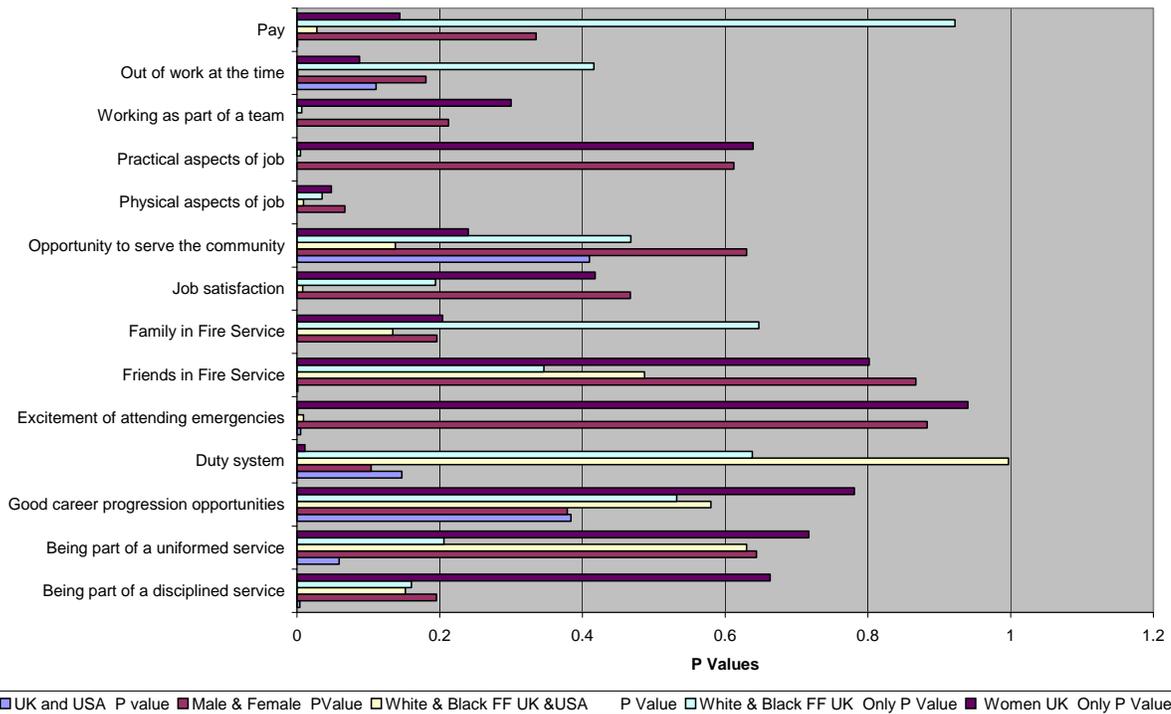
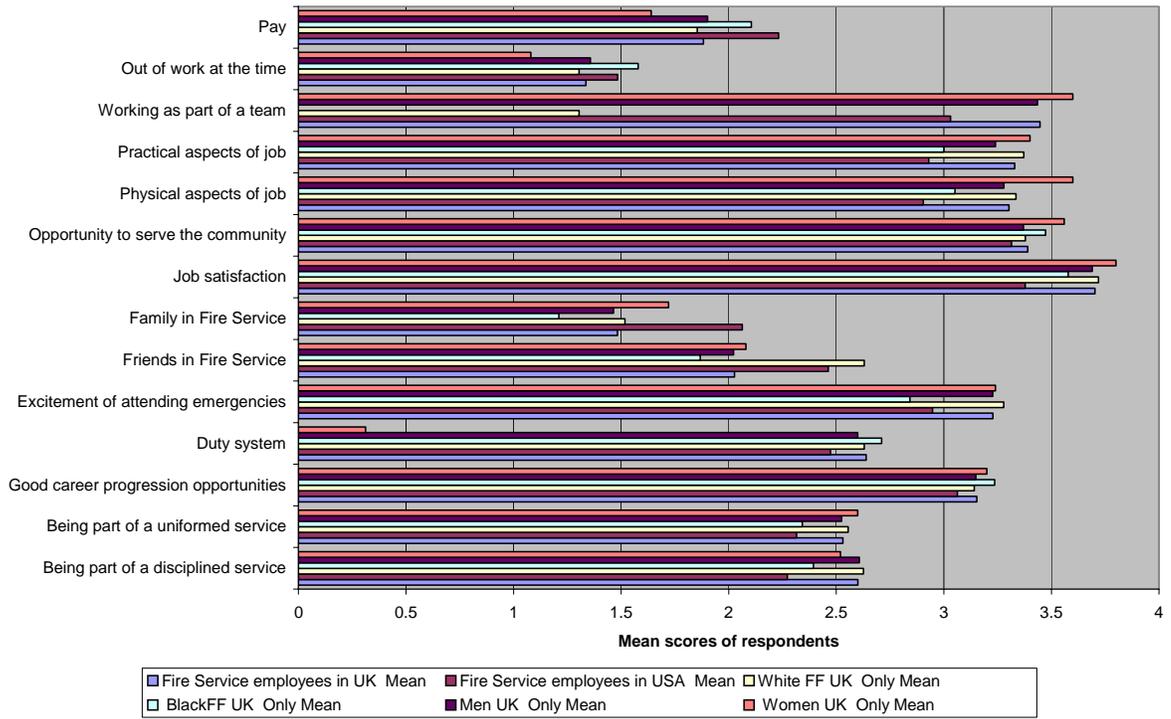
Table 1 Summary of the responses received.

	Number	% of total
Number of respondents	428	100
UK respondents	333	78%
USA respondents	95	22%
Males UK USA total	386	90%
Males UK	308	72%
Males USA	88	21%
Female UK	25	6%
Female USA	7	2%
Females total	32	7%
Black UK	38	9%
White UK	295	69%
Black USA	25	6%
White USA	70	16%
Black total	63	15%
White total	365	85%

Questionnaire Summary Factors that motivated firefighters to join the fire service

Factors that motivated firefighters to join the Fire Service.	Fire Service employees in UK Mean	Fire Service employees in USA Mean	UK and USA P value	Male FF UK & USA Mean	Female FF UK & USA Mean	Male & Female P Value	White FF UK & USA Mean	Black FF UK & USA Mean	White & Black P Value	White FF UK Only Mean	Black FF UK Only Mean	White & Black P Value	Men UK Only Mean	Women UK Only Mean	Men & Women P Value
Being part of a disciplined service	2.6006	2.273	0.00395	2.545	2.312	0.1954	2.556	2.365	0.152	2.627	2.394	0.1604	2.607	2.52	0.663
Being part of a uniformed service	2.5315	2.3157	0.059	2.489	2.406	0.6439	2.493	2.428	0.63	2.555	2.342	0.206	2.525	2.6	0.717
Good career progression opportunities	3.153	3.063	0.384	3.143	3	0.37889	3.123	3.19	0.58	3.142	3.236	0.532	3.149	3.2	0.781
Duty system	2.639	2.473	0.147	2.58	2.875	0.104	2.602	2.603	0.997	2.63	2.71	0.638	2.6	3.12	0.0111
Excitement of attending emergencies	3.228	2.947	0.0052	3.164	3.187	0.883	3.212	2.904	0.009	3.2779	2.842	0.001	3.227	3.24	0.94
Friends in Fire Service	2.027	2.463	0.000947	2.121	2.156	0.867	2.139	2.031	0.487	2.047	1.868	0.346	3	2.08	0.802
Family in Fire Service	1.483	2.063	0.000002	1.593	1.843	0.196	1.643	1.428	0.1342	1.518	1.21	0.647	1.464	1.72	0.204
Job satisfaction	3.702	3.378	0.00008	3.623	3.437	0.467	3.668	3.412	0.008	3.718	3.578	0.194	3.69	3.8	0.418
Opportunity to serve the community	3.39	3.315	0.41	3.368	3.437	0.63	3.35	3.507	0.138	3.379	3.473	0.468	3.37	3.56	0.24
Physical aspects of job	3.3033	2.905	0.000023	3.194	3.468	0.067	3.257	2.968	0.009	3.335	3.052	0.0352	3.279	3.6	0.048
Practical aspects of job	3.33	2.93	0.000031	3.237	3.312	0.612	3.301	2.904	0.0003	3.372	3	0.00488	3.24	3.4	0.639
Working as part of a team	3.447	3.0315	0.000014	3.34	3.531	0.2123	3.416	3	0.0002	3.498	3.05	0.0067	3.435	3.6	0.3
Out of work at the time	1.336	1.484	0.111	1.383	1.187	0.1807	1.317	1.666	0.0012	1.305	1.5789	0.0416	1.357	1.08	0.0878
Pay	1.882	2.2315	0.000824	1.972	1.812	0.335	1.92	2.19	0.0278	1.854	2.105	0.0922	1.902	1.64	0.144

