

COMMITTEE ON EQUALITY OF OPPORTUNITY EOC-04-02(min)

MINUTES

Date: 22 May 2002
Time: 9.30am
Venue: Committee Rooms 3 and 4, National Assembly Building

Attendance:

Members	Edwina Hart (Chair)	Gower
	Lorraine Barrett	Cardiff South and Penarth
	Ann Jones	Vale of Clwyd
	Helen Mary Jones	Llanelli
	David Melding	South Wales Central
	Peter Rogers	North Wales
	Owen John Thomas	South Wales Central
Advisers to the Committee	Kate Bennett	Equal Opportunities Commission
	Dharmendra Kanani	Commission for Racial Equality
	Will Bee	Disability Rights Commission
Presenting to the Committee	Ruth Marks	Chief Executive, Chwarae Teg
	Yvonne Griffith-Jones	North Wales Regional Officer, Chwarae Teg
	Hanna Huws	North Wales Regional Manager, Chwarae Teg

Dr Elizabeth Jordan	Expert Advisor to the Gypsy Traveller Review
Tim Wilson	Liaison Advisor to the Gypsy Traveller Review

Officials

Peter Gregory	Head of Personnel, Management and Business Services Group
Charles Willie	Head of Equality Policy Unit
John Duggan	Equality Policy Unit
Michael Trickey	Executive Board Secretariat
Dr Ian Thomas	Local Government Modernisation
Howell Rees	Committee Clerk
James Owen	Deputy Committee Clerk

Item 1: Chair's Report

Paper: EOC-04-02(p1)

1. The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting. Apologies were received from Janet Ryder, Val Lloyd, Huw Lewis and Eleanor Burnham.
2. The Chair introduced her written report. The following issues were discussed:
 - o It was important to maintain the impetus on the equal pay campaign. Following the successful launch of the equal pay CD-ROM, the campaign had targeted students by highlighting the pay gap that exists between male and female graduates. A private sector equal pay seminar, organised in conjunction with the Confederation of British Industry Cymru, had been arranged for 12 September 2002. The committee was eager to see progress over the summer on the public sector seminars for the equal pay campaign.

Item 2: Chwarae Teg

1. Ruth Marks made a presentation to the committee on the work of Chwarae Teg, outlining the research areas in which the organisation was involved (attached at Annex A). Chwarae Teg relied on developing good partnerships in the public, private and voluntary sectors and the organisation received Assembly funding and support for

developing research projects.

2. Yvonne Griffith-Jones outlined the work that Chwarae Teg was undertaking on European funding programmes. Chwarae Teg led on mainstreaming equality in European funding programmes in Wales as part of the European Equality partnership. This work involved producing written guidelines on mainstreaming equality into European programmes and developing partnerships at a local and national level to ensure that gender equality was part of the programme structures. Chwarae Teg had worked with the newly appointed officer from the Wales European Funding Office on mainstreaming gender equality. The procedures that Chwarae Teg had developed for mainstreaming equality in the wider sense had been replicated throughout the UK and Europe. The work that Chwarae Teg was undertaking would be beneficial to the creation of a European network on equal opportunities and should become an integral part of economic development and social justice in Wales.
3. The following points were made in discussion:
 - The committee requested an update on the Assembly's current arrangements for childcare at the next meeting (**action point**). The committee would be interested to gauge the impact of flexitime and shift working on childcare arrangements and the increased difficulties that private sector employees may encounter. The committee also agreed that the provision for bilingual childcare was important. Chwarae Teg had been part of the National Childcare Strategy Taskforce and offered their assistance to the committee regarding this work.
 - As part of a research project, Chwarae Teg had discussed the reasons behind the economic inactivity of women with the Economic Development Committee, the European Affairs Division and the Strategic Policy Unit. The research looked at different groups of women, those in education or training and those that were in employment or unemployed. The committee agreed that it was important to bring women's talents to formal employment. Women usually dealt with domestic problems such as child sickness and this could have an effect on their performance appraisal. It was important to raise awareness amongst women on the options offered by employers such as flexible working. The Chair requested an update on the Assembly's position in this area (**action point**). Chwarae Teg was involved with the Welsh Development Agency Entrepreneurship Action Plan and supported individual capacity building initiatives that raised competencies and skills.
 - Chwarae Teg had not encountered significant problems recruiting new members of staff with the necessary competencies and experience of the equality agenda. Chwarae Teg was looking to develop an internal and external staff training programme. The regional offices of Chwarae Teg had staff with long-term experience in equality issues and the organisation frequently used the academic expertise available in Wales.
 - It was difficult to measure the success of mainstreaming equality in European funding programmes, although awareness of equal opportunities requirements had been raised amongst those responsible for the programmes. This had led to some applications being rejected because they did not fulfil the necessary criteria.
 - The committee considered that more support should be available to carers to ensure

that they could remain in employment. Chwarae Teg mentioned support of the 'Equal' project for carers in Ynys Mon and Pembrokeshire. The Chair requested a note on the work that Chwarae Teg was undertaking in this area **(action point)**.

