

Toward Diversity II

Commitment to Cultural Change

The Second Fire Service Equal Opportunities Action Plan

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Produced by the Equal Opportunities Task Group

December 2001

Department for Transport, Local Government and the Regions: London

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Introduction

This Action Plan was developed at a two day workshop by the Equal Opportunities Task Group (EOTG) of the Central Fire Brigades Advisory Council for England and Wales. The workshop was attended by representatives from the Local Government Association, the Fire Brigades Union (including the Black and Ethnic Minority Members National Committee, the Women's National Committee, and the Gay and Lesbian National Committee), the Chief and Assistant Chief Fire Officers' Association, Networking Women in the Fire Service, the Department for Transport, Local Government and the Regions (Fire Policy Division and HM Fire Service Inspectorate for England and Wales), HM Fire Service Inspectorate for Scotland and the Home Office (Race Equality Unit). The workshop was facilitated by Opinion Research Services.

The workshop sought to take into account and respond positively to the views expressed by the fire service about the first Action Plan 'Toward Diversity – Promoting Cultural Change'. The EOTG recognised that although reaction to 'Toward Diversity' from within the fire service had been mixed, the Action Plan had nonetheless succeeded in having a significant influence on the momentum of the service's equal opportunities programme.

The EOTG agreed that the principles and values which 'Toward Diversity' sought to establish should be reflected in the successor document. This new Action Plan therefore retains at its core the benchmarks and behaviours promoted by its predecessor, carrying forward many of the same actions with the objectives of setting a consistent policy model and building on the progress achieved by 'Toward Diversity'.

The EOTG, having previously examined issues of internal culture, had concluded that the following principles should be embedded into the ethos and culture of the organisation through its policies and practices :

- All communities should be involved in the service;
- The service should have a team culture that is open and inclusive at all times, at all levels;
- The contribution of all members of the organisation should be recognised and valued;
- Harassment and bullying are unacceptable;
- Culture should be based on trust not fear;
- Equal treatment and fairness is afforded to every member of the organisation;
- In service delivery, all members of the community are treated with equal fairness and respect.

The cultural change required by the fire service must actively engage the whole workforce, uniformed and non-uniformed, by getting people to think and act differently. To achieve this change every member of the fire service must treat colleagues with dignity and respect, irrespective of race, nationality, ethnic or national origins, religion, sex, marital status, sexual orientation or disability. But change is not solely about the fire service looking

inward. As a local public service provider, it also carries the responsibility to communicate with and involve all sections of the community in order to better understand its needs. Senior management initiatives are an essential contribution to the process of change but cannot by themselves achieve cultural diversity. Achievement of this requires commitment at all levels of the organisation. The EOTG recognises that change cannot be imposed throughout the fire service and it is therefore working to encourage, influence and promote continued progress.

The equalities targets agreed by the service have been introduced to improve the representation of women and ethnic minorities. In this way they underpin the programme set out in the Action Plan to achieve equality and diversity throughout the service. The targets alone will not deliver change, nor should they be the sole driver for change: there has to be a genuine acceptance of the benefits of diversity at all levels of the organisation.

The EOTG commends this Action Plan to the fire service and trusts it will be welcomed as a practical, sensitive document designed to give encouragement, direction and assistance in taking forward equality and diversity programmes at local level.

**The Equal Opportunities Task Group,
Central Fire Brigades Advisory Council for England and Wales**

Membership of the Equal Opportunities Task Group:

Black and Ethnic Minority Members National Committee *

Chief and Assistant Chief Fire Officers' Association

Fire Brigades Union

Fire Policy Division, Department for Transport, Local Government and the Regions

Gay and Lesbian National Committee *

Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Fire Services for England and Wales, Department for Transport, Local Government and the Regions

Local Government Association

Networking Women in the Fire Service

Women's National Committee *

*** a committee of the Fire Brigades Union**

Actions

In the sections below, the actions are set out in the following format:

1. **Each action is stated ... followed by ...**
 - ❖ A fuller explanation or amplification ... and ...
 - Where possible, an illustration is provided ... with ...
 - Some pointers towards implementation.

