

THE HIGHLAND AND ISLANDS FIRE BOARD

Agenda Item	
Report No	

Race Equality Scheme and Annual Report

Summary

Highland & Islands Fire Board and Highlands and Islands Fire & Rescue Service and published its joint Race Equality Scheme in November 2005 to fulfil its obligations under the Race Relations (Amendment) Act 2000. With changes to guidance and best practice, we are now obliged to develop separate schemes.

This paper presents two reports for the Board's consideration:

1. An updated Race Equality Scheme for the Fire Service outlining the actions we will take 2008 - 2011 in order to meet the requirements of legislation.
2. An annual report setting out how we have fulfilled our action plan for the year 2007 - 2008.

1. Background

The Highlands and Islands Fire and Rescue Service is committed to implementing, supporting and promoting our new Race Equality Scheme.

The impact of the scheme together with a range of equality initiatives and partnership working with key stakeholders and agencies will help us to eliminate racial discrimination and ensure the talents and benefits of a diverse workforce are realised.

The scheme will assist us to build on previous achievements and help us to provide an ever improving service to our communities and to make the Highlands and Islands a better and safer place to live and work.

Recommendation

The Service asks that the Fire Board:

- (i) notes and adopts the Race Equality Scheme 2008 – 2011
- (ii) notes and adopts the annual progress report for the Race Equality Scheme 2007 - 2008

**ASSISTANT CHIEF FIRE OFFICER
5 November 2008**



Promoting Race Equality

Race Equality Scheme and
Action Plan
2nd Edition

November 2008 – 2011

This Equality Scheme is in 12 point font to improve accessibility under the requirements of the Disability Discrimination Act (DDA)

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1. Foreword

The Highlands and Islands Fire and Rescue Service is committed to implementing, supporting and promoting our new Race Equality Scheme.

The impact of the scheme together with a range of equality initiatives and partnership working with key stakeholders and agencies will help us to eliminate racial discrimination and ensure the talents and benefits of a diverse workforce are realised.

The scheme will assist us to build on previous achievements and help us to provide an ever improving service to our communities and to make the Highlands and Islands a better and safer place to live and work.

Brian A Murray
Chief Fire Officer
Highlands & Islands Fire & Rescue Service
October 2008

2. Introduction

- 2.1 This publication is Highlands and Islands Fire and Rescue Service's second Edition of the Race Equality Scheme.
- 2.2 The Highlands & Islands Fire & Rescue Service (HIFRS) is tasked with providing a service to 1/6th the landmass of the United Kingdom – an area equivalent to Belgium in size and a population of approximately 280,000. Its Headquarters are based in Inverness with 1 whole-time Station in Inverness and 126 part-time Stations, based at specific locations across the Highlands and Islands. It has an industrial infrastructure which is spread across the large mainland area and covers numerous islands. Communications are difficult and many communities need to be almost effectively self sufficient, in the knowledge that support of any kind may be hours away. Protecting the people and economy of this area is therefore a demanding challenge that requires an innovative and caring response.
- 2.3 HIFRS provide a fire and rescue service to the community including fire safety and community education.

The four strategic aims of the Service are:

- **Prevent** Operate a managed approach to reduce the risk in the communities we serve.
- **Prepare** Provide a well-equipped, skilled and motivated workforce able to work safely and whose composition and purpose reflects the risk and diversity in the communities we serve.
- **Respond** Respond promptly and effectively to fires and other emergencies.
- **Resource** Provide a service committed to the highest levels of quality, delivering value for money and demonstrating public accountability.

- 2.4 Our fourteen strategic objectives in priority order are:

		Prevent	Prepare	Respond	Resource
01	Develop solutions from the IRMP sustainability review	✓	✓	✓	✓
02	Operational Assuredness	✓	✓	✓	✓
03	Further develop incident command skills		✓	✓	✓
04	Introduction of Firelink communications system		✓	✓	✓
05	Succession Planning		✓	✓	✓
06	Retained availability management		✓	✓	✓
07	Implementation of approved restructure		✓		✓
08	Fire Scotland Act Part 3 – Legislative Fire Safety	✓			
09	Flooding response		✓	✓	✓
10	Single status				✓
11	Introduction of the Integrated Personal Development System (IPDS)	✓	✓	✓	
12	Information management / document control		✓		✓
13	Risk review	✓	✓	✓	✓

14	Information Technology (IT) Provision		✓		✓
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3. Race Relations (Amendment) Act 2000

3.1 The Race Relations (Amendment) Act 2000 substituted a new section 71 into the Race Relations Act 1976. Section 71(1) imposes a General Duty on persons specified in Schedule 1A to that Act in carrying out their functions to have due regard to (a) the need to eliminate unlawful discrimination and (b) to promote equality of opportunity and good relations between persons of different racial groups. The Race Relations Act 1976 (Statutory Duties) (Scotland) Order 2002 imposes a special duty to publish a Race Equality Scheme, on how those persons (or public bodies) intend to fulfill their General Duty and Specific Duties under this Order.

3.2 The murder of Stephen Lawrence in 1993 and the following inquiry set up by the Home Secretary in 1997, led to a number of significant changes in the way society was expected to respond to the issues of race relations and race equality in Britain. At the heart of these changes were mechanisms to combat what has been termed 'institutional racism'.

The Stephen Lawrence Inquiry Report was a landmark report which had implications for a range of public sector organisations and agencies in respect of their business activities. The recommendations in the report resulted in the strengthening of the existing race legislation through the Race Relations (Amendment) Act 2000.

3.3 During this period, concerns were also being expressed that the profile of the British Fire Service's workforce was not representative of the multicultural community it serves. These concerns led to an inquiry by the Fire Service Inspectorate into equality and fairness in the fire service. The inquiry, in addition to making a number of recommendations, concluded that the British Fire Service faced considerable challenges- in that, "these challenges require major changes to eradicate outmoded culture and to embrace a spirit of real commitment to equality and fairness. These needs apply both in employment practices and to improving the delivery of services to the public". (HMI Thematic Review 1999)

Population Profile: Ethnic Group

Highlands & Islands Fire & Rescue Service serves the Authorities of the Highland Council, Orkney Islands Council, Shetland Islands Council and the Western Isles

AT the time of the 2001 Census the BME population in the Highlands and Islands was 2,163, 0.78% of the total population (compared with 2.01% in Scotland overall).

2001	Highlands and Islands Population by Ethnic Group		Scotland Figures for Comparison	
	% of Total Population	Base	% of Total Population	Base
White Scottish	85.16	235,596	88.09	4,459,071
Other white British	12.19	33,731	7.38	373,685
White Irish	0.53	1,475	0.98	49,428
Other White	1.32	3,658	1.54	78,150
Indian	0.08	218	0.30	15,037
Pakistani	0.07	206	0.63	31,793
Bangladeshi	0.05	152	0.04	1,981
Other South Asian	0.06	151	0.12	6,196
Chinese	0.12	327	0.32	16,310
Caribbean	0.04	108	0.04	1,778
African	0.04	105	0.10	5,118
Black Scottish or other Black	0.01	40	0.02	1,129
Any Mixed Background	0.20	559	0.25	12,764
Other Ethnic Group	0.11	297	0.19	9,571
All Minority Ethnic Population	0.78	2,163	2.01	101,677
Whole Population	100	276,649	100	5,062,011

Source: General Register Office for Scotland (GROS) - 2001 Census

3.4 The amended Race Relations Act (referred to in this Scheme as the Act) has placed a duty on the Fire Service, nationally, to promote race equality and include this in its main stream activities. In addition to this General Duty, the Act also refers to Specific Duties Fire Services should respond to. Under the General Duty, HIFRS must have 'due regard to the need' to:

- eliminate unlawful racial discrimination;
- promote equality of opportunity and good relations between persons of different ethnic backgrounds.

3.5 The General Duty is supported by a series of Specific Duties, which provide the methods that public authorities should follow to help them meet the General Duty. The Specific Duties that HIFRS are required to fulfill include:

- prepare and maintain a Race Equality Scheme (RES);
- assess, monitor and consult on the likely impact of HIFRS' policies on promoting race equality;
- detail proposed action to eliminate unlawful discrimination and promote racial equality;
- publish the RES and the results of its assessments, consultation and monitoring;
- train staff on issues relevant to the Act; and
- monitor recruitment and career development of staff in relation to race and ethnic group.

- 3.6 HIFRS will do its best to meet the duties placed upon it under the Act and is fully committed to implementing the actions set out in the RES. However, we do recognise that we might have to improve procedures or that people may be dissatisfied with the way we are carrying out our duties. We therefore intend to make sure that our communities know that they have a right to complain about how we discharge our duties and are given the information about how to do this.

The Act does not give individuals a right to take legal action against the Fire Service for failing to fulfill its General Duty (to tackle racial discrimination; promote equality of opportunity' and promote good race relations), but we will attempt to deal with any complaints received about our performance in respect of this RES through our formal complaints procedure (see below for details).

The Equality and Human Rights Commission (EHRC) has the responsibility for enforcing compliance with the Specific Duties placed on the Fire Service. If the Commission is satisfied that a public authority is failing to meet the Specific Duties, it has the power to issue a 'compliance notice' requiring the authority to provide details of its response to the notice including details of how it intends to meet the duty. Ultimately, the EHRC can ask the courts to order the authority to comply with the duties under the Act. Again individuals do not have a direct right to enforce the Specific Duties but they (or trade unions, voluntary organisations etc) can inform the EHRC if they have concerns or complaints about whether the duties are being met and the EHRC can then investigate.

- 3.7 HIFRS has a complaints procedure which allows service users to make complaints, compliments and suggestions on any aspect of its services or policies. Details of the procedure are set out in our website. We will also ensure that details of our complaints procedure are widely publicised using appropriate formats.

A complaint can be made in writing, by phone or by email to:

Head of Corporate Services
Highlands & Islands Fire & Rescue Service
Headquarters
16 Harbour Road
Longman West
Inverness
IV1 1TB
Tel: 01463 227000
Email: complaints@hifrs.org

4. What is a Race Equality Scheme (RES)?

4.1 A RES is a strategy and a time tabled action plan. It should summarise a public authority's approach to race equality and its corporate aims. It should clearly say how the organisation plans to carry out each part of its duties towards:

- assessing, consulting on, and monitoring its functions and policies for any adverse impact on promoting race equality;
- publishing the results;
- making sure the public has access to its services; and
- training employees.

4.2 HIFRS's new RES will ensure that we develop robust policies and implementation strategies that recognise and respond to the diverse and differing needs of our communities when delivering against our key priorities is an ongoing process. We aim to ensure that the RES covers all the needs of our minority ethnic communities, including hard to reach groups and by implementing this RES, we intend to achieve the following outcomes:

- provide leadership to positively and proactively deal with race equality issues;
- give priority to and allocate appropriate resources to deliver our equality objectives and action plans;
- ensure that our internal/external functions, policies and procedures do not have an adverse impact on any minority group;
- ensure that our workforce is representative of the communities we serve;
- provide appropriate training to employees on the RES and race equality issues;
- ensure that all sections of our diverse community have access to the full range of information and services provided;
- develop a network of diversity champions to promote and give assistance in the race equality work of our functions;
- develop procedures for enabling a fair, diverse and nondiscriminatory work environment;
- status as an exemplar fire service on race equality;
- increased satisfaction with the delivery of our services across all racial groups; and
- increased employee satisfaction across all racial groups;

It is intended that the implementation of the RES will ensure that race equality will be mainstreamed throughout the HIFRS and build upon existing work in this area.

4.3 To demonstrate the importance of this RES the lead for race equality and diversity lies within the remit of the Chief Fire Officer who has overall responsibility for race and diversity issues within HIFRS. An Equality and Diversity Forum is established which has specific responsibilities for delivering the RES and consists of members of Service Delivery, Service Support and the Fire Board in delivering this function. The Chief Fire Officer will devolve the responsibility for tackling discrimination, promoting equality of opportunity and developing good relations between the mainstream host community and different minority ethnic and racial groups, to the Forum under the Chair of the Assistant Chief Fire Officer.