- The committee was interested in the proportion of childcare provided by local authorities and the voluntary sector in comparison with the private sector and the relative costs. The Chair agreed to discuss with the clerk the possibility of commissioning a paper on this topic.

- It was agreed to invite Chwarae Teg back to the committee on an annual basis **(action point)**. The committee would also consider the conclusions of the Chwarae Teg research on employment for women when it was completed **(action point)**.

Item 3: Race Equality Scheme

Paper: EOC 04-02(p2)

1. The Chair introduced the Assembly's draft Race Equality Scheme. The scheme would be sent out for consultation and the committee would have the opportunity to examine the responses. The scheme would be reviewed in 12 months in light of the consultation exercise and the committee's opinions.
2. The following points were made in discussion:
 - In some areas of the scheme the terminology used required more clarity and strength to actively engage with people during the consultation exercise.
 - As monitoring and evaluation was essential to the scheme, more detail, a timeline with benchmarks and clarity on the budget process should be incorporated into the draft document. The priorities of the scheme should also be made more evident.
 - It was important that outreach work was available throughout Wales to promote inclusive communities.
 - The committee agreed to consider the Race Equality Schemes of Assembly Sponsored Public Bodies (ASPBs) beginning in the autumn term on a rolling basis **(action point)**. The Commission for Racial Equality agreed to produce examples of good practice for consideration. The committee was also interested in the work undertaken by ASPBs to mainstream other equality agendas.
 - The committee agreed that the draft scheme was a good start but more work was necessary. In light of the committee's discussion, the Chair agreed to make some amendments to the wording of the scheme in advance of it being considered in plenary **(action point)**. The committee agreed to discuss the response to the consultation in the autumn **(action point)**. The Commission for Racial Equality would assist with the revision of the draft document.

Item 4: Recruitment and Deployment Strategy

Paper: EOC 04-02(p3)

1. The committee considered a paper on the progress of the staff consultation on the Assembly's recruitment and selection strategy.
2. The following points were raised in discussion:
 - The committee agreed to invite Roger McKenzie, the author of the Lifting Every Voice report, to a future meeting for discussion on the progress that the Assembly had made in taking forward the report's recommendations (**action point**).
 - Practical difficulties, which had not been anticipated, were encountered during the pilot recruitment programme. The committee accepted that comprehensive consultation was required before the pilot programme could be properly evaluated. Peter Gregory said that the programme had been an objective process and that initial feedback suggested that candidates felt that they had been afforded the opportunity to display their skills against the required competencies.
 - The recruitment programme would undergo two stages of evaluation. The first evaluation would be a relatively quick process to draw out some common themes and results. A consultant would be employed for the second, more comprehensive evaluation, which would take place over a longer-term. The committee would be able to consider some initial results from the evaluation process at its first meeting in the autumn term along with an outline of the practical and logistical difficulties encountered during the recruitment exercise (**action point**). The committee agreed to ask the Trade Union Side to prepare a paper on the strategy for the same meeting (**action point**).
 - The expertise of the statutory equality organisations should be utilised during the evaluation process.
 - The committee would consider the outcome of the staff consultation at its next meeting on 26 June, when the Permanent Secretary reports to the committee on progress on the action plan (**action point**).

Item 5: Gypsy-Traveller Review

Paper: EOC 04-02(p4)

1. The Chair welcomed Dr Elizabeth Jordan, the committee's expert adviser for the Gypsy-Traveller Review and Tim Wilson, the committee's liaison advisor to the meeting.
2. Dr Jordan told the committee that she had worked with Gypsy-Travellers at local, regional and international levels since 1985. The primary focus of this work was concerned with the accommodation and social needs of Gypsy-Travellers. Dr Jordan outlined the main priorities of the review from her perspective:
 - The opinions of Gypsy-Travellers should be sought during the review.
 - The review should seek to validate the legitimacy of mobility as a lifestyle and provide support to enable Gypsy-Travellers to activate their own voices.