Section 3 What factors motivate firefighters to join the fire service?



In the analysis between UK and USA, when looking at what factors motivated firefighters to join the fire service, nine factors score below .05 and were statistically significant. These are:

- Being part of a team.
- Being part of a uniformed service.
- Excitement of the job.
- Friends in the fire service.
- Family in the fire service.
- Job satisfaction.
- Physical aspects of the job.
- Practical aspects of the job.
- Working as a team.

In the analysis between black and white firefighters as to what factors motivated them to join the fire service, seven factors score below .05 and were statistically significant. These are:

- Excitement of the job.
- Job satisfaction.
- Physical aspects of the job.
- Practical aspects of the job.

- Working as a team.
- Out of work at the time.
- Pay.

For UK firefighters a similar P value was found when comparing black firefighters with white firefighters in the USA. No significant factors were found between women and men in the UK and the USA. When the analysis was done for the UK only one factor was found when comparing men to women. That was:

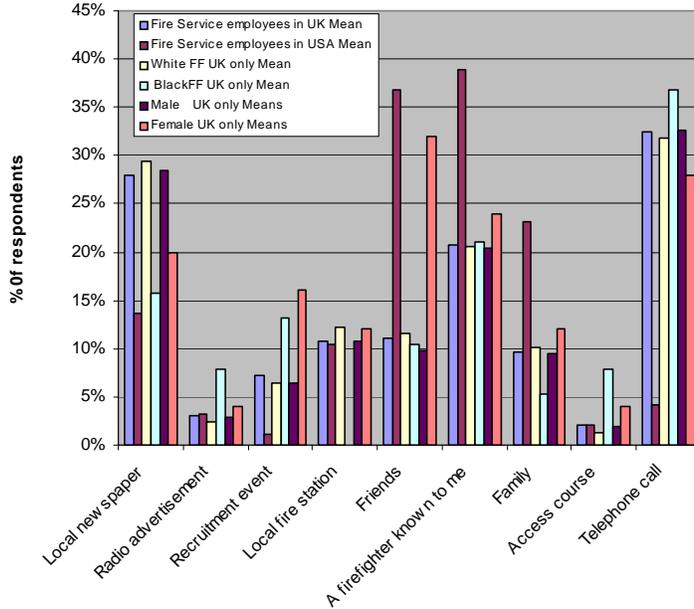
- Duty systems.

Questionnaire Summary How did respondents find out that the fire service was recruiting at the time of application?

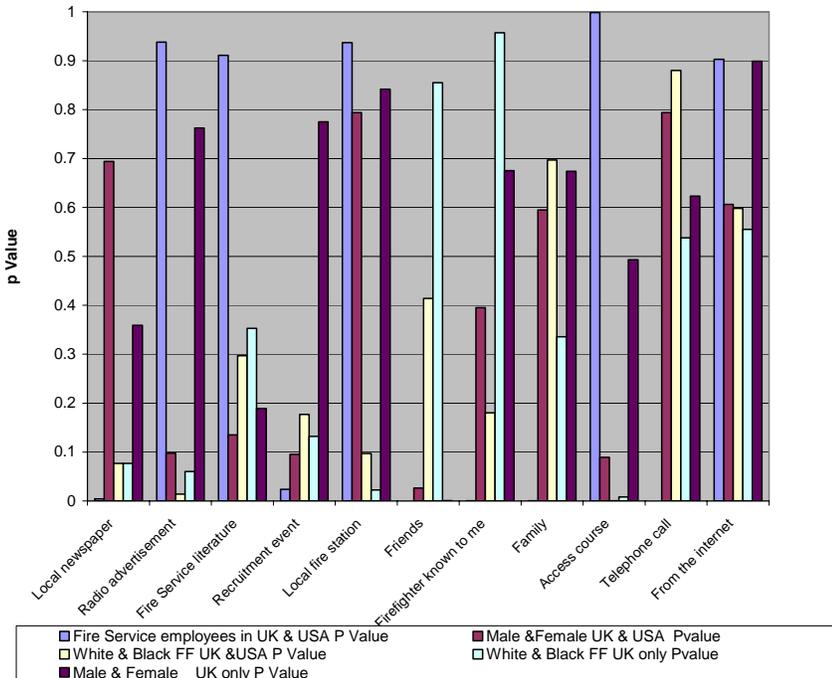
How did respondents find out that the Fire Service was recruiting at the time of application	Fire fighters UK	Fire fighters USA	Fire fighters UK & USA P Value	Male FF UK & USA	Female FF UK & USA	Male & Female UK & USA Pvalue	White FF UK & USA	Black FF UK & USA	White & Black FF UK & USA P Value	White FF UK only	Black FF UK only	White & Black FF UK only Pvalue	Male UK only	Female UK only	Male & Female UK only P Value
Local newspaper	28%	14%	0.0044	25%	22%	0.694	26%	16%	0.0768	29%	16%	0.0768	29%	20%	0.359
Radio advertisement	3%	3%	0.938	3%	3%	0.0976	2%	8%	0.014	2%	8%	0.06	3%	4%	0.7622
Fire Service literature	6%	6%	0.911	7%	0%	0.135	7%	3%	0.297	6%	26%	0.353	7%	0%	0.189
Recruitment event	7%	1%	0.024	5%	13%	0.0953	5%	10%	0.177	6%	13%	0.132	6%	16%	0.775
Local fire station	11%	11%	0.937	11%	9%	0.794	12%	5%	0.097	12%	0%	0.0225	11%	12%	0.842
Friends	11%	37%	0	16%	31%	0.0264	16%	21%	0.414	12%	11%	0.855	10%	32%	0.0007
A firefighter known to me	21%	39%	0.00043	24%	31%	0.395	24%	32%	0.18	21%	21%	0.957	20%	24%	0.675
Family	10%	23%	0.000426	12%	16%	0.595	13%	11%	0.697	10%	5%	0.3355	9%	12%	0.674
Access course	2%	2%	0.9984	2%	6%	0.089	1%	8%	0.0004	1%	8%	0.008	2%	4%	0.493
Telephone call	32%	4%	0	26%	28%	0.794	26%	26%	0.88	32%	37%	0.538	33%	28%	0.623
From the internet	5%	4%	0.9026	4%	6%	0.6061	5%	3%	0.598	5%	26%	0.555	5%	4%	0.899

Charts for Section 4 of questionnaire

How did respondents find out that the fire service was recruiting at the time of application?