Leadership

1. **Chief Fire Officers should develop and communicate a clear statement of core values and commitment to diversity to all levels of the service.**
 - ❖ Fire services should not only publish formal statements of values, but should make sure they are understood and accepted by all employees.
 - For example, fire services should publish and circulate to all staff their core values, not just through occasional, formal memos, but by using a range of media and regular face-to-face communication in team briefings.
 - Communication is best when done regularly – little and often. Fire services might usefully take this opportunity to review their strategies for communicating key ideas and policies at all levels within the service.
2. **Chief Fire Officers should implement the leadership agenda regarding the commitment to diversity.**
 - ❖ Leadership is a challenging role that is constantly subject to new demands in the modern fire service. Fire services must embrace the challenge of diversity, not as a secondary responsibility but as a core function.
 - Chief Fire Officers should ensure that not only they, but their fellow officers, are developed in such a way that they are properly able to apply the skills of leadership. Chief Fire Officers should ensure that the methods of leadership implemented within their service are consistent with the stated commitment to the promotion of diversity.
 - Ensuring good leadership requires a continuing commitment. One possible route towards the desired change is for fire services to implement a 360 degree feedback system – a number of which exist as models for adaptation, such as the Cabinet Office Top Management System.

3. Chief Fire Officers should develop and implement their own local action plan to ensure equality and fairness within their fire service.

- ❖ Each fire service's action plan should be based upon the recommendations in HM Fire Service Inspectorate's thematic review 'Equality and Fairness in the Fire Service' and this document. Chief Fire Officers should also have regard to the Equality and Fairness at Work Expectations issued by HM Inspectorate.
- ❑ Actions plans must include procedures for monitoring their implementation and effectiveness and should be developed in conjunction with representative bodies.
- Fire services should routinely conduct self-assessments. In particular, fire services should refer in detail to HM Inspectorate's Equality and Fairness Checklist (Part Two, Appendix E of 'Equality and Fairness in the Fire Service'). Gender equality and race equality checklists are available from the appropriate equality commissions. The Employers' Forum on Disability also publishes a ten point agenda. The Advisory, Conciliation and Arbitration Service (ACAS) has an advisory booklet on considerations in formulating employment policies. Addresses and Contact details are listed under Advisory Bodies at the back of the Action Plan.

4. Chief Fire Officers should encourage and enable minority role models and champions within fire services to participate in activities that support diversity.

- ❖ Minority role model 'champions' can make an essential contribution in promoting equality, but fire services must beware of the dangers of tokenism and using employees insensitively for 'public relations.'
- ❑ Role model champions should be an important part of a genuine fire service aspiration to promote cultural change and diversity. Isolated examples to demonstrate official policy carry little conviction in practice. Ethnic minority, female, gay, lesbian and disabled members of fire services should be involved in internal and external programmes (such as training, lectures, seminars and careers fairs) that promote the fire service as an increasingly diverse organisation.
- As well as encouraging minority role models to promote the fire service, fire services should ensure that they have sufficient access to support networks for their champions, and that appropriate recognition is given for their contribution. Managers must, however, be sensitive to the views of the individual regarding participation, and must ensure that individuals do not suffer from 'over-exposure'. Information about support groups is provided at the back of the Action Plan.

5. Chief Fire Officers should promote positive action initiatives that target under-represented groups in the community as an integral part of their recruitment procedures.

- ❖ Fire services should be as pro-active as possible in taking action to encourage under-represented groups to apply to all sections of the service, seeking advice from the equality commissions and central government as appropriate. While some fire services are anxious about straying from positive action to positive discrimination (which is, of course, illegal), the basic distinction is clear. Positive action means using appropriate and effective means to encourage previously disadvantaged groups to apply to the service; whereas positive discrimination means giving them an unfair advantage in the selection process itself. In other words, proper targets for balanced representation of minority groups does not mean setting appointment quotas.

- ❑ The Equal Opportunities Commission (EOC) has published advice on positive action within its Code of Practice on Sex Discrimination, and a Good Practice Guide ('How to Manage Successful Positive Action under Sections 47 and 48 of the Sex Discrimination Act'). There is also a Commission for Racial Equality (CRE) publication 'Positive Action and Equal Opportunity in Employment'.
- Research has found that the fire service has a low image profile as a potential career among under-represented groups, therefore fire services need to be as proactive as possible in promoting the range of career opportunities if the service is to meet its often stated objective of becoming more reflective of the community it serves. The Central Office of Information has produced national career information material which seeks to address the research findings.