5. Responsibilities

5.1 Chief Fire Officer

The Chief Fire Officer is responsible for ensuring the requirements of the Act are effectively implemented by HIFRS. Specifically the Chief Fire Officer will delegate to the Assistant Chief Fire Officer, the responsibility to:

- ensure that the RES is implemented and monitored;
- lead the Equality and Diversity Forum to ensure HIFRS promotes race equality and develops good relations and eliminates race discrimination;
- implement awareness training in accordance with the Act for all employees;
- promote a culture that does not tolerate any form of inequality and discrimination;
- ensure appropriate action is taken against employees who breach the RES and associated equal opportunities policies; and
- ensure that all contractors are compliant with the Act.

5.2 Service Management Team

The Service Management Team is responsible for ensuring the RES is implemented within their area of responsibility. They will:

- be proactive in eliminating unlawful racial discrimination and promoting equality of opportunity and developing good relations between people of different racial groups;
- raise awareness and understanding amongst existing staff and new joiners;
- undertake appropriate awareness training;
- support the Equality and Diversity Forum to ensure the RES is implemented, monitored and evaluated; and
- take appropriate action if the RES or other associated equal opportunities policies are breached.

5.3 Managers

All Managers within HIFRS are responsible for eliminating unlawful racial discrimination and promoting equality of opportunity and developing good race relations. They will:

- support the implementation, monitoring and evaluation of the RES;
- act as a positive role model to staff by embracing anti-discriminatory practice and by challenging racial stereotyping, prejudice and discrimination;
- raise awareness of race equality;
- take appropriate action if the RES or other associated equal opportunities policies are breached; and
- ensure that practices and policies do not racially discriminate.

5.4 Firefighters, Control Room and Support Staff

All employees have a contractual responsibility for ensuring they are familiar with the RES and other associated equal opportunities policies. They will:

- be aware of their own responsibilities and the implications of any breach of equality policies;
- undertake appropriate awareness training; and
- embrace anti-discriminatory practice and challenge racial stereotyping and prejudice.

5.5 Equality and Diversity Forum

The Equality and Diversity Forum has specific responsibility for implementing, monitoring and reviewing the RES. They will:

- assess HIFRS' functions, policies and procedures to determine whether they are compliant with the Act;
- develop an implementation plan to address inequalities;
- review and develop equality policies and practices;
- address practices that do not promote race equality;
- develop practices to develop good relations between different racial groups; and
- effectively communicate on the above.

6. Progress on Race Equality since 2005 and future action

HIFRS's first Race Equality Scheme outlined a number of areas where the principles of race equality would apply. This section outlines each area reporting on progress to date. Future Actions are visible on the revised Action Plan 2008-2011 in the attachment.

Action Plan 2006 - 2008	Progress to date
1 CORPORATE	
1.1 Staff Training	All fulltime and the majority of retained staff have received a minimum of 1 day Equality & Diversity Training provided in collaboration with SFRS.
1.2 Method of consulting and publishing information	The Highland Alliance for Racial Equality (HARE) is not active anymore. HIFRS is part of the Highland Community Planning Partnership Equality and Diversity Group which does interlink with ethnic groups.
1.3 Impact Assessments (existing policies)	Responsible staff in each departments has been trained to do impact assessments. Existing policies are being impact assessed ongoing and will all be done by the end of the financial year 2008/09.
1.4 Impact Assessments (future policies)	All new policies have to have a impact assessment attached before they are confirmed by SMT.
1.5 Handling of Calls	The procedure to ensure staff is equipped to handle calls from people who speak a different language has been reviewed and developed. Access to Translation Service is made available to staff.
2 SERVICE DELIVERY	
2.1 Operations	
2.1.1 Post-Fire Leaflets	Post-Fire Leaflets have been reviewed and Language cards have been developed and retained on appliances
2.1.2 Fire Calls	The Fire Calls policy has been reviewed to ensure appropriate measures are in place for

	dealing with callers who speak a different language. Access to Translation Service is made available to staff
2.2. Community Safety	
2.2.1 Community Safety Information	The printed material has been reviewed and it is ensured that the language and the range of languages meet the needs of the community. Joint funding from Scottish Government could be secured for recent translations of Safety Information Leaflets. Ethnic origin is monitored on our online requests for Home Fire Safety checks and at all events attended by Community Safety Advocates.
2.3 Intergrated Risk Management	
2.3.1 IRMP	IRMP is published in Plain English and in accordance with guidance from RNIB
3. SERVICE SUPPORT	
3.1 Support Services	
3.1.1 Suppliers/Service Providers/Contractors	We require contractors, suppliers and service providers to promote and develop race equality matters as demonstrated in HIFRS tender documents. The procurement manager of the Highland Council acts as adviser to the Fire Board and ensures our compliance.
3.1.2 Suppliers/Service Providers/Contractor	We ensure compliance with HIFRS Equal Opportunities Policy and Race Equality Scheme. The procurement manager of the Highland Council acts as adviser to the Fire Board and ensures our compliance
3.1.3 Purchasing	Review of all Purchasing and Stores Policies to ensure compliance with the Race Relations (Amendment) Act 2000 is ongoing
3.1.4 Complaints	The complaints procedure has been reviewed to include post quality check and evaluation monitoring questionnaire and will got to SMT for approval by the end of November 2008
3.2 Training	
3.2.1 Training Course Material	
3.2.2 Training	Majority of full time staff and selected retained staff has completed Equality & Diversity Training
3.2.3 HIFRS Trainers	All training staff have been trained in Equality & Diversity
3.2.4 Monitoring	Training & Development is providing Human Resources a report of the numbers and names of internal and external personnel attending courses on a monthly basis
3.2.5 Monitoring	Training & Development is providing Human Resources a report of the numbers and names of applications (successful and unsuccessful) for training and development opportunities.

3.2.5 Monitoring	Training & Development is providing Human Resources a report of the numbers and names of applications (successful and unsuccessful) for training and development opportunities.
3.2.6 Monitoring	Results of the monitoring are published through Service Performance Reports on an annual basis.
3.2.7 Joining Instructions	Joining instructions have been reviewed in the context of the Race Relations (Amendment) Act 2000 including language, dietary and other relevant needs.
3.2.8 External training providers	External Training Providers comply with HIFRS Equal Opportunities Policy and Race Equality Scheme.
3.2.9 Training	Majority of full time and retained staff completed training. A refresher programme will be in place by e.learning modules by 2009/10
3.3 Human Resources	
3.3.1 Recruitment & Selection	All recruitment is monitored and statistical analysis provided to the Equality & Diversity Forum quarterly.
3.3.2 Recruitment & Training	All staff in Selection Panels has been trained in Equality & Diversity.
3.3.3 Monitoring	<p>A monitoring system to analyse by Disability, Ethnicity and Gender is in place. The following elements are monitored and statistical analysis provided to the Equality & Diversity Forum quarterly:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Applicants for employment • Employee applicants for promotion • Employees involved in grievances • Employees subject to disciplinary action <p>The Service has developed an exit interview policy and procedure which is awaiting union approval.</p>
3.3.4 Monitoring	Results for all Equality Schemes will be included in the annual Public Performance Report and annual reports are published on the Webpage
3.3.5 Recruitment material	Recruitment material has been reviewed and deemed appropriate to leave in English as a main requirement for all roles. New roles need to be impact assessed to ensure ongoing requirement.
3.3.6 Selection Assessments	Selection assessment and material has been reviewed and deemed appropriate to leave in English as a main requirement for all roles. New roles need to be impact assessed to ensure ongoing requirement.
3.3.7 Equal Opportunities Policy	An updated Equal Opportunities Policy has been prepared and is with the Unions for consultation.

3.4 Risk Management/Health & Safety	
3.4.1 Accident Investigation	An interim measure is in place, but this specific action is part of a much broader H&S revitalisation strategy currently being developed.
3.4.2 HIFRS Premises	The procedure for public use of HIFRS premises to ensure the specific needs of the community/ethnic groups are addressed has been reviewed. Language identification information available at Headquarter and District Offices.
3.5 Operations Support	
3.5.1 Racial Incidents	Ongoing project with the Community Planning Partnership for a system to report, record and monitor racial incidents. Planned to be launched by March 2009.

7. Specific Duties

7.1 Duty 1 – RES

- 7.1.1 The RES is itself one of the specific duties and essentially packages all the other duties into a coherent strategy and action plan. It demonstrates how HIFRS proposes to fulfil its statutory duty in accordance with the Act.
- 7.1.2 The Equality and Diversity Forum will be responsible for implementing, monitoring and reviewing the RES.
- 7.1.3 Copies of the RES will be available electronically from the following website www.hifrs.org or in hard copy format from the Equality & Policy Adviser at Highlands and Islands Fire and Rescue Service, Headquarters, 16 Harbour Road, Inverness, IV1 1TB. Where requested, the RES will be made available in accessible formats.
- 7.1.4 HIFRS will produce annual reports on the progress of the RES which will be available electronically from our website www.hifrs.org. At the end of the three year period (2008-2011) the RES will be reviewed by the Equality and Diversity Forum. The RES will again be revised and introduced for a further three years in 2011.
- 7.1.5 The review does take account of any guidance issued by the Equality and Human Rights Commission. The review does include any assessment of how HIFRS has complied with the Act and how eliminating unlawful discrimination, promotion of equality and opportunity and good race relations have been advanced in relation to HIFRS's functions and policies.

7.2 Duty 2 - Identify, Assess and Monitor relevant Functions, Policies and Procedures

- 7.2.1 HIFRS will examine each of the functions, policies and procedures and assess them for their relevance to race equality and for their compliance with the General Duty of the Act. HIFRS will prioritise the action required and develop an implementation plan. These functions and policies will be reviewed within three years of publishing this RES and every three years after that.

- 7.2.2 The term “Function” in relation to the Act encompasses the full range of HIFRS’s duties and powers. This includes internal functions (such as policy development) as well as service delivery. It includes all statutory and non-statutory functions, including any functions that have been contracted out.
- 7.2.3 All functions policies and procedures considered relevant will be subject to further detailed assessment for their impact on race equality, and impact assessments will take place over the next three years to determine whether people from particular racial groups are affected by each function, policy or procedures. Responsibility for these assessments and decisions about any necessary actions will rest with the Service Management Team.
- 7.2.4 The impact assessments will be based on evidence gathered in a variety of ways depending on the potential impact on the duty to promote Racial Equality. The assessments will include all or some of the following:
- consulting Highland Community Planning Partnership Equality and Diversity Group;
 - comparisons of policies with those from other Authorities and F&RS;
 - analysis of existing data and research findings;
 - advice from statutory agencies;
 - will set clear policy aims;
 - use existing ethnic data, such as census information;
 - use the data to determine whether the policy is likely to affect different racial or ethnic groups, directly or indirectly in different ways;
 - consider changes to the policy to prevent any adverse impact or unlawful discrimination, while still delivering the aims of the policy;
 - consult interested parties, service users, trade unions and members of the public on the preferred policy;
 - take account of all assessments and consultations before making a final decision on the policy; and
 - monitor and review the policy and its impact.
- 7.2.5 Where the assessment indicates that there has been or is likely to be adverse impact on good race relations, discrimination or the denial of equality of opportunity, it will identify how the policy should be (or has been) revised in the light of the assessment.
- 7.2.6 HIFRS will further improve Management Information Systems in order to monitor employment and service delivery in terms of race and ethnic minority. As well as collecting and analysing quantitative ethnic data, various ways of testing the impact of our policies will be developed including monitoring community perceptions and experiences.
- 7.2.7 Minority ethnic communities will be asked how satisfied they are with the current services and policy decisions. The findings will provide a benchmark for future monitoring. It will also help to increase HIFRS’ understanding of people needs and concerns, in terms of service delivery and employment.
- 7.2.8 Targets and performance indicators will be established to promote race equality, and these will be developed and integrated into HIFRS’ business plans. Progress towards meeting these objectives and targets will be reviewed annually.

7.3 Duty 3 - Assessing and Consulting on the Likely Impact of Proposed Policies

7.3.1 Under this duty HIFRS must set out its arrangements for assessing and consulting on the likely impact of proposed policies on the promotion of race equality. This means outlining the arrangements HIFRS has made to assess the likely effects of policies that it proposes to introduce before they are adopted.