How firefighter found out service was recruiting at time of application



In the analysis between UK and USA, when looking at how firefighters in the fire service found out about recruitment at the time of application, only five factors score below .05 and were statistically significant. These are:

- Local newspapers.
- Friends.
- A firefighter known to me.
- Family.
- Telephone call.

In the analysis of men and women for the above only one factor emerged as significant.

That was:

- Friends.

Three factors were common in the analysis between the UK and USA and in the UK when comparing black firefighter to white:

- Local newspapers.
- Recruitment event.
- Family.

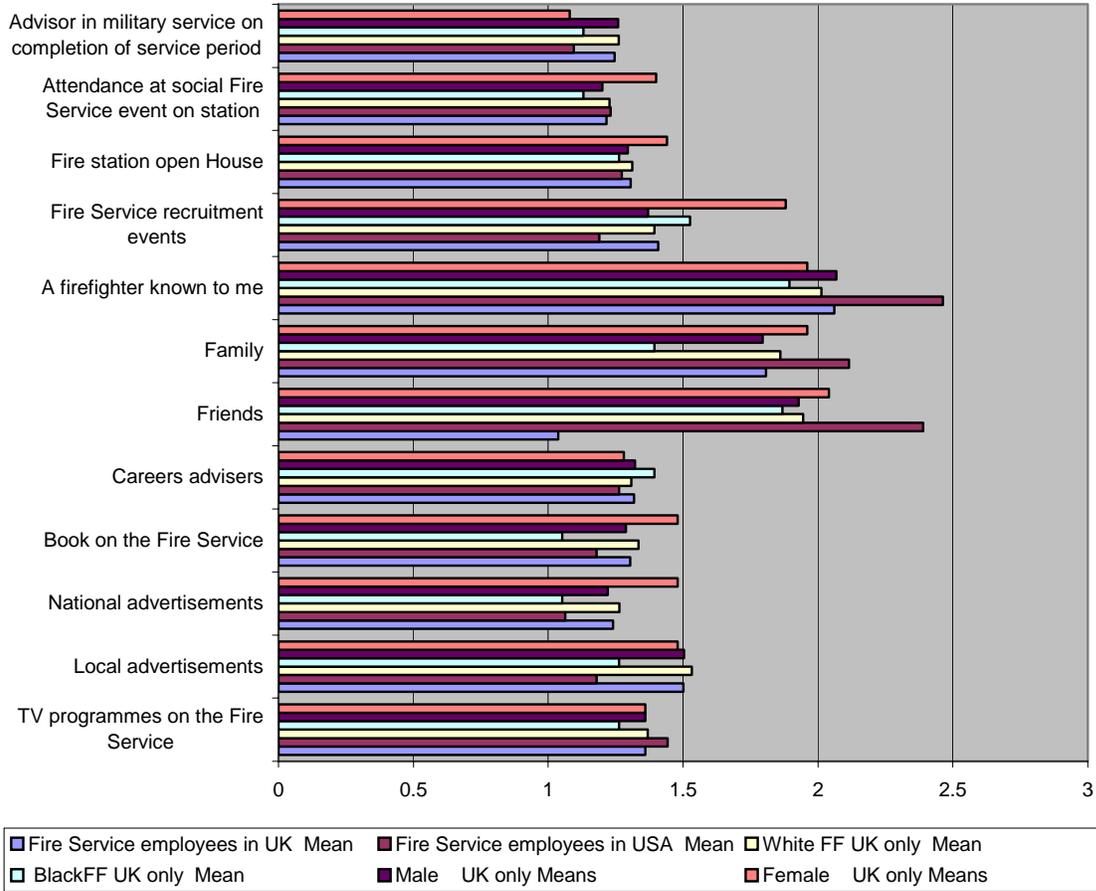
In the analysis of the UK and USA one additional factor was found and that was:

- Radio advertisements.

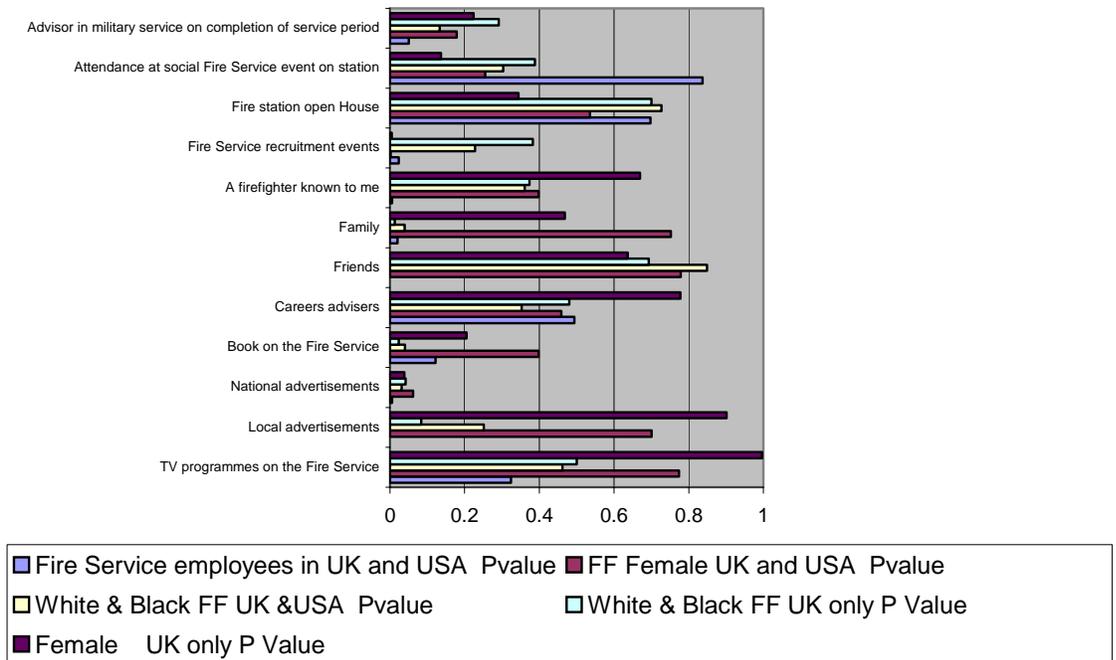
Section 5 Factors that influenced firefighters to join the fire service