Culture and Diversity, Surveys and Audits

6. **Fire services should regularly survey and monitor the views and attitudes of the local community on the service delivery in their area.**
 - ❖ In order to ensure they treat all sections of the community fairly, sensitively and effectively, fire services should monitor whether their public surveys and consultations reveal variations in the views of different groups. While monitoring possible ethnic and gender variations is particularly important, fire services should also take account of possible variations in views by age, disability, area, employment status and housing tenure. Monitoring is not an end in itself, but should be used to inform action plans for service reviews.
 - ❑ All survey questionnaires should include properly designed profile questions that identify respondents' characteristics while preserving confidentiality of the information and their views. Survey findings should be able to be broken down by the variety and combination of factors referred to above.
 - CACFOA has collaborated at regional level on survey work under Best Value. Further information can be obtained from CACFOA Personnel & Training Committee.
7. **Fire services should actively monitor the perceptions of the community about the fire service.**
 - ❖ As well as considering views about service delivery, fire services should also regularly monitor minority groups' perceptions of the fire service itself, ensuring that all groups in the community are included in the survey.
 - ❑ Effective monitoring of minority groups' views of the fire service needs careful design that goes beyond Action 6 above. In order to effectively obtain the views of all sections of the community fire services will need to use a range of techniques, including liaison with community groups, periodic community forums, qualitative research through focus groups and quantitative surveys. The proper goal of monitoring is for fire services to develop effective action plans for recruitment, equalities policies and community fire safety. Fire services should focus not only on community leaders, but should seek to form links with careers officers in order to encourage greater awareness of the fire service as a career.

- Survey data from questionnaires on community fire safety and perceptions of the fire service as a career can be obtained from the Fire Information Research and Evaluation Services (FIRES) Partnership. The findings of the research conducted by C3 Consulting (four reports published under cover of Fire Service Circulars 12/1999 and 4/2000) should also be noted.
- 8. Fire services should conduct regular audits to determine whether links with minority communities could be improved/strengthened.**
- ❖ The audit should involve a critical review of procedures for liaising and consulting with minority communities. The audit should consider the effectiveness of these procedures – from both the fire service’s and the minority communities’ points of view. Procedures should be reviewed in the light of these views.
 - As well as involving their role model champions in community liaison, fire services should seek to establish a variety of links within the community. Fire services need to consider whether their liaison meetings have sufficient notification and clear – and interesting – agendas; and they should consider whether their meetings are representative and contribute to community fire safety and the equalities agenda.
 - Fire services should share good practice in community links through their regional groups.
- 9. Fire services should conduct an internal cultural audit based on nationally agreed core questions about equality and diversity values in order to inform their ongoing equality and fairness strategies.**
- ❖ Such audits are valuable and the EOTG wishes to encourage their implementation. But it is recognised that the term ‘cultural audit’ is open to a range of interpretations that could include quantitative and/or qualitative aspects.
 - Ideally, internal audits should cover all categories of employees, including trainees and even applicants.
 - Full implementation of this action point requires national agreement not only on clear and measurable core indicator questions for comparative benchmarking and but also on the survey-audit methods to be used. The EOTG is considering the issue of guidance to the service on core values (see Action 25).
- 10. Fire services must continue to review their practices, identify any that are inappropriate*, and implement changes required to support progress on the diversity and equality agenda.**
- ❖ Fire services must examine inappropriate practices critically to consider whether they obstruct progress towards diversity and equality.
 - The Central Office of Information’s recent commission to review the national career literature included as part of an examination of the service’s external image interviews with women and ethnic minorities. It was found that a number of established organisational and cultural practices created barriers to recruitment. This is not the place to exhaustively detail all practices, behaviours and rituals that might fall within a definition of ‘inappropriate’ but the following is illustrative:

- the term 'brigade'; **
 - priority of rank over role; rank markings;
 - roll call; passing out parades; mess dinners;
 - separate facilities ('officers and other ranks');
 - barracks style working/sleeping arrangements;
 - a culture of physique and endurance;
 - some physical requirements, and implementation/use of current disciplinary regulations.
- Reviews should consult different sections of the service as well as stakeholders and community groups. Fire services need to consult across all sections of the workforce and within the community. The EOTG would like to hear the experiences and conclusions of those fire services that have already conducted a review. The Central Fire Brigades Advisory Council's National Uniform Task Group is currently reviewing operational and non-operational clothing styles.