7.3.2 Consideration will be given to the wide range of methods available in order to assess the impact of proposed policies including:

- demographic data and other statistics, including census findings;
- available research findings;
- comparisons between similar policies in HIFRS or other public authorities;
- survey data;
- ethnic monitoring data;
- one-off data gathering exercises;
- specially commissioned research;
- consultation with interested parties, service users, trade unions; and
- consideration of alternative policies, or finding ways of reducing their impact, if an assessment shows that they are likely to have an adverse effect on sections of the communities that HIFRS serves.

7.3.3 The range of methods used to consult with staff on proposed policies may include:

- consulting with Equality and Diversity Forum;
- meetings with relevant groups of staff;
- sending out paper proposals to targeted groups of staff;
- structured focus groups;
- consulting over the intranet;
- consulting with staff via surveys and functional meetings; and
- consulting with representative bodies.

7.3.4 The wide range of methods to consult with communities may include:

- separate meetings for specific groups;
- focus groups;
- stakeholders panels;
- citizens panels;
- advice networks, eg Citizens Advice Bureau;
- anti-racists organisations;
- Chief Fire Officers Association (CFOA); and
- Government organisations, eg Scottish Executive, ODPM.

7.3.5 HIFRS will consult with all minority ethnic associations and community leaders through Highland Community Planning Partnership Equality and Diversity Group and Multicultural Associations. The Highland Community Planning Partnership Equality and Diversity Group meets at regular intervals throughout the year and provides a platform for the sharing of information and resources in promoting good practice to combat discrimination and promote cultural diversity.

- 7.3.6 HIFRS believe that the success of our initiatives depends on our ability to communicate with our community about services and employment. We will do our very best to ensure that the information and services we provide are accessible and appropriate to the needs of all minority ethnic groups. We fully recognise that different communities and racial groups access information in different formats and expect services to be geared to meet their needs. We will regularly review our systems and processes to ensure that we identify any barriers that might prevent equal access to services and information. Where barriers are found, action will be taken to put in place appropriate solutions. Therefore in meeting our commitment to ensuring that our communities have equal and proper access to information and services provided by us, we will investigate appropriate translation and interpretation mechanisms to help us achieve this.
- 7.3.7 HIFRS will take appropriate measures to ensure full participation in any consultative meetings that are held. Comments and views received will be taken into account and fed into the decision-making processes in an open and responsible way.
- 7.4 Duty 4 - Publishing the Results of the Assessments, Consultation and Monitoring
- 7.4.1 This means outlining the arrangements that HIFRS has in place for publishing the results of monitoring for every function or policy that is considered relevant to the general duty to promote race equality. For policies HIFRS are proposing to adopt, it will have to publish assessment and consultation reports.
- 7.4.2 HIFRS will produce written reports on every **assessment, consultation and monitoring** exercise. These reports will be available to anyone who asks for them. However, as these reports may be quite detailed and technical, HIFRS will also publish and distribute summaries of reports more widely and regularly using the most appropriate communication methods i.e. newsletter or information bulletin, annual report, local, specialist and other media.
- 7.4.3 HIFRS will liaise with the Highland Community Planning Partnership Equality and Diversity Group on other appropriate methods of publishing these results.
- 7.5 Duty 5 - Access to Information and Services
- 7.5.1 Under this duty, HIFRS must set out its arrangements for making sure that ethnic communities have access to the information and services it provides. This means making sure that everyone, whatever their racial group, can get information about HIFRS and can access its services and complaints procedures, as well as information about peoples rights.
- 7.5.2 HIFRS publishes a wide range of information including:
- Public Performance Report;
 - Audited Statement of Accounts;
 - Service Plan;
 - leaflets on specific issues such as Fire Safety advice;
 - Community Safety Bulletins;
 - recruitment information;
 - information on the website: and
 - Integrated Risk Management Plan.

7.5.3 HIFRS' services need to be accessible and work for everyone. If people from ethnic communities:

- do not receive the services they need or want;
- do not know about particular services;
- are not confident about using them; and/or
- meet barriers when they try to use them.

HIFRS will be failing to make services equally available to everyone.

7.5.4 Complaints received either internally or externally in connection with the way in which HIFRS is meeting the general and specific duties, or other complaints about race equality will be dealt with by the Head of Corporate Services. These will be monitored in order to ensure that the complaints process is readily understood and accessible by all groups within the Highlands and Islands. It is therefore important to provide baseline figures of how this procedure is used to determine whether it is effective for purpose.

7.5.5 The Highland Community Planning Partnership Equality and Diversity Group will share information and good practice to maximise access by the diverse community. Based on that work, recommendations can be made on how public access to information and services can be made more specific to the needs of minority ethnic communities. Any changes that are recommended will be publicised. Systems will be put in place to ensure that information and services are made accessible in a timely manner.

7.6 Duty 6 - Staff Training on Race Equality

7.6.1 Under this duty HIFRS must set out its arrangements to provide training to staff on issues relevant to the General Duty to promote race equality.

7.6.2 Equality & Diversity training will be provided to new staff as part of their induction to HIFRS and further training is provided to Firefighters who attend specific development courses at the Fire Service College.

7.6.3 HIFRS' training plan in support of the RES will be carried on. A multi faceted approach will be taken to train all employees in Equality & Diversity in general and specifically to ensure staff is fully aware of their duty and obligations under the RES.

7.6.4 HIFRS will review the extent of race equality training already undergone by members of staff in areas relevant to the delivery of the RES and relevant training courses/programmes will be considered.

7.6.5 HIFRS will ensure that all staff involved in the recruitment and selection process is trained in equality and diversity issues.

7.7 Duty 7 - Employment, Monitoring and Analysis

7.7.1 HIFRS will continue to develop and expand upon their existing employment monitoring methods to meet the Specific Duties, which will include monitoring by race and ethnic group the number of:

- employee applicants for promotion and training;
- training and Development activities undertaken;
- applicants for employment;
- employees who have appraisal/performance management interviews including the results in benefits and sanctions;
- employees who are involved in grievances;
- employees who are subject to disciplinary action; and
- employees who cease employment due to dismissal or other reasons for leaving.

7.7.2 The categories to be adopted for ethnic monitoring will be the same as those used for the 2001 census as amended by the Equality and Human Rights Commission in Scotland.

7.7.3 HIFRS is obliged to monitor racial incidents. The process for reporting and monitoring racial incidents will be reviewed to ensure that the patterns of behaviour are recognised and measures are established to act upon inappropriate behaviour.

7.7.4 The data collected will be analysed to find any patterns of inequality and if necessary, steps will be taken to remove barriers and promote diversity. This may include '**positive action**' initiatives which will be carried out in consultation with relevant organisations.

'**Positive action**'- is defined in the Race Relations Act 1976 as action that is permitted by the Act that allows a person to:

- provide facilities to meet the special needs of people from particular racial groups in relation to their training, education or welfare; and
- target job training at people from racial groups that are underrepresented in a particular area of work, or encourage them to apply for such work.

7.7.5 HIFRS will undertake an initial monitoring process of all employees. Monitoring will initially be undertaken in the areas of recruitment, selection, promotion, discipline and grievance in order to establish any adverse impact to racial equality. Statistics will be published as part of HIFRS' Performance Indicators.

7.7.6 The results of the corporate monitoring will be published at least once a year. This will include anything that is being done as a result of the monitoring. This information will be published in the RES Annual Report.

Large print, Braille or other versions of this scheme are available upon request to:

Manuela Flueckiger
Equality & Policy Adviser
Highlands and Islands Fire and Rescue Service
Headquarters
16 Harbour Road
INVERNESS
IV1 1TB

01463 227 000
people@hifrs.org

This scheme can also be viewed on
www.hifrs.org

**HIGHLANDS & ISLANDS FIRE & RESCUE SERVICE
RACE EQUALITY SCHEME ACTION PLAN – NOVEMBER 2008–OCTOBER 2011**

1: CORPORATE					
Objective	Lead	Predicted Timescale for completion	Detail of actions to be undertaken	Progress to Date	Completed
1.1 Method of consulting and publishing information	Equality & Policy Adviser	Nov 2008 – Oct 2011	Consult with local BME groups to seek their advice as to how the Service can increase links with ethnic groups.		
1.2 Impact Assessment (existing policies and procedures)	Department Heads	Nov 2008 – March 2009	Carry out outstanding impact assessments to ensure that current functions and policies do not discriminate on racial or other grounds.	Operations CRM People Services Operations Support Corporate Services	

2: SERVICE DELIVERY					
Objective	Lead Department	Predicted Timescale for completion	Detail of actions to be undertaken	Progress to Date	Completed
<p><u>2.1 Community Safety</u></p> <p>2.1.1 Community Safety Information</p>	Head of Community Risk Management	Nov 2008 – Oct 2011	Review printed material on an ongoing basis and ensure that the language and the range of languages meet the needs of the community.		
2.1.2 Community Safety Checks	Head of Community Risk Management	Nov 2008 – Oct 2011	Provide fire safety advice to communities in relation to religious/cultural festival arrangements through local Associations. Be sensitive to festival calendars in order to avoid causing unnecessary offence (not knocking on doors during specific times)		
2.1.3 Community Safety Information	Head of Community Risk Management	Nov 2008 – Oct 2011	Engage with statutory partner organisations on media campaigns raising awareness to ethnic communities		
2.1.4 Community Safety Information	Head of Community Risk Management	Nov 2008 – Oct 2011	Engage with Ethnic Associations to provide CFS awareness		

2.1.5 Community Safety Information	Head of Community Risk Management	Oct 2008 – Dec 2008	Introduce a monitoring and analysis system on Race, Gender and Ethnicity of participants on youth engagement schemes		
2.1.6 IRMP	Head of Community Risk Management	Oct 2008 – March 2009	Extend the existing IRMP Questionnaire to analyse all 6 strands (Race, Gender, Disability, Age, Religion and sexual orientation)		

3: SERVICE SUPPORT					
Objective	Lead Department	Predicted Timescale for completion	Detail of actions to be undertaken	Progress to Date	Completed
<u>3.1 Support Services</u>					
3.1.1 Complaints	Head of Corporate Services	Nov 2008 – March 2009	Ensure complaints are monitored by ethnicity and data analysed to recommend improvements. Introduce a system to report, record and monitor baseline information to ensure that process is fit for purpose	Procedure being reviewed to include post quality check and evaluation monitoring questionnaire. Will go to SMT for approval by the end of November 2008.	
<u>3.2 Training</u>					
3.2.1 Training Course Material	Head of People Services	Nov 2008 – March 2009	Review all training courses, documentation and materials and consult on simplicity and plain English to meet the needs of the community.	All L&D documents being assessed and prioritised into subject areas for allocation to all L&D personnel for assessment/amendment and EIA. Work packages co-ordinated by WM Kelly for final sign-off by GMs Dey & Hay	
3.2.2 Staff Training	Head of People Services	Nov 2008 – March 2009	To ensure that all staff receive awareness training in Equality & Diversity.	Wholetime staff training ongoing 84% complete – training planned for new entrants 13/14 November 2008. Current status for	