Factors that influenced firefighters to join the Fire Service	Fire Service employees in UK Mean	Fire Service employees in USA Mean	Fire Service employees in UK and USA Pvalue	FF male total UK and USA Mean	FF Female total UK and USA Mean	FF Female UK and USA Pvalue	White FF UK &USA Mean	BlackFF UK &USA Mean	White & Black FF UK &USA Pvalue	White FF UK only Mean	BlackFF UK only Mean	White & Black FF UK only P Value	Male UK only Means	Female UK only Means	Female UK only P Value
TV programmes on the Fire Service	1.36	1.442	0.324	1.381	1.343	0.774	1.389	1.317	0.462	1.369	1.263	0.5	1.36	1.36	0.997
Local advertisements	1.501	1.1789	0.00094	1.434	1.375	0.701	1.449	1.317	0.251	1.532	1.263	0.083	1.503	1.48	0.901
National advertisements	1.24	1.063	0.0054	1.186	1.375	0.062	1.224	1.063	0.0312	1.264	1.052	0.0414	1.22	1.48	0.0385
Book on the Fire Service	1.3033	1.1789	0.1215	1.267	1.375	0.398	1.304	1.111	0.0402	1.335	1.052	0.0232	1.288	1.48	0.205
Careers advisers	1.3183	1.2631	0.4942	1.313	1.218	0.459	1.293	1.38	0.353	1.308	1.394	0.48	1.321	1.28	0.778
Friends	1.0369	2.3894	0.000951	2.032	2.093	0.779	2.032	2.063	0.849	1.945	1.868	0.6931	1.928	2.04	0.637
Family	1.807	2.115	0.0201	1.871	1.938	0.752	1.923	1.603	0.0396	1.861	1.394	0.0127	1.795	1.96	0.468
A firefighter known to me	2.06	2.463	0.005691	2.164	1.968	0.398	2.172	2.015	0.3612	2.013	1.894	0.374	2.068	1.96	0.67
Fire Service recruitment events	1.408	1.189	0.0232	1.325	1.781	0.002	1.339	1.476	0.228	1.393	1.526	0.3822	1.37	1.88	0.005
Fire station open House	1.3063	1.273	0.6976	1.292	1.375	0.536	1.304	1.269	0.727	1.311	1.263	0.7	1.295	1.44	0.344
Attendance at social Fire Service event on station	1.2162	1.231	0.8369	1.209	1.343	0.255	1.232	1.142	0.303	1.227	1.131	0.388	1.2	1.4	0.136
Advisor in military service on completion of service period	1.246	1.095	0.0508	1.225	1.062	0.179	1.232	1.096	0.1335	1.261	1.131	0.291	1.259	1.08	0.224

Section 5 Factors that influenced firefighters to join the fire service



Factors that influenced firefighters to join the fire service



In the analysis between UK and USA, when looking at what influenced firefighters to join the fire service, seven factors scored below .05 and were statistically significant. These are:

- Local advertisements.
- National advertisements.
- Friends.
- Family.
- A firefighter known to me.
- A fire service recruitment event.
- Careers advisor in the military.

Only two factors were found when analysing the difference between men and women in the UK and USA and only one factor for the UK. These were:

- National advertisements (for both groups).
- Fire service recruitment event (for the comparisons of UK and USA only).

When analysing the difference between white and black firefighters the following three factors had P values below .05 for UK alone and for the UK and USA:

- National advertisement.
- Book on the fire service.
- Family.

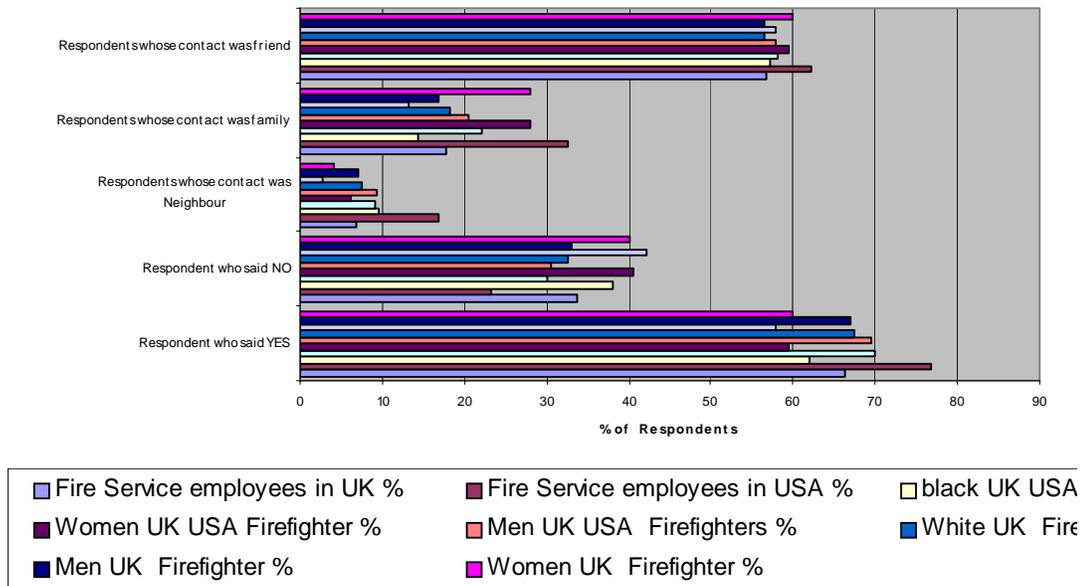
One additional factor was discovered to have a P Value of less than .05 when the analysis was done for the UK only between black and white firefighters. This was:

- Local advertisements.

Questionnaire Section 6 Summary Prior to joining the Service, % of respondents who knew a serving firefighter

Prior to joining the Service,% of respondents who knew a serving firefighter	Fire fighters UK total	Fire fighters UK %	Fire fighters USA Total	Fire fighters USA %	black UK USA Fire fighter Total	black UK USA Fire fighter %	White UK USA Fire fighter Total	White UK USA Fire fighter %	Women UK USA Fire fighter Total	Women UK USA Fire fighter %	Men UK USA Fire fighters USA total	Men UK USA Fire fighters %	White UK Fire fighter Total	White UK Fire fighter %	black UK Fire fighter total	black UK Fire fighter %	Men UK Fire fighter total	Men UK Fire fighter %	Women UK Fire fighter Total	Women UK Fire fighter %
Respondent who said YES	221	66.37	73	76.84	39	61.9	255	69.86	19	59.38	275	69.44	199	67.46	22	57.89	206	66.88	15	60
Respondent who said NO	112	33.63	22	23.16	24	38.1	110	30.14	13	40.63	121	30.56	96	32.54	16	42.11	102	33.12	10	40
Respondents whose contact was Neighbour	23	6.91	16	16.84	6	9.52	33	9.04	2	6.25	37	9.34	22	7.46	1	2.63	22	7.14	1	4
Respondents whose contact was family	59	17.72	31	32.63	9	14.29	81	22.19	9	28.13	81	20.45	54	18.31	5	13.16	52	16.88	7	28
Respondents whose contact was friend	189	56.76	59	62.11	36	57.14	212	58.08	19	59.38	229	57.83	167	56.61	22	57.89	174	56.46	15	60

Prior to joining the Service, % of respondents who knew a serving firefighter



In analysing connections that firefighters have prior to joining the fire service, the above table confirms the hypothesis that the majority of firefighters who join the service have some connection in the fire service. From the above table the following can be noted:

- In the UK, 66% of all firefighters joining the fire service have a connection prior to joining.
- 56% of firefighters joining the UK fire service will have a friend in the fire service.
- 17% of firefighters in the UK fire service have a member of the family in the service.

For the USA the figure for firefighters having connections in the service are even higher:

- 78% of firefighters in the service have a connection within the service.
- 62% of USA firefighters had a friend in the fire service prior to joining.
- In the sample grouping the USA 32% of firefighters had a member in the fire service prior to joining.

The above table also reveals a number of other interesting statistics which are:

- The USA has the highest percentage of connection within the fire service prior to joining at 78%.
- As a group, white firefighters had the highest percentage of connections in the fire service prior to joining at 69%.

For the UK the following information was also noted:

- 17% of firefighters who joined the fire service had a member of the family in the fire service prior to joining.
- Women had the highest percentage of family in the fire service prior to joining at 28%.
- Black firefighters had the lowest percentage of connection within the fire service prior to joining in all areas, ie friends, family and neighbours.

An analysis and conclusions from the above results can be found in Section 5.

