



Executive Summary

# Achieving Race Equality

in

South Wales  
Fire and Rescue Service

**South Wales**  
Fire and Rescue Service



Gwasanaeth Tân ac Achub  
**De Cymru**

**Raising Awareness - Reducing Risk**

This summary provides an overview of the progress we have made since 2002 in achieving race equality, in relation to our external (service delivery) and internal (policy and procedure) functions and sets all our race equality objectives for 2005-08.

To view the full version of our Race Equality Scheme visit [www.southwales-fire.gov.uk](http://www.southwales-fire.gov.uk)

## **STATEMENT**

South Wales Fire and Rescue Service (SWF&RS) aims to promote equality in all its operations, to celebrate the diversity of its staff and the community it serves, by promoting equality of opportunity, preventing unlawful discrimination and by promoting good relations between people.

## **BACKGROUND**

In 2000 amendments to the Race Relations Act 1976 were made following an inquiry set up by the Home Secretary regarding investigations into the murder of Stephen Lawrence. The Race Relations Amendment Act (2000) placed a general duty on the Service to have 'due regard to the need' to:

- Eliminate unlawful racial discrimination
- Promote equality of opportunity; and
- Promote good relations between people of different racial groups

The Act also set out specific duties that enable the Service to meet the general duty, that is arrangements for

- Assessing, consulting on, and monitoring its functions
- Ensuring public access to information and services it provides, and
- Training employees

The Service is also bound by the requirements set out by the Employment duty to monitor by ethnic group, and publish annually the numbers of

- Staff in post
- Applicants for employment, training and promotion, from each such group
- Staff that receive training
- Staff that benefit or suffer detriment as a result of poor performance assessment procedures
- staff involved in grievance procedures
- staff that are the subject of disciplinary procedures
- staff that cease employment

## **RACE EQUALITY SCHEME**

The Service produced a three-year Race Equality Scheme in 2002 setting out how it would progress and promote race equality, and was the result of internal discussions and external consultations about our employment practices and how we could improve the delivery of our services in order to meet the diverse needs of South Wales.

In 2005 we were required to review our performance in meeting our race equality objectives and to review the assessment of those functions and policies, or proposed policies that were relevant to meeting the general and specific duties.

The following functions were identified as relevant to meeting the general duty;

- Fire and Rescue
- Community Safety
- Fire Safety
- Employment
- Procurement
- Training and Development

The revised Race Equality Scheme 2005-2008 sets out the above, as well as highlighting some of the achievements and challenges we faced in meeting our race equality objectives. The revised Scheme highlights some of the lessons learned and sets out 10 achievable and realistic objectives for the next three years. These will have the most impact on delivering race equality outcomes for the Service.

## **ACHIEVEMENTS**

- Positive action initiatives were developed in order to attract people from an ethnic minority community to a career in the Service. This included awareness raising days in Cardiff and Newport at the Indian Mela, Sikh Temple, Maindee Festival, Anondho Dhara event and the Black Heritage event
- Taster days were held and a special initiative developed in partnership with Chwarae Teg providing women with an insight into a career in the Service
- Staff attended the 'Race to Change' training which used forum theatre to explore issues such as managing diversity and unlawful discrimination
- All our policies, procedures and projects have been equality screened, impact assessed and reviewed so that none of them have any adverse impact on any minority group. Guidance, templates, training and systems have been developed to carry this out during the policy review cycle. This process will be audited and evaluated over the next three years
- Consultation mechanisms have improved having appointed a community liaison officer, who facilitated two focus groups in Cardiff and Newport engaging local ethnic minority communities. Our consultation strategy has been developed and implemented. Opinion Research Services have carried out a number of surveys such as quality of service in order to further inform the work of the Service. These were disaggregated by ethnic origin so that any patterns could be identified

- Fire Safety literature and resources were developed in appropriate minority languages and Rachel and Rashida storyboards were developed for community safety education in schools
- Approximately 420 staff who work in the community received awareness training

## **CHALLENGES**

- National census data was mapped over fire incidents using GIS in order to target fire safety, but this information was not accurate
- Disparities were identified between the monitoring requirements (Human Resource Forms, HRFs) set out by the ODPM and the race equality legislation
- Publishing mechanisms needed improvement in order to ensure accountability to the public
- Service wide equality and diversity training strategy needed to be developed and implemented
- No monitoring data available regarding Road Traffic Collisions

## **OUR 10 NEW PRIORITIES**

- All employees, service providers, contractors and organisations that come into contact with the South Wales Fire & Rescue Service are aware of its commitment to race equality, its race equality policy, scheme and action plan
- Improve coordination, development, implementation and review of our equality and diversity objectives and publish our progress

- Implement the Services' consultation strategy and coordinate and plan Service wide
- Improve monitoring mechanisms and data collection to further inform policy development and service delivery
- Engage suppliers that share our values and commitment to race equality and that meet the general duty
- In order to ensure that our workforce is representative of the community we serve, evaluate our initiatives and processes for attracting people from an ethnic minority background to a career in the Fire Service
- Develop, implement and evaluate equality and diversity training strategy, evaluating completed training in order to ensure that all staff have a sound understanding of equality and diversity relevant to their role and responsibilities and are confident in transferring that knowledge to the workplace
- Staff are informed of their rights and responsibilities with regard to race equality and are empowered to challenge discriminatory behaviour
- An initial increase in the number of reported internal complaints on the grounds of equality resulting in a longer term decrease in the number of complaints and formal investigations
- Ensure all policies, procedures, decisions and initiatives are equality impact assessed

The three Welsh Fire and Rescue Services submitted their revised Schemes to the Commission for Racial Equality in Wales in the Spring of 2005. Each Service received feedback from the Commission for Racial Equality and met with them on several occasions between June and October 2005. The result of these meetings was the setting of Wales' wide equality objectives

## **CONCLUSION**

In conclusion our Race Equality Scheme 2005-2008 sets out our progress to date, lessons learned and new priorities. It highlights our achievements and the challenges we have faced. From discussions with the CRE Wales we feel confident that by working together we can make significant progress by focusing on our priorities and that our revised Scheme meets the requirements set out by the Race Relations Amendment Act 2000.

## **CONTACTS**

For further information or to request a copy of the Scheme or Executive Summary in an alternative format please contact:

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***For a full version of the Scheme and to view our  
Annual Equality Progress Report visit our website  
[www.southwales-fire.gov.uk](http://www.southwales-fire.gov.uk)***