				RDS training complete (Orkney – 87% Shetland – 64% WI – 84% Mainland – 74%). Currently identifying mainland trainer to complete mop-up sessions (October 2008)	
3.2.3 Training	Head of People Services	Nov 2008 – March 2009	Introduce a rolling refresher training programme for all HIFRS staff	Refresher training for all service personnel to take place once SFSC update LCMS E&D lecture (update pending)	
3.2.4 HIFRS Trainers	Head of People Services	Nov 2008 – March 2009	All training staff involved to be trained in Equality & Diversity	All L&D personnel received E&D training. Currently identifying in-house personnel to perform future E&D training	
3.2.5 Monitoring	Head of People Services	Nov 2008 – Sept 2009	Monitor through analysis applications (successful and unsuccessful) for training and development opportunities. Setup monitoring/reporting System		
3.2.6 Joining Instructions	Head of People Services	Nov 2008 – Oct 2011	To review joining instructions in the context of the Race Relations (Amendment) Act 2000 including language, dietary and other relevant needs on an ongoing basis to make sure instructions stay in line with the changing requirements of the community		
3.2.7 External	Head of People	Nov 2008 –	Ensure External Training Providers		

training providers	Services	Oct 2011	Policies are in line with HIFRS Equal Opportunities Policy and Race Equality Scheme		
3.3 <u>Human Resources</u> 3.3.1 Recruitment & Selection	Head of People Services Equality & Policy Adviser	Nov 2008 – March 2009	Set up a minimum of 4 positive action initiatives per year to support the recruitment of a more diverse workforce		
3.3.2 Recruitment & Training	Head of People Services	Nov 2008 – Oct 2011	Ensure that all staff included in the Recruitment and Selection process are trained in Recruitment and Equality & Diversity		
3.3.3 Monitoring	Head of People Services	Nov 2008 – March 2010	Extend the existing monitoring system to analyse by Race, Gender, Disability, Age, Religion and sexual orientation the number of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Employees who have performance appraisals including the results in benefits and sanctions 		
3.3.4 Equal Opportunities Policy	Head of People Services	Nov 2008 – Oct 2009	Implement the updated Equal Opportunities Policy to ensure HIFRS meets the requirements of		

			the Race Relations (Amendment) Act 2000.		
3.3.5 Consultation	Head of People Services Equality & Policy Adviser	Nov 2008 – Oct 2009	Identify groups to be consulted, establish contacts and methods of consultation. Circulate the Race Equality Scheme and Action Plan for consultation making them available in an appropriate range of languages and formats as necessary		
<u>3.4 Risk Management/ Health & Safety</u> 3.4.1 Accident Investigation	Head of Operations Support	Nov 2008 – Oct 2009	Accidents to be monitored by ethnicity and data analysed to recommend further improvements	An interim measure is in place, but this specific action is part of a much broader H&S revitalisation strategy currently being developed.	
3.4.2 HIFRS Premises	Head of Corporate Services	Nov 2008 – Oct 2011	Further improve procedure for public use of HIFRS premises to ensure the specific needs of the community/		

			ethnic groups are addressed		
<u>3.5</u> <u>Operations</u> <u>Support</u>					
3.5.1 Racial Incidents	Head of Operations Support/ Head of People Services	Nov 2008 – March 2009	Implement the system to report, record and monitor Hate Incidents in partnership with the Highland Community Partnership Equality & Diversity Group.	Launch of the Hate Incident reporting will be before March 2009	



Promoting Race Equality

Race Equality Scheme and Action Plan 2nd Edition

November 2008 – 2011

This Equality Scheme is in 12 point font to improve accessibility under the requirements of the Disability Discrimination Act (DDA)

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1. Foreword

The Highlands and Islands Fire and Rescue Service is committed to implementing, supporting and promoting our new Race Equality Scheme.

The impact of the scheme together with a range of equality initiatives and partnership working with key stakeholders and agencies will help us to eliminate racial discrimination and ensure the talents and benefits of a diverse workforce are realised.

The scheme will assist us to build on previous achievements and help us to provide an ever improving service to our communities and to make the Highlands and Islands a better and safer place to live and work.

Brian A Murray
Chief Fire Officer
Highlands & Islands Fire & Rescue Service
October 2008

2. Introduction

- 2.3 This publication is Highlands and Islands Fire and Rescue Service's second Edition of the Race Equality Scheme.
- 2.4 The Highlands & Islands Fire & Rescue Service (HIFRS) is tasked with providing a service to 1/6th the landmass of the United Kingdom – an area equivalent to Belgium in size and a population of approximately 280,000. Its Headquarters are based in Inverness with 1 whole-time Station in Inverness and 126 part-time Stations, based at specific locations across the Highlands and Islands. It has an industrial infrastructure which is spread across the large mainland area and covers numerous islands. Communications are difficult and many communities need to be almost effectively self sufficient, in the knowledge that support of any kind may be hours away. Protecting the people and economy of this area is therefore a demanding challenge that requires an innovative and caring response.
- 2.3 HIFRS provide a fire and rescue service to the community including fire safety and community education.

The four strategic aims of the Service are:

- **Prevent** Operate a managed approach to reduce the risk in the communities we serve.
- **Prepare** Provide a well-equipped, skilled and motivated workforce able to work safely and whose composition and purpose reflects the risk and diversity in the communities we serve.
- **Respond** Respond promptly and effectively to fires and other emergencies.
- **Resource** Provide a service committed to the highest levels of quality, delivering value for money and demonstrating public accountability.

- 2.4 Our fourteen strategic objectives in priority order are:

		Prevent	Prepare	Respond	Resource
01	Develop solutions from the IRMP sustainability review	✓	✓	✓	✓
02	Operational Assuredness	✓	✓	✓	✓
03	Further develop incident command skills		✓	✓	✓
04	Introduction of Firelink communications system		✓	✓	✓
05	Succession Planning		✓	✓	✓
06	Retained availability management		✓	✓	✓
07	Implementation of approved restructure		✓		✓
08	Fire Scotland Act Part 3 – Legislative Fire Safety	✓			
09	Flooding response		✓	✓	✓
10	Single status				✓
11	Introduction of the Integrated Personal Development System (IPDS)	✓	✓	✓	
12	Information management / document control		✓		✓
13	Risk review	✓	✓	✓	✓

14	Information Technology (IT) Provision		✓		✓
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3. Race Relations (Amendment) Act 2000

3.1 The Race Relations (Amendment) Act 2000 substituted a new section 71 into the Race Relations Act 1976. Section 71(1) imposes a General Duty on persons specified in Schedule 1A to that Act in carrying out their functions to have due regard to (a) the need to eliminate unlawful discrimination and (b) to promote equality of opportunity and good relations between persons of different racial groups. The Race Relations Act 1976 (Statutory Duties) (Scotland) Order 2002 imposes a special duty to publish a Race Equality Scheme, on how those persons (or public bodies) intend to fulfill their General Duty and Specific Duties under this Order.

3.2 The murder of Stephen Lawrence in 1993 and the following inquiry set up by the Home Secretary in 1997, led to a number of significant changes in the way society was expected to respond to the issues of race relations and race equality in Britain. At the heart of these changes were mechanisms to combat what has been termed 'institutional racism'.

The Stephen Lawrence Inquiry Report was a landmark report which had implications for a range of public sector organisations and agencies in respect of their business activities. The recommendations in the report resulted in the strengthening of the existing race legislation through the Race Relations (Amendment) Act 2000.

3.3 During this period, concerns were also being expressed that the profile of the British Fire Service's workforce was not representative of the multicultural community it serves. These concerns led to an inquiry by the Fire Service Inspectorate into equality and fairness in the fire service. The inquiry, in addition to making a number of recommendations, concluded that the British Fire Service faced considerable challenges- in that, "these challenges require major changes to eradicate outmoded culture and to embrace a spirit of real commitment to equality and fairness. These needs apply both in employment practices and to improving the delivery of services to the public". (HMI Thematic Review 1999)

Population Profile: Ethnic Group

Highlands & Islands Fire & Rescue Service serves the Authorities of the Highland Council, Orkney Islands Council, Shetland Islands Council and the Western Isles

AT the time of the 2001 Census the BME population in the Highlands and Islands was 2,163, 0.78% of the total population (compared with 2.01% in Scotland overall).

2001	Highlands and Islands Population by Ethnic Group		Scotland Figures for Comparison	
	% of Total Population	Base	% of Total Population	Base
White Scottish	85.16	235,596	88.09	4,459,071
Other white British	12.19	33,731	7.38	373,685
White Irish	0.53	1,475	0.98	49,428
Other White	1.32	3,658	1.54	78,150
Indian	0.08	218	0.30	15,037
Pakistani	0.07	206	0.63	31,793
Bangladeshi	0.05	152	0.04	1,981
Other South Asian	0.06	151	0.12	6,196
Chinese	0.12	327	0.32	16,310
Caribbean	0.04	108	0.04	1,778
African	0.04	105	0.10	5,118
Black Scottish or other Black	0.01	40	0.02	1,129
Any Mixed Background	0.20	559	0.25	12,764
Other Ethnic Group	0.11	297	0.19	9,571
All Minority Ethnic Population	0.78	2,163	2.01	101,677
Whole Population	100	276,649	100	5,062,011

Source: General Register Office for Scotland (GROS) - 2001 Census

3.4 The amended Race Relations Act (referred to in this Scheme as the Act) has placed a duty on the Fire Service, nationally, to promote race equality and include this in its main stream activities. In addition to this General Duty, the Act also refers to Specific Duties Fire Services should respond to. Under the General Duty, HIFRS must have 'due regard to the need' to:

- eliminate unlawful racial discrimination;
- promote equality of opportunity and good relations between persons of different ethnic backgrounds.

3.5 The General Duty is supported by a series of Specific Duties, which provide the methods that public authorities should follow to help them meet the General Duty. The Specific Duties that HIFRS are required to fulfill include:

- prepare and maintain a Race Equality Scheme (RES);
- assess, monitor and consult on the likely impact of HIFRS' policies on promoting race equality;
- detail proposed action to eliminate unlawful discrimination and promote racial equality;
- publish the RES and the results of its assessments, consultation and monitoring;
- train staff on issues relevant to the Act; and
- monitor recruitment and career development of staff in relation to race and ethnic group.

- 3.6 HIFRS will do its best to meet the duties placed upon it under the Act and is fully committed to implementing the actions set out in the RES. However, we do recognise that we might have to improve procedures or that people may be dissatisfied with the way we are carrying out our duties. We therefore intend to make sure that our communities know that they have a right to complain about how we discharge our duties and are given the information about how to do this.

The Act does not give individuals a right to take legal action against the Fire Service for failing to fulfill its General Duty (to tackle racial discrimination; promote equality of opportunity' and promote good race relations), but we will attempt to deal with any complaints received about our performance in respect of this RES through our formal complaints procedure (see below for details).

The Equality and Human Rights Commission (EHRC) has the responsibility for enforcing compliance with the Specific Duties placed on the Fire Service. If the Commission is satisfied that a public authority is failing to meet the Specific Duties, it has the power to issue a 'compliance notice' requiring the authority to provide details of its response to the notice including details of how it intends to meet the duty. Ultimately, the EHRC can ask the courts to order the authority to comply with the duties under the Act. Again individuals do not have a direct right to enforce the Specific Duties but they (or trade unions, voluntary organisations etc) can inform the EHRC if they have concerns or complaints about whether the duties are being met and the EHRC can then investigate.

- 3.7 HIFRS has a complaints procedure which allows service users to make complaints, compliments and suggestions on any aspect of its services or policies. Details of the procedure are set out in our website. We will also ensure that details of our complaints procedure are widely publicised using appropriate formats.

A complaint can be made in writing, by phone or by email to:

Head of Corporate Services
Highlands & Islands Fire & Rescue Service
Headquarters
16 Harbour Road
Longman West
Inverness
IV1 1TB
Tel: 01463 227000
Email: complaints@hifrs.org

4. What is a Race Equality Scheme (RES)?

4.1 A RES is a strategy and a time tabled action plan. It should summarise a public authority's approach to race equality and its corporate aims. It should clearly say how the organisation plans to carry out each part of its duties towards:

- assessing, consulting on, and monitoring its functions and policies for any adverse impact on promoting race equality;
- publishing the results;
- making sure the public has access to its services; and
- training employees.

4.2 HIFRS's new RES will ensure that we develop robust policies and implementation strategies that recognise and respond to the diverse and differing needs of our communities when delivering against our key priorities is an ongoing process. We aim to ensure that the RES covers all the needs of our minority ethnic communities, including hard to reach groups and by implementing this RES, we intend to achieve the following outcomes:

- provide leadership to positively and proactively deal with race equality issues;
- give priority to and allocate appropriate resources to deliver our equality objectives and action plans;
- ensure that our internal/external functions, policies and procedures do not have an adverse impact on any minority group;
- ensure that our workforce is representative of the communities we serve;
- provide appropriate training to employees on the RES and race equality issues;
- ensure that all sections of our diverse community have access to the full range of information and services provided;
- develop a network of diversity champions to promote and give assistance in the race equality work of our functions;
- develop procedures for enabling a fair, diverse and nondiscriminatory work environment;
- status as an exemplar fire service on race equality;
- increased satisfaction with the delivery of our services across all racial groups; and
- increased employee satisfaction across all racial groups;

It is intended that the implementation of the RES will ensure that race equality will be mainstreamed throughout the HIFRS and build upon existing work in this area.

4.4 To demonstrate the importance of this RES the lead for race equality and diversity lies within the remit of the Chief Fire Officer who has overall responsibility for race and diversity issues within HIFRS. An Equality and Diversity Forum is established which has specific responsibilities for delivering the RES and consists of members of Service Delivery, Service Support and the Fire Board in delivering this function. The Chief Fire Officer will devolve the responsibility for tackling discrimination, promoting equality of opportunity and developing good relations between the mainstream host community and different minority ethnic and racial groups, to the Forum under the Chair of the Assistant Chief Fire Officer.