4.3 Semi-Structured Interviews

A total of twelve semi-structured interviews were conducted in the UK and the USA. The number of interviews was restricted due to the industrial dispute in the UK and the lack of availability of some of the senior officers who had agreed to be interviewed. A sample of the questions used during the semi-structured interviews is attached as Appendix 1. The purpose of the interviews was to ascertain what the principal officers and equality officers of the service considered to be the key issues in recruiting from the under-represented groups. A secondary aim was to obtain best practice from the brigades who have taken steps toward changing the balance of their workforce. No names are attributed to the quotes or the summary of the replies as some of the respondents wished to remain anonymous and the author had agreed at the outset of the research to maintain confidentiality.

Summary of Responses:

In this section a selection of views that were expressed to the author are presented that reflect the general views found.

Q1 What practical steps (positive action or affirmative action) has your Fire Department taken to increase the numbers of black firefighters over the last five years?

'We have found that the use of role models to provide and deliver training to potential firefighter in the community using community colleges has been a major success as well as providing potential women and black recruits mentors for the applicants during the application process'. Black Senior Officer, Phoenix.

Q2 What practical steps (positive action, affirmative action) has your Brigade taken to increase the numbers of women firefighters over the last five years?

'We have carried out a full analysis of the practical and written test for entry into the fire service. All have been fully reviewed and this has improved the pass rates of women and black applicants'. Recruitment Officer, USA.

'We have set clear goals for us to achieve to increase the numbers of protected groups entering the service, we have set up a formal mentoring scheme for new entrants and for those in the service from the protected groups. We also intend to maximise our efforts within the minority community'. Phoenix Senior Officer, USA.

Q3 What are the beneficial outcomes of positive action and affirmative action for women and black members of the community and the fire service?

'Senior officers of the service are only now waking up to realise that cultural diversity will bring with it new knowledge, skills and ideas that will benefit the organisation'. White Fire Officer, Emmetsburg.

'Diversity is more than just words it must be a way of life and run through the organisation's procedures and policies like health and safety does'. Black Firefighter, UK.

'The benefit for the service must be made clear to all in the service. I believe the benefits are, employees become more productive when they are free to interact with all free of prejudices. The customer service base is better served because employees realise their hidden cultural differences and furthermore employees are better at feeling the needs of the community if they reflect the community'. Black Chief Fire Officer, USA.

'The workforce 2000 study tells us that the traditional pool of recruits into the fire service is shrinking and that if we are to recruit the quality of people needed for the service, the growth in the labour market will be found in black workers and women. It is this group we need to attract and target if we are to enlarge the pool we recruit from'. White Fire Officer, Emmetsburg.

'In day-to-day interactions with the community, a fire department is strengthened and enjoys more community support when the community members see themselves represented in the fire service. Since I joined Atlanta fire department over 25 years ago, the workforce has changed from a small number of black firefighters to what it is now of over 50% black firefighters. When I joined we had over 50 fire deaths to members of the black community a year and, through our community safety campaigns in the black community we now only have 20 fire deaths a year a clear benefit from the service changes in the workforce'. Black Senior Officer, Atlanta.

Q4 What do you believe are some of the negative outcomes of positive action for women and black members of the community and the fire service?

'Often when chief officers speak about diversity it's everybody's problem and we the firefighters are the problem that is why they (black firefighter and women) get such a hard time'. White Firefighter, USA.

Answers to questions 4, 5, 6, and 7 revealed that most brigades and fire departments carry out different degrees of monitoring and auditing the recruitment process. West Midlands Fire Service and Cambridge Fire and Rescue Service provided comprehensive auditing and review reports for this project, brigades looking for best practice are advised to evaluate the models used by these brigades to see if they meet their needs.

Q8 What more can fire departments (Chief Officers) do to increase representation of under-represented groups in the fire service?

'We need to analyse the job of a firefighter better in particular as the role is changing. We need to emphasise the educational skills side as much as the physical/practical side of the fire service. If we are to recruit more women into the fire service our current recruitment entry tests do not fully reflect the true job of a firefighter and these must change'. Recruitment Officer, UK

Further Information Section

In this section the respondents were able to cover issues that had not in their view been fully explored.

‘The history of the fire service is rich in tradition. Part of that tradition is at times a deep-seated resistance to change, even when the service is presented with clear and convincing evidence to change that will be of benefit to the service and the community. It fights that change. This is certainly the case when we look at why the fire service has not embraced the need to recruit more women and black firefighters.’ White Fire Officer, Emmetsburg.

‘Diversity does not require the fire service to compromise on quality, instead it should lead to the talented coming to the fore and bring a new insight into the community and one supporting the changing role of the fire service from an intervention service to one this is proactive and focused on prevention’. White Senior Officer, UK.

4.4 Focus Group

A summary of interviews undertaken by the author is given below. Black and ethnic minority firefighters offered suggestions on strategies and reasons why the service needs to adopt positive action in order to encourage more members of black and ethnic communities to join the fire service.

The purpose of the focus groups was to enable the author to gain a deeper understanding of the key issues relating to the recruitment of under-represented members of the community, that have been the focus of this report.

The focus group’s activities were conducted to a set structure, which was reviewed and refined during each group activity. Due to time constraints of the research project the rapid approach to focus groups, suggested by Kruger and Casey (2000) was adopted.

The groups ranged between five and ten people. In order to reduce observer bias, the author facilitated the groups by providing some standard background to the research project and then asked the group to consider the questions in Appendix 1.

Results of the questionnaires are summarised below. The majority of the black focus group participants emphasised that racism in the fire service needs to be tackled before they would consider promoting the fire service as a career to their family and friends. In addition, the focus group members made a number of suggestions that the service should consider to improve representation. These are listed below:

- The recruitment process should be job related and not used as a barrier.
- The recruitment process should identify and exclude racists.
- Racism should be severely dealt with and handled independently.
- More people from minority ethnic communities should be recruited and promoted on merit.
- Information about recruitment should be more accessible to all communities.
- Different cultural needs, such as adaptations to dress and places to pray, should be accommodated and understood, in the uniformed and non-uniformed sections of the fire service.
- The fire service needs to be seen to take steps to deal with racism in the service.

- Training should address diversity issues.
- The fire service needs to raise awareness of other cultures with all employees.
- Better support structures should be available for minority ethnic fire service staff, particularly those experiencing racism.
- Recruitment officers should talk to potential recruits from ethnic minority communities, face-to-face, and use role models from those communities as much as possible.
- The fire service should be more proactive in schools and colleges, presenting the fire service as a career rather than a job.
- Use more professional advertising materials, that will support and encourage black and women section of the community to apply.
- Diversity in the fire service should embrace all sections of the service and not just focus on the uniformed sections.

The focus group members and selected firefighters and officers also agreed that there needed to be more people from minority ethnic communities in the fire service, for reasons highlighted earlier in this report. The main reasons listed by respondents were:

- To support the work with local minority ethnic communities with regard to community safety.
- To contribute towards increasing cultural understanding and inspiring confidence among minority ethnic communities.

- To prevent potential racially motivated incidents in the workplace and in the community.
- As more black and ethnic firefighters are recruited, more would be available to take up officer posts.

Even though the focus groups perceived advantages to having more firefighters from black and ethnic communities, particularly to work with the local community, some respondents felt strongly that they should join the fire service to help society as a whole and for no other reason. This view is reflected by a black African American firefighter who said:

‘But it should not be a racial issue. There is no point in black people joining the fire service purely to solve fire service problems on diversity. You’ve got to join because you want to be firefighter and serve the community. Reverse discrimination never helped anybody, all it does is create friction amongst firefighters’. Black Firefighter, Phoenix.