* The 'Equality and Fairness in the Fire Service' thematic review highlighted characteristics which it concluded have no place in a civilian emergency service. Subsequently, 'Toward Diversity – Promoting Cultural Change' recommended that fire services should undertake an internal justification exercise of their own practices.

** In this document the term 'fire service' has replaced 'fire brigade', wherever appropriate, in recognition that 70 % no longer title themselves as a 'brigade'.

Policy, Provision, Training and Development

11. **Each fire service to develop and communicate to all staff its policies on bullying and harassment along with effective procedures for implementing, monitoring and reviewing the policy.**
- ❖ This requirement follows from Action 1 – any statement of core values should make plain that bullying and harassment are unacceptable. Fire services should take steps to regularly communicate these policies to all members of the workforce in order to re-emphasise the unacceptability of such behaviour and ensure that all staff are aware of the policies.
 - Employees at all levels should be made aware that bullying is not always a matter of overt brutality, but includes threats and other forms of intimidation, while harassment can take many forms. The Fire Brigades Union booklet 'All Different, All Equal' provides advice on issues of harassment, bullying and discrimination. There is also a joint policy document issued by CACFOA and the FBU.
 - Fire services should consider using employee surveys to monitor the success of their strategies for communicating and enforcing these key ideas at all levels within the service.

- 12. Appropriate development, supported by regular training, should be provided for those responsible for implementing bullying and harassment policies.**
- ❖ All managers should be trained to recognise bullying and harassment, and how to deal with such situations confidently and fairly.
 - ❑ Training will raise their awareness and enable them to seek informal resolutions where possible, providing they can be assured that the problems will not recur.
 - Fire services should establish support networks both for victims of bullying and harassment and for those dealing with these issues. Above all, in order to come forward, complainants need to feel confident about the fire service's processes. It is important that all staff, no matter what their ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, religion or disability, should be confident of their right to work in an environment free from bullying or harassment.
- 13. Fire services should review all their development programmes to ensure that equality and diversity are included routinely – and that both language and presentation are non-discriminatory and free from bias.**
- ❖ Equality and diversity issues should be mainstreamed and included routinely in development programmes.
 - ❑ Much language is a matter of style and taste, but everyone should know that, for example, 'fireman' is sexist whereas 'firefighter' is gender neutral.
 - Fire services should involve their specialist advisor in the review (see Action 15).
- 14. Fire services should ensure that the fundamental values and issues of diversity form part of the development programme undertaken by all staff, and this should be supported by locally based training and development activities.**
- ❖ Personal development is vitally important because achieving equality and diversity requires cultural change. Legal compliance must be the minimum but the outcome of the development process should not just be compliance with the law, but a genuine change in attitude and behaviour. The benefits of such change will extend beyond the organisation to embrace service delivery and relations with the community.
 - ❑ A better understanding of people from different cultures and backgrounds, and those with different lifestyle choices, or who have different needs, will lead to improved working relations within the service and with the community.
 - Fire services should consider whether they require external expertise to implement development effectively. Whatever method is used, it needs to be followed up with further reinforcement and examples of good practice. To be effective, the staff should be familiar with and understand the service's equal opportunities policy. All staff must be confident that they will be fully supported by the service in their right to a working environment free from harassment or bullying. Staff must also be aware that all colleagues, no matter what their gender, ethnicity, religion, sexual orientation or disability, share that right.