5. Responsibilities

5.2 Chief Fire Officer

The Chief Fire Officer is responsible for ensuring the requirements of the Act are effectively implemented by HIFRS. Specifically the Chief Fire Officer will delegate to the Assistant Chief Fire Officer, the responsibility to:

- ensure that the RES is implemented and monitored;
- lead the Equality and Diversity Forum to ensure HIFRS promotes race equality and develops good relations and eliminates race discrimination;
- implement awareness training in accordance with the Act for all employees;
- promote a culture that does not tolerate any form of inequality and discrimination;
- ensure appropriate action is taken against employees who breach the RES and associated equal opportunities policies; and
- ensure that all contractors are compliant with the Act.

5.2 Service Management Team

The Service Management Team is responsible for ensuring the RES is implemented within their area of responsibility. They will:

- be proactive in eliminating unlawful racial discrimination and promoting equality of opportunity and developing good relations between people of different racial groups;
- raise awareness and understanding amongst existing staff and new joiners;
- undertake appropriate awareness training;
- support the Equality and Diversity Forum to ensure the RES is implemented, monitored and evaluated; and
- take appropriate action if the RES or other associated equal opportunities policies are breached.

5.3 Managers

All Managers within HIFRS are responsible for eliminating unlawful racial discrimination and promoting equality of opportunity and developing good race relations. They will:

- support the implementation, monitoring and evaluation of the RES;
- act as a positive role model to staff by embracing anti-discriminatory practice and by challenging racial stereotyping, prejudice and discrimination;
- raise awareness of race equality;
- take appropriate action if the RES or other associated equal opportunities policies are breached; and
- ensure that practices and policies do not racially discriminate.

5.4 Firefighters, Control Room and Support Staff

All employees have a contractual responsibility for ensuring they are familiar with the RES and other associated equal opportunities policies. They will:

- be aware of their own responsibilities and the implications of any breach of equality policies;
- undertake appropriate awareness training; and
- embrace anti-discriminatory practice and challenge racial stereotyping and prejudice.

5.5 Equality and Diversity Forum

The Equality and Diversity Forum has specific responsibility for implementing, monitoring and reviewing the RES. They will:

- assess HIFRS' functions, policies and procedures to determine whether they are compliant with the Act;
- develop an implementation plan to address inequalities;
- review and develop equality policies and practices;
- address practices that do not promote race equality;
- develop practices to develop good relations between different racial groups; and
- effectively communicate on the above.

8. Progress on Race Equality since 2005 and future action

HIFRS's first Race Equality Scheme outlined a number of areas where the principles of race equality would apply. This section outlines each area reporting on progress to date. Future Actions are visible on the revised Action Plan 2008-2011 in the attachment.

Action Plan 2006 - 2008	Progress to date
1 CORPORATE	
1.1 Staff Training	All fulltime and the majority of retained staff have received a minimum of 1 day Equality & Diversity Training provided in collaboration with SFRS.
1.2 Method of consulting and publishing information	The Highland Alliance for Racial Equality (HARE) is not active anymore. HIFRS is part of the Highland Community Planning Partnership Equality and Diversity Group which does interlink with ethnic groups.
1.3 Impact Assessments (existing policies)	Responsible staff in each departments has been trained to do impact assessments. Existing policies are being impact assessed ongoing and will all be done by the end of the financial year 2008/09.
1.4 Impact Assessments (future policies)	All new policies have to have a impact assessment attached before they are confirmed by SMT.
1.5 Handling of Calls	The procedure to ensure staff is equipped to handle calls from people who speak a different language has been reviewed and developed. Access to Translation Service is made available to staff.
2 SERVICE DELIVERY	
2.1 Operations	
2.1.1 Post-Fire Leaflets	Post-Fire Leaflets have been reviewed and Language cards have been developed and retained on appliances
2.1.2 Fire Calls	The Fire Calls policy has been reviewed to ensure appropriate measures are in place for

	dealing with callers who speak a different language. Access to Translation Service is made available to staff
2.2. Community Safety	
2.2.1 Community Safety Information	The printed material has been reviewed and it is ensured that the language and the range of languages meet the needs of the community. Joint funding from Scottish Government could be secured for recent translations of Safety Information Leaflets. Ethnic origin is monitored on our online requests for Home Fire Safety checks and at all events attended by Community Safety Advocates.
2.3 Intergrated Risk Management	
2.3.1 IRMP	IRMP is published in Plain English and in accordance with guidance from RNIB
3. SERVICE SUPPORT	
3.1 Support Services	
3.1.1 Suppliers/Service Providers/Contractors	We require contractors, suppliers and service providers to promote and develop race equality matters as demonstrated in HIFRS tender documents. The procurement manager of the Highland Council acts as adviser to the Fire Board and ensures our compliance.
3.1.2 Suppliers/Service Providers/Contractor	We ensure compliance with HIFRS Equal Opportunities Policy and Race Equality Scheme. The procurement manager of the Highland Council acts as adviser to the Fire Board and ensures our compliance
3.1.3 Purchasing	Review of all Purchasing and Stores Policies to ensure compliance with the Race Relations (Amendment) Act 2000 is ongoing
3.1.4 Complaints	The complaints procedure has been reviewed to include post quality check and evaluation monitoring questionnaire and will got to SMT for approval by the end of November 2008
3.2 Training	
3.2.1 Training Course Material	
3.2.2 Training	Majority of full time staff and selected retained staff has completed Equality & Diversity Training
3.2.3 HIFRS Trainers	All training staff have been trained in Equality & Diversity
3.2.4 Monitoring	Training & Development is providing Human Resources a report of the numbers and names of internal and external personnel attending courses on a monthly basis
3.2.5 Monitoring	Training & Development is providing Human Resources a report of the numbers and names of applications (successful and unsuccessful) for training and development opportunities.

3.2.5 Monitoring	Training & Development is providing Human Resources a report of the numbers and names of applications (successful and unsuccessful) for training and development opportunities.
3.2.6 Monitoring	Results of the monitoring are published through Service Performance Reports on an annual basis.
3.2.7 Joining Instructions	Joining instructions have been reviewed in the context of the Race Relations (Amendment) Act 2000 including language, dietary and other relevant needs.
3.2.8 External training providers	External Training Providers comply with HIFRS Equal Opportunities Policy and Race Equality Scheme.
3.2.9 Training	Majority of full time and retained staff completed training. A refresher programme will be in place by e.learning modules by 2009/10
3.3 Human Resources	
3.3.1 Recruitment & Selection	All recruitment is monitored and statistical analysis provided to the Equality & Diversity Forum quarterly.
3.3.2 Recruitment & Training	All staff in Selection Panels has been trained in Equality & Diversity.
3.3.3 Monitoring	<p>A monitoring system to analyse by Disability, Ethnicity and Gender is in place. The following elements are monitored and statistical analysis provided to the Equality & Diversity Forum quarterly:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Applicants for employment • Employee applicants for promotion • Employees involved in grievances • Employees subject to disciplinary action <p>The Service has developed an exit interview policy and procedure which is awaiting union approval.</p>
3.3.4 Monitoring	Results for all Equality Schemes will be included in the annual Public Performance Report and annual reports are published on the Webpage
3.3.5 Recruitment material	Recruitment material has been reviewed and deemed appropriate to leave in English as a main requirement for all roles. New roles need to be impact assessed to ensure ongoing requirement.
3.3.6 Selection Assessments	Selection assessment and material has been reviewed and deemed appropriate to leave in English as a main requirement for all roles. New roles need to be impact assessed to ensure ongoing requirement.
3.3.7 Equal Opportunities Policy	An updated Equal Opportunities Policy has been prepared and is with the Unions for consultation.

3.4 Risk Management/Health & Safety	
3.4.1 Accident Investigation	An interim measure is in place, but this specific action is part of a much broader H&S revitalisation strategy currently being developed.
3.4.2 HIFRS Premises	The procedure for public use of HIFRS premises to ensure the specific needs of the community/ethnic groups are addressed has been reviewed. Language identification information available at Headquarter and District Offices.
3.5 Operations Support	
3.5.1 Racial Incidents	Ongoing project with the Community Planning Partnership for a system to report, record and monitor racial incidents. Planned to be launched by March 2009.

9. Specific Duties

9.1 Duty 1 – RES

- 7.1.1 The RES is itself one of the specific duties and essentially packages all the other duties into a coherent strategy and action plan. It demonstrates how HIFRS proposes to fulfil its statutory duty in accordance with the Act.
- 7.1.2 The Equality and Diversity Forum will be responsible for implementing, monitoring and reviewing the RES.
- 7.1.3 Copies of the RES will be available electronically from the following website www.hifrs.org or in hard copy format from the Equality & Policy Adviser at Highlands and Islands Fire and Rescue Service, Headquarters, 16 Harbour Road, Inverness, IV1 1TB. Where requested, the RES will be made available in accessible formats.
- 7.1.5 HIFRS will produce annual reports on the progress of the RES which will be available electronically from our website www.hifrs.org. At the end of the three year period (2008-2011) the RES will be reviewed by the Equality and Diversity Forum. The RES will again be revised and introduced for a further three years in 2011.
- 7.1.5 The review does take account of any guidance issued by the Equality and Human Rights Commission. The review does include any assessment of how HIFRS has complied with the Act and how eliminating unlawful discrimination, promotion of equality and opportunity and good race relations have been advanced in relation to HIFRS's functions and policies.
- ### 7.2 Duty 2 - Identify, Assess and Monitor relevant Functions, Policies and Procedures
- 7.2.1 HIFRS will examine each of the functions, policies and procedures and assess them for their relevance to race equality and for their compliance with the General Duty of the Act. HIFRS will prioritise the action required and develop an implementation plan. These functions and policies will be reviewed within three years of publishing this RES and every three years after that.

- 7.2.2 The term “Function” in relation to the Act encompasses the full range of HIFRS’s duties and powers. This includes internal functions (such as policy development) as well as service delivery. It includes all statutory and non-statutory functions, including any functions that have been contracted out.
- 7.2.3 All functions policies and procedures considered relevant will be subject to further detailed assessment for their impact on race equality, and impact assessments will take place over the next three years to determine whether people from particular racial groups are affected by each function, policy or procedures. Responsibility for these assessments and decisions about any necessary actions will rest with the Service Management Team.
- 7.2.4 The impact assessments will be based on evidence gathered in a variety of ways depending on the potential impact on the duty to promote Racial Equality. The assessments will include all or some of the following:
- consulting Highland Community Planning Partnership Equality and Diversity Group;
 - comparisons of policies with those from other Authorities and F&RS;
 - analysis of existing data and research findings;
 - advice from statutory agencies;
 - will set clear policy aims;
 - use existing ethnic data, such as census information;
 - use the data to determine whether the policy is likely to affect different racial or ethnic groups, directly or indirectly in different ways;
 - consider changes to the policy to prevent any adverse impact or unlawful discrimination, while still delivering the aims of the policy;
 - consult interested parties, service users, trade unions and members of the public on the preferred policy;
 - take account of all assessments and consultations before making a final decision on the policy; and
 - monitor and review the policy and its impact.
- 7.2.5 Where the assessment indicates that there has been or is likely to be adverse impact on good race relations, discrimination or the denial of equality of opportunity, it will identify how the policy should be (or has been) revised in the light of the assessment.
- 7.2.6 HIFRS will further improve Management Information Systems in order to monitor employment and service delivery in terms of race and ethnic minority. As well as collecting and analysing quantitative ethnic data, various ways of testing the impact of our policies will be developed including monitoring community perceptions and experiences.
- 7.2.7 Minority ethnic communities will be asked how satisfied they are with the current services and policy decisions. The findings will provide a benchmark for future monitoring. It will also help to increase HIFRS’ understanding of people needs and concerns, in terms of service delivery and employment.
- 7.2.8 Targets and performance indicators will be established to promote race equality, and these will be developed and integrated into HIFRS’ business plans. Progress towards meeting these objectives and targets will be reviewed annually.