4.5 Summary

The methodology adopted for the research provided a rich source of information on the range of factors impacting on the employment of black and women firefighters. This Section provided the data required to meet the needs of the hypothesis. The data confirmed that the majority of firefighters have a connection in the fire service prior to joining the fire service. Additional information on the key factors that influence and motivate firefighters to join the fire service was discovered and listed. More information was collected and obtained than could be included in this report. Therefore, only the information considered to be of most relevance and significance was included in this Section. The additional information will be made available and used

when this report is discussed and used by CACFOA and the other groups that supported the research. The following Section provides conclusions and recommendations of this report.

SECTION 5 CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 Introduction

The purpose of this section is to draw together the main points of this report and to draw conclusions from the results of the research reported in Sections 3 and 4. This section will also bring to the attention of the fire service, areas of further research and make recommendations based on the research. The author will continue to consult with key stakeholders and develop the recommendations at the conclusion of the Brigade Command Course.

5.2 Conclusions

The following hypothesis and objectives were set to focus the research:

The majority of people who join the service have a connection with a serving firefighter.

The research objectives were:

- To seek to determine if there is a difference between ethnic and gender groups in the connections they have prior to joining the service.
- To seek to determine if there is a difference between the USA and the UK when comparing connections that firefighters have prior to joining the service.
- To investigate the reasons that motivate people to join the service and what influenced them to join.

- To identify best practice from an analysis of the information received during the research.
- To identify a business case for addressing diversity in fire service.
- To draw conclusions from the research findings and make recommendations for a possible way forward.

The hypothesis was tested primarily by the use of the questionnaires. Section 6 of the questionnaire collated the results from respondents regarding the connections that firefighters had prior to joining the fire service. These results confirmed the views expressed by Bucke (1994) and the findings were much higher than expected by the author in that, in the UK and USA respectively, 69% and 79% of firefighters joining the service had connections with a serving firefighter. This research was also able to confirm that friends were the largest group in the UK and USA who motivated and influenced firefighters to join. The research also showed that in the UK, at 39%, women had the largest influence of any group, from family members in the fire service of the groups surveyed. The author did not find this surprising as, when attending the IABPFF conference, a black Chief Fire Officer of the association said:

‘Do not be surprised that your efforts to address under-representation leads to more white women joining more quickly than black sections of the community. You will find as you change your culture and procedure then white male firefighters will begin to encourage their partners and daughters to join the service’. Black, Senior Officer, Buffalo, IABPFF Conference.

The above was further confirmed during the BCC, when the author attended a passing out parade for fire service recruits at the Fire Service College, of the four women who completed the course, two had partners in the service.

The majority of firefighters join the service because of six factors, these being: Job satisfaction, working as a team, practical aspects of the job, physical aspects of the job, opportunities to serve the community and the excitement of attending emergencies; this confirms the finding of the research of Shuttleworth (2001) and McGill (2002). These six factors do not acknowledge that the service has changed its role from being predominantly firefighting to being more proactive in the community, particularly in education on fire safety matters. This also does not take account of the wider role of the service in special services and working in partnerships with community groups on matters such as crime and disorder and the safer community agenda. The service needs to take account of the findings of this report and develop strategies that will ensure applicants are fully aware of the roles and competencies needed by a modern firefighter. To do this it will need to state clearly the competencies, skills, and emotional intelligence criteria required of a firefighter. The service will need to communicate this to all members of the service as well as the community it is serving. Firefighters currently influence over 60% of all new entrants in the UK and, they will need to be made fully aware of these changing criteria.

When analysing what factors influenced firefighters to join the fire service, not surprisingly, the main influences were not proactive measures taken by the service but friends and family. The influence of role models noted in Phoenix should not be overlooked by the service. This is an area that has not been properly resourced in UK fire brigades, other than in LFCDA and in WMFS. The work of the LFCDA outreach team in providing dedicated and committed resources is worthy of note and further study.

The third objective was to try to establish how the firefighters found out that the service was recruiting at the time of application. Once again, friends and family played a major part. Firefighters also relied on ringing the brigade to find out if they were recruiting. To ensure the callers receive accurate and appropriate information and that the call handler is able to direct under-represented groups to mentors or access courses (if the brigade or department are running them), the call handler should be fully trained to handle calls from all sections of the community. Often positive action activities occur in isolation from the recruitment section. Call handlers are therefore unable to direct potential applicants from the under-represented sections of the service to possible sources of further advice.

The Internet was used by some applicants to find out about the fire service prior to joining. The author believes this is a growing area and in order to meet this need the fire service (CACFOA and or ODPM) should develop a professional web site giving all sections of the community the information needed. Additionally, each brigade should develop its own web page that supports the recruitment of women and black firefighters.

The questionnaires and interviews with firefighters revealed a lack of understanding regarding the concerns of the fire service and Government about the under-representation of women and black sections of the community in the fire service. The business case for diversity was also found to be poorly understood by firefighters and fire officers. CFO McGuirk (2002) is the first principal officer to write a major report that supports the need to address the issue of building a business case. Section 3.5 summarises his views and supports them with practical examples from the USA. Mathis

(1999) makes a strong case for diversity and in particular recruitment of women when he cites the example of the Los Angeles Fire Department paying out large sums of money in discrimination cases brought by women firefighters. Large sums have also been paid out in the UK following sexual and racial discrimination cases. Mathis makes the point that by addressing the issues of diversity the fire departments could have avoided the payouts and the ensuing bad publicity, which also has a damaging effect on recruitment.

The author's findings conclude that if the two approaches are measured in terms of which country has made the greatest strides to change the balance to its work force then it is clear that affirmative action has been far more successful. The merits of the two methods have not been fully discussed in this project and no comparative studies were found during the literature search. This is worthy of further study particularly as the figure for the two approaches are so stark and much mythology exists as to the merits of each approach. The frustrations of the current system of positive action restricts many chief officers in pursuing radical change. The author supports the need for Government to look into and provide better legislation to support the need of public sector organisations to change the representation of their workforces.

The literature review confirmed that if the fire service is to meet its challenging targets, then it will need to take on board a number of issues, in particular:

- Manage diversity issues by using robust change management models.

- Take on the leadership challenge issued by the Commission for Racial Equality.
- Adopt a public sector audit, monitoring and review model or develop a fire service model for diversity review, audit and management.

The fire service needs to carefully examine the finding of this report and each brigade needs to carry out its own survey and match it against the database to see to what extent connections play a part in their recruitment process. If the fire service continues to recruit in the manner it has historically then it may, as the culture changes and becomes more positive towards under-represented groups, result in more women joining. However, it is unlikely that sufficient black firefighters will join the service as insufficient role models are currently employed to make a significant difference. The fire service should engage all uniformed sections of the service in its drive to recruit more firefighters from the under-represented groups.

Senior officers in the UK and the USA expressed a view that in terms of strategy, the fire service needs to get better at publishing and sharing best practices. More collaboration and partnership work in the area of recruitment and diversity would enable smaller fire brigades to take advantage of economies of scale. The CACFOA equality group, by setting up the national, regional and the practitioners committees goes some way to meet this need. The east of England CACFOA group is one group that is making good use of sharing best practice. CACFOA regularly organises seminars to meet this need, as does the FBU by running national and regional equality schools for its officials. This enables the sharing of best practice. More could be done if

all the stakeholders worked together in partnership and develop joint seminars and training.

This project, by the use a multi faceted methodology, confirmed that firefighters who join the service are influenced and motivated by the connections they have in the service prior to joining. The research has also been able to confirm that where brigades have taken positive action to provide mentors and role models this has had success. In Phoenix, Arizona, the fire department has support programmes for women, black and Hispanic sections of the community. West Midlands Fire Service has a full time black sub officer working in the community, utilising a Government funded initiative (Connecting Communities). This has provided a number of applicants to the fire service in the past year:

‘In less than a year I have been able to get over 200 black members of the community to register an interest in joining the fire service. If I could get just ten percent of these to pass the entrance test I would be happy’. Sub Officer Smith, West Midlands Fire Service.