- Local Authorities would need to be consulted on the provision of services for Gypsy-Travellers.
 - The review should seek to provide legitimacy for innovative education provisions.
 - The legal basis for Gypsy-Travellers should be clarified, particularly in regard to the Race Relations Act.
 - The overriding priority of the review was to deliver results and outcomes that could be recorded and monitored.
 - To ensure that the public and the media was aware of what the review was about, the committee could organise public events to raise the profile of the review.
1. Tim Wilson told the committee that he worked for a voluntary organisation operating in Cardiff and the Vale of Glamorgan and had worked with Gypsy-Travellers for twenty years. This work included creating links between Gypsy-Travellers and organisations across a range of issues. The liaison advisor's role in the review would be to facilitate appropriate discussions with groups of Gypsy-Travellers across Wales. The committee's contact with members of the Gypsy-Traveller community would need to be carefully planned to avoid raising expectations. The review would also need to address a common opinion amongst Gypsy-Travellers, that they were over researched and under involved.
 2. The following points were made in discussion:
 - As part of the review, the committee had decided to look at health and education initially, where the Assembly had devolved responsibility.
 - The budgetary commitments required for providing an effective service for Gypsy-Travellers were not great in terms of total expenditure.
 - Site visits were necessary and would have to be handled carefully, as accommodation was a key issue for the review. Visits should be conducted on an all-Wales basis with a couple of members taking evidence on behalf of the committee. Members would require thorough briefing on site protocols, local sensitivities and methods of obtaining evidence before going on site visits.
 - The review would need to counter the experiences of the settled community and illustrate positive outcomes that could be achieved.
 - The profile of the review would need to be raised, especially amongst civic society in Wales.
 - The committee would be interested in the development of innovative ideas for delivering measured objectives as part of the review.
 - The review would need to take into account examples of double disadvantage which some Gypsy-Travellers may encounter.
 - The committee was interested in the variety of languages that Gypsy-Travellers spoke in Wales. If possible the education system should support the transfer of language through generations of Gypsy-Travellers. This would involve Gypsy-Travellers becoming teachers.
 - The committee could apply relevant conclusions from the education review to create a

flexible education system for Gypsy-Travellers.

- a photo exhibition in the Assembly could be arranged to raise awareness of the review

1. It was agreed that:

- A comprehensive paper looking at the delivery of education for Gypsy-Traveller children in Wales would be commissioned for consideration at the first committee meeting in the autumn term (**action point**). The Clerk, Expert Advisor, Liaison Advisor and Dr Ian Thomas would meet to discuss the content of the paper.
- The Clerk and the Liaison advisor would develop ideas for a programme of visits, which could commence over the summer recess (**action point**).
- The Clerk and the Expert Advisor would produce a reading list for members that highlighted areas which the committee would need to examine. The reading list should incorporate good practice examples from around Europe (**action point**).

Item 6: Draft Annual Report of the Committee on Equality of Opportunity

Paper: EOC 04-02(p5)

1. The committee considered its draft annual report. The committee agreed to make the following amendments:

- The introduction to the report should draw a clear distinction between the committee's section (annex A) and the Assembly's sections (annexes B and C) to clarify responsibilities.
- The Chair's preface should include reference to the difficulties that the committee had encountered over the past year.
- The section of the committee's report on asylum seekers in Wales should be amended to illustrate the committee's view that integration into communities was preferable to accommodation centres. Reference should also be made to the committee's work on vouchers, the practice of holding asylum seekers in prison and the meetings with the National Asylum Support Service and local authorities.

1. The committee considered annexes B and C to the report. The following points were made in discussion:

- To make the report more accessible in the future a common format should be adopted for the section detailing specific divisional activity (appendix B2).
- The committee welcomed the top-level commitment on the proposals and the action that the Assembly had undertaken on equality. However, the committee would expect to see consistent improvement and further work on equality issues in the future.
- Officials would be discussing the findings of the annual report with the statutory equality organisations.

- The committee would like a systematic auditing approach to be adopted by Assembly divisions to identify the impact of policy changes on particular sections of society.
 - The Strategic Policy Unit was currently developing a tool to ensure equality issues were considered in policy development and implementation. The statutory equality organisations agreed to engage with the unit on its development. The committee would consider progress in the autumn **(action point)**.
1. The Chair agreed to write to the Panel of Chairs requesting an opportunity to discuss equality training and the impact of policy decisions on the equal opportunities agenda **(action point)**.

Item 7: Minutes of the previous meeting and paper to note

Paper: EOC 03-02(min) and EOC 04-02(p6)

1. The minutes of the previous meeting were agreed.
2. The committee agreed that the Lesbian, Gay and Bisexual Forum Cymru should be a standing invitee to the committee **(action point)**. It was also agreed that, following the conclusion of the Welsh Language Review, the committee would consider inviting a representative from the Welsh Language Board to become a standing invitee. In the meantime, a representative from the Welsh Language Board would be invited to attend committee meetings in an informal capacity **(action point)**.
3. The committee noted the paper providing an analysis of Welsh speaking non-executive directors of NHS Trusts and health authorities. The committee expressed concern that Welsh speakers were not sufficiently represented particularly in Welsh speaking areas. For example there were no Welsh speakers on the Board of the Pembrokeshire and Derwen NHS Trust. The Chair agreed to write to the Welsh Language Board to request advice on this issue **(action point)**.

The meeting closed at 12.05pm