7.3 Duty 3 - Assessing and Consulting on the Likely Impact of Proposed Policies

7.3.1 Under this duty HIFRS must set out its arrangements for assessing and consulting on the likely impact of proposed policies on the promotion of race equality. This means outlining the arrangements HIFRS has made to assess the likely effects of policies that it proposes to introduce before they are adopted.

7.3.2 Consideration will be given to the wide range of methods available in order to assess the impact of proposed policies including:

- demographic data and other statistics, including census findings;
- available research findings;
- comparisons between similar policies in HIFRS or other public authorities;
- survey data;
- ethnic monitoring data;
- one-off data gathering exercises;
- specially commissioned research;
- consultation with interested parties, service users, trade unions; and
- consideration of alternative policies, or finding ways of reducing their impact, if an assessment shows that they are likely to have an adverse effect on sections of the communities that HIFRS serves.

7.3.3 The range of methods used to consult with staff on proposed policies may include:

- consulting with Equality and Diversity Forum;
- meetings with relevant groups of staff;
- sending out paper proposals to targeted groups of staff;
- structured focus groups;
- consulting over the intranet;
- consulting with staff via surveys and functional meetings; and
- consulting with representative bodies.

7.3.4 The wide range of methods to consult with communities may include:

- separate meetings for specific groups;
- focus groups;
- stakeholders panels;
- citizens panels;
- advice networks, eg Citizens Advice Bureau;
- anti-racists organisations;
- Chief Fire Officers Association (CFOA); and
- Government organisations, eg Scottish Executive, ODPM.

7.3.5 HIFRS will consult with all minority ethnic associations and community leaders through Highland Community Planning Partnership Equality and Diversity Group and Multicultural Associations. The Highland Community Planning Partnership Equality and Diversity Group meets at regular intervals throughout the year and provides a platform for the sharing of information and resources in promoting good practice to combat discrimination and promote cultural diversity.

- 7.3.7 HIFRS believe that the success of our initiatives depends on our ability to communicate with our community about services and employment. We will do our very best to ensure that the information and services we provide are accessible and appropriate to the needs of all minority ethnic groups. We fully recognise that different communities and racial groups access information in different formats and expect services to be geared to meet their needs. We will regularly review our systems and processes to ensure that we identify any barriers that might prevent equal access to services and information. Where barriers are found, action will be taken to put in place appropriate solutions. Therefore in meeting our commitment to ensuring that our communities have equal and proper access to information and services provided by us, we will investigate appropriate translation and interpretation mechanisms to help us achieve this.
- 7.3.7 HIFRS will take appropriate measures to ensure full participation in any consultative meetings that are held. Comments and views received will be taken into account and fed into the decision-making processes in an open and responsible way.
- 7.4 Duty 4 - Publishing the Results of the Assessments, Consultation and Monitoring
- 7.4.1 This means outlining the arrangements that HIFRS has in place for publishing the results of monitoring for every function or policy that is considered relevant to the general duty to promote race equality. For policies HIFRS are proposing to adopt, it will have to publish assessment and consultation reports.
- 7.4.2 HIFRS will produce written reports on every **assessment, consultation and monitoring** exercise. These reports will be available to anyone who asks for them. However, as these reports may be quite detailed and technical, HIFRS will also publish and distribute summaries of reports more widely and regularly using the most appropriate communication methods i.e. newsletter or information bulletin, annual report, local, specialist and other media.
- 7.4.3 HIFRS will liaise with the Highland Community Planning Partnership Equality and Diversity Group on other appropriate methods of publishing these results.
- 7.5 Duty 5 - Access to Information and Services
- 7.5.1 Under this duty, HIFRS must set out its arrangements for making sure that ethnic communities have access to the information and services it provides. This means making sure that everyone, whatever their racial group, can get information about HIFRS and can access its services and complaints procedures, as well as information about peoples rights.
- 7.5.2 HIFRS publishes a wide range of information including:
- Public Performance Report;
 - Audited Statement of Accounts;
 - Service Plan;
 - leaflets on specific issues such as Fire Safety advice;
 - Community Safety Bulletins;
 - recruitment information;
 - information on the website: and
 - Integrated Risk Management Plan.

7.5.3 HIFRS' services need to be accessible and work for everyone. If people from ethnic communities:

- do not receive the services they need or want;
- do not know about particular services;
- are not confident about using them; and/or
- meet barriers when they try to use them.

HIFRS will be failing to make services equally available to everyone.

7.5.4 Complaints received either internally or externally in connection with the way in which HIFRS is meeting the general and specific duties, or other complaints about race equality will be dealt with by the Head of Corporate Services. These will be monitored in order to ensure that the complaints process is readily understood and accessible by all groups within the Highlands and Islands. It is therefore important to provide baseline figures of how this procedure is used to determine whether it is effective for purpose.

7.5.5 The Highland Community Planning Partnership Equality and Diversity Group will share information and good practice to maximise access by the diverse community. Based on that work, recommendations can be made on how public access to information and services can be made more specific to the needs of minority ethnic communities. Any changes that are recommended will be publicised. Systems will be put in place to ensure that information and services are made accessible in a timely manner.

7.6 Duty 6 - Staff Training on Race Equality

7.6.1 Under this duty HIFRS must set out its arrangements to provide training to staff on issues relevant to the General Duty to promote race equality.

7.6.2 Equality & Diversity training will be provided to new staff as part of their induction to HIFRS and further training is provided to Firefighters who attend specific development courses at the Fire Service College.

7.6.3 HIFRS' training plan in support of the RES will be carried on. A multi faceted approach will be taken to train all employees in Equality & Diversity in general and specifically to ensure staff is fully aware of their duty and obligations under the RES.

7.6.4 HIFRS will review the extent of race equality training already undergone by members of staff in areas relevant to the delivery of the RES and relevant training courses/programmes will be considered.

7.6.5 HIFRS will ensure that all staff involved in the recruitment and selection process is trained in equality and diversity issues.

7.7 Duty 7 - Employment, Monitoring and Analysis

7.7.1 HIFRS will continue to develop and expand upon their existing employment monitoring methods to meet the Specific Duties, which will include monitoring by race and ethnic group the number of:

- employee applicants for promotion and training;
- training and Development activities undertaken;
- applicants for employment;
- employees who have appraisal/performance management interviews including the results in benefits and sanctions;
- employees who are involved in grievances;
- employees who are subject to disciplinary action; and
- employees who cease employment due to dismissal or other reasons for leaving.

7.7.2 The categories to be adopted for ethnic monitoring will be the same as those used for the 2001 census as amended by the Equality and Human Rights Commission in Scotland.

7.7.3 HIFRS is obliged to monitor racial incidents. The process for reporting and monitoring racial incidents will be reviewed to ensure that the patterns of behaviour are recognised and measures are established to act upon inappropriate behaviour.

7.7.4 The data collected will be analysed to find any patterns of inequality and if necessary, steps will be taken to remove barriers and promote diversity. This may include '**positive action**' initiatives which will be carried out in consultation with relevant organisations.

'**Positive action**'- is defined in the Race Relations Act 1976 as action that is permitted by the Act that allows a person to:

- provide facilities to meet the special needs of people from particular racial groups in relation to their training, education or welfare; and
- target job training at people from racial groups that are underrepresented in a particular area of work, or encourage them to apply for such work.

7.7.5 HIFRS will undertake an initial monitoring process of all employees. Monitoring will initially be undertaken in the areas of recruitment, selection, promotion, discipline and grievance in order to establish any adverse impact to racial equality. Statistics will be published as part of HIFRS' Performance Indicators.

7.7.7 The results of the corporate monitoring will be published at least once a year. This will include anything that is being done as a result of the monitoring. This information will be published in the RES Annual Report.

Large print, Braille or other versions of this scheme are available upon request to:

Manuela Flueckiger
Equality & Policy Adviser
Highlands and Islands Fire and Rescue Service
Headquarters
16 Harbour Road
INVERNESS
IV1 1TB

01463 227 000
people@hifrs.org

This scheme can also be viewed on
www.hifrs.org

**HIGHLANDS & ISLANDS FIRE & RESCUE SERVICE
RACE EQUALITY SCHEME ACTION PLAN – NOVEMBER 2008–OCTOBER
2011**

1: CORPORATE					
Objective	Lead	Predicted Timescale for completion	Detail of actions to be undertaken	Progress to Date	Completed
1.1 Method of consulting and publishing information	Equality & Policy Adviser	Nov 2008 – Oct 2011	Consult with local BME groups to seek their advice as to how the Service can increase links with ethnic groups.		
1.2 Impact Assessment (existing policies and procedures)	Department Heads	Nov 2008 – March 2009	Carry out outstanding impact assessments to ensure that current functions and policies do not discriminate on racial or other grounds.	Operations CRM People Services Operations Support Corporate Services	

2: SERVICE DELIVERY					
Objective	Lead Department	Predicted Timescale for completion	Detail of actions to be undertaken	Progress to Date	Completed
<u>2.1 Community Safety</u> 2.1.1 Community Safety Information	Head of Community Risk Management	Nov 2008 – Oct 2011	Review printed material on an ongoing basis and ensure that the language and the range of languages meet the needs of the community.		
2.1.2 Community Safety Checks	Head of Community Risk Management	Nov 2008 – Oct 2011	Provide fire safety advice to communities in relation to religious/cultural festival arrangements through local Associations. Be sensitive to festival calendars in order to avoid causing unnecessary offence (not knocking on doors during specific times)		
2.1.3 Community Safety	Head of Community Risk	Nov 2008 – Oct 2011	Engage with statutory partner		

Information	Managem ent		organisations on media campaigns raising awareness to ethnic communities		
2.1.4 Community Safety Information	Head of Community Risk Managem ent	Nov 2008 – Oct 2011	Engage with Ethnic Associations to provide CFS awareness		
2.1.5 Community Safety Information	Head of Community Risk Managem ent	Oct 2008 – Dec 2008	Introduce a monitoring and analysis system on Race, Gender and Ethnicity of participants on youth engagement schemes		
2.1.6 IRMP	Head of Community Risk Managem ent	Oct 2008 – March 2009	Extend the existing IRMP Questionnaire to analyse all 6 strands (Race, Gender, Disability, Age, Religion and sexual orientation)		

3: SERVICE SUPPORT					
Objective	Lead Department	Predicted Timescale for completion	Detail of actions to be undertaken	Progress to Date	Completed
<p><u>3.1 Support Services</u></p> <p>3.1.1 Complaints</p>	Head of Corporate Services	Nov 2008 – March 2009	Ensure complaints are monitored by ethnicity and data analysed to recommend improvements. Introduce a system to report, record and monitor baseline information to ensure that process is fit for purpose	Procedure being reviewed to include post quality check and evaluation monitoring questionnaire. Will go to SMT for approval by the end of November 2008.	
<p><u>3.2 Training</u></p> <p>3.2.1 Training Course Material</p>	Head of People Services	Nov 2008 – March 2009	Review all training courses, documentation and materials and consult on simplicity and plain English to meet the needs of the community.	All L&D documents being assessed and prioritised into subject areas for allocation to all L&D personnel for assessment/amendment and EIA. Work packages co-ordinated by WM Kelly for final sign-off by GMs Dey & Hay	

3.3.2 Staff Training	Head of People Services	Nov 2008 – March 2009	To ensure that all staff receive awareness training in Equality & Diversity.	Wholetime staff training ongoing 84% complete – training planned for new entrants 13/14 November 2008. Current status for RDS training complete (Orkney – 87% Shetland – 64% WI – 84% Mainland – 74%). Currently identifying mainland trainer to complete mop-up sessions (October 2008)	
3.2.3 Training	Head of People Services	Nov 2008 – March 2009	Introduce a rolling refresher training programme for all HIFRS staff	Refresher training for all service personnel to take place once SFSC update LCMS E&D lecture (update pending)	
3.2.4 HIFRS Trainers	Head of People Services	Nov 2008 – March 2009	All training staff involved to be trained in Equality & Diversity	All L&D personnel received E&D training. Currently identifying in-house personnel to perform future E&D training	
3.2.5 Monitoring	Head of People Services	Nov 2008 – Sept 2009	Monitor through analysis applications (successful and unsuccessful) for training and		

			development opportunities. Setup monitoring/reporting System		
3.2.6 Joining Instructions	Head of People Services	Nov 2008 – Oct 2011	To review joining instructions in the context of the Race Relations (Amendment) Act 2000 including language, dietary and other relevant needs on an ongoing basis to make sure instructions stay in line with the changing requirements of the community		
3.2.7 External training providers	Head of People Services	Nov 2008 – Oct 2011	Ensure External Training Providers Policies are in line with HIFRS Equal Opportunities Policy and Race Equality Scheme		
3.4 <u>Human Resources</u>	Head of People	Nov 2008 –	Set up a minimum of 4		