In Avon Fire Service the Connecting Communities Programme has been run jointly with the police and probation service. The project manager has been very pleased with the results to date and has placed a number of people into the police and probation service. Due to the low numbers recruited into the fire service in Avon, he believes it will take time. Cambridge Fire service also provided positive feedback to the questionnaire sent to senior fire officers. The positive action initiatives that the above brigades are following are worthy of further study and evaluation.

The fire service should conduct a survey and research into the positive action campaigns that are currently being conducted and report the best practices to the service. The Fire Service Inspectorate should also take advantage of the Connecting Communities Initiatives and if possible run one from the centre, supporting the service in its pursuit to meet the diversity targets.

5.3 Recommendations

The author recommends that:

- 5.3.1 The Fire Service College takes note of the lack of research material in this area found in BCC and DCC research reports. Course tutors and CFOs who are mentors should take note of the areas highlighted in this report as needing further study and direct future students from 2003 onwards toward those areas.
- 5.3.2 The questionnaire and database used for this research be further developed by the CACFOA benchmarking group over the next year to support recruitment and equality officers in fire brigades.
- 5.3.3 Equality trainers review their training courses and objectives as soon as possible and address the poor understanding found at all levels of the fire service and develop an understanding of the terms (highlighted in this report) used and the business case for diversity.
- 5.3.4 CACFOA's equality group develop an audit, review and monitoring model, that will support brigades in their work, as well as support the sharing of best practice.

- 5.3.5 The fire service should take note of the high numbers of firefighters who are recruited by serving firefighters. Fire brigades in the UK and fire departments in the USA need to develop strategies that acknowledge and take account of this fact.
- 5.3.6 The Fire Service Inspectorate develop the role of the National Fire Safety Centre in supporting brigades and also look at ways in which it can provide more resources for positive action campaigns.
- 5.3.7 A central out-reach team be established either by the Fire Service Inspectorate or consideration be given to run it from the Fire Service College. (One advantage of running the team from the Fire Service College would be it could also provide a valuable training resource as well as recruitment out-reach work)
- 5.3.8 Minority groups be co-ordinated in a national forum (including uniformed and support staff employed in the fire service) in order that they can work together to support the above recommendations, and provide mentors and support for members of the public who wish to join the service and those in the service wishing to progress.
- 5.3.9 Resources be provided by Government for the Fire Service Inspectorate which can be accessed by under-represented groups who will support the above recommendations and the personal development of individuals, such as attendance of courses and seminars at national and international level.

5.4 Summary

More information was collected than could be included in this report. Some of the results and data highlighted in Sections 3 and 4 have not been discussed in this Section. These will form the subject of further research and discussion by the author with the stakeholders who have contributed to this report, in particular CACFOA, FBU, B&EMM and Women in the Fire Service Network.

The findings established that serving firefighters play a major part in the recruitment of firefighters. This report also established that a number of brigades who are providing positive action campaigns that utilise operational fire service employees in the recruitment of under-represented groups are finding this to be a successful policy. The project identified a number of areas where further research is needed and also established the need to build on the survey that has been carried out during the course of this project. Recommendations have been made for the fire service and its key stakeholders, as well as recommendations for the author so that the fire service can improve the representation of women and black firefighters in UK fire brigades.

This research project should not be allowed to sit on a shelf like the Bucke Report, but along with McGuirk's (2002) report, 'Are We Serious?', should be seen as an opportunity to move forward.

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Appendices

Appendix 1 Sample Semi-Structured Questions for interviews

International Research Project

Brigade Command Course 2002

USA Senior officer questionnaire

This questionnaire has been designed to seek your views and perceptions in order to support a study into the recruitment of firefighters into the Service for a Brigade Command Course research project and also for submission towards a master's degree.

The purpose of the study is to identify the methods by which members of the public are influenced to join the Service in order that the limited resources of Fire Department recruitment sections may be more effectively targeted.

Confidentiality will be maintained and no individual replies will be made available to any other persons or bodies.

This information will be analysed by me and will only be used collectively no individual records will be made available to any other persons or bodies and the information will be treated as strictly confidential at all times.

The general questionnaire as attached has been completed by all ranks although I am more interested in your views in implementing, setting and monitoring policy please feel free to complete the questionnaire for principle officers and the general one.

Thank you for your assistance.

WHEN COMPLETED POST WITH ATTACHMENTS

TO: Deputy Chief Officer Singh

Bedfordshire and Luton Fire and Rescue Service

Southfields Road

Kempston

Bedford MK 42 7NR

England UK.

or email: jagtarbasi@yahoo.com

Appendix 1

Supplementary questions for principal officers responsible for recruitment in USA

This questionnaire has been designed to be completed by principle officers responsible for recruitment or specialist recruitment officer in the USA.

1.	Name:	
2.	Email address:	
3.	Contact tel no:	

1. Has your department taken practical steps or any affirmative action?

YES or NO

2. Has your Brigade increased the numbers of black firefighter over the last five years? (If you have any internal reports that may support or add to your reply please attach)

YES or NO

3. Has your Department increased the numbers of Women firefighter over the last five years? (If you have any internal reports that may support or add to your reply please attach)

YES or NO

4. Has your Department evaluated what would be the beneficial outcomes of positive action for women and black members of the community and the fire service? (If you have any internal reports that may support or add to your reply please attach)

YES or NO

5. What do you believe are the negative and what are the positive outcomes of affirmative action for women and black members of the community and the fire service Please list three that you regard the most important for each?

Positive Outcome

1

2

3

Negative Outcomes

1

2

3

6. Does your department monitor the recruitment of black and women firefighters? (if you have any internal reports that may support or add to your reply please attach in particular if you have data of numbers of white black and women firefighter in your Brigade over the last five years.)

YES or NO

7. Does your department monitor and record information regarding black and women firefighter. (On applications, after testing procedure, during initial training, progression and retention, exit interviews if you have data that may useful to this report can you please attach.)

YES or NO

8. Have any internal reports have been produced for policy board level or fire authority level that may be useful for this research. (If you have any internal reports that may support would you be happy to share them)

YES or NO

9. In your opinion what more can fire officers or fire departments do to increase representation of under-represented groups in the fire service? Please list activities or policies you believe that should be taken up.

10. Have you anything further to add. (Please attach additional)

The purpose of this questionnaire is to capture as much best practice as possible and then to carry out some in depth one to one interviews following analysis of the data. I will forward a copy of my report to all Brigades Departments that support this project and where possible will be happy to discuss both the findings and recommendations with those who wish to have further information.