- 15. Fire services should appoint a qualified Equality and Fairness Specialist Advisor.**
- ❖ The thematic review on equality and fairness recommended that all fire services should have such specialist advisors. In smaller fire services the post might form part of the duties of the appointee rather than a full-time position. Qualified specialist advisors would have two main functions: to promote equality and diversity at all levels of the organisation, and to support and advise those who are suffering any form of discrimination, harassment or bullying.
 - ❑ By providing help, support and guidance the advisor is in a position to reduce the numbers of those leaving the service because of unacceptable behaviour within the organisation. By ensuring that equality issues have a high profile in the service, the advisor can help to reduce instances of such behaviour.
 - For the counselling role, some fire services might consider setting up a Helpline service; others might prefer more personal means of contact. Whatever the means, employees need to be assured of confidentiality when discussing such matters in a counselling context. The support groups listed at the end of this document can also provide help and assistance. Information on the support available should be supplied to individuals affected by discussing bullying and harassment.
- 16. Fire services should publicise and implement family-friendly policies that promote a satisfactory work-life balance.**
- ❖ Fire services should ensure that their working and shift arrangements do not impose undue strain on the family responsibilities and private lives of their employees.
 - ❑ In particular, fire services should, in conjunction with the National Joint Council, consider the feasibility of job sharing, flexible working and career breaks in order to allow people to combine family responsibilities with progressive careers in the fire service.
 - Advice on work-life balance and family-friendly policies can be obtained from the Department of Trade and Industry (DTI) Employment Relations Unit, Work-Life Balance Team. The National Joint Council for Local Authorities' Fire Brigades has the responsibility for matters affecting conditions of service. Financial support for reviews of family friendly policies can be obtained through the DTI.
- 17. Fire services should review their current provisions for women's and men's privacy and dignity, cost outstanding needs and accelerate the provision of necessary facilities.**
- ❖ Fire services need to take account of both the needs of their staff and the current and potential needs of members of the public visiting fire service premises. Adequate provision needs to be made in order to guarantee privacy and dignity for all. It is recognised that there are practical limitations at some sites, but it is unacceptable not to provide effective privacy.
 - ❑ This may include provision of toilet, washroom, shower, changing facilities; separate or partitioned dormitories; child care facilities; disabled access and facilities.
 - The allocation of Supplementary Credit Approvals for equality and diversity in July 2001 provided a momentum to the objective to provide suitable facilities. However,

the scale of the service's response to the exercise was such that it was not possible to fund all the projects submitted. Fire services should set appropriate minimum standards and then cost and timetable the correction of any shortfalls in facilities.

18. Fire services should understand and make appropriate provision for their employees' religious and cultural needs.

- ❖ The religious observance and cultural needs of all staff should be recognised and consideration should be given to how to make appropriate provision for their needs.
- ❑ This action concerns particularly time and facilities for privacy and prayer and dietary preparation.
- Fire services should consult with the Commission for Racial Equality and community groups on appropriate provision. The EOTG is looking into the practicalities of issuing fire services with advice on religious and cultural observance.

19. Fire services should provide high quality mentoring and support schemes.

- ❖ Proper mentoring schemes are recommended in order to provide support for recruits and trainees in general, and for new and newly promoted women and minority ethnic staff in particular. Training and support should also be provided for fire service mentors.
- ❑ Better retention of women and minority ethnic staff is as important as more effective recruitment. Effective mentoring schemes provide the individual with support and guidance, will benefit the service in progressing its programme for equality and diversity, and assist women and ethnic minorities in furthering their careers. It is particularly important that those who might be considering leaving the service should have readily accessible advice and support available.
- Some fire services already operate mentoring schemes and a number are in the process of setting them up. The CACFOA Personnel and Training Committee and the FBU National Fairness at Work Committee are best placed to provide advice to fire services seeking to establish such schemes.

Recruitment and Retention

20. Fire services should audit their selection tests and withdraw any considered to be either directly or indirectly discriminatory.

- ❖ There is evidence that some selection tests adversely impact on women and minority ethnic groups and are, therefore, unfairly discriminatory. Fire services should continue to review their selection methods in order to ensure that any requirements they have set in addition to the nationally set standards are all justifiable and not unfairly discriminatory. At national level, the Fire and Safety Directorate of DTLR is commissioning research to take forward the next phase in the development of national, standardised point of entry selection tests.
- ❑ Research found that no test of the individual's ability to work as part of a team could be identified that allowed fair, standardised assessment. Fire services should also refer

to advice previously issued about testing functional reach (see Fire Service Circulars 5/1997, 'Height Requirements for Fire Service Recruitment', and 7/1997 'Practical Aptitude Tests for Fire Service Recruits', and the accompanying research reports by the Robens Institute, University of Surrey).