3.3.1 Recruitment & Selection	Services Equality & Policy Adviser	March 2009	positive action initiatives per year to support the recruitment of a more diverse workforce		
3.3.2 Recruitment & Training	Head of People Services	Nov 2008 – Oct 2011	Ensure that all staff included in the Recruitment and Selection process are trained in Recruitment and Equality & Diversity		
3.3.3 Monitoring	Head of People Services	Nov 2008 – March 2010	Extend the existing monitoring system to analyse by Race, Gender, Disability, Age, Religion and sexual orientation the number of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Employees who have performance appraisals including the results in benefits and sanctions 		
3.3.4 Equal Opportunities Policy	Head of People Services	Nov 2008 – Oct 2009	Implement the updated Equal Opportunities Policy to		

			ensure HIFRS meets the requirements of the Race Relations (Amendment) Act 2000.		
3.3.5 Consultation	Head of People Services Equality & Policy Adviser	Nov 2008 – Oct 2009	Identify groups to be consulted, establish contacts and methods of consultation. Circulate the Race Equality Scheme and Action Plan for consultation making them available in an appropriate range of languages and formats as necessary		
<u>3.4 Risk Management/ Health & Safety</u> 3.4.1	Head of Operations	Nov 2008 – Oct	Accidents to be monitored by ethnicity	An interim measure is in place, but this	

Accident Investigation	Support	2009	and data analysed to recommend further improvements	specific action is part of a much broader H&S revitalisation strategy currently being developed.	
3.4.2 HIFRS Premises	Head of Corporate Services	Nov 2008 – Oct 2011	Further improve procedure for public use of HIFRS premises to ensure the specific needs of the community/ ethnic groups are addressed		
<u>3.5 Operations Support</u> 3.5.1 Racial Incidents	Head of Operations Support/ Head of People Services	Nov 2008 – March 2009	Implement the system to report, record and monitor Hate Incidents in partnership with the Highland Community Partnership Equality & Diversity Group.	Launch of the Hate Incident reporting will be before March 2009	





Highlands & Islands Fire & Rescue Service

Race Equality Scheme

Annual Report 2007/2008

This report is in 12 point font to improve accessibility under the requirements of the Disability Discrimination Act (DDA)

Summary

1.1 Introduction

Highlands and Islands Fire & Rescue Service is committed to ensuring equality for all who use our services and we will endeavour to do this through implementing our Race Equality Scheme and Action Plan, along with other documents, which work towards our equality objectives.

In order to do this the Service will ensure that the organisation understands its responsibilities and that there is clear communication throughout so that our intentions are transparent. We will continue to consult with our communities on this Scheme and any other relevant functions in the future.

Highlands and Islands Fire and Rescue Service introduced its 1st Race Equality Scheme in November 2005 in line with legislative requirement and identifies key actions to be taken by the Service to meet our commitment to promote equality of opportunity for people in the Highlands and Islands. It should be read alongside our Diversity Strategy, Equal Opportunities Policy, Fairness at Work Policy, Gender Equality Scheme (2007-2010), Disability Equality Scheme (2006-2009) and Service action plans.

1.1.1 How We Are Meeting our Duties

The service has already introduced many good practices to overcome race inequalities and to encourage under-represented groups to apply for positions within the Service.

We have been monitoring our employees and potential employees for many years and will continue to do so. As an organisation we will ensure that this information is utilised effectively to review our policies and identify patterns of concern.

The initiatives that the Service introduces along with a change in culture will help to meet the target.

The Service aims to be recognised as an equal opportunities employer and has policies to help achieve its goal. These policies cover all aspects of employment, including selection, recruitment and training, positive action and flexible conditions of service.

To ensure that our policies remain effective (and for no other purpose) the Service maintains records of employees' and applicants' ethnic background. Ongoing monitoring and regular analysis of such records provide the basis for appropriate action to eliminate unlawful direct and indirect discrimination, and to promote equality of opportunity.

The Service's long-term aim is to ensure that the composition of the workforce does reflect that of the community of the Highlands & Islands. Where necessary, steps may be taken to assist under-represented groups to compete for jobs, as permitted by the relevant legislation.

The Service's equality and diversity policies and the measures to implement them have been devised on the basis of advice from relevant bodies as well as through consultation with the appropriate representative bodies.

The Service encompasses a range of roles, including Administrative Staff, Control Operators, Community Fire Safety, Finance, Firefighters, Human Resources, IT, Mechanics, Performance Team, Procurement and Training. These jobs require a range of skills and provide opportunity of employment for a wide range of people.

1.1.2 Profile of the Area We Serve

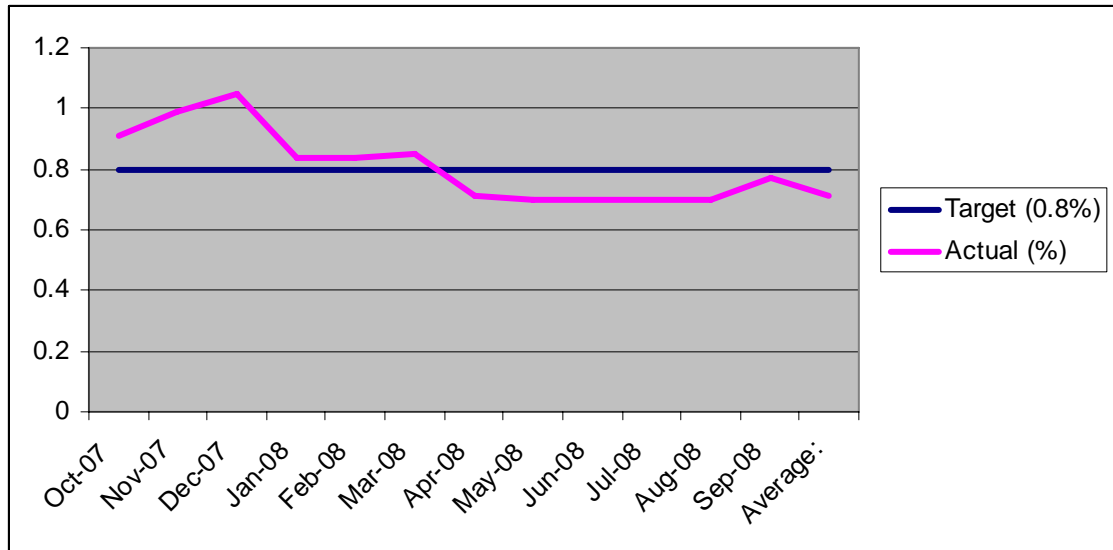
Highlands & Islands Fire & Rescue Service serves the Authorities of the Highland Council, Orkney Islands Council, Shetland Islands Council and the Western Isles

At the time of the 2001 Census the BME population of Highlands and Islands was 2,162, 0.78% of the total population (compared with 2.01% in Scotland overall).

2001	Highlands and Islands Population by Ethnic Group		Scotland Figures for Comparison	
	% of Total Population	Base	% of Total Population	Base
White Scottish	85.16	235,596	88.09	4,459,071
Other white				
British	12.19	33,731	7.38	373,685
White Irish	0.53	1,475	0.98	49,428
Other White	1.32	3,658	1.54	78,150
Indian	0.08	218	0.30	15,037
Pakistani	0.07	206	0.63	31,793
Bangladeshi	0.05	152	0.04	1,981
Other South				
Asian	0.06	151	0.12	6,196
Chinese	0.12	327	0.32	16,310
Caribbean	0.04	108	0.04	1,778
African	0.04	105	0.10	5,118
Black Scottish or other Black	0.01	40	0.02	1,129
Any Mixed				
Background	0.20	559	0.25	12,764
Other Ethnic Group	0.11	297	0.19	9,571
All Minority Ethnic Population	0.78	2,163	2.01	101,677
Whole Population	100	276,649	100	5,062,011

Source: General Register Office for Scotland (GROS) - 2001 Census

In the last 12 months the percentage of Black and Ethnic minority (BME) employees within the Service has decreased to 0.77% end of September 2008 because the overall number of employees has increased.



The total number of Employees at HIFRS at the end of September 2008 is 1425. 19 are from an ethnic minority background and 11 of them are BME

1.2 Progress

We believe there is more to be done to increase the BME workforce within HIFRS by initializing positive action campaigns in the Districts for Retained Recruitment and at Inverness Station for Retained and Wholetime Recruitment.

Equality and diversity has now been mainstreamed into our Service Plan through our annual business planning process. This ensures that all actions identified through the Race Equality Scheme Action Plan are not the responsibility of one or two individuals, but rather are owned by staff across all levels and departments.

Equality is a standing agenda item on key HIFRS committee meetings and an impact assessment process and policy document, covering all areas of equality has been produced and reviewed by an external organisation.

All new policies and key changes to practise or procedure require a completed EIA as part of the sign off procedure and all existing polices have been identified with and a timetable for outstanding documents will be completed in the near future.

The Service has implemented an exit interview process, and the information from this will be monitored to identify any practices or policies that may discriminate on the grounds of ethnic background, and from that

information, act to remove or minimise such practices through the development of policy, training and education.

Whilst all identified appropriate staff have received training in completing an EIA by Angela Webb of HMI in 2006, further training has taken place in August 2008 by IODA to embed equality and diversity across all areas of our Service.

The Service investigates race differences in service use by using information from consultation processes and other community and partnership working exercising to continually inform service delivery mechanisms that meet the needs of BME people.

Race has been analysed through the monitoring form issued to those who have received a Home fire Safety Check; 2000 Questionnaires have been issued in March 2008. It was a successful consultation with a return of 46.95%. The results were (in alphabetical order):

- Asian 0.11%
- Black 0.11%
- Other White 1.50%
- White British 96.05%

- No Indication 2.23%

The Service has already delivered training to personnel on equality and diversity which includes cultural awareness and harassment and bullying. This training is ongoing and frameworks are now being considered to ensure all new employees to the Service receive this training during the early stages of their career with us, as well as refreshing training for existing employees to ensure that the training has a permanent and positive impact.

The training given to staff will be reviewed on a regular basis to ensure its relevance and effectiveness.

To ensure staff are aware of their responsibilities, staff also have access to HIFRS Race Equality Scheme and Action plan as well as access to the Equality and Diversity forum. All staff has been consulted during the months of August and September 2008 in regards to our new Race equality Scheme.

Further reports on progress made against the Scheme's Action Plan will be incorporated within our Public Performance Report.

1.3 Information Gathering

An Equality and Diversity Forum has been set up and monitors ongoing Equality plans on behalf of the Service. This group is chaired by the Assistant Chief Fire Officer, and has representatives from representative bodies, as well as from a broad selection of work areas from within the Service. Two members of the Highland and Islands Fire Board also sit on this committee to act as equality champions.

HIFRS is an active member of the Highland Community planning partnership Equality & Diversity Group, and it is this forum that provides essential links to the various race communities and service users.

It has grown from a group formed in 1996 of five public organisations in order to express their commitment to improve the wellbeing of the people of the Highlands and to develop collaborative ways of working.

Legislation in 2003 required the setting up of Community Planning Partnerships across Scotland to take forward the process of community planning.

Community planning is the process through which the connections between national priorities decided by the Scottish Executive and those at Highland, local and neighbourhood levels are improved.

- It is about making sure that people and communities in the Highlands are genuinely engaged in making decisions on public services which affect them.
- It requires a commitment from organisations in the Highlands to work together, not apart, in providing better public services.
- It provides the over-arching partnership framework within which other initiatives and partnerships can be co-ordinated and, where necessary, acting to rationalise and simplify public sector working arrangements. In Highland community planning involves representatives of the voluntary and business sectors as well as public sector agencies.

Not only do public sector organisations need to strengthen a joint-working culture and practice between each other but also with and between communities. The Highland Community Planning Partnership recognises that these relationships require considerable levels of support and action in order to enable full community participation in the community planning process to take place.