Appendix 2 Stakeholder analysis CFO McGuirk 'Are We Serious'

<u>Internal Stakeholders</u>	<u>External Stakeholders</u>
CACFOA	'The Community'
LGA	Government
Office of Deputy Prime Minister(ODPM)	CRE
LGA	EOC
Office of Deputy Prime Minister (ODPM)	Disability Rights Commission
HMFSI (UK and Scotland)	Special Interest Groups
COSLA	Recruitment Authorities/Bodies, eg Connexions
NJC	Schools/Colleges – Career Bodies
FBU	Faith Communities
UNISON	QCA/ Accrediting Bodies
RFU	Welsh Assembly
FOA	Northern Ireland
Individual Fire Authorities	Isle of Man
Fire Service College	IFE
APFO	European Fire Services
Minister for Fire	Other Government Departments
Fire Policy Unit	Greater London Assembly
Greater London Assembly	European Parliament
Scottish Executive	
Networking Women in the Fire Service (NWFS)	

Appendix 3 Commission for Racial Equality Ten Point Plan

During the seminar in 1998 in Sunderland at the stadium of light the author highlighted the need for leaders to demonstrate positive leadership by taking up the CRE leadership challenge and listed the following advice taken from the CRE guidance's to what leaders in the service could do to support equality in their brigades. During the seminar ten practical steps were offered. These were:

- Use their position on committees and boards to put equality issues high on the agenda.
- Raise equality issues and report on achievements in annual reports.
- Make public statements and speeches on the subject of equality.
- Extend personal support and endorsement of equality into the mainstream of the service and offer support to B&EMM, women's networks, seminars and social functions.
- Ensure that they are at the forefront of Best Practice.
- Encourage other leaders/senior officers in their brigade to take up the ten point plan.
- Take genuine pride in promoting the success of their equality programmes.
- Call for regular progress reports on equality issues.
- Steer the development, setting performance targets goals and milestones - on programmes of practical action that will help eliminate discrimination and unequal participation.
- Promote and support zero tolerance of racist and sexist behaviour.

The above list was taken from the leadership plan issued by the CRE and modified to meet the needs of the fire service by the author the CRE ten point plan also goes on offer further advice to leaders and that is leader should:

- Develop an equal opportunities policy covering recruitment, promotion and training.
- Set an action plan with targets so that staff have a clear idea of what can be achieved and by when.
- Provide training for all people including managers, throughout the organisation so they can understand the importance of equal opportunities. Provide extra training for recruitment and training staff.
- Review recruitment, selection and training procedures regularly to ensure that good intentions are being put to practice.
- Draw up clear and justifiable job criteria and ensure that these are objective and job related.
- Offer pre-employment training where appropriate to prepare potential job applicants for selection tests and interviews and positive action training to help under represented groups.
- Consider the organisations image.
- Consider flexible working, career breaks and provide childcare facilities etc.
- Develop links with the local community groups, schools.

Appendix 4 **SPLENDID Model**

A model used in the USA and supported by the US Federal Employment Opportunities Commission (1997, P.8)

- **Study** - Know the law, the standard that define obligations and the various barriers to EEO.
- **Plan** - Know ones own circumstances. Define ones problems, purpose solutions and develop strategies for achieving them.
- **Lead** - senior, middle and lower management must champion the cause of diversity as a business imperative and provide leadership for the successful attainment of the vision of a diverse workforce at all levels of the management.
- **Encourage** - Companies should encourage the attainment of diversity by all managers and employees and the structure and reward systems to reinforce those corporate objectives. Link pay and performance not only to technical competence but also for how employees interact support and respect each other.
- **Notice** - Take notice of the impact of your practices, after monitoring and assessing company progress. Self-analysis is a key part of this process. Ensure that a corrective strategy does not cause or result in unfairness.
- **Discussion** - communicate and reinforce the message that diversity is a business asset and a key element of business success in a national and global market.
- **Inclusion** - Bring everyone into the process, include white males. Help them understand that EEO incentives are good for the company and good for everyone. Include them in the analysis, planning and implementation.
- **Dedication** - Stay persistent in your quest. Long-term gains for these practices may cost in the short term. Invest in the needed human and capital resources.

Appendix 5 Sample Questionnaire

International Research Project

Brigade Command Course 2002

This questionnaire has been designed to seek your views and perceptions in order to support a study into the recruitment of firefighters into the Service for a Brigade Command Course research project and also for submission towards a master degree.

The purpose of the study is to identify the methods by which members of public are influenced to join the Service in order that the limited resources of brigade's recruitment sections may be more effectively targeted.

Confidentiality will be maintained and no individual replies will be made available to any other persons or bodies.

In completing the attached questionnaire you may leave blank items in Section 1 that you feel are confidential.

Appendix 5**Section 1** (This is optional, may be left blank.)

1.	Name:	
2.	Email address:	
3.	Contact tel no:	

Section 2

1.	Department:				
2.	Year of joining:				
3.	Current Rank				
4	Male		Female		
5	Age at Joining				
6	Ethnic Origin: I would declare my ethnic origin as: (please tick <u>one</u> of the boxes that best describes your ethnic origin)				
White	British		European		
Other. Please give details.					
Asian or Asian British	Indian		Pakistani		Bangladeshi
Other Asian background. Give details					
Black or Black British	Caribbean		African		
Any other Black background					
Chinese					

Appendix 5**Section 3**

From the list below indicate by placing a tick on the 1 to 4 scale those aspects of the Service that motivated you to join the Fire Service. Please place a tick for each item listed.

	1 Not at all	2 Minor	3 Moderate	4 Major
Being part of a disciplined service				
Being part of a uniformed service				
Good career progression opportunities				
Duty system				
Excitement of attending emergencies				
Friends in Fire Service				
Family in Fire Service				
Job satisfaction				
Opportunity to serve the community				
Physical aspects of job				
Practical aspects of job				
Working as part of a team				
Out of work at the time				
Pay				
Other. Please give details				

Appendix 5**Section 4**

How did you find out that the Fire Service was recruiting at the time of your application? (Please tick as appropriate you may tick more than one.)	
Local newspaper advertisement	
Radio advertisement	
Fire Service literature	
Fire Service recruitment event	
Local fire station	
Friends	
A firefighter known to me	
Family	
Access course	
Telephone call to Brigade	
From the internet	
Other please give details, eg Connecting communities programmes	

Appendix 5**Section 5**

Which of the factors below influenced you to join the Fire Service? (Please Mark as appropriate.)

	Not Influenced	Minor Influenced	Moderate Influence	Strongly Influenced
TV programmes on the Fire Service				
Local advertisements				
National advertisements				
Book on the Fire Service				
Careers advisers				
Friends				
Family				
A firefighter known to me				
Fire Service recruitment events				
Fire station open day				
Attendance at social Fire Service event on station				
Advisor in military service on completion of service period				
Other. Please give details.				

Section 6

Prior to joining the Service, did you know any serving firefighter? Please tick as appropriate.

	Yes	No
Friend		
Family		
Neighbour		
Other Give details		

Appendix 5**MONITORING EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES**

In order to measure how effective Equal Opportunities Policy and recruitment procedures have been in the fire service this research project has an ethnic monitoring section on page one of the questionnaire.

The ethnic origin categories you are asked to complete are as below. Please ensure you tick the box that best describes your ethnic background:

White:

Persons born in Europe, and or whose forbears were of European origin.

Black - African:

Persons born in Africa, and or whose recent forbears are of African origin. This does not include persons of Asian origin who have settled in Africa.

Black - Caribbean:

Persons born in the Caribbean, and or whose recent forbears are of Caribbean origin.

Black - Other (please specify):

Black people whose ethnic origin, and or that of their recent forbears, is other than African or Caribbean.

Indian

Persons born in India, and or whose recent forbears are of Indian origin.

Pakistani:

Persons born in Pakistan, and or whose recent forbears are of Pakistani origin.

Bangladeshi:

Persons born in Bangladesh, and or whose recent forbears are of Bangladeshi origin.

Chinese:

Persons born in China, and or whose recent forbears are of Chinese origin.

Mixed Race:

Persons whose parents are from different ethnic groups as defined in this classification system, eg Black - Caribbean and White, Indian and White etc.

Other (please describe):

Persons whose ethnic origin is not described above, eg Arab, East African Asian, and other Asian etc.

This information will be analysed by me and will only be used collectively no individual records will be made available to any other persons or bodies and the information will be treated as strictly confidential at all times.

Thank you for your assistance.