- Fire Service Circulars 11/2000, 18/2000 and 14/2001 issued guidance on the point of entry selection tests developed by CACFOA on behalf of the Integrated Personal Development Advisory Board (formerly the Implementation Working Group on Training Strategy).

21. Fire services should implement rolling recruitment programmes (possibly undertaken on a regional basis), in which all applicants receive full consideration and positive responses throughout.

- ❖ One-off recruitment exercises are less likely to attract the best and most diverse range of candidates than rolling programmes. While at any one time fire services will have limited vacancies to fill, it is important that candidates receive rapid and encouraging responses whenever they apply. As part of their commitment to equality and diversity, fire services should consider whether they are succeeding in attracting increasing numbers of women and minority ethnic applicants, and how they fare in the selection process.
- As part of their more pro-active and positive role, fire services should encourage those who are accepted not to drop-out but to enter the service, and encourage those who fail their entry tests to reapply.
- Research initiatives might be used to clarify why some of those accepted for the service fail to take up their places. A number of fire services are already collaborating on regional recruitment. The CACFOA Personnel and Training Committee will be able to provide further advice.

22. Fire services ensure that all those involved in recruitment and selection have received appropriate training and development to ensure that processes are carried out fairly.

- ❖ Training and development is not only necessary for those involved in the selection process, but all employees who are involved in any of the fire service's positive action programmes, community initiatives, recruitment lines, cadet schemes and recruitment fairs. The aim should be for all employees to understand the recruitment process and appreciate its fairness.
- All employees involved in the process in any way should understand the principles of fairness and equality so that individuals from under-represented groups, having been encouraged to apply, can be sure that they have been considered on an equal basis with all other candidates and that their applications were not determined by irrelevant factors.
- Fire services should emphasise this approach during routine team briefing sessions; and they should share good practice initiatives within their regional groupings.

- 23. Fire services should implement positive action initiatives to redress imbalances in the workforce and encourage under-represented groups to gain access to development and promotion opportunities within the service.**
- ❖ Positive action is not discriminatory. It means encouraging and assisting those who are less likely to apply, not favouring less well qualified candidates at the expense of those better qualified.
 - Positive encouragement and assistance can be offered to under-represented groups through a wide range of fire service initiatives to develop community links, such as role model champions, community forums, open-days, exhibitions, cadet schemes and sponsored team games.
 - Fire services will benefit from sharing good practice and from asking appropriate community groups for suggestions. There is also a range of good practice guidance available from the equality commissions. The Race Relations Employment Advisory Service (RREAS) can also offer advice to employers on the formulation of lawful positive action measures.
- 24. Fire services should introduce exit and post-exit follow-up interviews for those leaving or who have left the service voluntarily for reasons other than ill-health and retirement.**
- ❖ Interviews can be very informative provided interviewees are confident about the confidentiality of their views and know that their comments will not, under any circumstances, affect any references they might seek from the fire service.
 - The exit interviews should find out as honestly as possible why people have left the service. They should also confirm whether or not they had adequate information and support before they left. If a mentoring system is in place, the exit interviews should ask how well it worked in practice
 - Interviews are best done in two stages: at the time of departure from the service with a follow-up interview about 6 months later – when the respondent has had time to see things in context, with the benefit of hindsight. Fire services should use independent interviewers, as this will help to ensure confidentiality and references are clearly in place.

National Initiatives/Programme of Work

- 25. The EOTG to issue nationally agreed core questions about equality and diversity values that fire services should apply for the purpose of an internal cultural audit (see Action 9).**
- ❖ Full implementation of this action requires national agreement not only on clear and measurable core indicator questions for comparative benchmarking and but also on the survey-audit methods to be used.
 - Fire Service Circular 20/2000 has already offered examples of values for fire service management to consider for the purpose of evaluating their own organisational culture.
 - EOTG to publish advice on core values, indicator questions and methodology.