The HIFRS is committed to promoting race equality and will implement the new Race Equality Scheme and Action Plan 2008-2011 in November 2008.

The Race Equality Scheme is published in paper format and is available on request; it is also placed on our website: www.hifrs.org
The results of the monitoring are published annually and are available on the website within the annual Public Performance Report.

The tables on the following pages represent our targets and the achieved results up to date.

HIGHLANDS & ISLANDS FIRE & RESCUE SERVICE
RACE EQUALITY SCHEME ACTION PLAN – NOVEMBER 2005–OCTOBER 2008

1: CORPORATE					
Objective	Accountable	Timescale	Outcome	Progress to Date	Completed
1.1 Staff Training	Department Heads	Nov 05 - Oct 06	To ensure that all staff receive awareness training in Diversity.	All full time staff have received a minimum of 1 day diversity training provided in collaboration with SFRS. Training being rolled out to RDS and due to complete 2008 Agreed to use PDR Pro module for both uniformed and civilian staff for refresher and new start awareness training.	On new RES
1.2 Method of consulting and publishing information	Department Heads	Nov 05 - Oct 06	Consult with the Highland Alliance for Racial Equality (HARE) to seek their advice as to how the Service can increase links with ethnic groups	The Highland Alliance for Racial Equality (HARE) is not active anymore. HIFRS is part of the Highland Community Planning Partnership Equality and Diversity Group which does interlink with ethnic groups.	Dismissed
1.3 Impact Assessment (existing policies)	Department Heads	Nov 05 - Oct 06	Carry out an impact assessment to ensure that current functions and policies do not discriminate on	Ioda have been sent a number of Key policies to impact assess on our behalf and review our template.	May/June 2007 August 2008 October 2008

			racial or other grounds.	HR completed CRM completed OPS Support 5% (July 2008, done by March 2008) T&D (done by March 2009) Corporate Services (done by March 2009) Engineering & supplies (done by March 2009)	
1.4 Impact Assessment (future policies)	Department Heads	Nov 05 - Oct 08	Carry out an impact assessment to ensure that proposed functions and policies do not discriminate on racial or other grounds.	The information gleaned from this process will be used to develop an in house impact assessment training event. July 2007	April 2007
1.5 Handling of Calls			Develop and review the procedure to ensure staff are equipped to handle calls from people who speak a different language.	Access to Translation Service made available to staff.	October 2006

2: SERVICE DELIVERY					
Objective	Accountable	Timescale	Outcome	Progress to Date	Completed
<u>2.1 Operations</u>					
2.1.1 Post Fire Leaflets	Commander Ops Support Commander CRM	Nov 05 - Oct 07	Review post fire leaflets and consult on the range of languages required to meet the needs of the community.	Language cards have been developed and retained on appliances.	October 2006
2.1.2 Fire Calls	Commander Ops Support	Nov 05 - Oct 06	Review the Fire Calls policy to ensure appropriate measures are in place for dealing with callers who speak a different language.	Bi-lingual CFS Advocate reviewing available literature Access to Translation Service made available to Control staff.	October 2006
<u>2.2 Community Safety</u>					
2.2.1 Community Safety Information	Commander CRM	Nov 05 - Oct 07	Review printed material and ensure that the language and the range of languages meet the needs of the community. Provide data to demonstrate the equality of this service	Bi-lingual CFS Advocate reviewing available literature on an ongoing basis	February 2008
			Include ethnic origin in data information sheet	Joint Funding from Scottish Government secured for recent translations of Safety Information Leaflets	February 2008
2.2.2 Juvenile Fire Setters	Commander CRM	Nov 05 - Oct 07		Ethnicity monitored on our on-line	January 2006 October 2008

<p>Policy</p> <p>2.2.3 Fire Investigation</p>	<p>Commander CRM</p>	<p>Nov 05 – Oct 07</p>	<p>Gather data on ethnicity with regard to juvenile fire setters</p> <p>Include data on fires, fire fatalities and fire injuries in respect of ethnicity. Assess the risk reduction measures and take appropriate action.</p>	<p>requests for Home Fire Safety checks and at all events attended by CSAs.</p> <p>The Ethnicity of juvenile fire settees is being recorded.</p> <p>The gathering of ethnicity information with regard to fires is being considered as part of the new IRS due to be commenced in 2009. Ethnicity information is now being gathered for fires investigated by the Services specialist fire investigation team.</p>	<p>October 2008</p>
<p><u>2.3 Integrated Risk Management IRMP</u></p>	<p>Commander CRM</p>	<p>Nov 05 – Oct 08</p>	<p>Included in the IRMP, the proposed action to be taken in relation to equality</p>	<p>IRMP published in Plain English and in accordance with guidance from RNIB</p>	<p>April 2008</p>

3: SERVICE SUPPORT					
Objective	Accountable	Timescale	Outcome	Progress to Date	Completed
<u>3.1 Support Services</u>					
3.1.1 Supplies/ Service Providers/ Contractors	Head of Corporate Services Head of Engineering & Supplies	Nov 05 – Oct 06	Require contractors, suppliers and service providers to promote and develop race equality matters as demonstrated in HIFRS tender documents	Procurement manager of HC acts as adviser to Fire Board and ensures our compliance	April 2006
3.1.2 Contractors/ Suppliers/ Services Providers	Head of Corporate Services Head of Engineering & Supplies	Nov 05 – Oct 06	To ensure compliance with HIFRS Equal Opportunities Policy and Race Equality Scheme	Per above	April 2006
3.1.3 Purchasing	Head of Engineering & Supplies	Nov 05 – Oct 07	Review all Purchasing and Stores Policies and Procedures to ensure compliance with the Race Relations (Amendment) Act 2000	See 1.3	On new RES
3.1.4 Complaints	Head of Corporate Services	Nov 05 – Oct 06	Ensure complaints are monitored by ethnicity and data analysed to recommend improvements. Introduce a system to report, record and monitor baseline information to ensure that process is fit for purpose	Procedure being reviewed to include post quality check and evaluation monitoring questionnaire. Will go to SMT for approval by the end of November 2008.	October 2008

<u>3.2 Training</u>					
3.2.1 Training Course Material	Commander Development	Nov 05 – Oct 07	Review all training courses, documentation and materials and consult on the range of languages required to meet the needs of the community.	HIFRS personnel profile and language needs mapped against the regular review of training material to ensure fit for purpose and in line with current E&D legislation. To date no current need identified or request(s) from personnel made.	March 2009
3.4.2 Training	Commander Development HR Manager	Nov 05 – Oct 06	To develop the plan for Diversity Training within HIFRS with the HR Department	T&D – Majority of full time staff and selected retained staff completed training during 06/07. All mainland retained stations and outstanding fulltime staff programmed for 07/08 currently on target. Island status to be programmed for 08/09. New retained staff, section of recruit course to include E&D training via appropriate instructor. A refresher programme will be in place by e.learning modules by 09/10.	October 2008
3.4.3 HIFRS Trainers	Commander Development	Nov 05 – Oct 07			On new RES
3.2.4 Monitoring	Commander Development	Nov 05 – Oct 06	All training staff involved to be trained in Diversity		April 2008
3.2.5 Monitoring	Commander Development	Nov 05 – Oct 06	Monitor, through analysis, the internal and external participants of training delivered throughout HIFRS		March 2008
3.2.6 Monitoring	Commander Development	Nov 05 – Oct 06	Monitor through analysis	All L& D personnel received E&D training. Currently identifying in-house	June 2008

			<p>applications (successful and unsuccessful) for training and development opportunities</p> <p>Publish results of monitoring on an annual basis through existing HIFRS reporting systems (eg Service Performance Reports)</p>	<p>personnel to perform future E&D training</p> <p>T&D – Providing HR department on a monthly basis a report of the numbers and names of personnel attending courses</p> <p>T&D – Providing HR department on a monthly basis a report of the numbers and names of personnel attending courses</p> <p>T&D - Completed</p>	
3.2.7 Joining Instructions	Commander Development	Nov 05 – Oct 06	To review joining instructions in the context of the Race Relations (Amendment) Act 2000	T&D – Completed	June 2008
3.2.8 External training providers	Commander Development	Nov 05 – Oct 06	including language, dietary and other relevant needs	T&D – Completed	April 2008
3.2.9 Training	Commander Development HR Manager	Nov 05 – Oct 08	<p>Ensure External Training Providers comply with HIFRS Equal Opportunities Policy and Race Equality Scheme</p> <p>Organise training in Diversity for all staff on an annual basis</p>	T&D – Majority of full time staff and selected retained staff completed training during 06/07. All mainland retained stations and outstanding fulltime staff programmed for 07/08 currently on target. Island status to be programmed for 08/09. New retained staff,	On new RES

				section of recruit course to include E&D training via appropriate instructor. A refresher programme will be in place by e.learning modules by 09/10.	
3.5 <u>Human Resources</u>					
3.3.1 Recruitment & Selection	HR Manager	Nov 05 – Oct 06	Introduce monitoring system for Recruitment and Selection Procedure to ensure recruitment is carried out in accordance with legislation and the principles of Fairness and Equality	All recruitment is monitored and statistical analysis provided to the Equality & Diversity forum quarterly	April 2007
3.3.2 Recruitment & Training	HR Manager Commander Development	Nov 05 – Oct 06	Ensure that all staff included in the Recruitment and Selection process are trained in Recruitment and Diversity	All staff in Selection Panel has been trained in Equality & Diversity.	January 2008
3.3.3 Monitoring	HR Manager	Nov 05 – Oct 07	Introduce monitoring system to analyse by Race, Ethnic Group and Gender the number of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Employees in post by grade • Applicants for employment 	The following elements are monitored and statistical analysis provided to the Equality & Diversity forum quarterly: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Applicants for employment • Employee applicants 	April 2008

3.3.4 Monitoring	E&D Forum	Nov 05 – Oct 06	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Employees who have performance appraisals including the results in benefits and sanctions • Employee applicants for promotion • Employees involved in grievances • Employees subject to disciplinary action 	<p>for promotion</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Employees involved in grievances • Employees subject to disciplinary action <p>The service has developed an exit interview policy and process.</p>	April 2008
3.3.5 Recruitment Material	HR Manager	Nov 05 – Oct 07	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Employees involved in grievances • Employees subject to disciplinary action • Employees who cease employment and reasons for leaving HIFRS 	Results for all schemes will be included in the annual PPR and included on the web site – effective 2008	February 2007
3.3.6 Selection Assessments	HR Manager	Nov 06 – Oct 07	Publish results of monitoring on an annual basis through existing HIFRS reporting systems	Recruitment material has been reviewed and deemed appropriate to leave in English as a main requirement for all roles.	January 2008
3.3.7 Equal Opportunities Policy	HR Manager	Nov 05 – Oct 06	<p>Review Recruitment material and consult on the range of language provided to meet the needs of the community.</p> <p>Review selection assessment and material and consult on the range of languages required to meet</p>	New roles need to be impact assessed to ensure ongoing requirement Selection assessment and material has been reviewed and deemed appropriate to leave in English	On new RES

			<p>the needs of the community.</p> <p>Review the Equal Opportunities Policy to ensure HIFRS meets the requirements of the Race Relations (Amendment) Act 2000.</p>	<p>as a main requirement for all roles. New roles need to be impact assessed to ensure ongoing requirement</p> <p>New Equal Opportunities Policy prepared and with Unions for consultation</p>	
<p><u>3.4 Risk Management/ Health & Safety</u></p> <p>3.4.1 Accident Investigation</p>	Commander Ops Support	Nov 05 – Oct 06	Accidents to be monitored by ethnicity and data analysed to recommend improvements	Changes to documentation and procedures have all been prepared. Policy change to go to SS for approval. An interim measure is in place, but this specific action is part of a much broader H&S revitalisation strategy currently developed.	On new RES
3.4.2 HIFRS Premises	Head of Corporate Services	Nov 05 – Oct 08	Review procedure for public use of HIFRS premises to ensure the specific needs of the community/ ethnic groups are addressed	Language identification information available at HQ and district offices.	October 2006
<p><u>3.5 Operations Support</u></p> <p>3.5.1 Racial</p>	Commander	Nov 05 –	Implement a	Launch of the	On new

Incidents	Ops Support HR Manager	Oct 06	system to report, record and monitor racial incidents	Hate Incident reporting system in 1. quarter 2009	RES
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