- 26. Establish system test components required to identify the aptitude of individuals to perform the tasks of a firefighter in all the various roles.**
- ❖ The range of standardised, fair procedures will embrace, for example, educational and interpersonal skills, practical aptitude and aerobic capacity.
 - The Implementation Working Group report 'Point of Entry Selection Tests', issued under Fire Service Circular 11/2000, referred to concerns about the appropriateness of selection test procedures; the fairness of the wide variety of selection tests employed by fire services, and recruit wastage during initial training. The research reports by C3 Consulting also provide useful reference.
 - DTLR Fire and Safety Directorate is commissioning research to take forward development of national selection tests, the results of which are anticipated in 2003.
- 27. The fire service should collaborate in the development of a national recruitment campaign supported by representatives from under-represented groups.**
- ❖ By taking a national approach to recruitment, the standard of information provided to candidates, as well as the standards for selection, will be uniform across the country thus ensuring fairness and consistency.
 - Fire Service Circular 14/2001 advised that the Central Office of Information had been commissioned to produce information material that would seek to address issues about the service's low career profile among under-represented groups.
 - An information leaflet and career booklet are available to the service. The EOTG is considering the provision of training and support in the use of the new recruitment literature, with the aim of helping recruiters across the country to give a consistent and effective message.
- 28. The EOTG should establish effective arrangements for monitoring the progress achieved by all fire services on the national action plan.**
- ❖ The Central Fire Brigades Advisory Council has directed that it should receive regular advice on progress.
 - The EOTG encourages fire services to develop and share information and examples of good practice among themselves, with representative bodies and the EOTG.
 - The Secretariat of the EOTG will continue the existing practice of seeking periodic progress reports from all fire services, and through liaison with the CACFOA equality exchange regions. HM Inspectorate will also conduct a qualitative review of progress as part of each fire service's inspection and pass the findings to the EOTG.

Advisory bodies

Further advice can be obtained from the following organisations.

Advisory, Conciliation and Arbitration Service (ACAS)

Head Office
Brandon House
180 Borough High Street
London SE1 1LW
Tel: 0207 210 3613
Fax 0207 210 3708
www.acas.org.uk

Commission for Racial Equality

Head Office:
Elliot House
10-12 Allington Street
London SW1E 5EH
Tel: 0207 828 7022
www.cre.gov.uk
Also at:
Birmingham Tel: 0121 710 3000
Manchester Tel: 0161 835 5500
Leeds Tel: 0113 389 3600
CRE Scotland Tel: 0131 226 5186
CRE Wales Tel: 029 20 388977

Disability Discrimination Act Helpline

DDA Help
Freepost MIDO2164
Stratford-upon-Avon CV37 9BR
Help line Tel: 0845 622 633
Text phone Tel: 0845 622 644

Disability Rights Commission

Freepost MID 02164
Stratford-upon-Avon
Warks CV37 9BR

Employers' Forum on Disability

Helpdesk Tel: 0207 403 3020

Equal Opportunities Commission

Head Office:
Overseas House
Quay Street
Manchester M3 3HN
Tel: 0161 833 9244
www.eoc.org.uk
Also at:
EOC Scotland Tel: 0141 248 5833. EOC Wales Tel: 029 20 343 552

FIRES Partnership

C/O Opinion Research Services Ltd
University of Wales
PO Box 530
Swansea
SA2 8YS
Tel: 01792 535300
Fax 01792 535301
Email: fires@ors.org.uk

Race Relations Employment Advisory Service (RREAS)

4th floor
2 Duchess Place
Hagley Road
Birmingham B16 8NS
Tel: 0121 452 5447/8/9
Fax 0121 452 5485
Email: hq.rreas@dfee.gov.uk

Support groups

Fire Brigades Union

- National Women's Committee
- National Black and Ethnic Minority Members Committee
- National Gay and Lesbian Committee

Bradley House
68 Coombe Road
Kingston Upon Thames
Surrey
KT2 7AE
(0208 541 1765
Fax 0208 541 5187

Networking Women in the Fire Service

Tel: 01933 388 553
Email: nwfs@aol.com

